

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Lannon, Library Director; Board of Library Trustees
FROM: Jamie Penney, Head of Collection Services
DATE: July 27, 2023
RE: Recommendation for RFR of “Tricks” by Ellen Hopkins

On Friday, June 23, 2023, the Reading Public Library (RPL) and the Board of Library Trustees received an email Request for Reconsideration of Materials (RFR) of the book “Tricks” by Ellen Hopkins with the requested action to remove the book from the library or move it out of the Teen collection. On Monday, July 10, 2023, RPL received a second RFR for the same book and same request for action. RPL staff notified the Board. The Collection Services team assessed this title.

RECOMMENDATION

This title conforms to RPL’s Collection Development Policy, is shelved appropriately, and should remain in the collection.

BACKGROUND

As a reminder, the RPL [Collection Development Policy](#) states “[t]he-selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed.” The RPL selection process includes the use of authoritative professional reviews, popular reviews, publishers’ catalogs, standard lists of basic works, firsthand examination, and patron requests. Additionally, print and non-print materials meet one or more of these criteria.

- Relevance to the library’s mission and core values
- Current usefulness, interest, and/or permanent value
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the existing collection
- Standards of quality in content and format
- Price

REVIEWS

Source: Jill Heritage Maza. *School Library Journal*, vol 55, issue 10, p128. Oct 1 2009.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid&custid=rdg&db=afh&AN=44598916&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Excerpt: “Gr 9 Up— Five teens desperately seek to find their way through the darkness in Hopkins’s latest epic novel in verse. ... As they near rock bottom, their narratives begin to intersect. It is only when their paths converge that a glimmer of redemption appears out of the hopelessness. From the punch delivered by the title, to the teens’ raw voices, to the visual impact of the free verse, Hopkins once again produces a graphic, intense tale that will speak to mature teens.”

Source: Carton, Debbie. *Booklist*, vol 105, number 22, p62. Aug 1 2009.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid&custid=rdg&db=afh&AN=44154200&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Excerpt: Grades 10-12 Five teenagers from all over the U.S.—three girls, two boys, some straight, some gay—end up as prostitutes in Las Vegas in this multiple-voiced novel in verse. ... Hopkins has never shied away from tough subjects; descriptions of sex, while not overly graphic, are realistic and will likely provoke controversy. A master of storytelling through free verse, she uses multiple poetic devices to construct well-defined, distinctive voices for the five teens.”

AWARDS

Rainbow award 2010

RPL AND NOBLE COLLECTION HOLDINGS

- Level assigned by publisher: Young Adult
- Print copy ordered February 9, 2010
- Digital Audiobook acquired January 13, 2010
- Circulation data

Copies RPL	2	Copies NOBLE	6
Current Year circ RPL	1	Current Year circ NOBLE	7
Total circ RPL	28	Total circ NOBLE	123

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

COMMUNIUTY	COPIES	LOCATION
Andover	0	
Lynnfield	0	
North Reading	0	
Peabody	0	
Stoneham	0	
Wakefield	0	
Wilmington	0	
Woburn	1	Young Adult

Board of Library Trustees
 Reading Public Library
 Tricks - Public Comment Emails Received as of 12:00 PM Thursday, August 10, 2023

#	Subject Line	Last Name	Date Received	Time Received
1	REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS	REDACTED	6/23/2023	6:34 PM
2	Fwd: Tricks - Request for Reconsideration	REDACTED	7/10/2023	9:49 PM
3	Fwd: future Agenda item	Docktor	7/10/2023	9:34 AM
4	Fwd: Monday Meeting	Cloney	8/8/2023	12:15 PM
5	Banning of Books	Tolman	8/9/2023	10:55 AM
6	Attempt to ban books in Reading	Rienzo	8/9/2023	11:00 AM
7	Tricks	Theo	8/9/2023	11:05 AM
8	Banning books	Hersey	8/9/2023	11:05 AM
9	Book Ban	Bacon	8/9/2023	11:06 AM
10	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library!	No Name	8/9/2023	11:09 AM
11	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	Deb	8/9/2023	11:09 AM
12	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	Mosier	8/9/2023	11:11 AM
13	Book ban	Rimkunas	8/9/2023	11:20 AM
14	Book ban	Heinemann	8/9/2023	11:21 AM
15	Reject the book challenge	Scola	8/9/2023	11:33 AM
16	Tricks and other books	Baker	8/9/2023	11:37 AM
17	(no subject)	Madden	8/9/2023	11:39 AM
18	Book Ban	Stephens	8/9/2023	11:50 AM
19	Another book banning?	King	8/9/2023	11:51 AM
20	Book ban? NO!	Mosier	8/9/2023	11:56 AM
21	Book Bans	Galiza	8/9/2023	12:07 PM
22	No Book Banning Please	Myatt	8/9/2023	12:14 PM
23	Banned Book Target - Tricks	Curtin	8/9/2023	12:31 PM
24	Please reject banning attempt for Tricks	Estes	8/9/2023	12:40 PM
25	Please Reject Book Ban Attempt	Whiting	8/9/2023	12:55 PM
26	Support for keeping "Tricks" at the library	King	8/9/2023	12:59 PM
27	Tricks	Harrington	8/9/2023	1:11 PM
28	Books in the Library	Mathieu	8/9/2023	1:17 PM
29	Censorship threatens democracy	Woods	8/9/2023	1:27 PM
30	Ban Attempt	Magoon	8/9/2023	1:44 PM
31	Book ban attempt yet again	Maughan	8/9/2023	2:05 PM
32	Against banning Tricks	Mayberry	8/9/2023	2:14 PM
33	Please, no banning of books	Harrington	8/9/2023	3:07 PM
34	Tricks	Conti	8/9/2023	3:12 PM
35	Tricks	Michele	8/9/2023	4:19 PM
36	Book Banning	Collins	8/9/2023	4:49 PM
37	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	McSweeney	8/9/2023	4:52 PM
38	Tricks	Quinn	8/9/2023	5:08 PM
39	Book Ban Redux	Lenart	8/9/2023	5:27 PM
40	Banning books	Harrington	8/9/2023	6:25 PM
41	Please do not ban any books	Baker	8/9/2023	7:02 PM
42	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	Cuffe	8/9/2023	8:14 PM
43	Please Do NOT Ban Tricks	Flynn	8/9/2023	8:14 PM
44	Book Banning Tricks	McEachern	8/9/2023	8:15 PM
45	book ban	Bennett	8/9/2023	9:21 PM
46	Tricks	Wallace	8/9/2023	9:46 PM
47	Banning books	Moore	8/9/2023	10:44 PM
48	In support of Tricks	Tucci	8/10/2023	9:29 AM
49	Book bans	Lindemer	8/10/2023	11:03 AM
50	Stand strong against attempts at censorship	Loscalzo	8/10/2023	11:29 AM
51	book banning & August 14th meeting	Clopper	8/10/2023	11:33 AM



Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Re: Fw: REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

1 message

Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Wed, Jun 28, 2023 at 9:40 AM

To:

Cc: rpltrustee@noblenet.org

Thank you for your email. It has been received and forwarded to the Library Director.

