

Indian River County Case Report

Summary

Print Date/Time: 04/19/2022 15:37
Login ID: sheriff\nchristm
Case Number: 2022-00026805

Indian River County Sheriff's Office
ORI Number: FL0310000

Case

Case Number: 2022-00026805	Incident Type: Miscellaneous
Location: 4055 41ST AV VERO BEACH, FL 32960	Occurred From: 03/08/2022 13:30
Reporting Officer ID: 5270 - Scranton	Occurred Thru: 03/08/2022 13:30
	Disposition: No Crime Occurred
	Disposition Date: 04/19/2022
	Reported Date: 03/08/2022 13:30 Tuesday

Offenses

No.	Group/ORI	Crime Code	Statute	Description	Counts
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Subjects

Type	No.	Name	Address	Phone	Race	Sex	DOB/Age
Complainant	1	PIPPIN, JENNIFER ANN	2616 52ND AV VERO BEACH, FL 32966	(772)766-2765		Female	03/28/1985 36

Arrests

Arrest No.	Name	Address	Date/Time	Type	Age
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Property

Date	Code	Type	Make	Model	Description	Tag No.	Item No.
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Vehicles

No.	Role	Vehicle Type	Year	Make	Model	Color	License Plate	State
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**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION**

Report # 2022-26805

Case Number: 2022-26805 Date: March 8, 2022 Sergeant Aaron Scranton # 5270

Introduction

On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, I met with Jennifer Pippin and three other concerned citizens at the Indian River County Sheriff's Office regarding their complaint of what they deemed to be inappropriate books being available in public schools within Indian River County.

Investigative Actions

On Tuesday, March 9, 2022, I met with Jennifer Pippin and three other concerned citizens at the Indian River County Sheriff's Office regarding their complaint of what they deemed to be inappropriate books being available in public schools within Indian River County. The group, Identified as "Moms for Liberty" and seemingly headed by Mrs. Pippin, reported they have petitioned the school district to remove approximately 150 books from public schools. The reason for the petition is that the group has identified these select books to contain (in their opinion) references to sex, rape and drugs. On the date of this meeting, Mrs. Pippin stated the school district has reviewed most of the books. To date, the school district has permanently removed six books, four books have been lost and five books are pending further review; the remaining books have been returned to school library shelves after their review and are accessible to students.

Mrs. Pippin provided me with what she claims to be three of the most sexually grotesque books to review, claiming they depict the aforementioned references and violate Florida State Statute 847.012 which prohibits the sale or distribution of harmful material to minors. Mrs. Pippin and her associates have reviewed the books in their entirety and left reference tabs for which specific sections of the books they want reviewed be law enforcement. Below are the three books provided by Mrs. Pippin which I personally reviewed during my investigation:

- The Perks of Being a Wallflower, written by Stephen Chbosky
- Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, written by Johnathan Foer
- Perfect, written by Ellen Hopkins

I collected the books and all supporting documents provided by Mrs. Pippin for her claim. The documents were scanned into the case file and copies of each reference page from the three books were scanned and saved as a PDF.

The following Florida State Statutes and their subsections were reviewed for potential violations of Florida law pertaining to the books content and their dissemination to school aged youth/minors:

- FSS 847.012 – Harmful materials; Sale or distribution to minors or using minors in production prohibited.
 - 847.012(3) – A person may not knowingly sell, rent, or loan for monetary consideration to a minor:
 - (a) Any picture, photograph, drawing, sculpture, motion picture film, videocassette, or similar visual representation or image of a person or portion of the human body which depicts nudity or sexual conduct, sexual excitement, sexual battery, bestiality, or sadomasochistic abuse and which is harmful to minors; or
 - (b) Any book, pamphlet, magazine, printed matter however reproduced, or sound recording that contains any matter defined in FSS 847.001, explicit and detailed verbal descriptions or narrative accounts of sexual excitement, or sexual conduct that is “harmful to minors”.
 - 847.012(5) – An adult may not knowingly distribute to a minor on school property, or post on school property, any material described in subsection (3). As used in this subsection, the term “school property” means the grounds or facility of any kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, junior high school, or secondary school, whether public or nonpublic. This subsection does not apply to the distribution or posting of school-approved instructional materials that by design serve as a major tool for assisting in the instruction of a subject or course by school officers, instructional personnel, administrative personnel, school volunteers, educational support employees, or managers
- FSS 847.001 – Definitions related to Chapter 847 – Obscenity.
 - 847.001(2)(a) defines an “Adult bookstore” as any corporation, partnership, or business of any kind which restricts or purports to restrict admission only to adults, which has as part of its stock books, magazines, other periodicals, videos, discs, or other graphic media and which offers, sells, provides, or rents for a fee any sexually oriented material.
 - 847.001(3) defines “Child pornography” as any image depicting a minor engaged in sexual conduct.
 - 847.001(6) defines “Harmful to minors” as any reproduction, imitation, characterization, description, exhibition, presentation, or representation, of

whatever kind or form, depicting nudity, sexual conduct, or sexual excitement when it:

- (a) Predominantly appeals to a prurient, shameful, or morbid interest;
 - (b) Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material or conduct for minors; and
 - (c) Taken as a whole, is without serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.
- 847.001(8) defines “Minor” as a person under the age of 18 years.
 - 847.001(9) defines “Nudity” as the showing of the human male or female genitals, pubic area, or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering; or the showing of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering of any portion thereof below the top of the nipple; or the depiction of covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state.
 - 847.001(10) defines “Obscene” as the status of material which:
 - (a) The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
 - (b) Depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct as specifically defined herein; and
 - (c) Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
 - 847.001(11) defines “Person” as individuals, children, firms, associations, joint ventures, partnerships, estates, trusts, business trusts, syndicates, fiduciaries, corporations, and all other groups or combinations.
 - 847.001(16) defines “Sexual conduct” as actual or simulated sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, sexual bestiality, masturbation, or sadomasochistic abuse; actual lewd exhibition of the genitals; actual physical contact with a person’s clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or, if such person is a female, breast with the intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of either party; or any act or conduct which constitutes sexual battery or simulates that sexual battery is being or will be committed.

- 847.001(17) defines “Sexual excitement” as the condition of the human male or female genitals when in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal.
- 847.001(18) defines “Sexually oriented material” as any book, article, magazine, publication, or written matter of any kind or any drawing, etching, painting, photograph, motion picture film, or sound recording that depicts sexual activity, actual or simulated, involving human beings or human beings and animals, that exhibits uncovered human genitals or the pubic region in a lewd or lascivious manner, or that exhibits human male genitals in a discernibly turgid state, even if completely and opaquely covered.
- 847.001(19) defines “Simulated” as the explicit depiction of conduct described in subsection (16) which creates the appearance of such conduct and which exhibits any uncovered portion of the breasts, genitals, or buttocks.
- 847.001(20) defines “Specific sexual activities” as the following sexual activities and the exhibition of the following anatomical areas:
 - (a) Human genitals in the state of sexual stimulation or arousal.
 - (b) Acts of human masturbation, sexual intercourse, sodomy, cunnilingus, fellatio, or any excretory function, or representation thereof.
 - (c) The fondling or erotic touching of human genitals, the pubic region, the buttocks, or the female breasts.
 - (d) Less than completely and opaquely covered:
 - Human genitals or the pubic region.
 - Buttocks.
 - Female breasts below the top of the areola.
 - Human male genitals in a discernibly turgid state, even if completely and opaquely covered.

In reviewing the provided books and comparing them to the elements of a crime within the harmful material statute under chapter 847, I am unable to establish that a criminal offense has occurred. The reason for my findings and lack of a crime are as follows:

- Books available on the shelves of public schools within Indian River County are not for sale, rent or loaned out for monetary consideration; therefore, the transactions of the books in question between school libraries and students does not meet the criminal elements of Florida State Statute 847.012(3).

- As it pertains to 847.012(3)(b), if the books were for sale, rented or loaned out for monetary consideration, the statute indicates the content must be “harmful to minors”. Per the definition in Florida State Statute 847.001(6), content which is “harmful to minors” would depict “nudity, sexual conduct or sexual excitement” when it “predominately appeals to a prurient, shameful or morbid interest.”

“Predominately” meaning mainly; for the most part.

“Prurient” meaning marked by or arousing an immoderate (excessive) or unwholesome (unpleasant/distasteful) interest or desire, especially marked by, arousing, or appealing to sexual desire.

“Shameful” meaning to bring shame or disgrace.

“Morbid” meaning abnormally susceptible to or characterized by gloomy or unwholesome feelings.

- After a review of 847.001(9), I did not observe any “nudity” in any of the books.
- After a review of 847.001(16), “sexual conduct” is an actual or simulated act and does not reference written content in books or other reading instruments.
- After a review of 847.001(17), I did find very few portions within the books which did meet the states definition of “sexual excitement” where some of the writings referenced “male and/or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal”; however, per 847.001(6) above, the content which depicts sexual excitement is not the “predominate” subject matter within the books.

In reviewing *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, written by Johnathan Foer, it was determined the book did not predominately depict content of a prurient, shameful or morbid interest. Six pages were highlighted by Mrs. Pippin (and/or her group) for my review out of the books 326 total pages, which equates to 1.84% of the book. Refer to the books uploaded content for specific excerpts.

In reviewing *Perfect*, written by Ellen Hopkins, it was determined the book did not predominately depict content of a prurient, shameful or morbid interest. 17 pages were highlighted by Mrs. Pippin (and/or her group) for my review out of the books 622 total pages, which equates to 2.73% of the book. Refer to the books uploaded content for specific excerpts.

In reviewing *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, written by Stephen Chbosky, it was determined the book did not predominately depict content of a prurient, shameful or morbid interest. 11 pages were highlighted by Mrs. Pippin (and/or her group) for my review out of the books 213 total pages, which equates to 5.16% of the book. Refer to the books uploaded content for specific excerpts.

As I continued to diligently investigate Mrs. Pippin's complaint, I searched for similar complaints as filed by her and "Moms for Liberty" within the State of Florida. I was able to locate an almost identical complaint filed by individuals associated with "Moms for Liberty" in Flagler County, Florida, in November 2021 (Contact the Flagler County Sheriff's Office for details pertaining to case number 2021-100272).

FCSO investigators conducted a similar investigation pertaining to the book "All Boys Aren't Blue", written by George Matthew Johnson. The results of FCSO's investigation determined that the criminal elements pertaining to FSS 847.012 were not met. FCSO provided case documents to their general counsel for review, and it was unanimously determined that no crime had occurred. Like this IRCISO investigation, FCSO had complainant information for their investigation; however, they were unable to establish who would be the particular victim and/or suspect if an actual crime had occurred. During Mrs. Pippin and her groups initial report to me they mentioned this particular book several times, cited quotes from the book and informed me that in their opinion, *All Boys Aren't Blue* was one of the most grotesque books available to students. This particular book was one of the select few which were removed from Indian River County schools.

Based on the results of my investigation, it is concluded that the allegations described above did not meet the elements of a crime as defined in FSS. 847.012, or any other criminal statute. Therefore, the case requires no further investigation and is closed due to the lack of criminal activity. Whether or not this material is appropriate for students of Indian River County is an internal matter for the school board and is best addressed through their processes.

Results and Disposition

There is nothing further to report. This case is cleared unfounded, no crime occurred.

List of books for review

Email #	Title	Author	Date Added to SDIRC	Current Level of Lowest placement	Recommended Age Level
17	Blankets	Thompson, Craig	Unknown	High School	Not K-12 Appropriate
22	Triangles	Hopkins, Ellen	Unknown	High School	Not K-12 Appropriate
39	Girl 2 Girl	Peters, Julie	2011	High School	Not K-12 Appropriate
102	Deogratias: a tale	Siegel, Alexis	2008	High School	Not K-12 Appropriate
63	Gone Girl	Flynn, Gillian	2015	Middle School	Not K-12 Appropriate
13	The Haters	Andrews, Jesse	2021	High School	High School w/ parent consent
26	Crank	Hopkins, Ellen	2013	High School	High School w/ parent consent
87	Sorted	Bird, Jackson	2019	High School	High School w/ parent consent
124	My Book Of Life	Leavitt, Martine	2012	High School	High School w/ parent consent
1	Out of Darkness	Perez, Ashley	2016	High School	High School
2	The Cemetary Boys	Brewer, Heather	2015	High School	High School
3	Odd One Out	Stone, Nic	2018	High School	High School
4	Rift	Cremer, Andrea	2012	High School	High School
6	The Infinite Moment of Us	Myracle, Lauren	2014	High School	High School
15	Aristotle and Donte Discover	Saenz, Benjamin	2014	High School	High School
16	The Hate You Give	Thomas, Angie	2017	High School	High School
19	Me and Earl and the Dying	Andrews, Jesse	2015	High School	High School
20	Homegoing	Gyasi, Yaa	2017	High School	High School
23	Tricks	Hopkins, Ellen	2010	High School	High School
30	The Black Flamingo	Atta, Dean	2021	High School	High School
31	Real Life Boyfriends	Lockhart, E	2011	High School	High School
33	Beloved	Morrison, Toni	2000	High School	High School
34	Killing Mr. Griffin	Duncan, Lois	1999	High School	High School
40	Fly on the Wall	Lockhart, E	2001	High School	High School
41	The Truth About Alice	Mathieli, Jennifer	2015	High School	High School
42	The Vincent Boys	Glines, Abbi	2014	High School	High School
44	More Happy than Not	Silvera, Rob	2016	High School	High School
46	Beloved	Morrison, Toni	2004	High School	High School
47	Brave Face	Hutchinson, Shaun	2019	High School	High School
48	How I Paid for College:	Acito, Marc	2008	High School	High School
49	Ace Of Spades	Lyimide,	2021	High School	High School
50	All American Boys	Reynolds, Jason	2017	High School	High School
53	Black Lives Matter	Hilstorm, Laurie	2021	High School	High School
54	Black Software:...	McIlwain, Carlton	2021	High School	High School
56	#Blacklivesmatter	Thomas, Rachel	2021	High School	High School
57	Brave Leaders and Activist	Miller, J.P.	2021	High School	High School
62	Girls Like Us	Giles, Gail	2014	High School	High School
64	Grasshopper Jungle	Smith, Andrew	2015	High School	High School
67	Strange Fruit	Malik, Kenan	2008	High School	High School
68	Coming out and Seeking Su	Robert Rodi...	2016	High School	High School
69	I'll Be the One	Lee, Lyla	2020	High School	High School
70	Imbeciles	Cohen, Adams	2016	High School	High School
72	Queer & Trans Identities	Gluliani, Mady	2019	High School	High School
73	Little & Lion	Colbert, Brandy	2018	High School	High School

