

Red Leaves Falling: Scene breakdown, Questions and Learning Points

The discussion can focus on specific scenes in the video to assist the participants in further reflecting on the characters' situation and on the issue. For each scene, possible questions and suggested learning points are provided.

Scene 1: Ruby's first encounter with Rommel

- What is Ruby doing and whom is she doing it for?
- What is the significance of the book in the scene? What does its presence convey?
- Why did Rommel steal a kiss from Ruby? How does this foretell what is about to happen to Ruby?
- How did Ruby react to Rommel? Did she do the right thing? What would you have done if someone suddenly kissed you?
- Compare Frank Smith's daughter to Ruby. Who appears to be at risk for child sex trafficking? Why or why not?

Suggested Learning Points:

1. Every child has the right to be treated with respect, the right to participate in decisions affecting them, the right to a protective environment, the right to survival, the right to full human development and, the right to education.
2. Poverty is one hindrance to children's full enjoyment of their rights.
3. Everyone, especially children, have the right to say NO. It is a way for children to set boundaries that prevent their exploitation.
4. Any act that takes advantage of a child is considered abuse.
5. Secrecy and social isolation increases children's vulnerability to being exploited. Children should be able to identify their support system to protect themselves and prevent exploitation.
6. Some of the ways adults treat children may actually contribute to their exploitation. This includes culture-based expectations on how children should behave and help their families, and how they should relate and behave towards elders.

Scene 2: Agreement between Mother and Rommel

- Why did Mother ask Rommel for help? How do you think they know each other?
- What made Mother decide to stop Ruby's schooling and compel her to work somewhere?
- What role did Mother play in the "employment" of Ruby? What alternatives did Mother have other than to allow her 12 year-old child to work? Can you think of any?
- Was it fair for Mother to expect Ruby to keep their house in order? In the first place, is it Ruby's responsibility to look after her siblings, she being a child herself?
- What effect does blaming Ruby for a chaotic home have on her?

Suggested Learning Points:

1. Exploitation is a relationship where one party is unfairly used for the benefit of another.
2. Financial issues, lack of education, and lack of external support can cause lapses in parental judgment.

Scene 3: Rommel and "Joe" arrives to take Ruby and Dawn away

- What do you think Ruby felt upon seeing Rommel and Joe? Why did Dawn say "It's just Rommel"?
- What do you think mother was thinking when "Joe" asked Dawn's age? What do you think persuaded mother to let Dawn go as well?
- Look closely at the scenes in and around Ruby's house. What risk factors for child sex trafficking are found in Ruby's environment?

Suggested Learning Points:

1. Removing a child from his/her family deprives the child of many other rights.
2. Some people may unknowingly "sell" their child to sex traffickers, while some may do it consciously.

3. Whether or not children go with the trafficker willingly, child sex trafficking is a crime. The child's "consent" is immaterial. Children are not mature enough to see the available spectrum of choices, or to foresee the consequences of their actions

Scene 4: Ruby and Dawn are brought to the city

- Notice the billboard along the road. What is the message communicated in the billboard? How does it relate to the theme of the story?
- Who does the street sweeper represent? What is her significance?
- Put yourself in Ruby and Dawn's place and try to describe what you are feeling as you see the other children in the brothel for the very first time.
- Notice the child sex traffickers and "customers". What do they look like? Are foreigners the only type of child trafficker and "customer"? Why or why not?
- How did the exploitation affect Ruby and Dawn?

Suggested Learning Points:

1. There are factors in our culture that cause and perpetuate the exploitation of children. We can challenge our beliefs and change the way we regard women and children to make our environment safer for children.
2. Children trafficked for sexual purposes are usually exploited in prostitution, pornography and sex tourism. Once trafficked, the child will most likely experience an endless cycle of abuse and isolation.
3. Traffickers and "customers" cannot be lumped into one type of nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or economic background.
4. Sexually trafficked children bear trauma that rips them of human dignity. It changes the way a child sees her/his self and the way he/she sees others.
5. Some socially accepted beliefs, including those portrayed in the media contribute to the proliferation of attitudes that allow child sexual abuse and trafficking to thrive and proliferate.

Scene 5: The Anonymous Street Sweeper calls for help

- What made her finally decide to report what she suspected?
- What would have happened if she had notified the police immediately after she saw Ruby and Dawn alight from the car and enter the building with Joe?
- What would have happened if she notified the police at once immediately after Ruby escaped and asked for her help?
- What would have happened if the Street Sweeper refused to get involved?
- When "Joe" shot Ruby's leg, what was the significance of showing Mother calling out her name? What does this say about Mother?
- Why do you think the Street Sweeper has no name? What does this symbolize?

Suggested Learning Points:

1. It is important for everyone to know the physical signs and symptoms of possible child sexual exploitation.
2. Reporting may be the only way a child can be saved from further abuse or exploitation.
3. Sexually trafficked children are often brought to places unfamiliar to them and often have nowhere to go. They will continue to suffer the abuse unless someone else takes courage to help them.
4. People's indifference to the issue and the refusal to understand it allow the continuation of this crime.

Scene 6: The father (Frank Smith) arrested

- What is your opinion of the father?
- Why was the father arrested? What crime did he commit?
- Is viewing child pornography a crime all over the world? What is your opinion?
- Can you imagine the father as someone who is from another country? Could he be someone from your country? Why or why not?

Suggested Learning Points:

1. A child abuser can be anybody.
2. Child abuse is not limited to actual physical abuse of the child. Even a click to websites with child pornography or simulated child pornography adds to the demand. The syndicates make money out of each click; the more clicks there are, the more children they will force into their evil business. There are still places where there is no law against viewing child pornographic materials.

Scene 7: Ruby and Dawn home again

- Discuss how the lives of Ruby and Dawn might have been affected by their experiences in the brothel? Do you think they now have special needs in order for them to recover from their experiences?
- How do you think they are looked upon in their village?
- If you notice the little grave in the background in the closing scene, what does this tell you?
- Did the money that mother earn from sending Ruby and Dawn off to the city solve anything?

Suggested Learning Points

1. Survivors of child sex trafficking take time to recover and would require concerted efforts of various stakeholders for needs to be met.
2. Citizen and government collaborative action could be the best possible way to curb the transnational organized crime of child sex trafficking.
3. Child sex trafficking is real. Crime syndicates continue to victimize children on a wide scale.
4. Unless people become concerned and act, more families, communities and nations will suffer the loss of children to sex trafficking.