On Tue, Jun 27, 2023 at 10:31 PM wrote:

Can you confirm you received my email below sent 06/23/2023?

Sent: Friday, June 23, 2023 at 6:34 PM

From:

To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org, rdgadmin@noblenet.org

Subject: REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

I could not type text into your form (it is not a fillable PDF) so I pasted all text from your form, with my responses, into this email.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form to the Director's attention. This process is serious and can take time.

The item and the form will be reviewed by the library director and the Board of Library Trustees, using qualitative and quantitative data and assessments of the material. If the material meets the criteria of selection, it will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group.

Requests for Reconsideration are reported to the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and the American Library Association (ALA).

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights. The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues. The criteria used by the professional staff when

selecting materials are listed in the Collection Development Policy.

The Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

It is deemed the responsibility of parents and caregivers to determine what their children may read, watch or listen to, and selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents and caregivers consider inappropriate.

The great diversity of the library's customers means that the library must do more than provide materials for the common denominator in order to be effective.

Reading residents may request the Board of Library Trustees reconsider library materials.

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblenet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request.

Amended 5/10/2022

Request for Reconsideration of Materials 2022

FORM TO REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Date: 6/23/23

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

You represent: Myself

MATERIAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

Format: Book

Title: Tricks

Author: Ellen Hopkins

Call #: ISBN: 9781416950073

1. What brought this material to your attention? A friend.
2. Have you examined or read the entire item? Yes. If not, why?
3. What concerns you about the material? Please be specific - See my answer below.
4. Are there materials you suggest that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic? - No.
5. What action are you requesting the Board of Library Trustees to consider? – Remove this book from the library. If the library is not going to do this, I request the book be moved out of kids and or teen section.

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblenet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request.

What concerns you about the material? Please be specific -See below.

This book contains sexually explicit excerpts involving minors. There are also excerpts containing explicit child rape and abuse; illegal drug abuse; graphic violence; underage alcohol consumption; and adult and child prostitution. Providing this book to children and or teens promotes and or legitimizes those types of behavior at worst and at a minimum introduces the disgusting content to children that are to young to safely process it.

Profanity Count in this book

Ass 4

Bitch 6

Dick 1

Fuck 16

Shit 5

Below are the page numbers and text that are objectionable.

Page 6 ...Why would God need a pecker, anyway?

29 Swollen with desire. Demanding. Lips still locked to mine, she murmured, What if I give you this...? Her hand found my own, urged it along her body's contours, all the way to the place between her legs, the one I had never asked for. ...In the heat of the moment, I even got hard, especially when Janet touched me, dropped onto her knees, lowered my zipper, started to do what I never suspected she knew how to do. Yes...

48 ...considering how buzzed we got. Okay, it wasn't the first time I'd smoked weed, but I'd rarely smoked myself so close to outer space before.

50 We were making out hot and heavy. He started to unbutton my blouse. I let him. And when he unzipped my jeans, I helped him help me out of them. Snared by the heat of his kiss, I barely noticed when he slipped out of his own Levis. Skin urgent against skin, only panties and boxers between us, I was ready to shed that final thin barrier, allow him access to the most private part of me,...

53 Too much booze. Too many smokes. Way too many pills. Speed. Downers. Everything in between.

58 "...then all they're after is free booze and an easy lay."

74 Let alone given me an up-close view of those tasty-looking tits. Something twitches behind my zipper. Glad I'm standing behind the counter. ...Ronnie takes a deep breath, rounding the mounds I can't quit staring at. ...Only one thing was really good between us.... That twitch again.

75 Ronnie dips even lower, giving me a quick nipple shot before drawing back and straightening. ...Thinking with my dick. That's for sure. So what is Ronnie thinking with? That makes the dick in question think even harder.

76 We can keep the refreshments in my car. And as for dessert...Stop that!

77 I have to admit I have thought about boinking her more than once, while taking solo care of a hard-on. Oh yeah, the big M. I probably do it more than I should, and Ronnie is definite boner bait, at least when I'm left to my own imagination instead of Internet porn. Viva la webcams!

83 By the Time we reach Frozen

75, we've def gotten high together. This guy I work with scores really good bud, and he's not above dealing a little to me. "So what do you think about the smoke?" ...It's awesome. Then she reaches over, touches my leg. Tonight will be fun. Thanks for taking me. Her hand strokes my thigh gently.

93 "And I want to make love with you soon." My body aches with wanting that very thing. 97 My Hand, Disguised as Andrew's hand, moves lightly down my neck, over collarbone, breastbone. Goose bumps rise in unusual places, and my body tingles in a completely foreign way. Because of Andrew. But he's not here. I pretend he is and let "his" hands explore the rounds of my breasts, move in tighter and tighter orbits, and now fingers circle the hard center nubs, raised like it's cold in here. It's not. I'm burning up. Delirious Page Content with raw need. My hand wants to slide lower, to a place I know nothing about except what they call it in books. And suddenly it comes to me how completely inept I'll be when Andrew and I finally share that warm feather bed, with comfy quilts and pillows we can fall into. I Turn on the Light Go to the computer, try to avoid looking at the Calvary screen saver. Jesus, hanging on the cross, staring down at his poor crying mother. Mama downloaded that, no doubt specifically to deter the kind of Internet exploration I have in mind

108 Sex that is more than mutual masturbation. ...individual masturbation was the bulk of my sexual experience. There were a few short chapters of "touch here, I'll touch you there" in my very slim book of adolescent sexual escapades, but nothing more.