Email #	Title	Author	Date Added to SDIRC	Current Level of Lowest placement	Recommended Age Level
78	The Black Friend	Frederick, Joseph	2021	High School	High School
79	The Black Kids	Reed, Christina	2021	High School	High School
80	Cross My Heart	Gould, Sasha	2012	High School	High School
82	The Music that Happens	Konigsberg, Bill	2019	High School	High School
84	This is My America	Johnson, Kim	2021	High School	High School
88	Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass	Medina, Meg	2018	High School	High School
90	Mexican Whiteboy	DeLaPena	2015	High School	High School
91	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	Chbosky, Stephen	2006	High School	High School
94	The Things They Carried	O'Brien	2007	High School	High School
96	A Bad Boy Can Be Good For You	Stone, Tanya	2007	High School	High School
98	The Color Purple	Walker, Alice	2009	High School	High School
100	Gossip Girl	Zeigesar	2022	High School	High School
101	House of Night	Cast, Kristin	2015	High School	High School
106	Rainbow Boys	Sanchez, Alex	2003	High School	High School
109	Sold	McCormick, Patricia	2007	High School	High School
110	Perfect Chemisrty	Elkeles, Simone	2011	High School	High School
112	A Marriage Of Thousand Lies	Sindu, SJ	2017	High School	High School
113	The Carnival	Foley, Jessie	2014	High School	High School
117	The Opposite of Innocent	Sones, Sonya	2018	High School	High School
119	My Sister's Keeper	Picoult, Jodi	2006	High School	High School
120	Did I Mention I Need You?	Maskame, Estelle	Unknown	High School	High School
121	Bait	Sanchez, Alex	2010	High School	High School
123	Brave New World	Huxley, Aldous	2016	High School	High School
125	Out of the Easy	Sepetys, Ruta	2013	High School	High School
126	Charmed	Mac, Carrie	2005	High School	High School
127	They Called Me Red	Kilbounre, Christina	2011	High School	High School
129	Traffick	Hopkins, Ellen	2016	High School	High School
130	Dime	Frank, ER	2016	High School	High School
131	Bowery Girl	Taylor, Kim	2009	High School	High School
132	Hear These Voices	Allison, Anthony	2005	High School	High School
133	Joshua and the City	Gorzone, Joseph	2005	High School	High School
134	Hunger A Memoir	Roxane Gay	2017	High School	High School
135	Rape on campus	Bruno Leone	2005	High School	High School
136	The Rape of the Nanking	Iris Chang	2005	High School	High School
137	Lucky	Alice Sebold	2010	High School	High School
138	Someone I Used to Know	Patry Blount	2018	High School	High School
139	The Tenth Circle	Jodi Picoult	2006	High School	High School
140	The Nowhere Girls	Amy Reed	2019	High School	High School
141	What we Saw	Aaron Hartzler	2016	High School	High School
142	Empty	KM Walton	2013	High School	High School
143	Exit, Pursued by a Bear	EK Johnston	2016	High School	High School
144	Safe	Susan Shaw	2008	High School	High School
145	Trails of Crumbs	Lisa J Lawrence	2019	High School	High School
146	You Against Me	Jenny Downham	2012	High School	High School
147	Blood Water Paint	Joy McCullough	2018	High School	High School
148	The Facts Speak For Themselves	Brock Cole	2005	High School	High School
149	Luicy Peale	Colby Rodowsky	2005	High School	High School
150	Dumplin	Julie Murphy	2016	High School	High School

Email #	Title	Author	Date Added to SDIRC	Current Level of Lowest placement	Recommended Age Level
151	Leah on the Offbeat	Becky Albertalli	2018	High School	High School
152	Maus	Art Spiegelman	2007	High School	High School
38	The Kite Runner	Hosseini, Khaled	2010	High School	High School
11	Water for Elephants	Sara Gruen	2007	High School	High School
5	Graceling	Cashore, Kristin	2010	Middle School	High School
8	Vampire Academy	Mead, Richelle	2010	Middle School	High School
9	Looking For Alaska	Green, John	2014	Middle School	High School
10	The Glass Castle 2005	Walls, Jeannette	2008	Middle School	High School
14	The Absolutely True Diary of	Alexie, Sherman	2008	Middle School	High School
32	The Bluest Eyes	Morrison, Toni	2000	Middle School	High School
43	Nineteen Minutes	Picoult, Jodi	2008	Middle School	High School
45	Extremely loud & Incredibly	Foer, Johnathan	2010	Middle School	High School
52	Black Girl Unlimited	Brown, Echo	2021	Middle School	High School
59	Dear Martin	Stone, Nic	2019	Middle School	High School
60	Black Enough	Zoboi, Ibi	2021	Middle School	High School
61	Girls Like Us	Alger, Christina	2014	Middle School	High School
66	This book is Anti-Racist:...	Jewell, Tiffany	2021	Middle School	High School
85	Forever	Blume, Judy	2014	Middle School	High School
93	Of Mice and Men	Steinbeck, John	1999	Middle School	High School
95	What My Mother Doesn't Know	Sones, Sonya	2010	Middle School	High School
99	Eleanor & Park	Rowell, Rainbow	2013	Middle School	High School
103	Ready of Not	Cabot, Meg	2005	Middle School	High School
104	I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican	Sanchez, Erica	2021	Middle School	High School
105	Ciriy of Heavenly Fire	Clare, Cassandra	2017	Middle School	High School
107	Ciriy of Heavenly Fire	Clare, Cassandra	2015	Middle School	High School
108	The Poet X	Acevedo, Elizabeth	2019	Middle School	High School
111	A Court of Mist and Fury	Mass, Sarah	2016	Middle School	High School
114	A Certain Slant of Light	Whitcomb, Laura	2005	Middle School	High School
128	Sisters=Hermanas	Paulsen, Gary	2005	Middle School	High School
25	Perfect	Hopkins, Ellen	2013	High School	Middle School
74	Spinning (Graphic)	Walden, Tillie	2017	High School	Middle School
76	Thanks a lot. Universe	Lucas, Chad	2021	High School	Middle School
81	The Magic Fish	Nguyen, Trung Le	2021	High School	Middle School
118	The Handmaide's Tale	Atwood, Margaret	2005	High School	Middle School
12	The Berlin Boxing Club	Sharenow, Robert	2011	Middle School	Middle School
18	The Breakaways	Johnson, Cathy	2019	Middle School	Middle School
24	Boy2Girl	Blacker, Terence	2005	Middle School	Middle School
28	Ghost Boy's	Rhodes, Jewell	2018	Middle School	Middle School
29	George	Gino, Alex	2021	Middle School	Middle School
35	This One Summer	Tamaki, Mariko	2014	Middle School	Middle School
36	Thirteen Reasons Why	Asher, Jay	2008	Middle School	Middle School
55	What is Black Lives Matter	Hedreich, Nicholas	2021	Middle School	Middle School
75	Stamped	Reynolds, Jason	2020	Middle School	Middle School
77	The Best at it	Pancholy, Maulik	2021	Middle School	Middle School
86	Who am I without him?...	Flake, Sharon	2004	Middle School	Middle School
92	Speak	Anderson, Laurie	2002	Middle School	Middle School
97	Lush	Friend, Natasha	2007	Middle School	Middle School
115	I am Alfonso Jones	Medina, Toni	2021	Middle School	Middle School

Email #	Title	Author	Date Added to SDIRC	Current Level of Lowest placement	Recommended Age Level
27	Anti Racist Baby	Kendi, Ibram X	Unknown	Elementary School	Elementary School
37	Drama	Telgemeier, Raina	2013	Elementary School	Elementary School
58	Blended	Draper, Sharon	2019	Elementary School	Elementary School
83	The Witch Boy	Ostertag, Molly	Unknown	Elementary School	Elementary School
89	Baseball Saved Saved Us	Mochizuki, Ken	2015	Elementary School	Elementary School
116	Draw Me a Star	Carle, Eric	1998	Elementary School	Elementary School
122	Wishtree	Applegate, Katherine	2019	Elementary School	Elementary School
7	Doin it	Mornroe, Ayshia	Unknown	High School	Copy Unavailable for Review
21	L8R, G8R	Myracle, Lauren	2012	High School	Copy Unavailable for Review
51	Beyond Magenta	Kuklin	Unknown	High School	Copy Unavailable for Review
71	King of the Dragon Flies	Gallender, Kacen	2020	High School	Copy Unavailable for Review
153	Feed	M.T. Anderson	2005	High School	Pending Review
154	The House of the Spirits	Isabel Allende	2005	High School	Pending Review
156	The Kingdom of Little Wour	Susann Cokal	2016	High School	Pending Review
155	Monster	Walter Dean Myers	2005	High School	Pending Review

List of books status

SDIRC Pornography Submitted To Be Removed

- All Boys Aren't Blue by George Johnson **PERMANENTLY REMOVED**
1. Out of Darkness by Ashley Hope Perez
 3. Odd One Out by Nic Stone
 4. Rift by Andrea Cremer
 5. Graceling by Kristin Cashore
 6. The Infinite Moment of Us by Lauren Myracle
 7. Doin' It by Ayshia Monroe **LOST**
 8. Vampire Academy by Richelle Mead
 9. Looking For Alaska by John Green
 10. The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls
 11. Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen
 12. The Berlin Boxing Club by Rob Sharenow
 13. The Haters by Jessie Andrews
 14. The Absolute True Diary of a Part Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
 15. Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz
 17. Blankets by Craig Thompson **PERMANENTLY REMOVED**
 18. The Breakaways by Cathy G. Johnson
 19. Me, Earl and the Dying Girl by Jessie Andrews
 20. Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi
 21. L8R, G8R by Lauren Myracle **LOST**
 22. Triangle by Ellen Hopkins **PERMANENTLY REMOVED**
 23. Tricks by Ellen Hopkins
 25. Perfect by Ellen Hopkins
 26. Crank by Ellen Hopkins
 29. George by Alex Gino
 30. The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta
 31. Real Live Boyfriends by E. Lockhart
 32. The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison
 33. Beloved by Toni Morrison
 35. This One Summer by Mariko Tamaki
 36. Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher
 37. Drama by Raina Telgemeier
 38. The Kite Runner by Khalid Hosselini
 39. Grl2grl short fictions by Julie Ann Peters **PERMANENTLY REMOVED**

40. Fly on the Wall How one Girl Saw Everything by E. Lockhart
41. The Truth about Alice by Jennifer Mathreu
42. The Vincent Boys by Abbi Glines
43. Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult
44. More Happy Than Not by Adam Silvera
45. Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Johnathon Foer
47. Brave Face A Memoir by Shawn Hutchinson
48. How I paid for College a novel of Sex, Theft, Friendship and Musical Theatre by Marc Acito
49. Ace of Spades by Faridah Abike Lyimide
51. Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out by Susan Kuklin **LOST**
52. BlackGirl Unlimited by Echo Brown
59. Dear Martin by Nic Stone
61. Girls Like Us by Christina Alger
62. Girls Like Us by Gail Giles
63. Gone Girl: A Novel by Gillian Flynn **PERMANETLY REMOVED**
64. Grasshopper Jungle A History by Andrew Smith
67. Strange Fruit by Kenan Malik
68. Coming Out and Seeking Support by multiple authors
69. I'll Be the One by Lyla Lee
70. Imbeciles the Supreme Court, American Eugenics and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck by Adam Cohen
- 71. King and the Dragonflies by Kacen Callender **LOST****
72. A Quick and Easy Guide to Queer and Trans Identities by Mary G and JR Zuckerberg
73. Little & Lion A Novel by Brandy Colbert
74. Spinning by Tillie Walden
75. Stamped racism, antiracism and You by Jason Reynolds
80. Cross My Heart by Sasha Gould
82. The Music of What Happens by Bill Konisberg
83. The Witch Boy by Molly Knox
84. This is My America by Kim Johnson
85. Forever by Judy Blume
86. Who I am without him:short stories about girls and their lives by Sharon Flake
87. Sorted: Growing Up, Coming Out and finding my place (A transgender memoir) by Jackson Bird
91. The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

94. The Things they Carried: A work of fiction by Tim O'Brien
95. What My Mother Doesn't Know by Sonya Sones
96. A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl by Tanya Lee Stone
97. Lush by Natasha Friend
98. The Color Purple by Alice Walker
99. Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell
100. Gossip Girl a novel by Cecil Von Ziegeaser
101. House of Night Series by PC Cast
102. Fade by Lisa McMann
103. Ready or Not an American Girl Novel by Meg Cabot
104. I'm Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter by Erica Sanchez
105. Degratias a tale of Rwanda by Alexis Siegel **PERMANETLY REMOVED**
106. Rainbow Boys by Alex Sanchez
107. City of Heavenly Fire by Cassandra Clare
108. The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
109. Sold by Patricia Mc Cormick
110. Perfect Chemistry by Simone Elkeles
111. A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah James Mass
112. A Marriage of a Thousand Lies by SJ Sindu
113. The Carnival at bray by Jessie Foley
114. A Certain Slant of Light by Laura Whitcomb
116. Draw Me a Star by Eric Carle
117. The Opposite of Innocent by Sonya Sones
118. The Handmaids tale by Margaret Atwood
119. My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult
120. Did I mention I need you? by Estelle Maskame
121. Bait by Alex Sanchez
123. Brave New World by Aldus Harley
124. My Book of Life by Angel Martine
125. Out of the Easy by Ruta Sepetys
126. Charmed by Carrie Mac
127. The Called me red by Christina Kilbourne
128. Sisters=Hermanas by Gary Paulsen
129. Traffick by Ellen Hopkins
130. Dime by ER Frank
131. Bowery Girl by Kim Taylor
132. Hear these Voices: youth at the edge of the millennium by Anthony Allison

133. Joshua and the City by Joseph Gorzone
134. Hunger: a memoir of my Body by Roxane Gay
135. Rape on Campus by Bruno Leone
136. The Rape of Nanking :the forgotten Holocaust of world war 2 by Iris Chang
137. Lucky by Alice Sebold
138. Someone I Used to Know by Patry Blount
139. The Tenth Circle by Jodi Picoult
140. The Nowhere Girls by Amy Reed
141. What We Saw by Aaron Hartzler
142. Empty by KM Walton
143. Exit, Pursued by a Bear by EK Johnston
144. Safe by Susan Shaw
145. Trail of Crumbs by Lisa Lawrence
146. You Against Me by Jenny Downham
147. Blood Water Paint by Joy McCullough
148. The facts Speak for themselves by Brock Cole
149. Lucy Peale by Colby Rodowsky
150. Dumplin' by Julie Murphy
151. Leah on the Offbeat by Becky Albertalli
152. Maus:a survivors tale by Art Spiegelman
153. Feed by M.T. Anderson
154. The House of Spirits by Isabel Allende
155. Monster by Walter Dean Myers
156. The Kingdom of Little Wounds by Susann Cokal

SNIFFEN & SPELLMAN, P.A.

123 North Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Phone: (850) 205-1996
Fax: (850) 205-3004

MEMORANDUM

To: School Board of Indian River County, Florida
From: Molly L. Shaddock
Date: February 1, 2022
Re: Library Book Requests for Reconsideration

A Member of the Board has requested an opinion on the legal requirements of the Board with regard to community requests for reconsideration of library materials. I have reviewed the pertinent Florida Statutes, Board Policy, and surveyed the practices of other school boards around the State.

Requests for Reconsideration

As you know, to date, the District has received over 100 public requests for reconsideration of District library books asking that they be removed from circulation for violations of Florida law. These requests generally are made on the basis that the books contain obscene material or contain Critical Race Theory (“CRT”) material.

District Process for Reconsideration

Under Section 1006.28(2)(a)(2)(b), Fla. Stat. (copy attached for ease of reference), each district school board is responsible for the content of all instructional materials and any other materials used in a classroom, made available in a school library, or included on a reading list.

Each district school board must adopt a policy regarding an objection by a parent or a resident of the county to the use of a specific material, which clearly describes a process to handle all objections and provides for resolution.

