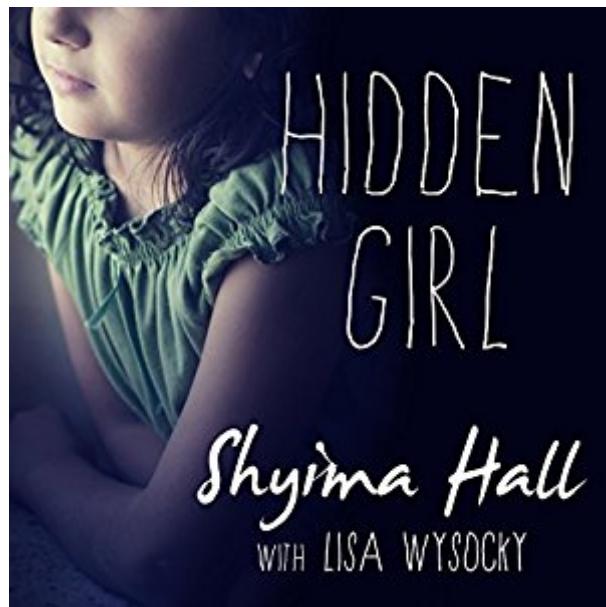


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# Hidden Girl: The True Story Of A Modern-Day Child Slave



## **Synopsis**

Shyima Hall was born in Egypt on September 29, 1989, the seventh child of desperately poor parents. When she was eight, her parents sold her into slavery. Shyima then moved two hours away to Egypt's capitol city of Cairo to live with a wealthy family and serve them eighteen hours a day, seven days a week. When she was ten, her captors moved to Orange County, California, and smuggled Shyima with them. Two years later, an anonymous call from a neighbor brought about the end of Shyima's servitude - but her journey to true freedom was far from over. A volunteer at her local police department since she was a teenager, Shyima is passionate about helping to rescue others who are in bondage. Now a U.S. citizen, she regularly speaks out about human trafficking and intends to one day become an immigration officer. In *Hidden Girl*, Shyima candidly reveals how she overcame her harrowing circumstances and brings vital awareness to a timely and relevant topic.

## **Book Information**

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 6 hours and 48 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: June 25, 2014

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00KY6SI4U

Best Sellers Rank: #121 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Biographies & History #121 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Nonfiction #560 in Books > Teens > Biographies

## **Customer Reviews**

The book was originally intended for the teenage reader market, but the subject matter of slavery and human trafficking transcends all ages. It is written by Shyima Hall, whose story it is, and Lisa Wysocky, a professional writer and successful author. Chapter One opens with, "Everyone has a defining moment in his or her life. For some it is the day they get married or have a child. For others it comes when they reach a sought-after goal. My life, however, drastically changed course the day my parent's sold me into slavery. I was 8 years old." Thus begins the heartrending account of the

narrator; from being an 8 year old girl, living with her family and nine siblings in the slums of Alexandria, the second largest city in Egypt to ending up as a child-slave in Orange County, USA. Shyima was sold by her parents to a wealthy Egyptian family as restitution of a bogus debt of honor to repay an alleged theft by her older sister (Zahra), while working for these people. Shyima's indentured bondage lasted four years; she spent 2 years in Cairo, Egypt and two more in California, after being illegally smuggled into the USA by her "owners". During her captivity she lived under harrowing conditions; working from dawn to late night, fed once a day on the family's leftovers and regularly abused verbally and physically for the least infraction. Her sleeping quarters were a bare walled rat and insect infested garage with no heat. This only begins to describe her tragedy =No spoilers here=. Shyima was eventually rescued and her abusers punished with prison and deportation. The bulk of the book is about her psychological, emotional and educational rehabilitation with the help of social services and foster care system, culminating in her becoming a US citizen. Her experience through group homes and foster parents was far from idyllic. Her belief that, "everything would turn out if only she could get to the other side of this horrific situation", did not match the reality of her tribulations while trying to fit in the regular society. The silver lining of this harrowing tale is that she was brought to America by her captors, where a brave Samaritan noticed her abuse and called the authorities, ending her bondage. Had she remained in Egypt, or returned there, her situation would have been hopeless and terminally dismal. The language is simple, flows without emotion and is often redundant. Events and people are listed and described in a matter-of-fact way almost devoid of feeling; as if the author is having an out-of-body experience writing the story. I highly recommend the book for its intended teen readers, the majority of whom may be unaware of child slavery and trafficking, occurring even within their society. Shyima writes that "More than seventeen thousand new slaves are brought into the United States every year. And more are being rescued than ever before. That's why it's so important to know that a rescued slave could show up in your school, workplace or neighborhood. That person is going to need a lot of love, care, and patience.". Adults may find the book somewhat simplistic, yet gut wrenching and sad. But it is a clarion that brings attention to a hidden world-wide corruption that has been neglected by the mainstream media. It also provides signs and clues to spot victims such as young Shyima and encourages individuals to report them and to get involved.

Shyima was a slave and this is her story - of survival and of her new reality - the good and the ugly. This book was compelling to read and very, very hard and raw. I found myself being sad, horrified and disgusted, all the while I also felt myself rooting for her, at first quietly and then out loud

and its rare that a book actually has me "talking back to it". While the actual story is the main storytelling in the book, I found myself looking for subtext - and there were many - for instance how "everything would turn out if only she could get to the other side of this horrific situation", yet, when we read about Shyima's attempts at fitting in to the "regular world" we see that things are not quite as perfect as she thought (hoped) they would be. I also felt so sad when reading her letters to her captors - what a nightmare situation. This book is also about hope and about believing that you can turn any situation as a learning one. I really enjoyed this book but was surprised that it was directed at YA. I would say that this is a must read for YA and adults.

This is the first book I ever read that brought a tear to my eye. Sometimes for the sadness of the situation and sometimes for sharing Shyima's triumphs. I've heard people say, "Why don't slaves run when they get a chance". This book will give a clear understanding. Prayers be with you always Shyima. God's blessings as well.

Please read this book. Make yourself aware of Human-Slavery. The subject matter is so important, the statistics are overwhelming, and after reading this book and finding these out, it made me want to spread the word and do more about this dreadful horrific situation. Shymia Hall has overcome so much in her short life, her early life was that of a human slave. She was dealt a very bad hand and has worked so hard to overcome her past. She should be so proud of herself, she is amazing and I hope she is patting herself on the back. She is a true example of a hero and if you need a story about a hero - this is your book and she is your GO-TO-GIRL! Good Luck Shymia & may your future be Bright~God Bless You and may you and your beloved Family ALWAYS be BLESSED!

I could not put the book down until almost the end. Her story of being a slave engrossed me completely. I also found interesting her struggles to acculturate and obtain learning. Shyima's will to improve her lot in life shows just what determined and strong people can accomplish. However, most fascinating was her depiction of her time in slavery. It's amazing to learn of how slavery still exists even in the U.S. Her plea at the end of how all of us can be more observant to help stamp out the practice really opened my eyes.

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