110 Who's on top and who's not means nothing when you aren't completely positive that you belong in either position. But that night, one kiss and need struck with enough force to erase all

doubt, all hesitation. I didn't wait for Loren to say it was okay, didn't ask him to show me what to do. Pure animal instinct led me just where I wanted to go. It wasn't tender. ..."But I want to do it again." It was a long few minutes before I could. Wasn't pretty. It was a raw, naked joining, energized from years of dreaming about what it could be like, or should be like. I gave, he took, and when it was over, like Adam, I shook at the forbidden taste of new awareness.

139 Wonder how hot his monkey is.

128 Guess he has fuck buddies, though.

137 Besides, maybe Iris would stop tricking for the right guy.

150 ...I suspected, Alyssa is not very happy about Ronnie jumping my bones...

150 ...I thought she'd shit on the spot. We were sitting together (okay, like glued together, front to front, Ronnie in my lap) on the grass at school. ...I'm not sure if she was talking to Ronnie or me, but Ronnie jumped right down her throat. What does it look like we're doing, Alyssa? Having tea?

151 We Had Sex The very first night we went out together... Pissed off a bunch of people...

153 But he is a partier. Drinks like no serious athlete should... ...Vince and I Have Shared A bottle or two, a fistful of doobs, pipes and pipes and pipes. Tonight, we'll pass around all three at his regular Friday poker game. ...Suppose it could be because I'm usually the one supplying the weed. ...Booze isn't his only bad habit, though. Pot. Pills. Crack. Probably other stuff...

155 Fucking meds. ...Talk about jumpy. Freakin crack is famous for that.

156 I have to be careful not to let my own toking get so out of hand. I swear I never had a clue she had made friends with the pipe. Best thing about it is what a little horndog she turns into when she's smoking. Boo frigging yah! Whatever I want. Page Content

159 Except this time he smells like cheap brew. Thirteen! How did he even get hold of the stuff? Ripped it off, no doubt.

161 The Game Hasn't Started Yet Four or five guys are drinking. Smoking. Snorting something off the glass-topped coffee table.

161 You brought some of that good green, didn't you? As I suspected, the key to my invite. ...Six of us belly up to the table, and I light a big fat one.

163 My head is Tilt-A-Whirling with substance abuse, but more because of finishing off the evening as a winner. I won at poker. And I'm about to win at something even better. Ronnie comes to the glass, opens it, lets me inside. Her room smells of roses, and she has nothing on but a thigh-length shirt. She puts a finger to her lips, but there's no need for words once we fall together into her bed. Night slips away.

178 Andrew stops kissing me, and his eyes ask what he's afraid to, and my eyes answer in the same way, so he takes my hand, leads me down the hall to the bedroom that I would have picked as his without analyzing. It has a big feather bed, with massive quilts and pillows I have to fall into. With Andrew. ...But when he kisses me, I'm shaking, and there are tears in my eyes. We don't have to, he whispers. "I know. I want to. I'm just..." Unsure. I'm completely unsure about my body. What if he hates it? But now he touches me. His hands are tentative, and I remember that this is new for him, too. Is this okay? he asks. Tell me what you like. He kisses me as he picks me up, lays me gently on the bed. A slow, mutual exploration begins. As we learn together, the fear falls away,

and sheer exhilaration-- like standing on the very edge of a cliff, with the wind in your face-- replaces it. He likes my body, and I love his, and there are only a few seconds of pai, before waves of pleasure. Wave after swelling wave of everything right. Wave after wave of love.

186 Hetero couples wander the sidewalks. Looking for a threesome?

187 Then it all became about sex. More sex. Better sex. Unusual sex. Like most couples, I guess.

196 The price tag is regular sex.

206 What's in the Baggie Is a half-dollar-sized chunk of something yellowish white. It sparkles in the sunlight. Lucas slices off a thin section and tells me, Cocaine, clean as you can find anywhere. My brother knows the importer. Wait until you try it. ...Weed is one thing. Cocaine is another.

206 You've done coke before, right? No? Oh, baby, you're gonna love it. You're totally gonna fly. Don't worry. He grins like a leprechaun. You're safe flying with me. Mostly anyway. I Watch Lucas Suck two long, thin, sparkly yellowish lines up his nose. Then he hands the picture to me. Not too hard or you'll sneeze. I inhale gently, one line up the right nostril, the other up the left. Immediately, both sides of my nose go cold and numb. Now, just like that, my heart is racing and the hairs on my arms rise, sending little chills throughout my entire body. OMG. No wonder people like this drug. I look at Lucas, who's watching me carefully. "More, please." He laughs. Careful now. A little of this goes a long way. But he indulges me, and himself, with two more. Every nerve jumps to attention. I can't feel my mouth or nose, but other parts of my body are begging to be touched. Lucas indulges them, too, with his hands and his mouth. I love how he kisses, love how Page Content his fingers move over my body. Everything is hard. Everything is warm. No, cold. No, warm. I've never felt so alive. Never felt so in love. I glance at the clock. Not even one. We have plenty of time. But I don't want to do it here on the couch. "Let's go to my bedroom, okay?" I Don't Have to Ask Twice Lucas scoops me up into his toned arms, carries me down the hall, like a groom clutching his bride. The thought makes me blush, and I have no clue why. I rest my head against his chest for the entire ten-second journey. Then he lays me gently on the bed, unbuttons my shirt, peels back the blue satin, stares at what he has uncovered. I am totally exposed, totally flying high, and yet I do, in fact, feel safe with Lucas, even as he lowers himself over me. Every ounce of me wants what he's about to do, and yet for just an instant, regret stings and I say, "Wait." He pauses. What? You don't want me to stop, do you? Because I don't think I can. I need you. See? He lowers my hand to feel his need, and my heart screams, "Hurry!" Still, my brain whispers, "You can never take this back." I look up into Lucas's eyes. "I don't want you to stop. But please don't go too fast. I'm afraid..." Afraid it will hurt. Afraid it will change me. Afraid... afraid... the word humps in time with my heartbeat, even as Lucas soothes, I'll go easy. And he does. And I'm ready. And it does feel good, despite the pain, because it also hurts. And then, it's just over. Still Buzzed And yet also drained, we lie together for a while. I don't know if it was good for Lucas or not. I want to ask, but I don't want to ask because if I do and he says no, it will leave a scar. I don't even know if it was good for me, because I'm not sure what "good sex" is. Your first time probably isn't so good, right?