The District's Policy 9130, Public Complaints (copy attached for ease of reference), provides a process for handling written requests for reconsideration of library materials from members of the community. According to this Policy, the request is considered by a review committee who makes a recommendation to the Superintendent who makes a recommendation to the Board. The materials are currently under review by the review committee. According to this Policy:

No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

Prohibited Content

Under Section 1006.28(2)(a)2.b., if the School Board finds that any library material contains prohibited content, the District shall discontinue use of the material for any grade level or age group for which such use is inappropriate or unsuitable. This provision defines prohibited content as follows:

Any material used in a classroom, made available in a school library, or included on a reading list contains content that is pornographic or prohibited under s. 847.012, is not suited to student needs and their ability to comprehend the material presented, or is inappropriate for the grade level and age group for which the material is used.¹

¹ Please also be advised that Section 1006.40(3)(d), Fla. Stat., similarly provides that materials purchased by a school board must be free of pornography and material prohibited under Section 847.012, suited to student needs and their ability to comprehend the material presented, and appropriate for the grade level and age group for which the materials are used or made available. Section 1006.31(2), Fla. Stat. provides similar language for the review of instructional materials.

Obscene Materials

Under Section 847.012(5), Fla. Stat (copy attached for ease of reference), an adult may not knowingly distribute to a minor on school property, or post on school property, “[a]ny book, pamphlet, magazine, printed matter however reproduced, or sound recording that contains any matter defined in s. 847.001, explicit and detailed verbal descriptions or narrative accounts of sexual excitement, or sexual conduct and that is harmful to minors.” Section 847.001(6), Fla. Stat. (copy attached for ease of reference) defines “harmful to minors” as:

any reproduction, imitation, characterization, description, exhibition, presentation, or representation, of whatever kind or form, depicting nudity, sexual conduct, or sexual excitement when it:

- (a) Predominantly appeals to a prurient, shameful, or morbid interest;
- (b) Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material or conduct for minors; and
- (c) Taken as a whole, is without serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.

A mother’s breastfeeding of her baby is not under any circumstance “harmful to minors.”

This is similar to the legal definition of “obscene” in this same statute. Both definitions require reviewing the work “as a whole” to determine if there is serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. If the work taken as a whole contains other serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value, then it is not prohibited under Section 847.012, Fla. Stat, because then it is not deemed harmful to minors.

Pursuant to Section 847.012(6), Fla. Stat., anyone who violates Section 847.012, Fla. Stat. commits a felony of the third degree. However, under 847.012(5), Fla. Stat.:

This subsection does not apply to the distribution or posting of school-approved instructional materials that by design serve as a major tool for assisting in the instruction of a subject or course by school officers, instructional personnel, administrative personnel, school volunteers, educational support employees, or managers as those terms are defined in s. 1012.01.

Pornography and Age and Grade Appropriateness

The District's review committee is also evaluating the books to determine if they contain pornography and are age and grade level appropriate pursuant to Section 1106.28, Fla. Stat. While there is no definition for pornography in the Florida Statutes, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement." The appropriateness for age and grade level are being determined by the review committee.

Critical Race Theory

In addition, some library materials have been requested for reconsideration on the basis of containing CRT. Under Fla. Admin. Code Rule 6A-1.094124 (copy attached for ease of reference), instruction on required topics may not contain CRT. Since the requests for reconsideration have been to library books with CRT and not material used for classroom instruction, this Rule does not apply.

Thank you and please advise if you have any question.

From: Richard.Myhre@indianriverschools.org,
To: Jennifer.Pippin@aol.com,
Subject: RE: Library book 5
Date: Mon, Nov 1, 2021 9:51 am

Attachments:

Ms. Pippin,

I concur with Dr. Moore, pornographic material has no place in our schools. We are pulling, and reviewing, all of these books and will follow-up with a singular response with the final determination of whether they will be permanently removed.

As we are conducting this review, I was curious if there was a list you were referencing in order to conduct your searches of the online card catalog? I am happy to have someone conduct this search internally as well.

I do think it is important to state that none of us, most likely yourself included, would want library books eliminated simply because someone doesn't like them. But from my perspective, that is not what we are doing in this instance, we are ensuring our books do not violate Florida Statute requirements which I am in complete agreement with.

I'm sure as people hear more about this, someone will claim we are trying to ban "thought" or "free speech", and please know I will not support pulling books for those reasons. However, we must fulfil our obligation to ensure our materials are not inappropriate, clearly "All Boys aren't Blue" would be an example of a text which is extremely inappropriate for our students and it has already been permanently removed.

Richard Myhre

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

School District of Indian River County

6500 57th Street

Vero Beach, FL 32967

(772)564-3014



From: David.Moore@indianriverschools.org,
To: jennifer.pippin@aol.com,
Cc: Eric.Seymour@indianriverschools.org,
Jacqueline.Rosario@indianriverschools.org,
Mara.Schiff@indianriverschools.org,
Peggy.Jones@indianriverschools.org,
Scott.Bass@indianriverschools.org,
Teri.Barenborg@indianriverschools.org,
Brian.Barefoot@indianriverschools.org,
Richard.Myhre@indianriverschools.org,
tiffany@momsforliberty.org, rdallen9@gmail.com,
mschrisallen@icloud.com,
Subject: RE: Library book 5
Date: Fri, Oct 29, 2021 2:31 pm

Ms. Pippin,

Thank you. I assure you that the District will follow up. As I peruse some of the content that you have forwarded, I am of the opinion that books including this type of information do not have any place in our schools.

Thank you,

David K. Moore, Ed.D.

Superintendent

School District of Indian River County

6500 57th Street

Vero Beach, FL 32967

772.564.3150

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From: Jennifer Pippin <jennifer.pippin@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 3:16 PM
To: Moore, David <David.Moore@indianriverschools.org>
Cc: Seymour, Eric <Eric.Seymour@indianriverschools.org>;
Rosario, Jacqueline
<Jacqueline.Rosario@indianriverschools.org>; Schiff, Mara
<Mara.Schiff@indianriverschools.org>; Jones, Peggy
<Peggy.Jones@indianriverschools.org>; Bass, Scott
<Scott.Bass@indianriverschools.org>; Barenborg, Teri
<Teri.Barenborg@indianriverschools.org>; Barefoot, Brian
<Brian.Barefoot@indianriverschools.org>; Myhre, Richard
<Richard.Myhre@indianriverschools.org>; Tiffany Justice
<tiffany@momsforliberty.org>; Rick Allen us
<rdallen9@gmail.com>; CHRIS ALLEN
<mschrisallen@icloud.com>
Subject: Re: Library book 5

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dr. Moore,

Thank you for the suggestion, but I want to make the board as well as everyone in this thread aware of ALL the books currently in the libraries that have sex, rape, drugs etc etc in them that need to be removed immediately so they don't get into the hands of anymore students in our district. I'm holding all of you accountable. Not just Mr. Myhre. We've done the work so you can get them out of our schools. Full transparency. Anyone can pull these emails for documentation if it doesn't get done.

Thanks, Jennifer Pippin

Sent from Jennifer Pippin's iPhone

On Oct 29, 2021, at 2:38 PM, Moore, David
<David.Moore@indianriverschools.org> wrote:

Ms. Pippin,

Thank you for sharing. My recommendation is that you coordinate a time with Mr. Myhre so that he can appropriately follow up with materials of concern.

Thank you,

David K. Moore, Ed.D.

Superintendent

School District of Indian River County

6500 57th Street

Vero Beach, FL 32967

772.564.3150

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From: Jennifer Pippin

<jennifer.pippin@aol.com>

Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 2:35 PM

To: Moore, David

<David.Moore@indianriverschools.org>;

Seymour, Eric

<Eric.Seymour@indianriverschools.org>;

Rosario, Jacqueline

<Jacqueline.Rosario@indianriverschools.org>;

Schiff, Mara

<Mara.Schiff@indianriverschools.org>; Jones,

Peggy <Peggy.Jones@indianriverschools.org>;

Bass, Scott <Scott.Bass@indianriverschools.org>;

Barenborg, Teri

<Teri.Barenborg@indianriverschools.org>;

Barefoot, Brian

<Brian.Barefoot@indianriverschools.org>;

Myhre, Richard

<Richard.Myhre@indianriverschools.org>

Cc: Tiffany Justice

<tiffany@momsforliberty.org>; Rick Allen us

<rdallen9@gmail.com>; CHRIS ALLEN

<mschrisallen@icloud.com>

Subject: Library book 5

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Graceling by Kristin Cashore

Online Review- **Cashore and her series are much loved by Y.A. fans, and her 2009 debut is no exception. Says one fan, "Even though it was not graphic, the suggestion for their love scenes [in Graceling] was surprisingly erotic." One (positive) Amazon reviewer notes, however, for "conservative parents," that "there are a couple of fairly discreet sex scenes, where the author is clear about what is going on but not very detailed. There is also a mention of a brothel near the beginning of the book (although a more offensive

word is used to describe it) and there are many incidences of unwanted attention paid to girls or inappropriate comments made about them. This is a plot element, since it makes the lead female character defensive of the young women." The reviewer adds that this, along with the ideas of marriage and love put forth in the book, "may actually allow parents to discuss these themes with teens, who need to decide where they stand on sex and marriage," which is, we'd argue, at least part of the point of such books and topics.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2012/09/teen-reads-better-fifty-shades/323380/>

<https://www.gofollett.com/aasp/ui/pick/pick>

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School Board of Indian River County, Florida expressly prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, by or towards any student or employee. See Policy 5517.01: Bullying and Harassment for additional information.

<image001.png>

Sent from Jennifer Pippin's iPhone

From: Thomas Kenny thomasaugustus77@gmail.com
Subject: Mr. Myhre's proposal compromise he stated 2/15 is in violation of state education law.
Date: February 24, 2022 at 1:00 PM
To: david.moore@indianriverschools.org
Cc: teri.barenborg@indianriverschools.org, peggy.jones@indianriverschools.org, mara.schiff@indianriverschools.org, jacqueline.rosario@indianriverschools.org, Brian.Barefoot@indianriverschools.org, richard.myhre@indianriverschools.org
Bcc: jennifer.pippin@aol.com, mschrisallen@icloud.com, westcottmediations@gmail.com, susanm@ersmd.com, drkarenhiltz@gmail.com

Dr. Moore and SDIRC Board Members,

Hi. My name is Thomas Kenny and I hope this note finds all of you well. I am writing because I find absolute confusion surrounding the legal question regarding the library materials submitted by school board member, Jackie Rosario and concerned parent, Jennifer Pippin. There is "an interpretation" favored by Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Richard Myhre, to determine if each title in question is "age appropriate." This view is projected by Mr. Myhre onto the review committee, that is constructed of only library media specialists which is in violation of school policy and state statute. That is another subject. The "age appropriate" phrase comes from the Florida education statute 1006.40 which is partially quoted in a footnote on page 2 of the memorandum to the "School Board of Indian River County, Florida," dated February 01, 2022 from Attorney, Molly L. Shaddock.

Shaddock's memorandum seems hastily put together when you consider that according to 1006.40 up to 50% of annual state allocation of funds for instructional materials maybe used for resources other than "a major tool of instruction in core courses of the subject areas of mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, reading and literature." Ref: 1006.40(2).

According to 1006.40(3)(a)(b)(c) those funds maybe used for:

1. The purchase of library and reference books and non-print materials.
 2. The purchase of other materials having intellectual content which assist in the instruction of a subject or course. These materials may be available in bound, unbound, kit, or package form and may consist of hardbacked or softbacked textbooks, novels, electronic content, consumables, learning laboratories, manipulatives, electronic media, computer courseware or software, and other commonly accepted instructional tools as prescribed by district school board rule.
 3. The repair and renovation of textbooks and library books and replacements for items which were part of previously purchased instructional materials.
- District school boards may use 100 percent of that portion of the annual allocation designated for the purchase of instructional materials for kindergarten, and 75 percent of that portion of the annual allocation designated for the purchase of instructional materials for first grade, to purchase materials not on the state-adopted list.

What is clear from the Florida statute 1006.40 is that library books are clearly "instructional materials." They are not "support materials" as suggested by administrators at previous School Board business meetings. With that appropriation to school library books given and established in Florida Law, the next question s. 1006.40 answers is "what are the requirements for the instructional materials?"

1006.40(3)(d) clearly states:

(d) Any materials purchased pursuant to this section must be:

1. Free of pornography and material prohibited under s. [847.012](#).
2. Suited to student needs and their ability to comprehend the material presented.
3. Appropriate for the grade level and age group for which the materials are used or made available.

Mr. Myhre and his current team of reviewers do not have authority under the law to determine

...ing and the educational materials do not have obscenity. The law is written to determine "age appropriateness" in regards to what sexual content is permissible to students, mostly all of whom are minors. Why is that? Well, the law follows a logical process. First, the law is written to provide clarity concerning how to provide proper instructional materials "appropriate for the grade level and age group." There are several grade levels that coincide with age groups. For example, the school board would be outside the law if it purchased "Trigonometry for Dummies" and put it in the Elementary school library targeting kindergartners. While it would pass the first requirement in 1006.40(3)(d), it would hardly meet the requirements of (d)2 and (d)3.

The law is very logical. The library books must be "free of pornography and material prohibited under s. 847.012." The third requirement does not contradict or challenge the first requirement. Each legal requirement is an attribute of acceptable instructional material that is not a "major tool" as previously referenced in 1006.40(2). Once a library book is proven to be "free of pornography and material prohibited under s. 847.012," then it is further verified that it is " 2) suited to students needs and their ability to comprehend the material presented, and, 3) appropriate for the grade level and age group for which the materials are used or made available." All library books and other library media are to be properly qualified as instructional materials consistent with education law and not just the obscenity statute.

In the discussion of instructional material submitted by Jackie Rosario and Jennifer Pippin, the obscenity statute is subordinate to the first mentioned qualifier of the education law's first requirement, "the instructional material must be free of pornography..." This statement means that books with explicit sexual material are not considered, and cannot be considered for literary context, free speech warranties and other nefarious interpretations. Why? The books are recognized for the purpose of instruction and not entertainment. It was rather flippant for Mr. Myhre to even mention at the January meeting the blockbuster movie, *Titanic*, because while the movie has a historical setting of a real ocean tragedy, it features nudity and sexual portrayal that is considered illegal according to the education statute's definition of instructional material. In regards to education law, you could even say, the *Titanic* scene is actually equated to the section of Molly Shaddock's memorandum on page 4 when she uses Merriam Webster's dictionary definition of pornography.

Distributing *Titanic* in schools would also violate 847.012. Florida statute 847.012 reinforces this logical process in determining what is NOT permissible for minors in section (3)(a)(b), a minor's participation (4), and, most importantly, distribution on school property (5). 847.012 only makes room for "instructional materials that by design serve as a major tool for assisting in the instruction of a subject or course" by legally recognized educational personnel defined in Florida Law 1012.01. The presumption here would be sex education that parents can have their children opt out of if they wish, or students must have parental permission to attend each of the various courses offered.

847.012 reads:

847.012

(3) A person may not knowingly sell, rent, or loan for monetary consideration to a minor:

(a) Any picture, photograph, drawing, sculpture, **motion picture film (*emphasis mine*)**, videocassette, or similar visual representation or image of a person or portion of the human body which depicts nudity or sexual conduct, sexual excitement, sexual battery, bestiality, or sadomasochistic abuse and which is harmful to minors; or

(b) Any book, pamphlet, magazine, printed matter however reproduced, or sound recording that contains any matter defined in s. 847.001, explicit and detailed verbal descriptions or narrative accounts of sexual excitement, or sexual conduct and that is harmful to minors.

