

Enslaved: True Stories of Modern Day Slavery

Discussion Guide

1. Gloria Steinem begins her foreword with an epigraph: “*We must save the executioner from being the executioner as well as the victim from being the victim.*” How did this affect the way you read each story in *Enslaved*?
2. How do the experiences of the women in *Enslaved* differ from those of the men? What do their experiences tell you about the relationship between women’s rights and modern-day slavery?
3. The slave narrative—a personal story written by a former slave—has been used as a political tool since the beginning of the abolitionist movement. What makes a personal story more powerful than, for example, a scholarly article? What are the risks involved in politicizing personal experiences? Are they worth it?
4. Consider other slave narratives, such as Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. How do the stories in *Enslaved* continue the tradition of the slave narrative? How do they deviate from it?
5. How did Salina Juma and Beatrice Fernando have their faith in God challenged and reinforced by their experiences of slavery? Is there anything surprising there?
6. Abdel Nasser Ould Yessa experienced a gradual awakening to the injustice of slavery. What does his story tell you about the challenges of eradicating slavery? How might they be overcome?
7. What is the significance of the title of chapter seven, “Atop the Second Wave”? How does Sveta’s experience stand out? How did she continue to be a victim of trafficking even after becoming a trafficker herself?
8. Harry Wu writes, “*Herein lies the essence of the Communist Party’s art of governance, referred to as ‘from the masses, to the masses’... They would lock you up or kill you, and still demand that you be utterly convinced and laud the decision loudly*” (131). Harry Wu endured physical enslavement in the labor camps; here he describes a campaign of mental enslavement to go along with it. Talk about the relationship between physical and mental enslavement. What might this tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of the systems, institutions, or individuals that make modern day slavery possible?
9. Jill Leighton’s story is perhaps one of the most profoundly disturbing accounts in this volume; particularly troubling is the fact that, repeatedly, individuals who were in positions to help her did nothing. Why? What does that tell you about the importance of raising awareness?
10. Are there any patterns to the stories of slavery in this book? What are they? What do they tell us about the roots of modern slavery and how it might be abolished?
11. Brainstorm ways that you can take action. Work with your reading group to put one of your ideas into action! (For help, support and ideas, visit us online at <http://www.iabolish.org/activist>, or email us at enslaved@iabolish.org)

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“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

--Edmund Burke