212 And you might want to wash your sheets. You're not on your period, are you? "No, not for..." Now I notice how the front of him is splashed red, and the crimson stain flowering on my bed. My face burns. "It's not my period." How could he not know that the first time can make a girl bleed? Or did he maybe not believe...?

216 ...another of Iris's badass lays, one I can't forget. I do my best never to think of him, what he did. Try never to remember that place in my childhood, but sometimes it pops into view despite all my efforts o keep it hidden. I was almost ten, and we lived in Pahrump, the butthole of Nevada.

Iris worked at a cathouse, making money her usual way, only without walking the streets. Walt was a miner, and though he was a regular paying customer at Mimi's, he had an appetite for younger meat. Iris was younger then too, but even at twenty-six, she was way too old for Walt. Still, he paid for her, then he followed her home. She let him move in for a while. I remember his sour sweat, coming in after working backhoe. I remember how he touched Iris, and how she didn't care that her kids could see. I remember his Marlboro breath falling all down around me when he said, Let me show you something. On Another Day It wouldn't have happened, couldn't have happened. Too many witnesses around. But for some odd reason, that particular afternoon, Iris had taken the other kids to play in the park. You stay and start dinner, she said. We won't be gone very long. I didn't mind. I was too old for swings, and I've always liked spending time by myself. But it wasn't more than ten minutes before Walt came through the door. He didn't ask where Iris was, or why the house was so quiet. He didn't say one word. I opened a can of refried beans, spooned them into a pot. I had no real reason to be Page Content afraid. So why did my hands shake? I kept my back to him but could feel his eyes, carving into me. Finally, he started toward the living room. Bring me a beer, sweets. I dug one from the fridge. But he wasn't on the couch, as expected. Back here, he called from Iris's room. He was already out of his jeans. I didn't know much then, but I knew there was something very wrong about that. Still, I took him the beer, holding my breath against his stench. He grabbed my hand, jerked me hard against him. Let me show you something. I tried to run, but he was faster. Tried to fight. He was stronger. Tried to scream. He choked my cries. When He Finished (Thank God it didn't take long), he rolled off me with a grunt. Reached for his beer. Slammed it. Ripped and pried, swallowed up by the shame of what that meant, I crawled into the bathroom to scrub away the evidence. Not that I'd dare tell anyone Not when he followed me, stood in the doorway, watchin me, finally said, Tell a soul, I'll do your sister too. He knew that was a bigger threat than saying he'd hurt Iris or some other TV kind of shit. Because I knew he would come back for Mary Ann. She was only eight. If he did this to her, she'd die for sure. It had almost killed me. I'll probably always link sex with pain.

222 Not Sure If Harry is tuned in to how Iris earns her booze and pill money.

224 "Yeah, well, least I'm not a whore! Wait. 'Whore' is too good a word for you and what you do. 'Hooker' works much better."

227 There is no more, no "let's have sex," which leaves me both content and confused. I think you need a drink, she says.

230 Only booze goes down and stays.

231 A little bouillon (takes care of the protein requirement, right?) watered down with vodka. And for dessert, stiff megashots of gin. Hey, someone besides Cory should drink it.

232 Like staying alive just one more fucking day. So Cory Drinks Way too much. Pickling his brain, and much too young to end up relish. But how can I say anything when I drink? And more. I smoke. Snort. drink? And more. I smoke. Snort. When Cory and I finish off Jack's dwindling booze stash, scoring more won't be a problem. Vinnie will happily buy. At least as long as I keep bringing bud to the Friday night games.

246 We have learned a lot about each other. How to touch. Where to kiss. I have taught him as much as he has taught me, all through mutual experimentation. Mad sex scientists, that's us. There have been clumsy moments, yes. But they are rare. Few. The worst was when it suddenly came to us that, swept downstream by a flood of desire we hadn't used protection the first time. But either I'm sterile or the timing was right, because three days later I started my period. ...we don't have to have sex every time we see each other, do we?

255 Her voice drips icicles. I believe you're confusing love and desire. Do you really think that man is in love with you? What he wants... Once again, her eyes travel over me, trying to look under my clothes to the sin she intuits beneath them. He wants your innocence. I Page Content will not let you succumb to temptation. She is past Papa, hands moving toward me. They fall. I don't dare try to defend myself. I've been here before. Tears sting my eyes. From the pain of her blows. And from the heartbreak tomorrow holds. ...Face bruised, eyes swollen almost shut from crying, no way can I go

257 Let me see what she did. His hands are kind as they soothe the bruises... ...How could anyone do something like that to their child? he demands.

268 What's calling is a stiff shot of good old' Kentucky bourbon. Maybe Loren left a little behind.

273 The first drink is on me. What's your pleasure?

275 A gulp of bourbon clears it, raises a nice, warm buzz.

277 Four courses of French cuisine and two bottles of wine later, my stomach is churning with rich food, my head buzzing with alcohol.

287 "Let's go find the alcohol." I don't wait for Paige's response, just push through the crowd, into the house. ...I work my way through the human knot, stopping twice to take a hit off lit blunts. By the time I reach he kitchen, I've got a nice little pot buzz going on, something to mellow the fog of anger.

290 First I Pour A hefty shot (okay, more like four) of Cuervo Gold. No need to bother with salt or limes, no worries about tequila burn going down. It feels good.

291 I totally wanted to pop your cherry. You were my first virgin, and you'll probably be my last. Because...sorry, but virgin sex really isn't very good. ..."F-fuck you!..." ...One more gulp and I repeat, "Fuck you!"

303 They'll be home soon. Not like ice cream takes forever. Only longer than rape. Fuck!

310 ... Alex and me in back, sipping rum from a water bottle...

314 Ronnie rises on her tiptoes, lifts her slick, honey-sweet lips to meet mine. It's the sweetest kiss ever, but it soon becomes more. I lock the door, guide her to my bed, and for maybe the very first time, sex is more than getting off. This time, sex feels like love. ...She undulates seductively, the rise and fall of her body like salty waves beneath my own. Another first, this time no faking climbing higher and higher, until she finishes with an amazing gush and tears of satisfaction. I love you, too, she exhales softly. We lie, tangled together, unmoving, unspeaking. And we both know this is what sex should be.

316 I've never had a girl in here. He probably thinks I'm taking care of business, solo. ...I kiss Ronnie's face, her neck, lick the shimmer of sweat from the deep fold between her breasts. She sighs, and that makes me want more.