(4) A person may not knowingly use a minor in the production of any material described in subsection (3), regardless of whether the material is intended for distribution to minors or is actually distributed to minors.

distributed to minors.

(5) An adult may not knowingly distribute to a minor on school property, or post on school property, any material described in subsection (3). As used in this subsection, the term "school property" means the grounds or facility of any kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, junior high school, or secondary school, whether public or nonpublic. This subsection does not apply to the distribution or posting of school-approved instructional materials that by design serve as a major tool for assisting in the instruction of a subject or course by school officers, instructional personnel, administrative personnel, school volunteers, educational support employees, or managers as those terms are defined in s. 1012.01.

On February 15th, Mr. Myhre invited Mrs. Pippin to an open dialogue with the media specialists. I was invited to attend by Mrs. Pippin. Chris Allen, who served on the curriculum review committee, and local attorney, Paul Westcott also were invited by Mrs. Pippin and in attendance. Mr. Myhre's repeated sentiments were firstly, most of the CRT books would be returning to the shelves. I have not mentioned CRT books, but even the question can be asked if they rise to the level of instructional material as defined in the education statute. Not one CRT book has been reviewed by a proper committee according to school board policy and procedure. Secondly, Mr. Myhre stated on more than one occasion in the symposium that some of the books protested for their pornographic content on the list would be removed, some would move to higher grade level libraries, for example middle school to high school, and finally, some would end up in a special area and allowed to be checked out with parental permission.

This policy, that has been hatched out of the idea of interpreting **age appropriateness** and saying that "the law is vague in defining that term," is wrong because the education statute is not ambiguous about qualified instructional material. Mr. Myhre's reasoning and those who would agree with it, is derived from a complete misreading of the education law. Secondly, it further violates the obscenity statute quoted previously.

In my email, I have clearly shown that all library books are legally defined instructional materials. In schools, we can determine that a student of a specified age will likely be in a specified grade. All instructional materials are for where those students are in their education. If a kid is old enough and the instructional material "is suited to the needs and the student's ability to comprehend the material presented" then more mature subjects can be available to them. One of the protested books containing pornographic content, as defined by Shaddock's memorandum and s. 847.012 was about the 9/11 attack on the USA. It was a story about a real tragedy of personal family loss. However, in the middle of it is a multi-page sex scene. Are there not other books on 9/11 that a student could read and get the same type of connection and literary excellence without the sex? I am sure there is that book somewhere in Follett's universe.

The protest against these books is because they violate state statutes regarding not only obscenity but the qualifications of what are "instructional materials." If Mr. Myhre decides to put any books in a special section of the library, and not allow them to be checked out except by parental permission, not only will he, the Superintendent and the School Board of Indian River County be in violation of Florida education and obscenity statutes, he would put in legal jeopardy as well under 847.012(3)(b)&(5) those very parents, whom he would willingly advise to allow their kids access at a school library.

Sincerely,

Thomas Kenny
Taxpayer - Indian River County
Vero Beach, FL

E-mail 4

3/5/22, 9:47 PM

Inaccurate Library Book List Voted on Monday 2/28

From: jennifer.pippin@aol.com,

To: david.moore@indianriverschools.org,
teri.barenborg@indianriverschools.org,
mara.schiff@indianriverschools.org,
peggy.jones@indianriverschools.org,
brian.barefoot@indianriverschools.org,
jacqueline.rosario@indianriverschools.org,
richard.myhre@indianriverschools.org,
kelly.baysura@indianriverschools.org, mschrisallen@icloud.com,
rdallen9@gmail.com, thomasaugustus@me.com,
drkarenhiltz@gmail.com, susanm@ersmd.com,
rumello@yahoo.com,

Subject: Inaccurate Library Book List Voted on Monday 2/28

Date: Thu, Mar 3, 2022 3:43 am

Attachments: SDIRC Pornography and Critical Race Theory Books Short.docx (24K)

Good morning,

Just wanted to have full transparency on the inaccurate and incomplete library list provided to the school board for the 2/28/2022 meeting that was voted on. Attached is the list from Moms for Liberty Indian River, FL and you can compare with your list provided by the library book committee/media specialists.

1. "All Boys Aren't Blue" by George Johnson isn't on the list permanently removed 10/27/2021.
2. Book Number 2 Title has a spelling error. Its Cemetery Boys. Not Cemetary.
3. Book Number 10 Title is incorrect. The Glass Castle. No 2005 in title.
4. Book Number 48 Title isn't complete. SDIRC copy states "How I Paid For College:". Full title is "How I Paid For College: A Novel of SEX, Theft, Friendship and Musical Theatre"

5. Book 49 has no first name of author.... it is Abike.
6. Book 53 Title isn't complete. SDIRC copy "Black Lives Matter". Full title is " Black Lives Matter; From A Moment to a Movement."
7. Book 54 Title does have..... but the full title is " Black Software: The Internet and Racial Justice from the Afronet the The Black Lives Matter."
8. Book 56 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "#Blacklivesmatter". The correct full title is "#blacklivesmatter: protesting racism"
9. Book 60 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "Black Enough". The correct full title is "Black Enough: Stories of being young and black in America."
10. Book 66 Title does have..... but full title is "This Book is Antiracist:20 lessons on how to wake up, take action and do the work."
11. Book 70 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "Imbeciles". The correct full title is "Imbeciles the Supreme Court, American Eugenics and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck. "
12. Book 72 title isn't complete. SDIRC has "Queer and Trans Identities". The correct full title is " A Quick and Easy Guide to Queer and Trans Identities."
13. Book 74 title is incorrect. SDIRC has "Spinning (Graphic)". The correct full title is "Spinning."
14. Book 75 title isn't complete. SDIRC has "Stamped". The correct full title is " Stamped Racism, antiracism and You."
15. Book 76 punctuation in title isn't correct. "Thanks A Lot, Universe." comma not period in title

16. Book 78 title isn't complete. SDIRC has "The Black Friend." The correct full title is " The Black Friend: on being a better white person. "

17. Book 82 title isn't correct. SDIRC has "The Music that Happens." The correct title is " The Music of What Happens."

18. Book 86 Title does have..... but the full title is "Who I am Without Him:short stories about girls and their lives."

19. Book 87 Title isn't complete. SDIRC has "Sorted". The correct full title is " Sorted: Growing up, coming out and finding my Place (A transgender memoir)."

20. Book 92 Title isn't complete. SDIRC has "Speak". the correct full title is "Speak: The Graphic Novel."

21. Book 94 Title isn't complete. SDIRC has " The Things they Carried.". The full correct title is "The Things they carried: A work of Fiction."

Author doesn't have first name in SDIRC list. It's Tim.

22. Book 100 Author name is Cecil Von Zeigesar.

23. Library Book 102 Fade by Lisa Mcmann submitted via email 12/30/2021 isn't on the SDIRC list. Needs to be reviewed.

24. Library Book 103 title is incorrect. SDIRC has it as "Ready of Not". The full correct title is "Ready or Not an American Girl Novel."

25. Library Book 107 is misspelled "Cirty" instead of "City". Also this book is listed twice in SDIRC list 105 and 107. The correct book number is 107. Library Book 105 should be "Degratias a Tale of Rwanda" (permanently removed).

26. Library Book 113 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "The Carnival". The correct full title is "The Carnival at Bray."

27. Library Book 132 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "Hear these Voices," The correct full title is " Hear these Voices:Youth at the Edge of the Millennium."

28. Library Book 134 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "Hunger A Memoir." The correct full title is " Hunger: a Memoir of My Body."

29. Library Book 136 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "The Rape of the Nanking." The correct full title is "The Rape of Nanking: the Forgotten Holocaust of World War 2."

30. Library Book 152 title is incomplete. SDIRC has "Maus." The correct full title is "Maus: A Survivors Tale".

It is important to have this accurate so if parents, grandparents and community members want to search this information on Follett or opt their child/children out they can see the books and authors information in its entirety. Also if I was a board member I would want to know the full titles of the books that I voted on to go back on the shelves and clearly this list wasn't completely accurate for the vote 2/28.

Jennifer Pippin

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close

A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR
Los Angeles Times, Washington Post Book World, Chicago Tribune,
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Rocky Mountain News
 A NATIONAL BESTSELLER AND A BOOK SENSE SELECTION

"Energetic, inventive, and ambitious . . . an uplifting myth born of the sorrows of 9/11." — *Boston Sunday Globe*

Jonathan Safran Foer emerged as one of the most original writers of his generation with his best-selling debut novel, *Everything Is Illuminated*. Now, with humor, tenderness, and awe, he confronts the traumas of our recent history.

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey.

"*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is a miracle, a daybreak, a man on the moon. It's so impeccably imagined, so courageously executed, so everlastingly moving and fine." — *Baltimore Sun*

"A funny, wise, deeply compassionate novel that will renew readers' faith that the right book at the right time still has the power to change the world."
 — *O, The Oprah Magazine*

"Foer is definitely a new sort of literary warrior — virtuosic, visionary, ingenious, hilarious, heartbreaking. He brings an astonishing array of firepower to the page."
 — *Village Voice*



JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER was awarded the American Place Theatre's Literature to Life® Award for *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. His acclaimed debut novel, *Everything Is Illuminated*, received numerous awards, including the National Jewish Book Award and the New York Public Library Young Lions Award. His work has been translated into thirty languages. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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 Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close
 Used - Very Good
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 (1993)

EXTREMELY LOUD & INCREDIBLY CLOSE
 JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER

NEW YORK TIMES
 bestseller

EXTREMELY
 LOUD &
 INCREDIBLY
 CLOSE

EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED

BY THE
 AUTHOR OF

JONATHAN
 SAFRAN
 FOER
 A NOVEL

Now
 MAJOR
 MOTIVATIONAL
 PICTURE



MARINER

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Johnathon

Foer

Book # 45

Moved from middle to High School

119 / 11 Book "

	<p>Please provide as many exact as you find that are offensive according to these FL Statutes. If you find more than 6 quotes, document 6 of the most egregious quotes in this template and in the 7th row provide a total count of all offensive quotes that you have tabbed and highlighted.</p>	<p>NSC means not suitable material or conduct for minors per existing statutes Example 1: EA with N, NSC Example 2: EA with B Example 3: EA, NSC</p>
42	<p>that actress getting a blowjob from her normal boyfriend</p>	<p>NSC,N,SE oral sex</p>
84	<p>He spread my legs. His palms pressed gently at the insides of my thighs. my thighs pressed back His palms pressed out. Birds were singing in the other room. We were looking for an acceptable compromise. The next week he held the back of my legs and the next week he was behind me. . it was the first time I ever made love . I wonder if he knew that. It felt like crying . I wondered why does anyone ever make love?</p>	<p>NSC, N,SE,SB sexual encounter</p>
127	<p>I didn't know what she was doing. I touched every part of her , what was I doing, do we understand something that we couldn't explain? Her father said, You can stay for as long as you need. You can stay forever " She pulled her shirt over her head,I held her breast in my hands, it was awkward and it was natural , she pulled my shirt over my head,in the moment I couldn't see Mr. Goldberg laughed and said , "Forever" I heard him pacing the small room, I put my hand under her skirt, between her legs, everything felt on the verge of bursting into flames,</p>	<p>NSC, N,SE sexual encounter</p>
145	<p>ME. I knew him, Horatio, a jerk of infinite stupidity, a most excellent masturbator in the second - floor boys' bathroom- I have proof . Also he's dyslexic. JIMMY SNYDER [Can't think of anything to say] ME. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs? JIMMY SNYDER . What are you talking about? ME . [Raises hand to scoreboard] Succotash my cocker spaniel, your fudging crevasse- hole dipshitake !</p>	<p>NSC, SE masturbation</p>
177	<p>I would have done anything for him. Maybe that was my sickness. We made love in nothing places and turned the lights off. It felt like crying. We</p>	<p>NSC, N, SE sexual encounter</p>

	could not look at each other . It always had to be from behind . Like that first time . And I knew that he wasn't thinking of me.	Sexual encounter NSC,N,SE,SB
275	She took my hand from her shoulder and pessed it between her legs , she didn't turn her head to the side , she didn't close her eyes, she stared at our hands between her legs, I felt like I was killing something , she undid my belt and unzipped my pants, she reached her hand under my underpants, "I'm nervous", I said, by smiling, "It's OK "	Sexual encounter
	11 Total violations found	

To add another row to the end of the table, place your cursor at the end of the text in the last cell (last row, last column) and hit Tab. Continue to hit Tab to add additional rows. Otherwise, you can use Layout under Table Tools to insert rows above and/or below existing rows.

would have been a logical explanation, which is always the best kind, although fortunately it isn't the only kind. Then I found out that there was a place called Black in every state in the country, and actually in almost every country in the world. In France, for example, there is a place called Noir. So that wasn't very helpful. I did a few other searches, even though I knew they would only hurt me, because I couldn't help it. I printed out some of the pictures I found—a shark attacking a girl, someone walking on a tightrope between the Twin Towers, that actress getting a blowjob from her normal boyfriend, a soldier getting his head cut off in Iraq, the place on the wall where a famous stolen painting used to hang—and I put them in *Stuff That Happened to Me*, my scrapbook of everything that happened to me.

The next morning I told Mom I couldn't go to school again. She asked what was wrong. I told her, "The same thing that's always wrong." "You're sick?" "I'm sad." "About Dad?" "About everything." She sat down on the bed next to me, even though I knew she was in a hurry. "What's everything?" I started counting on my fingers: "The meat and dairy products in our refrigerator, fistfights, car accidents, Larry—" "Who's Larry?" "The homeless guy in front of the Museum of Natural History who always says 'I promise it's for food' after he asks for money." She turned around and I zipped her dress while I kept counting. "How you don't know who Larry is, even though you probably see him all the time, how Buckminster just sleeps and eats and goes to the bathroom and has no *raison d'être*, the short ugly guy with no neck who takes tickets at the IMAX theater, how the sun is going to explode one day, how every birthday I always get at least one thing I already have, poor people who get fat because they eat junk food because it's cheaper. . . ." That was when I ran out of fingers, but my list was just getting started, and I wanted it to be long, because I knew she wouldn't leave while I was still going. ". . . domesticated animals, how I have a domesticated animal, nightmares, Microsoft Windows, old people who sit around all day because no one remembers to spend time with them and they're embarrassed to ask people to spend time with them, secrets, dial phones, how Chinese waitresses smile even when there's nothing funny or happy, and also how Chinese people own

Mexican restaurants but Mexican people never own Chinese restaurants, mirrors, tape decks, my unpopularity at school, Grandma's coupons, storage facilities, people who don't know what the Internet is, bad handwriting, beautiful songs, how there won't be humans in fifty years—" "Who said there won't be humans in fifty years?" I asked her, "Are you an optimist or a pessimist?" She looked at her watch and said, "I'm optimistic." "Then I have some bad news for you, because humans are going to destroy each other as soon as it becomes easy enough to, which will be very soon." "Why do beautiful songs make you sad?" "Because they aren't true." "Never?" "Nothing is beautiful and true." She smiled, but in a way that wasn't just happy, and said, "You sound just like Dad."