319 The three of us get drunk together...

321 A big, fat joint is calling my name. ...Bud and Booze May not exactly cure what ails ya, but partner 'em up and they'll definitely make you forget it for a while.

324 The Pot Buzz Should make me feel better, but all it does is combine with the alcohol to make loneliness hit like a freight train. Page Content

332 He creeps toward me, baiting, pallid tongue circling his mouth suggestively. Because I like you. He puts a berry to my lips. And because you're beautiful. Instinctively I suck the fruit onto my tongue, crush it against the roof of my mouth, go weak at the intense rush of pleasure. "Thank you." It comes out a whisper. "I promise not to tell." Jerome Isn't Quite Finished He takes my hand, caresses it gently before placing the other two berries on my palm. If you're really good at keeping secrets...His eyes bore into mine. Something feral pacing there. We could have a little fun. If you be good to me, I'll be really good to you. Strawberries are just the beginning. Cheese. Meat. Chocolate. Maybe even some shampoo to use instead of that vile soap. He touches my hair. I bet it's pretty when it's clean. I bet it smells like rain. Here now. What did I say? Don't cry. ...Pain throbs. No, not pain, not even agony. Something there is no word for. Something I can't fight. Can't fight. Can't. All I can think to do is say, "S-sorry." My head spins. My legs go numb. Jerome catches me as I collapse, and my tears soak into his bleached white shirt. Okay, baby, he soothes. Go ahead and cry. I should jerk away, out of his arms, but his gentle rock cradles my loneliness. There is nurturing here, and it comes to me, with a whoosh like sudden wind, that there just might be a way out after all. And that way could very well begin and end with Jerome. So When He Kisses The top of my head, I stay perfectly still against him. And when his hands begin a slow journey over the landscape of my body, I grit my teeth. Do not protest. Will not complain. Forgive me, Andrew. Please understand. It's my only way back to you. But I won't give him everything. I go as far as to let him open my blouse, touch beneath my bra. Now he kisses down my neck, to the skin he has just exposed. Drawn tight up against him, I feel him grown hard against my thigh. Now it's he who shakes. Shivers with hunger, and just like that, I am in control. I push him away, but tenderly, like a mother convincing the infant at her breast that he's had enough. I make my voice light. "That's all you get for three strawberries." He is pliable. Clay. He smiles, clearly into the game this has unmistakably become. Fair enough. Father would probably miss me now anyway. Just one question...He helps himself to a final taste. What will you give me for ice cream? I back away, closing buttons. Reach down deep for the "inner whore" Father claims all women harbor inside. I smile. "Haagen-Dazs or store brand?" The Door Locks Behind Jerome, who promised to see what I can do about Cherry Garcia. Dirtied, I drop to the floor, tuck my back into a corner, as if walls could protect me. Lord, please forgive this sin. What I've done. What I may do, though I'm not exactly sure what that might be. All I know is I have to escape this place, run far, far away. From here. ...Hungry. I glance at the bowl on the table, oatmeal grown granite cold inside it. I want pancakes. An omelet with sausage. I want the key to this unbarred cell. Jerome has perhaps offered it, if I will only reach for it. I close my eyes. Think of Mary Magdalene. What was her prison? And how far did she go to get the key? ...Sorry, Mama. Making love with Andrew didn't make me a whore. But sending me here might very well do exactly that. I have nothing to lose. You've already stolen everything Page Content important. Made me an outcast. Tossed me into this wilderness prison. And now the question becomes: How far will I go to get the key? To Know That I need to find out what Father has in store for me. We meet every afternoon except on Sunday (no work on the Sabbath), for "prayerful counseling." So far, it's the only time I'm allowed out of my room, into the sunlight, the sage-tainted air. There are two long, low buildings, with rows of doors just like mine. I'm not the only one here. Once in a while, I see other kids, working alone in the garden or shoveling manure from the chicken coops. Punishment? My guess is reward. ...A large house looms in the distance. Father's, no doubt.

347 Thinking of Loren Makes me want liquor. ...there's usually beer in the fridge, and the afternoon is hot for June. A cold brew sounds pretty damn fine.

348 ...now it's Miller time! I reach into the fridge, find a frosty can, pop the top, take a long swallow.

357 ...I've decided if being a real man means smashing someone in the face or turning your back on a person because of their sexuality, I'll just stay a girl.

370 Getting high. "You don't happen to have any pot, do you?" Bryn has never offered to get high with me. ...I do have some Valium, if you're a little nervous. In there. He points at the center console. Valium? Why not? "I'm not exactly nervous. But a good buzz never hurt anyone, right?" I pop one, wait for it to kick in, watching the ocean's heave. By the time we reach Bryn's chosen location, I'm feeling pretty darn fine.

371 He unpacks his gear, then checks me out, all up and down. Take off the bra and panties, okay? We want a glimpse--a hint-- of what's under all that white. I do as instructed, allow Bryn to position me exactly the way he wants. He sits me, skirt tucked provocatively between my bent legs, and when he goes to move my arms, his hand brushes against the fabric covering my breasts. My nipples go hard immediately. Lovely, he says, assessing. Exactly what I'm after. Then he kisses me sweetly. Exactly what I'm after He makes me feel like a real model--beautiful, every man's desire. When he's finished with his camera, he lays me back on a thick blanket. You are exceptionally lovely, he says, brushing sand from my hair. He settles beside me, props himself on one elbow. Bryn's free hand begins a slow exploration of my body, over the sheer fabric, tracing each curve. You don't mind, do you? Eyes closed to the lowering sun, brain suspended on a Valium cloud, I sigh, lift my head. "Kiss me." He does, and then he lowers his mouth to other, much more intimate places. So this is making love! Well, not quite. I want to know the rest. "Make love to me." You're sure? he asks, but there can be no doubt I'm very, very sure. Bryn guides me to a place Lucas has no idea exists. Okay, It's Kind of Disturbing That, immediately after learning the meaning of "orgasm," I think of Lucas. Maybe it's because I need to know, "Was that okay?" Oh, darling. Bryn kisses across my face. That was more than okay. That was Page Content extraordinary. With just a little practice, you will become perfection. And I so want to be...want to be your coach.

379 See, for a while Lydia worked as a stripper in a fairly nice club near the Stratosphere. I made pretty good money. Most of it went to the house, which took a big cut for keeping the girls safe. I did all the work, they reaped sixty percent of the bennies. Hard to swallow. So Lydia got smart, started her own business--Have Ur Cake Escorts. Now she takes a cut from he girls (and guys) whose "dates" she sets up. I still strip for fun once in a while. All on my own terms.