"What do you mean I sound just like Dad?" "He used to say things like that." "I like what?" "Oh, like *nothing* is so-and-so. Or *everything* is so-and-so. Or *obviously*." She laughed. "He was always very definitive." "What's 'definitive'?" "It means certain. It comes from 'definite.'" "What's wrong with definitivity?" "Dad sometimes missed the forest for the trees." "What forest?" "Nothing."

"Mom?" "Yes?" "It doesn't make me feel good when you say that something I do reminds you of Dad." "Oh. I'm sorry. Do I do that a lot?" "You do it all the time." "I can see why that wouldn't feel good." "And Grandma always says that things I do remind her of Grandpa. It makes me feel weird, because they're gone. And it also makes me feel unspecial." "That's the last thing that either Grandma or I would want. You know you're the most special thing to us, don't you?" "I guess so." "The most."

She petted my head for a while, and her fingers went behind my ear to that place that's almost never touched.

I asked if I could zip her dress up again. She said, "Sure," and turned around. She said, "I think it would be good if you tried to go to school." I said, "I am trying." "Maybe if you just went for first period." "I can't even get out of bed." Lie #6. "And Dr. Rein said I should listen to my feelings. He said I should give myself a break sometimes." That wasn't a lie, exactly, although it wasn't exactly the truth, either. "I just don't want it to become a habit," she said. "It won't," I said. When she

He moved me around more. He spent ten full minutes bending and unbending my knee. He closed and unclosed my hands. I hope this doesn't embarrass you, he wrote in German in his little book.

No, I said in German. No. He straightened one of my arms. The next week he touched my hair for what might have been five or fifty minutes.

He wrote, I am looking for an acceptable compromise.

I wanted to know how he lived through that night.

He touched my breasts, easing them apart.

I think this will be good, he wrote.

I wanted to know what will be good. How will it be good?

He touched me all over. I can tell you these things because I am not ashamed of them, because I learned from them. And I trust you to understand me. You are the only one I trust, Oskar.

The positioning was the sculpting. He was sculpting me. He was trying to make me so he could fall in love with me.

He spread my legs. His palms pressed gently at the insides of my thighs. My thighs pressed back. His palms pressed out.

Birds were singing in the other room.

We were looking for an acceptable compromise.

The next week he held the backs of my legs, and the next week he was behind me. It was the first time I had ever made love. I wondered if he knew that. It felt like crying. I wondered, Why does anyone ever make love?

I looked at the unfinished sculpture of my sister, and the unfinished girl looked back at me.

Why does anyone ever make love?

We walked together to the bakery where we first met.

Together and separately.

We sat at a table. On the same side, facing the windows.

I did not need to know if he could love me.

I needed to know if he could need me.

I flipped to the next blank page of his little book and wrote, Please

marry me.

He looked at his hands.

YES and NO.

Why does anyone ever make love?

He took his pen and wrote on the next and last page, No children. That was our first rule.

I understand, I told him in English.

We never used German again.

The next day, your grandfather and I were married.

The first time Anna and I made love was behind her father's shed, the previous owner had been a farmer, but Dresden started to overtake the surrounding villages and the farm was divided into nine plots of land, Anna's family owned the largest. The walls of the shed collapsed one autumn afternoon—"a leaf too many," her father joked—and the next day he made new walls of shelves, so that the books themselves would separate inside from outside. (The new, overhanging roof protected the books from rain, but during the winter the pages would freeze together, come spring, they let out a sigh.) He made a little salon of the space, carpets, two small couches, he loved to go out there in the evenings with a glass of whiskey and a pipe, and take down books and look through the wall at the center of the city. He was an intellectual, although he wasn't important, maybe he would have been important if he had lived longer, maybe great books were coiled within him like springs, books that could have separated inside from outside. The day Anna and I made love for the first time, he met me in the yard, he was standing with a disheveled man whose curly hair sprang up in every direction, whose glasses were bent, whose white shirt was stained with the fingerprints of his print-stained hands, "Thomas, please meet my friend Simon Goldberg." I said hello, I didn't know who he was or why I was being introduced to him, I wanted to find Anna, Mr. Goldberg asked me what I did, his voice was handsome and broken, like a cobblestone street, I told him, "I don't do anything," he laughed, "Don't be so modest," Anna's father said. "I want to be a sculptor." Mr. Goldberg took off his glasses, untucked his shirt from his pants, and cleaned his lenses with his shirttail. "You want to be a sculptor?" I said, "I am trying to be a sculptor." He put his glasses back on his face, pulling the wire ear-pieces behind his ears, and said, "In your case, trying is being." "What do you do?" I asked, in a voice more challenging than I'd wanted. He said, "I don't do anything anymore." Anna's father told him, "Don't be so modest," although he didn't laugh this time, and he told me, "Simon is one of the great minds of our age." "I'm trying," Mr. Goldberg said to me, as if only the two of us existed. "Trying what?" I asked, in a voice more concerned than I'd wanted, he took off his glasses again, "Trying to be." While her father and Mr. Goldberg spoke inside the makeshift

salon, whose books separated inside from outside, Anna and I went for a walk over the reeds that lay across the gray-green clay by what once was a stall for horses, and down to where you could see the edge of the water if you knew where and how to look, we got mud halfway up our socks, and juice from the fallen fruit we kicked out of our way, from the top of the property we could see the busy train station, the commotion of the war grew nearer and nearer, soldiers went east through our town, and refugees went west, or stayed there, trains arrived and departed, hundreds of them, we ended where we began, outside the shed that was a salon. "Let's sit down," she said, we lowered ourselves to the ground, our backs against the shelves, we could hear them talking inside and smell the pipe smoke that seeped between the books, Anna started kissing me, "But what if they come out?" I whispered, she touched my ears, which meant their voices would keep us safe. She put her hands all over me, I didn't know what she was doing, I touched every part of her, what was I doing, did we understand something that we couldn't explain? Her father said, "You can stay for as long as you need. You can stay forever." She pulled her shirt over her head, I held her breasts in my hands, it was awkward and it was natural, she pulled my shirt over my head, in the moment I couldn't see, Mr. Goldberg laughed and said, "Forever." I heard him pacing in the small room, I put my hand under her skirt, between her legs, everything felt on the verge of bursting into flames, without any experience I knew what to do, it was exactly as it had been in my dreams, as if all the information had been coiled within me like a spring, everything that was happening had happened before and would happen again, "I don't recognize the world anymore," Anna's father said, Anna rolled onto her back, behind a wall of books through which voices and pipe smoke escaped, "I want to make love," Anna whispered, I knew exactly what to do, night was arriving, trains were departing, I lifted her skirt, Mr. Goldberg said, "I've never recognized it more," and I could hear him breathing on the other side of the books, if he had taken one from the shelf he would have seen everything. But the books protected us. I was in her for only a second before I burst into flames, she whimpered, Mr. Goldberg stomped his foot and let out a cry like a wounded animal, I asked her if she was upset, she shook her head no, I

the basketball hoop. Her makeup was absorbing the lighting in a fascinating way, which made her look almost ultraviolet. "Alas, poor Yorick." I was as still as I could be, and the whole time I was thinking, *What trial is more important than the greatest play in history?*

The next performance was only Grandma again. She cried at all the wrong times and cracked up at all the wrong times. She applauded when the audience found out the news that Ophelia drowned, which is supposed to be bad news, and she booed when Hamlet scored his first point in the duel against Laertes at the end, which is good, for obvious reasons.

"This is where his lips were that I used to kiss a lot. Where are your jokes now, your games, your songs?"

Backstage, before closing night, Jimmy Snyder imitated Grandma to the rest of the cast and crew. I guess I hadn't realized how loud she was. I had gotten so angry at myself for noticing her, but I was wrong; it was her fault. Everyone noticed. Jimmy did her exactly right—the way she swatted her left hand at something funny, like there was a fly in front of her face. The way she tilted her head, like she was concentrating incredibly hard on something, and how she sneezed and told herself, "God bless me." And how she cried and said, "That's sad," so everyone could hear it.

I sat there while he made all the kids crack up. Even Mrs. Rigley cracked up, and so did her husband, who played the piano during the set changes. I didn't mention that she was my grandma, and I didn't tell him to stop. Outside, I was cracking up too. Inside, I was wishing that she were tucked away in a portable pocket, or that she'd also had an invisibility suit. I wished the two of us could go somewhere far away, like the Sixth Borough.

She was there again that night, in the back row, although only the first three rows were taken. I watched her from under the skull. She had her hand pressed against her ultraviolet heart, and I could hear her saying, "That's sad. That's so sad." I thought about the unfinished scarf, and the rock she carried across Broadway, and how she had lived so much life but still needed imaginary friends, and the one thousand thumb wars.

MARGIE CARSON. Hey, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

JIMMY SNYDER. At supper.

MARGIE CARSON. At supper! Where?

JIMMY SNYDER. Not where he eats, but where he's eaten.

MARGIE CARSON. Wow!

JIMMY SNYDER. A king can end up going through the guts of a beggar.

I felt, that night, on that stage, under that skull, incredibly close to everything in the universe, but also extremely alone. I wondered, for the first time in my life, if life was worth all the work it took to live. What *exactly* made it worth it? What's so horrible about being dead forever, and not feeling anything, and not even dreaming? What's so great about feeling and dreaming?

Jimmy put his hand under my face. "This is where his lips were that I used to kiss a lot. Where are your jokes now, your games, your songs?"

Maybe it was because of everything that had happened in those twelve weeks. Or maybe it was because I felt so close and alone that night. I just couldn't be dead any longer.

M.E. Alas, poor Hamlet [I take JIMMY SNYDER'S face into my hand]; I knew him, Horatio.

JIMMY SNYDER. But Yorick . . . you're only . . . a skull.

M.E. So what? I don't care. Screw you.

JIMMY SNYDER. [whispers] This is not in the play. [He looks for help

from MRS. RIGLEY, who is in the front row, flipping through the script.

She draws circles in the air with her right hand, which is the universal sign for "improvise."

M.E. I knew him, Horatio; a jerk of infinite stupidity, a most excellent masuricator in the second-floor boys' bathroom—I have proof.

Also, he's dyslexic.

JIMMY SNYDER. [Can't think of anything to say]

M.E. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs?

JIMMY SNYDER. What are you talking about?

M.E. [Raises hand to scoreboard] Succotash my cocker spaniel, you fudging crevasse-hole dipshitake!

because we were helpless. He needed to get things for me, just as I needed to get things for him. I gave us purpose. Sometimes I would ask him for something that I did not even want, just to let him get it for me. We spent our days trying to help each other help each other. I would get his shippers. He would make my tea. I would turn up the heat so he could turn up the air conditioner so I could turn up the heat. His hands didn't lose their roughness. It was Halloween. Our first in the apartment. The doorbell rang. Your grandfather was at the airport. I opened the door and a child was standing there in a white sheet with holes cut out for her eyes. Trick or treat! she said. I took a step back. Who is that? I'm a ghost! What are you wearing that for? It's Halloween! I don't know what that means. Kids dress up and knock on doors, and you give them candy. I don't have any candy. It's Hal-lo-ween! I told her to wait. I went to the bedroom. I took an envelope from underneath the mattress. Our savings. Our living. I took out two one-hundred-dollar bills and put them in a different envelope, which I gave to the ghost. I was paying her to go away. I closed the door and turned off the lights so no more children would ring our bell. The animals must have understood, because they surrounded me and pressed into me. I did not say anything when your grandfather came home that night. I thanked him for the papers and magazines. I went to the guest room and pretended to write. I hit the space bar again and again and again. My life story was spaces. The days passed one at a time. And sometimes less than one at a time. We looked at each other and drew maps in our heads. I told him my eyes were crummy, because I wanted him to pay attention to me. We made safe places in the apartment where you could go and not exist.

I would have done anything for him. Maybe that was my sickness. We made love in nothing places and turned the lights off. It felt like crying. We could not look at each other. It always had to be from behind. Like that first time. And I knew that he wasn't thinking of me. He squeezed my sides so hard, and pushed so hard. Like he was trying to push through me to somewhere else. Why does anyone ever make love? A year passed. Another year. Another year. Another. We made livings. I never forgot about the ghost. I needed a child. What does it mean to need a child? One morning I awoke and understood the hole in the middle of me. I realized that I could compromise my life, but not life after me. I couldn't explain it. The need came before explanations. It was not out of weakness that I made it happen, but it was not out of strength either. It was out of need. I needed a child. I tried to hide it from him. I tried to wait to tell him until it was too late to do anything about it. It was the ultimate secret. Life. I kept it safe inside me. I took it around. Like the apartment was inside his books. I wore loose shirts. I sat with pillows on my lap. I was naked only in nothing places. But I could not keep it a secret forever. We were lying in bed in the darkness. I did not know how to say it. I knew, but I could not say it. I took one of his daybooks from the bedside table. The apartment had never been darker. I turned on the lamp. It became bright around us. The apartment became darker. I wrote, I am pregnant. I handed it to him. He read it. He took the pen and wrote, How could that have happened? I wrote, I made it happen.

side me, creating a trail of things I wasn't able to tell you, it might have made my load possible, but I couldn't, I needed to get them to you, to my child. I hailed a cab, by the time we reached your mother's apartment it was already getting late, I needed to find a hotel, I needed food and a shower and time to think, I ripped a page from the daybook and wrote, "I'm sorry," I handed it to the doorman, he said, "Who's this for?" I wrote, "Mrs. Schell," he said, "There is no Mrs. Schell," I wrote, "There is," he said, "Believe me, I'd know if there was a Mrs. Schell in this building," but I'd heard her voice on the phone, could she have moved and kept the number, how would I find her, I needed a phone book. I wrote "3D" and showed it to the doorman. He said, "Ms. Schmidt," I took back my book and wrote, "That was her maiden name." . . . I lived in the guest room, she left me meals by the door, I could hear her footsteps and sometimes I thought I heard the rim of a glass against the door, was it a glass I once drank water from, had it ever touched your lips? I found my daybooks from before I left, they were in the body of the grandfather clock, I'd have thought she would have thrown them away, but she kept them, many were empty and many were filled, I wandered through them, I found the book from the afternoon we met and the book from the day after we got married, I found our first Nothing Place, and the last time we walked around the reservoir, I found pictures of banisters and sinks and fireplaces, on top of one of the stacks was the book from the first time I tried to leave, "I haven't always been silent, I used to talk and talk and talk and talk." I don't know if she began to feel sorry for me, or sorry for herself, but she started paying me short visits, she wouldn't say anything at first, only tidy up the room, brush cobwebs from the corners, vacuum the carpet, straighten the picture frames, and then one day, as she dusted the bedside table, she said, "I can forgive you for leaving, but not for coming back," she walked out and closed the door behind her, I didn't see her again for three days, and then it was as if nothing had been said, she replaced a light bulb that had worked fine, she picked things up and put them down, she said, "I'm not going to share this grief with you," she closed the door behind her, was I the prisoner or the guard? Her visits became longer, we never had conversations, and she didn't like to look at me, but something was happening, we were getting closer, or farther apart, I took a chance, I asked if she would pose for me, like when we first met, she opened her mouth and nothing came out, she touched my left hand, which I hadn't realized was in a fist, was that how she said yes, or was that how she touched me? I went to the art supply store to buy some clay, I couldn't keep my hands to myself, the pas-

tels in long boxes, the palette knives, the handmade papers hanging on rolls, I tested every sample, I wrote my name in blue pen and in green oil stick, in orange crayon and in charcoal, it felt like I was signing the contract of my life. I was there for more than an hour, although I bought only a simple block of clay, when I came home she was waiting for me in the guest room, she was in a robe, standing beside the bed, "Did you make any sculptures while you were away?" I wrote that I had tried but couldn't, "Not even one?" I showed her my right hand, "Did you think about sculptures? Did you make them in your head?" I showed her my left hand, she took off her robe and went onto the sofa, I couldn't look at her, I took the clay from the bag and set it up on the card table, "Did you ever make a sculpture of me in your head?" I wrote, "How do you want to pose?" She said the whole point was that I should choose, I asked if the carpeting was new, she said, "Look at me," I tried but I couldn't, she said, "Look at me or leave me. But don't stay and look at anything else." I asked her to lie on her back, but that wasn't right, I asked her to sit, it wasn't right, cross your arms, turn your head away from me, nothing was right, she said, "Show me how," I went over to her, I undid her hair, I pressed down on her shoulders, I wanted to touch her across all of those distances, she said, "I haven't been touched since you left. Not in that way." I pulled back my hand, she took it into hers and pressed it against her shoulder, I didn't know what to say, she asked, "Have you?" What's the point of a lie that doesn't protect anything? I showed her my left hand, "Who touched you?" My daybook was filled, so I wrote on the wall, "I wanted so much to have a life." "Who?" I couldn't believe the honesty as it traveled down my arm and came out my pen, "I paid for it." She didn't lose her pose, "Were they pretty?" "That wasn't the point." "But were they?" "Some of them." "So you just gave them money and that was it?" "I liked to talk to them. I talked about you." "Is that supposed to make me feel good?" I looked at the clay, "Did you tell them that I was pregnant when you left?" I showed her my left hand, "Did you tell them about Anna?" I showed her my left hand, "Did you care for any of them?" I looked at the clay, she said, "I love that you are telling me the truth," and she took my hand from her shoulder and pressed it between her legs, she didn't turn her head to the side, she didn't close her eyes, she stared at our hands between her legs, I felt like I was killing something, she undid my belt and unzipped my pants, she reached her hand under my underpants, "I'm nervous," I said, by smiling, "It's OK," she said, "I'm sorry," I said, by smiling, "It's OK," she said, she closed the door behind her, then opened it and asked, "Did you ever make a sculpture of me

FICTION N

standing on the fringes of life... offers a unique perspective, but there comes a time to see what it looks like from the dance floor.

since its publication, stephen chbosky's haunting debut novel has received critical acclaim, provoked discussion and debate, grown into a cult phenomenon with over 2 million copies in print, spent over 6 months at #1 on the new york times bestseller list, and inspired a major motion picture.

"a coming-of-age tale in the tradition of the catcher in the rye and a separate peace... poignant... inspirational... beautifully written." —usa today

"passed from adolescent to adolescent like a hot potato... the book's target audience has declared it a legit page-turner ever since it was published." —the new york times

"the language is plain and spry and blunt... in this culture where adolescence is a dirty word, i hope, nothing bad ever happens to [charlie]." —los angeles times

the perks of being a wallflower is a story about what it's like to travel that strange course through the uncharted territory of high school, the world of first dates, family dramas, and new friends, of sex, drugs, and the rocky horror picture show, of those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up.



stephen chbosky wrote and directed the feature film adaptation of his novel, the perks of being a wallflower, a native of pittsburgh, pennsylvania, he graduated from the university of southern california's filmic writing program, his first film, the four corners of nowhere, premiered at the sundance film festival. he wrote the screenplay for the critically acclaimed film adaptation of rent, and cocreated and served as executive producer of the postapocalyptic drama jericho. he also edited pieces, a collection of short stories for pocket books.

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the perks of being a wallflower

STEPHEN CHBOSKY



the perks of being a wallflower STEPHEN CHBOSKY GALLERY BOOKS

BOOKS

The Perks of being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

Dear friend.

I guess I forgot to mention in my last letter that it was Patrick who told me about masturbation. I guess I also forgot to tell you how often I do it now, which is a lot. I don't like to look at pictures. I just close my eyes and dream about a lady I do not know. And I try not to feel ashamed. I never think about Sam when I do it. Never. That's very important to me because I was so happy when she said "Charlie-esque" since it felt like an inside joke of sorts.

One night, I felt so guilty that I promised God that I would never do it again. So, I started using blankets, but then the blankets hurt, so I started using pillows, but then the pillows hurt, so I went back to normal. I wasn't raised very religiously

High School

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masturbation

Dear friend.

Do you know what "masturbation" is? I think you probably do because you are older than me. But just in case, I will tell you. Masturbation is when you rub your genitals until you have an orgasm. Wow!

That weekend, my sister spent a lot of time with this boy. And they laughed a lot more than they usually did. On Friday night, I was reading my new book, but my brain got tired, so I decided to watch some television instead. And I opened the door to the basement, and my sister and this boy were naked.

He was on top of her, and her legs were draped over either side of the couch. And she screamed at me in a whisper.

"Get out. You pervert."

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masturbation

stayed. I said I didn't see why not, so they closed the door and started kissing. Kissing very hard. After a few minutes, the boy's hand went up the girl's shirt, and she started protesting.

"I'm not, Dave."

"What?"

"The kid's in here."

"It's okay."

And the boy kept working up the girl's shirt, and as much as she said no, he kept working it. After a few minutes, she stopped protesting, and he pulled her shirt off, and she had a white bra on with lace. I honestly didn't know what to do by this point. Pretty soon, he took off her bra and started to kiss her breasts. And then he put his hand down her pants, and she started moaning. I think they were both very drunk. He reached to take off her pants, but she started crying really hard, so he reached for his room. He pulled his pants and underwear down to his knees.

"Please, Dave, No."

But the boy just talked soft to her about how good she looked and things like that, and she grabbed his penis with her hands and started moving it. I wish I could describe this a little more nicely without using words like penis, but that was the way it was.

After a few minutes, the boy pushed the girl's head down and she started to kiss his penis. She was still crying. Finally, she stopped crying because he put his penis in her mouth, and I don't think you can cry in that position. I had to stop watching at that point because I started to feel sick, but it kept going on, and they kept doing other things, and she kept saying "no." Even when I covered my ears, I could still hear her say that.

pg 30
oral
sex
rape
(orally)

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"How old are you, Charlie?"
"Fifteen."

"What do you want to do when you grow up?"

"I don't know just yet."

"What's your favorite band?"

"I think maybe the Smiths because I love their song 'Asleep,' but I'm really not sure one way or the other because I don't know any other songs by them too well."

"What's your favorite movie?"

"I don't know really. They're all the same to me."

"How about your favorite book?"

"*This Side of Paradise* by F. Scott Fitzgerald."

"Why?"

"Because it was the last one I read."

This made them laugh because they knew I meant it honest, not show-off. Then they told me their favorites, and we sat quiet. I ate the pumpkin pie because the lady said it was in season, and Patrick and Sam smoked more cigarettes.

I looked at them, and they looked really happy together. A good kind of happy. And even though I thought Sam was very pretty and nice, and she was the first girl I ever wanted to ask on a date someday when I can drive, I did not mind that she had a boyfriend, especially if he was a good guy like Patrick.

"How long have you been 'going out'?" I asked.

Then, they started laughing. Really laughing hard.

"What's so funny?" I said.

"We're brother and sister," Patrick said, still laughing.

"But you don't look alike," I said.

That's when Sam explained that they were actually stepsister and stepbrother since Patrick's dad married Sam's mom. I was very

happy to know that because I would really like to ask Sam on a date someday. I really would. She is so nice.

I feel ashamed, though, because that night, I had a weird dream. I was with Sam. And we were both naked. And her legs were spread over the sides of the couch. And I woke up. And I had never felt that good in my life. But I also felt bad because I saw her naked without her permission. I think that I should tell Sam about this, and I really hope it does not prevent us from maybe making up inside jokes of our own. It would be very nice to have a friend again. I would like that even more than a date.

Love always,

Charlie

October 14, 1991

Dear friend,

Do you know what "masturbation" is? I think you probably do because you are older than me. But just in case, I will tell you.

Masturbation is when you rub your genitals until you have an orgasm. Wow!

I thought that in those movies and television shows when they talk about having a coffee break that they should have a masturbation break. But then again, I think this would decrease productivity.

I'm only being cute here. I don't really mean it. I just wanted to make you smile. I meant the "wow" though.

I told Sam that I dreamt that she and I were naked on the sofa, and I started crying because I felt bad, and do you know what she

stephen chbosky

very sorry for them. His parents, I mean. Because my dad doesn't lose fights. He just doesn't.

My mom then went into the kitchen to make my sister's favorite thing to eat, and my sister looked at me.
"I hate you."

My sister said it different than she said it to my dad. She meant it with me. She really did.

"I love you," was all I could say in return.

"You're a freak, you know that? You've always been a freak. Everyone says so. They always have."

"I'm trying not to be."

Then, I turned around and walked to my room and closed my door and put my head under my pillow and let the quiet put things where they are supposed to be.

By the way, I figure you are probably curious about my dad. Did he hit us when we were kids or now even? I just thought you might be curious because Bill was, after I told him about that boy and my sister. Well, if you are wondering, he didn't. He never touched my brother or sister. And the only time he ever slapped me was when I made my Aunt Helen cry. And once we all calmed down, he got on his knees in front of me and said that his stepdad hit him a lot, and he decided in college when my mom got pregnant with my older brother that he would never hit his kids. And he felt terrible for doing it. And he was so sorry. And he would never hit me again. And he hasn't.
He's just stern sometimes.

Love always,
Charlie

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the perks of being a wallflower

October 15, 1991

Dear friend,

I guess I forgot to mention in my last letter that it was Patrick who told me about masturbation. I guess I also forgot to tell you how often I do it now, which is a lot. I don't like to look at pictures. I just close my eyes and dream about a lady I do not know. And I try not to feel ashamed. I never think about Sam when I do it. Never. That's very important to me because I was so happy when she said "Charlie-esque" since it felt like an inside joke of sorts.

One night, I felt so guilty that I promised God that I would never do it again. So, I started using blankets, but then the blankets hurt, so I started using pillows, but then the pillows hurt, so I went back to normal. I wasn't raised very religiously because my parents went to Catholic school, but I do believe in God very much. I just never gave God a name, if you know what I mean. I hope I haven't let Him down regardless.

Incidentally, my dad did have a serious talk with the boy's parents. The boy's mother was very very angry and screamed at her son. The boy's father kept quiet. And my dad didn't get too personal with them. He didn't tell them they did a "lousy job" raising their son or anything.

As far as he was concerned, the only important thing was getting their help to keep their son away from his daughter. Once that was settled, he left them to deal with their family and came home to deal with his. At least that's how he put it.

The one thing I did ask my dad was about the boy's problems at home. Whether or not he thought the parents hit their son. He told me to mind my own business. Because he didn't know and would never ask and didn't think it mattered.

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or married. I don't remember which. And they left my brother in charge of the house. He was sixteen at the time. My brother used the opportunity to throw a big party with beer and everything. I was ordered to stay in my room, which was okay because that's where everyone kept their coats, and it was fun looking through the stuff in their pockets. Every ten minutes or so, a drunk girl or boy would stumble in my room to see if they could make out there or something. Then, they would see me and walk away. That is, except for this one couple.

This one couple, whom I was told later were very popular and in love, stumbled into my room and asked if I minded them using it. I told them that my brother and sister said I had to stay here, and they asked if they could use the room anyway with me still in it. I said I didn't see why not, so they closed the door and started kissing. Kissing very hard. After a few minutes, the boy's hand went up the girl's shirt, and she started protesting.

"C'mon, Dave."

"What?"

"The kid's in here."

"It's okay."

And the boy kept working up the girl's shirt, and as much as she said no, he kept working it. After a few minutes, she stopped protesting, and he pulled her shirt off, and she had a white bra on with lace. I honestly didn't know what to do by this point. Pretty soon, he took off her bra and started to kiss her breasts. And then he put his hand down her pants, and she started moaning. I think they were both very drunk. He reached to take off her pants, but she started crying really hard, so he reached for his own. He pulled his pants and underwear down to his knees.

"Please. Dave. No."

But the boy just talked soft to her about how good she looked

and things like that, and she grabbed his penis with her hands and started moving it. I wish I could describe this a little more nicely without using words like penis, but that was the way it was.

After a few minutes, the boy pushed the girl's head down, and she started to kiss his penis. She was still crying. Finally, she stopped crying because he put his penis in her mouth, and I don't think you can cry in that position. I had to stop watching at that point because I started to feel sick, but it kept going on, and they kept doing other things, and she kept saying "no." Even when I covered my ears, I could still hear her say that.

My sister came in eventually to bring me a bowl of potato chips, and when she found the boy and the girl, they stopped. My sister was very embarrassed, but not as embarrassed as the girl. The boy looked kind of smug. He didn't say much. After they left, my sister turned to me.

"Did they know you were in here?"

"Yes. They asked if they could use the room."

"Why didn't you stop them?"

"I didn't know what they were doing."

"You pervert," was the last thing my sister said before she left the room, still carrying the bowl of potato chips.

I told Sam and Patrick about this, and they both got very quiet. Sam said that she used to go out with Dave for a while before she got into punk music, and Patrick said he heard about that party. I wasn't surprised that he did because it kind of became a legend. At least that's what I've heard when I tell some kids who my older brother is.

When the police came, they found my brother asleep on the roof. Nobody knows how he got there. My sister was making out in the laundry room with some senior. She was a freshman at the time. A lot of parents came to the house then to pick up their kids, and a lot of the

girls were crying and throwing up. Most of the boys had run away by this point. My brother got in big trouble, and my sister was given a "serious talk" by my parents about bad influences. And that was that.

The boy named Dave is a senior now. He plays on the football team. He is a wide receiver. I watched the end of the game when Dave caught a touchdown thrown from Brad. It ended up winning the game for our school. And people went crazy in the stands because we won the game. But all I could think about was that party. I thought about it quiet for a long time, then I looked over to Sam.

"He raped her, didn't he?"

She just nodded. I couldn't tell if she was sad or just knew more things than me.

"We should tell someone, shouldn't we?"

Sam just shook her head this time. She then explained about all the things you have to go through to prove it, especially in high school when the boy and girl are popular and still in love.

The next day at the homecoming dance, I saw them dancing together. Dave and his girl. And I got really mad. It kind of scared me how mad I got. I thought about walking up to Dave and really hurting him like maybe I should have really hurt Sean. And I think I would have, but Sam saw me and put her arm around my shoulder like she does. She calmed me down, and I guess I'm glad she did because I think I would have gotten even madder if I started hitting Dave, and his girl stopped me because she loved him. I think I would have gotten even madder about that.

So, I decided to do the next best thing and let the air out of Dave's tires. Sam knew which was his car.

There is a feeling that I had Friday night after the homecoming game that I don't know if I will ever be able to describe except to say that it is warm. Sam and Patrick drove me to the party that

night, and I sat in the middle of Sam's pickup truck. Sam loves her pickup truck because I think it reminds her of her dad. The feeling I had happened when Sam told Patrick to find a station on the radio. And he kept getting commercials. And commercials. And a really bad song about love that had the word "baby" in it. And then more commercials. And finally he found this really amazing song about this boy, and we all got quiet.