381 Okay, here's the deal. Both of you are pretty girls. Great bods, with that fresh look guys (especially old ones) appreciate. You could make boatloads taking off your clothes. The clubs are careful about underage girls, but work for me, no one will check your IDs.

382 Sooner or later, Lydia said, you'll have to deal with a jerk who won't want to hear "no touching allowed," if you decide to stick to that. With two of you, you've got a fighting chance, or at the very least, a witness. ...Our two-for-one fee is three hundred an hour (a bargain!) plus tips for straight dancing. Private lap dances are twenty dollars per song. Girl-on-girl action adds another hundred to the tab.

383 As for the actual stripping, Lydia gave us some pointers. Turns out I'm a better dancer than Alex. Her boobs are bigger, though, and really beautiful.

384 The men we perform for like when we dance with each other, breast-to-breast or bellyto-ass, tan skin against pale, ebony hair on blue-streaked blond, fingers touching hidden places we won't let "clients" touch. Powerful! That's how I feel, seeing how helpless we make them. I so enjoy reducing them to masturbation. It's like they are masturbating for me, and I can control when they come by how I move my body, what I let them see.

385 And when there's a crowd in the room, the dicks mostly stay hidden.

386 We decline and he escorts us inside, where a half dozen guys are ogling cable porn.

387 How much for head? ...We don't do head, except on each other, and that will cost an extra hundred.

389 I glance at Alex, who nods, meaning she'll do it for him. She knows I never could. After a little girl-on-girl rubbing, she goes to take care of it. He sits very still in his chair, staring as she strips free of her bra. Suddenly his hands are all over her. "Hey. Cut it out. Absolutely no touching allowed." ...Okay, man, we're out of here. She tries, but the creep snakes his arms around her waist, squeezes like a hungry boa constrictor. All I want is a hand job. Give it to me, I'll let you go. You, over there, play with yourself. So much for control. Good thing it doesn't take long He finishes with a loud, Aaaagh!

391 Later, After Several Shots Of whiskey (Lydia buys it for us, as long as we drink it postbusiness only), Page Content

393 She's a total bitch, not to mention a tease. ...Lately she hasn't even half-ass grinned at me. ...The Belmont fucked me good.

402 I need Ronnie to ding my dong.

409 Forgive me, he whispered, and he meant that, even as he stripped, lowered his ghostly white nakedness over me. I swallowed the building scream. Opened my legs. Wept as he plunged inside. Choked on his Listerine-flavored tongue, wielded like a weapon. His kiss was, in fact, harder to accept. Sex is sex. A kiss means love.

411 But now Jerome wants other things. Let me watch you touch yourself. Creepy things. Did you know guys like to use vibrators too? Like this. Downright disgusting things. Your period? I like the taste of blood. How I wish I could say no. But even if I thought he'd leave me alone, saying yes is how I have convinced him to make Father believe I am fit for small freedoms. Like working in the yard, pulling weeds and picking vegetables.

414 Make the best of it... Guys like vibrators too. ...Plan C Means courting Jerome's affection, pretending to enjoy his deviant sex. Tonight that means letting him call me "Mommy" as he sits on my lap and "nurses." I stroke his hair as a mother would, dig deep inside for the words, "Mommy loves you, Jerome." That excites him, as I guessed it would. I love you, too, Mommy. See how much? ...I hold stubbornly to the dream that he will, as Jerome turns his belly to "Mommy's." Love or no, Jerome wants to punish Mommy. The sex is rough, but it doesn't hurt nearly as bad as the pretense. And it's even faster than usual. When he finishes, I lay my head on his knobby chest.

416 I roll on top of him, look up into his eyes. "What if we..." Soft kiss. "Never mind." He shivers. Is much too easy. I feel almost evil when he whispers, What? almost evil when he whispers, What? Together." ...I lean forward, cup my breasts, rub them over his face. Confusion seeps into his eyes, and like it or not, his muscles relax. All but one. I rock back gently, invite him inside. "I'd be all yours and take such good care of you." The second time takes longer, but when he's finally done, he says, I'll think about it.

421 He lifts my arms, pulls my shift up over my head. I'm in need of your special brand of lovin'. Help me special brand of lovin'. Help me As He Pokes And pinches, I concentrate on ways to not reach Salt Lake City. Afterward, he takes me in his arms, like in some awful romantic movie.

433 they ask if you'll talk dirty to them, preferably on the phone. Masturbators. Every now and

then, you come across married guys who want to meet for real, with or without their wives, usually the former. Cheap thrill seekers. I haven't played in the flesh, but I don't mind getting someone off telling dirty stories. There's a certain sick kind of power in that.

443 He photographs me, too. Lately, the pics have all been naked.

445 It's a dope-sized plastic bag with some brown substance inside. "What's that?" But I suspect his response: Smack. One of the girls turned me on to a little. Thought you might like to share a taste. Heroin. I've never even thought about trying it. "I don't know....That shit is scary as hell." Way past meth, which is scary enough. ...Oh, I see. You can do cocaine with your other boyfriends, but you won't try this for me? ...Not if you only do a little, once in a while. And the places it will take you! I want to see you there. Page Content OMG. I can't believe I'm saying okay to heroin. But I am. Except, "No needles! No way will I shoot up anything." I wait for his reaction. No problem. We'll just chase the dragon, okay? He means heated tinfoil and a rolled-up bill to grab the smoke, draw it up my nose. I've seen people at parties do meth the same way. Even before Bryn creases the foil into a deep V, my heart starts racing. Fear is exhilarating, all on its own. I watch him drop a pinhead of H into the makeshift bowl, and goose bumps cover my arms. I have no idea what to expect when the smoke lifts into the dollar bill "straw." Ugh. It tastes like rotten ketchup. Bitter and harsh in my throat. I start to choke Bryn's warning is rough: Don't you dare cough it out! He checks out my eyes. Looking for pupil dilation, no doubt. It takes a while. If you shoot up, you feel the effects instantaneously. Smoking it might take ten or fifteen minutes. Patience. Meanwhile, I have another surprise. It takes all of ten minutes before I begin to feel kind of tingly. Euphoric. Like everything in my life just fell into place. The sensation is gentle, not at all like the overwhelming buzz I thought it would be. I can handle this. What's all the hype about, anyway? Bryn has finished setting up the second surprise-- a webcam, hooked up to his laptop. I thought it would be fun to put ourselves in the movies. America's Sexiest Home Videos. Come here. Let's get nasty. The tone of his voice lets me know disagreeing is not an option. But I don't want to disagree. Every nerve in my body screams to make love with Bryn, who responds by taking "nasty" to a whole new level. It is only afterward, floating on a sensual fog, in an uneasy state of half sleep, that it comes to me: Bryn didn't join in the dragon chase. ...A Week After My first sweet-bitter taste of smack, Bryn has talked me into indulging again four or five times. I don't want to get hooked, and I'm sure I won't, as long as all I do is smoke a little every now and again. I have to admit I like the way it makes me feel-- like I'm on top of the world. Bryn never indulges. I can't get it up if I do, and I want this to be all about you. So why does he keep asking me to do things that seem mostly all about him? Things like performing dirty acts on pay-per-view webcam? It won't be forever, I promise.