Sam tapped her hand on the steering wheel. Patrick held his hand outside the car and made air waves. And I just sat between them. After the song finished, I said something.

"I feel infinite."

And Sam and Patrick looked at me like I said the greatest thing they ever heard. Because the song was that great and because we all really paid attention to it. Five minutes of a lifetime were truly spent, and we felt young in a good way. I have since bought the record, and I would tell you what it was, but truthfully, it's not the same unless you're driving to your first real party, and you're sitting in the middle seat of a pickup with two nice people when it starts to rain.

We got to the house where the party was, and Patrick did this secret knock. It would be hard to describe to you this knock without sound. The door opened a crack, and this guy with frizzy hair looked out at us.

"Patrick known as Patty known as Nothing?"

"Bob."

The door opened, and the old friends hugged each other. Then, Sam and Bob hugged each other. Then, Sam spoke.

"This is our friend, Charlie."

And you won't believe it. Bob hugged me! Sam told me as we were hanging up our coats that Bob was "baked like a fucking cake." I really had to quote that one even though it has a swear.

But Monday in school, Brad kept saying the same thing.

"Man, I was so wasted. I don't remember a thing."

He said it to everyone who was at the party. He said it a few times to the same people. He even said it to Patrick. Nobody saw Patrick and Brad fool around, but Brad kept saying it anyway. That Friday, there was another party. And this time, Patrick and Brad got stoned although Patrick said that Brad was pretending to be a lot more stoned than he really was. And they ended up fooling around again. And Monday in school, Brad did the same thing.

"Man, I was so wasted. I don't remember a thing."

This went on for seven months.

It got to a point where Brad was getting stoned or drunk before school. It's not like he and Patrick were fooling around in school. They only fooled around at parties on Fridays, but Patrick said Brad couldn't even look at him in the hall, let alone speak with him. And it was hard, too, because Patrick really liked Brad.

When summer came, Brad didn't have to worry about school or anything, so his drinking and smoking got a lot worse. There was a big party at Patrick and Sam's house with the less than popular crowd. Brad showed up, which caused quite a stir because he was popular, but Patrick kept a secret as to why Brad came to the party. When most people left, Brad and Patrick went into Patrick's room.

They had sex for the first time that night.

I don't want to go into detail about it because it's pretty private stuff, but I will say that Brad assumed the role of the girl in terms of where you put things. I think that's pretty important to tell you. When they were finished, Brad started to cry really hard. He had been drinking a lot. And getting really really stoned.

No matter what Patrick did, Brad kept crying. Brad wouldn't

even let Patrick hold him, which seems rather sad to me because if I have sex with someone, I would want to hold them.

Finally, Patrick just pulled up Brad's pants, and said to him.

"Just pretend you're passed out."

Then, Patrick got dressed and walked around the house to go into the party from a different direction than his bedroom. He was also crying pretty bad, and he decided if anyone asked him, he would say his eyes were red from smoking pot. Finally, he shook himself out of it and walked into the main party room. He acted really drunk. He went to Sam. "Have you seen Brad?" Sam saw the look in Patrick's eyes. Then, she spoke up to the party.

"Hey, has anyone seen Brad?"

Nobody at the party had, so a few people went to search for him. They finally found him in Patrick's room . . . asleep.

Finally, Patrick called Brad's parents because he was really worried about him. He didn't tell them why, but he said that Brad was really sick at this party and needed to be taken home. Brad's parents did come, and Brad's father, along with some of the other boys including Patrick, carried Brad to the car.

Patrick doesn't know if Brad was really asleep or not at that point, but if he wasn't, it was a good acting job. Brad's parents sent him to rehabilitation because Brad's father didn't want him to miss his chance at a football scholarship. Patrick didn't see Brad for the rest of the summer.

Brad's parents never did figure out why their son was getting stoned and drunk all the time. Neither did anybody else. Except the people who knew.

When the school year started, Brad avoided Patrick a lot. He never went to the same parties as Patrick or anything until a little over a month ago. That was the night he threw rocks at Patrick's window

And all the books you've read have been read by other people. And all the songs you've loved have been heard by other people. And that girl that's pretty to you is pretty to other people. And you know that if you looked at these facts when you were happy, you would feel great because you are describing "unity."

It's like when you are excited about a girl and you see a couple holding hands, and you feel so happy for them. And other times you see the same couple, and they make you so mad. And all you want is to always feel happy for them because you know that if you do, then it means that you're happy, too.

I just remembered what made me think of all this. I'm going to write it down because maybe if I do I won't have to think about it.

And I won't get upset. But the thing is that I can hear Sam and Craig having sex, and for the first time in my life, I understand the end of that poem.

And I never wanted to. You have to believe me.

Love always,
Charlie

moody. I tried to talk to her, but she just told me to shut up and leave her alone. So, I watched the show for a few minutes, but it made even less sense to me than the book, so I decided to do my math homework, which was a mistake because math has never made any sense to me.

I was just confused all day.

So, I tried to help my mother in the kitchen, but I dropped the casserole, so she told me to read in my room until my father came home, but reading is what started this whole mess in the first place. Luckily, my father came home before I could pick up the book again, but he told me to stop "hanging on his shoulders like a monkey" because he wanted to watch the hockey game. I watched the hockey game with him for a while, but I couldn't stop asking him questions about which countries the players are from, and he was "resting his eyes," which means he was sleeping but didn't want me to change the channel. So, he told me to go watch television with my sister, which I did, but she told me to go help my mother in the kitchen, which I did, but then she told me to go read in my room. Which I did. I've read about a third of the book now, and it's pretty good so far.

Love always,
Charlie

February 8, 1992

Dear friend,

I have a date for the Sadie Hawkins' dance. In case you didn't

have one of those, it's the dance where the girl asks the boy. In my case, the girl is Mary Elizabeth, and the boy is me. Can you believe it?!

I think it started when I was helping Mary Elizabeth staple the latest issue of *Punk Rocky* on Friday before we went to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Mary Elizabeth was so nice that day. She said that it was the best issue we'd ever had for two reasons, and both of those reasons were mine.

First of all, it was in color, and second, it had the poem that I gave Patrick in it.

It really was a great issue. I think I'll even think so when I'm older. Craig included some of his color photographs. Sam included some "underground" news on some bands. Mary Elizabeth wrote an article about the Democratic candidates. Bob included a reprint of a pro-hemp pamphlet. And Patrick made this fake coupon advertising a free "blow job" for anyone who buys a Smiley Cookie at the Big Boy. *Some restrictions apply!*

There was even a nude photograph (from the back) of Patrick if you can believe it. Sam had Craig take the picture. Mary Elizabeth told everyone to keep it a secret that the photograph was Patrick, which everybody did, except Patrick.

All night, he kept yelling, "Flaunt it, baby! Flaunt it!" which is his favorite line from his favorite movie, *The Producers*.

Mary Elizabeth told me she thought that Patrick asked her to put the photograph in the issue so Brad could have a photograph of him without it being suspicious, but he wouldn't say for sure. Brad bought a copy without even looking at it, so maybe she was right.

When I went to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* that night, Mary Elizabeth was really mad because Craig didn't show up.

danced over to me. She said she felt very warm, but not in the temperature sense.

The music started, and she clinked my glass, said "cheers" and took a sip of brandy. Brandy is very good, by the way, but it was better at the Secret Santa party. We finished the first glasses very quickly.

My heart was beating really fast, and I was starting to get nervous. She handed me another glass of brandy and touched my hand very softly when she did it. Then, she slipped her leg over mine, and I watched it just dangle there. Then, I felt her hand on the back of my neck. Just kind of moving slowly. And my heart started beating crazy.

"Do you like the record?" she asked real quiet.

"Very much." I really did, too. It was beautiful.

"Charlie?"

"Uh-huh?"

"Do you like me?"

"Uh-huh."

"You know what I mean?"

"Uh-huh."

"Are you nervous?"

"Uh-huh."

"Don't be nervous."

"Okay."

That's when I felt her other hand. It started at my knee and worked its way up the side of my leg to my hip and stomach. Then, she took her leg off mine and kind of sat on my lap facing me. She looked right into my eyes, and she never blinked. Not once. Her face looked warm and different. And she leaned down and started kissing my neck and ears. Then my cheeks. Then my lips. And everything kind of melted away. She took my hand and slid it up her sweater,

and I couldn't believe what was happening to me. Or what breasts felt like. Or later, what they looked like. Or how difficult bras are.

After we had done everything you can do from the stomach up, I lay down on the floor, and Mary Elizabeth put her head on my chest. We both breathed very slowly and listened to the music and the fire crack. When the last song was over, I felt her breath on my chest.

"Charlie?"

"Uh-huh?"

"Do you think I'm pretty?"

"I think you're very pretty."

"Really?"

"Really."

Then, she held on to me a little tighter, and for the next half hour, Mary Elizabeth didn't talk at all. All I could do was lie there and think about how much her voice changed when she asked me if she was pretty, and how much she changed when I answered, and how Sam said she didn't like things like that, and how much my arm was beginning to hurt.

Thank God we heard the automatic garage door opener when we did.

Love always,

Charlie

March 28, 1992

Dear friend,

It's finally starting to get a little warm here, and the people are

"Right, Parker. How did you know?"

"My sister had a crush on him."

"Perfect!" We were getting pretty drunk. "So, Parker and Lily come up here one night. And they are so in love! He even gave her his thespian pin or something."

At this point, Patrick is spitting out wine between sentences, he's laughing so hard.

"They even had a song. Something like *Broken Wings* by that band, Mr. Mister. I don't even know, but I hope it was *Broken Wings* because it would make the story perfect."

"Keep going," I encouraged.

"Okay. Okay." He swallowed. "So, they've been going out for a long time, and I think they've even had sex before, but this was going to be a special night. She packed a little picnic, and he brought a boom box to play *Broken Wings*."

Patrick just couldn't get over that song. He laughed for ten minutes.

"Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. So, they have this picnic with sandwiches and everything. They start to make out. The stereo's playing, and they're just about to 'do it' when Parker realizes he forgot the condoms. They're both naked on this putting green. They both want each other. There's no condom. So, what do you think happened?"

"I don't know."

"They did it doggie-style with one of the sandwich bags!"

"NO!" was all I could really say.

"YES!" was Patrick's rebuttal.

"GOD!" was my counter.

"YES!" was Patrick's conclusion.

After we shook off the giggles and wasted most of the wine with spit takes, he turned to me.

"And you want to know the best part?"

"What?"

"She was the valedictorian. And everyone knew it when she went up to give her speech!"

There's nothing like the deep breaths after laughing that hard. Nothing in the world like a sore stomach for the right reasons. It was that great.

So, Patrick and I shared all the stories we could think of.

There was a kid named Barry, who used to build kites in art class. Then, after school, he would attach firecrackers to the kite and fly it and blow it up. He's now studying to be an air traffic controller.

—Patrick's story via Sam

And then there was this kid named Chip who spent all of his money from allowance and Christmas and birthdays to buy bug killing equipment and he would go door to door asking if he could kill the bugs for free.

—my story via my sister

There was a guy named Carl Burns and everyone called him C.B. And one day C.B. got so drunk at a party that he tried to "fuck" the host's dog.

—Patrick's story

And there was this guy they called "Action Jack" because supposedly he was caught masturbating at a drunk party. And at every pep rally, the kids would clap and chant. Action Jack . . . clap clap clap . . . Action Jack!

—my story via my brother

I would write a little more today, but I have to learn my math formulas for the final on Thursday. Wish me luck!

Love always,
Charlie

June 5, 1992

Dear friend,

I wanted to tell you about us running. There was this beautiful sunset. And there was this hill. The hill up to the eighteenth green where Patrick and I spit wine from laughing. And just a few hours before, Sam and Patrick and everyone I love and know had their last day of high school ever. And I was happy because they were happy. My sister even let me hug her in the hallway. Congratulations was the word of the day. So, Sam and Patrick and I went to the Big Boy and smoked cigarettes. Then, we went walking, waiting for it to be time to go to *Rocky Horror*. And we were talking about things that seemed important at the time. And we were looking up that hill. And then Patrick started running after the sunset. And Sam immediately followed him. And I saw them in silhouette. Running after the sun. Then, I started running. And everything was as good as it could be. That night, Patrick decided to play Frank 'n Furter one last time. He was so happy to put on the costume, and everyone was happy he decided to do it. It was quite moving actually. He gave the best show I ever saw him give. Maybe I was biased, but I don't care. It was the show I'll always remember. Especially his last song.

The song is called "I'm Going Home." In the movie, Tim

Curry, who plays the character, cries during that song. But Patrick was smiling. And it felt just right.

I even persuaded my sister to come to the show with her boyfriend. I have been trying to get her to come since I started going, but she never would. But this time she did. And since she and her boyfriend never saw the show before, they were technically "virgins," which meant they would have to do all these embarrassing things before the show started to get "initiated." I decided not to tell my sister this, and she and her boyfriend had to go on stage and try to dance the *Time Warp*.

Whoever lost the dance contest had to pretend he or she was having sex with a large stuffed Gummy doll, so I quickly showed my sister and her boyfriend how to dance the *Time Warp*, so they wouldn't lose the contest. It was fun watching my sister dance the *Time Warp* on stage, but I don't think I could have handled her pretending to have sex with a large stuffed Gummy.

I asked my sister if she wanted to come to Craig's for the party afterward, but she said that one of her friends was having a party, so she was going to that. That was okay with me because at least she came to the show. And before she left, she hugged me again. Two in one day! I really do love my sister. Especially when she's nice.

The party at Craig's was great. Craig and Peter bought champagne to congratulate all the people who were graduating. And we danced. And we talked. And I saw Mary Elizabeth kissing Peter and looking happy. And I saw Sam kissing Craig and looking happy. And I saw Patrick and Alice not even care that they weren't kissing anybody because they were too excited talking about their futures.

So, I just sat there with a bottle of champagne near the CD player, and I changed the songs to fit the mood of what I saw. I was lucky, too, because Craig has an excellent collection. When people

I looked up at her. She had stopped crying.

"So, tomorrow, I'm leaving. And I'm not going to let that happen again with anyone else. I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm going to be who I really am. And I'm going to figure out what that is. But right now I'm here with you. And I want to know where you are, what you need, and what you want to do."

She waited patiently for my answer. But after everything she said, I figured that I should just do what I wanted to do. Not think about it. Not say it out loud. And if she didn't like it, then she could just say so. And we could go back to packing.

So, I kissed her. And she kissed me back. And we lay down on the floor and kept kissing. And it was soft. And we made quiet noises. And kept silent. And still. We went over to the bed and lay down on all the things that weren't put in suitcases. And we touched each other from the waist up over our clothes. And then under our clothes. And then without clothes. And it was so beautiful. She was so beautiful. She took my hand and slid it under her pants. And I touched her. And I just couldn't believe it. It was like everything made sense. Until she moved her hand under my pants, and she touched me.

That's when I stopped her.

"What's wrong?" she asked. "Did that hurt?"

I shook my head. It felt good actually. I didn't know what was wrong.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to—"

"No. Don't be sorry," I said.

"But, I feel bad," she said.

"Please don't feel bad. It was very nice," I said. I was starting to get really upset.

"You're not ready?" she asked.

I nodded. But that wasn't it. I didn't know what it was.

"It's okay that you're not ready," she said. She was being really nice to me, but I was just feeling so bad.

"Charlie, do you want to go home?" she asked.

I guess I nodded because she helped me get dressed. And then she put on her shirt. And I wanted to kick myself for being such a baby. Because I loved Sam. And we were together. And I was ruining it. Just ruining it. Just terrible. I felt so terrible.

She took me outside.

"Do you need a ride?" she asked. I had my father's car. I wasn't drunk. She looked really worried.

"No, thanks."

"Charlie, I'm not going to let you drive like this."

"I'm sorry. I'll walk then," I said.

"It's two o'clock in the morning. I'm driving you home."

She went to another room to get the car keys. I just stood in the entry hall. I felt like I wanted to die.

"You're white as a sheet, Charlie. Do you need some water?"

"No. I don't know." I started to cry really hard.

"Here. Just lie down on the couch," she said.

She laid me down on the couch. She brought out a damp washcloth and put it on my forehead.

"You can sleep here tonight. Okay?"

"Okay."

"Just calm down. Take deep breaths."

I did what she told me. And just before I fell asleep, I said something.

"I can't do that anymore. I'm sorry," I said.

"It's okay, Charlie. Just go to sleep," Sam said.

But I wasn't talking to Sam anymore. I was talking to someone else.

What would you give to be Perfect?

Everyone has something, someone, somewhere else that they'd rather be. For four high school seniors, their goals of perfection are just as different as the paths they take to get there. Carat's parents' unrealistic expectations have already sent her twin brother, Conner, spiraling toward suicide. For her, "perfect" means rejecting their ideals to take a chance on a new kind of love. Kendra covets the perfect face and body—no matter what surgeries and drugs she needs to get them. To score his perfect home run—on the field and off—Sean will sacrifice more than he can ever win back. And Andre realizes that to follow his heart and achieve his perfect performance, he'll be living a life his ancestors would never have understood.

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.....looking through my window with binoculars or something is he? I want to know when you all went gay. Not only a whore, but a lezbo whore? When the fuck did that happen? No wonder you didn't want dick. Then again some lez like dildos.

Do you and your little butch girl use those? Because I would pay to watch. In fact, I bet I could round us a few friends....what do you think?

Page 454

Thinking about it all the way across the parking lot, through the big glass doors, along the marble floors, into the elevator. Sex in exchange for cash makes you a whore. What does sex in exchange for a shortcut to your dreams make you? Is there any difference? Then again what about sex in exchange for love? Some people fall in lust well before they fall in love, but it isn't impossible for love to trail sex. My little sister, as Xavier noticed, uses her body to get what she wants. Is my moral compass any truer? Why even worry about it? This Giles guy might be gay for all I know, ~~more reason to make him fuck me.~~

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Chad, Steroid Expert

Is also my supplier. And not just mine. He underwrites his living expenses dealing illegal substances. Steroids are just the tipping-off place.

I'm glad there's a sound explanation. Still, "So I can't have sex until I quit, or what?" What about all those pro athletes and their hot women?

Well, I wouldn't say that exactly. Haven't you heard of Viagra? He's got to be kidding. Viagra is definitely for eighty-year-old dicks, right?

Fuck it. Just say it. "Not an STD. I couldn't get one if I tried. See, the problem is, I can't get it up. Not even when I really want to. Not even when my girlfriend takes her clothes off and climbs all over me. I'm barely eighteen, and my dick acts like it's eighty. What's wrong?"

Chad grins. Dude, you know aboutroids and nut shrinkage, right? At my horrified grimace, he says: Too much artificial testosterone makes the real deal go away. That's one reason why you don't want to do too many cycles in a row. Stop using, things should work like they're supposed to again.

Wish I Could Say

I've fallen for the perfect girl,
but that would be
a lie. Or at least a gross exaggeration.

There's a lot about Jenna to love.
The way she looks,
of course, all curves and frothiness.

Cotton candy. Or cumulus clouds.
And when she turns
her focus on you, brother, you are king

and she is part lady-in-waiting, part
concubine. You want
to put her up on a pedestal, as long

as she's naked. We have gotten
naked a time or two,
and Lord help me, that girl has shown
me things most grown women
would blush at.
All that stuff goes in the plus column.

182

In The Minus Column

Loitering beneath the sweet fluff,
the wide-eyed faux
innocence, is something hard. Maybe

even just a little bit scary. A fallen angel,
perhaps. A creature
of the heavens, surviving in earthly shadow.

I don't see that part of her very often.
Just a bitchlike snap
at someone she might consider competition.

A misplaced remark, revealing under-
belly. But never directed
at me. At least, not yet. There's something

else, too. Something harder to define.
It has to do with the way
she can shift between demanding total
attention to turning herself off to the rest
of the world. Blanking
out everyone else completely. Even me.

183

Jenna Knows

A good burger restaurant inside the Grand Sierra. We have to walk through the casino to get there. I hook

my arm around her waist, claiming her. Not to mention keeping her a little more steady on her feet. She rocks slightly, exaggerating the sway of her hips. Heads turn and every old pervert in the place looks at me with envy.

Jenna puffs up on the attention. *Did you see that guy? I thought his eyeballs were gonna pop out of his head.*

I should feel proud, right? So why does my face flush, fever-hot, and blood roar in my ears? "Do you have to shake your ass like that? Those dudes probably think you're a hooker." Immediately, an apology

Yet I help myself to another nip before handing back the flask.

"Your mamma should have named you Delilah."

Hub? She takes a long pull and doesn't even cough as it goes down. What a girl. A crazy, soon-to-be

drunk girl. "You know, as in Samson and Delilah?" The rumble in my belly tells me I really need to eat.

Jenna shakes her head. *Samson is, like, in Greek mythology, right? We studied that in fifth grade.* She smiles.

"Actually, the story is in the Bible and... oh, never mind. You hungry? I am. Let's get food and then..."

Two people on a giant rubber band slingshot past the window, shrieking. It doesn't look fun either. "Then we'll see."

I Have Never Insisted

On Cara having sex with me.

She didn't seem ready for
the longest time, and being
in love with her meant more
than getting off with her.

It was enough to hold her.

Kiss her. Inhale the "her"
of her. Enough to gather
in the heat of her skin,
knowing that she was mine.

Then something changed.

That night in the truck,
something had opened
inside her—some sudden
bloom of womanhood I didn't

expect. She was a wildcat,
come into season—enough
to drive any man crazy,
and that's what I became
when I couldn't give her

266

what she wanted. Practically

begged for. Betrayed by
my own body! Thank God
she didn't think I was gay
or something. She gave me

another chance, and tonight

we will make serious love
right here, right now, on
Chad's sweat-reeking, not
real comfortable couch.

Those girls on the TV are

beautiful. But I've got
the real deal, stripped
down to nothing but skin,
beneath me. She moves like

an eel. Sinuous. Cautious.

My kiss is a question.
Her tongue answers.
Now she pushes my head
lower, asking for much more.

267

She tastes of soap and salt.

A knockout combination.

It makes me high. Makes
me thirsty. Makes me hungry
for even more. This could

easily become addiction.

Tonight my body hints

zero treachery. Tonight

it wants to go for hours.

"I love you," I promise,

though she can't doubt it.

I prove it with my mouth.

My fingers. My tongue.

This is her first time,

so I want her to be ready,

and I think she has to be.

"I don't want to hurt

you," I tell her. "Ever."

She is flushed, her skin

hot as summer sand.

268

I'm crazy again, this time

with the need to make

this all real. I lift myself

over her, working forearm.

Biceps. She closes her eyes,

moans as I move into place

right up against her sweet

spot. Pause at the resistance.

"I need you," I say, before

kissing her. Before going all

the way with her. One push

and we will be joined in

the most amazing way.

Connected by love. Now.

I have to have her now.

But just as I test the barrier,

everything screaming yes,

go, she opens her eyes.

And out of her mouth

comes a single word: *No*.

269

I Heard Her Wrong

I know I did, and even if
I didn't, I know she means
now, not no, so I go ahead
and push. Hard. Oh. Oh.
And her eyes pop wide

and she screams, *Stop. I said
no. Stop, goddamn it.* And
her little fists try to pound
against my chest, which
only feels good and I can't

stop, even if I wanted to,
and I so don't, so I won't.
And she starts to cry and
I don't understand so I tell
her, over and over again,

"I love you. I love you.
I love you." Rhythmic.
In perfect time with my
body's rhythmic beat.
"I love you. I love you . . ."

There's A Strange Buzzing

In my ears. With a final
thrust, there's a brilliant
flash and the emptying
is syncopeated. My head
clears as the mist slowly lifts.

And I see what I have done.
Cara lies, stiff as old toast,
tear-glossed eyes staring
up at me. *I told you no,*
she whispers. *Why . . . ?*

Fuck. Fuck. What
the hell just happened?
"You wanted this! You
told me so. In fact, you
practically raped me . . ."

She sobs, and her entire
body shakes with the force
of it. *No. You raped me.*
Her voice slices, tempered
steel. *I told you to stop.*

DNA Evidence

Soaks into Chad's lumpy

sofa in sticky, red ropes.

But I didn't rape her.

"Cara. We both wanted

this. I love you so much.

Please don't say I raped

you. I've waited for this

for months and months,

until I was sure you were

ready. And I was more than

sure tonight." Cable TV moans

and groans remind us both

of how this little episode

went down. I nod toward

the noise. "You even liked . . ."

She strong-arms me aside,

jumps up, stalks over to

turn off the tube, blood

trickling down her legs.

Bastard. You set me up.

272

I have no idea what she means.

Sudden anger is a tornado,

hurting through my veins.

"Look. I'm not sure exactly

what happened here, but you

are everything to me. Even

if you weren't, you have

to realize you can't get

a guy all worked up, then

tell him to stop. It's not fair."

Cara snatches her clothes

from the floor, stomps off

to find the bathroom.

Rule one of the Rapist's

Handbook. Blame the victim.

I run to catch her, grab

her shoulders, swing her

around, pinch her cheeks.

"You shut the fuck up, hear

me? I. Did. Not. Rape. You."

273

When I Let Go

Of her face, crimson finger-

shaped marks remain. Jesus.

"I'm sorry, Cara. Really,

I am." I reach for her, but

she slaps my hand away.

Don't touch me. Ever again.

I can't believe I trusted you

enough to be here like this with

you. Can't believe I thought

I was in love with you. Stupid!

"Cara, please. I didn't mean

to hurt you. I wanted to

make you feel special.

You are in love with me.

You have to be. I—I . . ."

Her lips curl in a feral snarl.

May I go now? I'd like to get

rid of the . . . residue. She

doesn't wait for an answer,

but leaves me to consider

what all this means. Have I lost

her? No way, right? She'll think

things over, and understand

that this was a mutual fuckup.

Of course she will. And I'll figure

out a way to make it all up to her.

Losing Cara would mean losing

pretty much everything good

about me. I've programmed

my entire existence around

constructing a life with her.

College. Career. Marriage.

Family. Together. With Cara.

Because what good are

any of those things alone?

Wounded

And I don't even know what
the fuck happened. Everything
was going perfectly. Graduating
with a high B average? Check.
Playing top-flight baseball?

Check. Offered a scholarship
to play Cardinal ball? Check.
Accepted into Stanford, an
almost impossible goal
to realize? Check. Best of

all, after waiting for a year,
after finding a way to make
sure performance would
not be an issue, being right
there with Cara, both of us

naked and hot and ready
to go, finally having sex
with the girl I love more
than life, only to be accused
of rape? Check. And check!!

314

I Thought She Was Over It

When she finally called.
Believed shed forgiven
me. How could I have
been so wrong? About
everything. I thought she

loved me, too. How could
I have given my heart to
someone still-frozen?
Looking back, I see that she
never felt about me the way

I felt about her. Talk about
one-sided affection. What in
God's name do I do now?
Turn down Stanford? I could
have gone east to school.

Some place far, far away
from Cara. No, damn it.
After all I went through
to get in there, I'm going to
Stanford. With or without Cara.

315

André

PEOPLE WHO ARE IN LOVE

beginner run where I can pick
up enough speed to catch Duvall.
It isn't hard, considering he's
waiting for me at the fringe of
a small stand of cedars. He waves

rather frantically for me to join
him. *Check it out*, he says,
pointing into the trees. *Jesus,*
O'Connell, you turned her, like,
gay. What's he talking about?

I lift my goggles, look hard
at where his finger is aimed.
Two girls on snowboards . . .
wait. What the fuck? It's Cara,
for sure. She's with that girl, the one

with spiky hair, now frosted
blue. They are chest to chest,
and they are kissing. Not just
kissing like friends do. Kissing
like people who are in love do.

420

Expect certain things.
Time together, to learn
all there is to know about
each other. Falling in
love

can happen to complete
strangers. Staying in love
requires being best friends
and
that means accepting the person
beneath the veneer. What
complicates things is
sex.

Loveless, it's easy. Insert
Tab A into Slot B. Enjoy what
happens naturally. But under
love's influence, the directions
aren't
quite so straightforward.
It is then, striving for perfection,
you realize that all Slot Bs are not
interchangeable.

421

I'm Thinking About It Now

Thinking about it all the way across
the parking lot, through the big glass

doors, along the marble floors, into
the elevator. Sex in exchange for cash

makes you a whore. What does sex
in exchange for a shortcut to your dreams

make you? Is there any difference?
Then again, what about sex in exchange

for love? Some people fall in lust well
before they ever fall in love, but it isn't

impossible for love to trail sex.
My little sister, as Xavier noticed, uses

her body to get what she wants.
Is my moral compass any truer?

Why even worry about it? This Gilles
guy might be gay for all I know, more

454

interested in Xavier than me. Ha.

Wonder if Xavier would give the guy

head if it meant landing the gig. He knocks,
and I can't tell from the first glance if the guy

who comes to the door is gay or not.
Come in. Come in. His obvious appraisal

(of me, not Xavier) makes my stomach
lurch. *You must be Kendra. Xavier, you were*

so right. She is a knockout. Come in.
(If he says that again, I am so leaving.)

Let's talk. He slips an arm around
my waist, herds me toward a big sofa.

I glance over my shoulder at Xavier, who
gives an A-OK sign. I do not feel A-OK.

I feel halfway nauseous. And totally
set up. Gilles sits me on the sofa. *Let me*

455

Seam

A Thin Strip

show you my new line, Teen In-Style. He opens a big photo album, flips through the pages.

Tell me what you think. Do you like this one?

He is very close. His leg pushes against mine.

One hand lights on my knee. The fashion he shows me is smart. The idea is to market

to teens who don't have unlimited budgets, who want clothing that makes a statement.

His hand makes a statement, starting a slow crawl up my leg. Teens who are innocent, yet

bold. It reaches my inner thigh. Girls who want to look exactly like you. . . .

I could protest. Should protest. Xavier should protest. But when I glance at him,

he is smiling. Fingers play at the thin strip of fabric between my legs. And I let them.

456

Divides a healthy dose of self-esteem from a fatal overdose of conceit.

Vanity.

It's a high-wire act requiring exceptional balance. Complete control.

invites

Straddling that tightrope

a bone-smashing fall, death the preferable outcome. Irreversible brain damage

incites

force-feeding pity parties, everyone wondering if you sleep in paradise or fight for stability in a maelstrom of

insanity.

457