450 Some guys like to watch girls getting off all by themselves. Make it look good for the camera. I was never into touching myself, but it isn't so bad, especially when I'm high. Besides the occasional H, Bryn supplies me with bud-- mediocre seeded Mexican-- and prescription downers. Not sure where he gets them, and I really don't care. As long as I'm buzzed, the things he asks of me are easy to do, and hey, anything's better than wasting way in Santa Cruz. ...You're right, Bryn. She's very pretty. Tight little body, too. Yes, she'll do. His hands slide over my front, reach up under my blouse. The skin of his fingers, seeking my nipples, is calloused. Cold. "No, wait. I can't. You're not serious... Bryn?" He can't want me to do this! I jerk away from Oscar, turn to Bryn. Search his eyes. They are deadly serious, and so is Bryn when he says, Yes, you can. And if you love me, you will. You do love me, don't you? "Of course I love you! But this isn't..." Isn't right, is what I want to say. But what is right, anymore? is this really what loving him means? Bryn's hands press down on my shoulders. Do this for me, Whitney. Do this for us. He kisses me. But it is the kiss of a stranger. I Beg for a Buzz First Pot won't do. It has to be smack, and three long pulls of the acrid smoke

barely take me to the place I need to be. Oscar watches. Waits impatiently for the H to kick in. You should use a needle. Smoking the Lady is a waste of good dope. Fearqueasy, I stumble down the hall, into the bedroom. Oscar follows, shedding clothes. His Page Content body is lean, muscular. Another time, another place, I might find him attractive, but attraction is about choice. I have no choice here but to I have no choice here but to is he has paid to do. I hate you, Bryn. I hate you. Within Seconds I hate Oscar, too. He breathes beer, sweats onion, and there is no beer, sweats onion, and there is no beer, sweats onion, and there is no move when he bites my neck, and lower. I'll wear his teeth marks for days. "Stop. You're hurting me." "You think that hurts? You ain't seen nothing yet. His teeth close even harder and his hand squeezes my arms like a vise and now my arms like a vise and now my arms like a vise and now Bruising pain. I give myself to he morphine shroud, denying the pounding between my thighs. Something makes me look toward the door. Bryn stands there, staring.

458 It's not such a big deal, as long as they use condoms. The thing is, Lydia wouldn't have to know. I could do it on the side, and not give her a cut We could save up enough money to blow this city. Go somewhere pretty, like Portland or San Francisco.

460 Maybe that bastard who raped me made me pregnant and God was gracious enough to let me miscarry.

466 My guess is no way, or if he does happen to be her father, it's a definite case of incest. ...Is Every Girl In this nasty, stinking city turning tricks? Young, old, at least as old as you can get without dying of some incurable sex disease?

468 It's more than a little bit obvious that the day's "business" included more than stripping. The smell of sweat and sex hangs in the air, a storm cloud. ...You're not turning tricks like some hooker, are you?" ...I mean, the sex isn't good, but it's fast, and all things considered, the pay scale isn't bad. Fifty bucks for under ten minutes' work? Three hundred an hour! Shit, girl, that's attorney Shit, girl, that's attorney "Stop it! We don't need money that bad. I'll get off the rag and we'll go back to stripping.

475 Chris still had a sleeve or two left of his shirt, and while he was busy losing those, I invited Misty to smoke some bud. We got to talking, and the more we smoked, the more I confessed, which made her open up to me. Yeah, money sucks, but you can't live without it. I'm paying my way through UNLV with a little sex-on-the-side. ...I mean, if you're going to have sex anyway, why not earn a little extra cash, you know? She took a big drag. ...You interested in a little paid action? I can introduce you to Lydia if you want. ...Sex for money. I still hadn't considered the possibility of it meaning having sex with men

479 Sometimes Misty and I Do have "two-fers" with confused guys. ...I hang up, pop a Valium, "borrowed" from a bottle in Ronnie's medicine cabinet. Fuck. Stealing pills. I suck. ...Twenty bucks for a backseat blowjob? ...if someone would have told me two months ago I'd be selling myself to men, I'd have said they were full of shit. Necessity is a motherfucker. And if they would have said I might even like it, I'd have kicked their ass.

483 You can take me around the world. He reaches for his wallet. One fifty, right? He tries to sweeten the pot. Dan will He reaches for his wallet. One fifty, right? He tries to sweeten the pot. Dan will pay extra to go without a sleeve. No condom? It's not the first time I've had the request. I'd kill for the extra cash, but I'm not taking a chance on AIDS "Sorry. No can do. Cover up, I'll take care of you." I pull my T-shirt over my head, watch him strip off his jeans. His waist is narrow, his hips straight. Beautiful. Stop it! What's wrong with me? He's down to his skivvies. I should have charged more. He's built like a fucking bull. "Holy crap, dude, I don't know...." What's wrong, kid?

Never done it with a real man before? His voice falls, cold and heavy as hail. You want me wrapped? Do it for me! He pushes me to my knees, comes around in front of me. My heart thuds in my chest. I open the foil pouch, remove the thin latex protection. You ever seen a ramrod like Dan's? I shake my head as I roll the condom down over it. No, of course you haven't. Let's see just how good you are. I close my eyes, fight not to gag at the taste of lubricant, not to choke on his thrusts against my throat. ...Dan decides he's done with Europe. He pulls me to my feet, moves behind me, drapes my back with his chest. His muscles are thick cables, but his skin is smooth and cool as snake skin. Check it out. he little boy likes that. He reaches down between my thighs. Look how hard he is. No! How could something so messed up turn me on? Whatever he does, I won't...His lips brush the back of my neck His lips brush the back of my neck me toward the bed, urges me facedown. The sheets smell of bleach. ...Down go my boxers. Oh my. What a sweet little bottom. Dan's hands, moving over my skin, are soft, and when he lowers himself over me, a cloud of cloves and apple sinks around me. ...Dan is in for a real treat, isn't he? He presses up against me. I brace and he pauses. Do you think it will hurt? Let's see. He pushes, but only a little. A test. Oh yes, I'm afraid it might. And after Dan, nothing else will do. I Bite Down On a strange metal taste--a metal taste of emotions. An odd blend of fear and... excitement. For some fucked-up reason, I'm excited. I can't want his! Adrenaline firecrackers through my body. Blood pulses in my temples. You make Dan happy now, hear? Pain! Oh my God! Nothing has ever hurt like this. I tense, beg him to stop. But he doesn't stop. Doesn't slow. Can't take it. Can't. Through the rhythmic pain, apple. Pressure. Pressure, deep. Oh! Nothing has ever felt so good. Exquisite. Exquisite. No! I won't. No matter what, I won't. This isn't me. ...But I do. And when I do, it's over the top.

502 Mr. So-not-nice trucker issues an ultimatum: Oral sex or a very long walk to Vegas.

508 He grins. What? Did I flash you or something? Hope it wasn't offensive. Most guys seem to like it well enough.

516 Before I Can Answer He is all over me. Hands. Mouth. Ugh. Tequila. I push him away. "Wait just one fucking second...." I step back, look at Carl... ...No need to be rude to our guest. He's here by invitation. Understand? "Invi--" Carl wants me to be with this creep? What happened to our "exclusive relationship"? "No. I don't understand." ...He pushes me, and not gently, toward Brett. Now apologize to my friend as I hope you would apologize to me. He Does Not Mean With words. And he doesn't exactly mean solo. They move in unison, and I am sandwiched between them, Carl behind me, moving sensuously, while Brett dares kiss me again. I hold my breath against the assault of gin at Page Content my back, tequila in my face. A strange tongue in my mouth. Now Brett rests his chin on my shoulder, and he and Carl are kissing. t's a cobra dance, and despite what it means, I am charmed. Seduced by sensual motion. Behind me and in front of me, both men grow hard, and for some horrifying reason, I respond in like manner. I Have Never Considered Three-way sex. How would...? Oh. No way will I let one of them take me like that. ...My rule: hands or mouths only. He stops kissing Brett, but neither man quits moving, writhing like mating hooded serpents. We're playing by my rules, remember? But don't worry. I only expect you to give. For now. From somewhere, he extracts a condom, hands it to me, keys to the kingdom. Don't rush, he orders, and don't you dare close your eyes. I want to see how much you like it. He moves in front of me, strips Brett from the waist down, pushes him onto his hands and knees. Then he drops his own trousers. Come on, he urges, positioning himself inches from Brett's face. Shaking, I move behind Brett, grab his shoulders. Carl's hands cover mine. Brett moans as I...Oh my God! I am damned. But I don't stop and I don't rush. Carl's eyes never once leave mine. Finally I beg his permission. "Now? Please?" He nods and I do. We all do.

521 Sometimes he comes, rewards them like he rewards me, with junk and beautiful sex.

Sometimes other men come. That sex is never beautiful. It is selfish. Needful. Fueled by sick desire to get off. Get even. Get over someone who has hurt them by symbolically impaling someone else. So Bryn's zombie girls stay stoned. Out of our heads messed up. Eyes closed, we can be anywhere.

524 Poor baby. Don't worry. Daddy has presents for his beautiful little girl. He comes over, sits beside me. Pulls a dime bag from his pocket like it's made of gold. Clean rigs, too. Let Daddy fix it for you. He cooks up a perfect spoon, loads it, plunges it between my toes. Bryn gives me wings. The sting is luscious, the awful rush all I need. No, not all. I need Bryn. And he's here, all mine right now. His lap is warm, inviting. I climb into it, slip my arms around his neck. Thank you. Better now. Oh, so much better. Soaring. Up here in the clouds, the air is dry. I kiss him, Oh, so much better. Soaring. Up here in the clouds, the air is dry. I kiss him, suck his tongue into my mouth, seeking moisture. It curls over my own tongue, sensuous as smoke. Time slows. ...Want him to take me higher. Want sex as it was meant to be, as only Bryn can ever give it to me. "Make love to me." He pushes me to the floor. My head spins, dizzy with anticipation. My brain screams, kiss me! Kiss all those special places, just like you used to. I know he will, but... But what? Why is he stopping? He reaches into a back pocket. What is that? A rubber? No. We don't need that. ...Finally he says, Never know what kind of gift one of your customers might have left. What? My face flushes, hot from the skag, hotter still with an overdose of anger. Always, with no exceptions, "My customers use condoms." I Try to Push Him Away But even if I were perfectly straight, my stick-figure body would be no match for his toned physique. And I'm not straight. My vision is blurred, like looking through a fishbowl, and my muscles feel like steel cables--much too heavy to drag around. And the weirdest steel cables--much too heavy to drag around. And the weirdest vanishes. So hell, he can screw me, if that's all it means to him. He boosts himself up over me. Page Content ...That's it, he soothes. No need to waste a perfectly good boner In. Out. In. Out. I close my eyes.

528 Stay a while, watching pole dancers and cocktail waitresses, shaking their boobs for tips. Boys come out, horny as hell. Some go home to beat off or bug their wives.

532 I Swear Until This Moment I never even noticed his hand creeping up my leg, ever closer to my semi-exposed crotch. ...I give the guy a quick feel before pushing his hand away. "Oh, I for sure know how to have fun." Game on. ...All I can think about is a syringe full of magic. How fast can I do this guy? ...Cost? You want me to pay for it? He pushes me inside. I don't pay for sex. Even if I did, I wouldn't pay for you, you junkie bitch. He is all predator now, and on me. Scream! But his hand is already over my mouth. I shake my head, look into his eyes. This wolf has mayhem on his mind. He takes me down. So okay. Give it to him. I go limp. No! he screams. Fight, you goddamn whore! Fight, or I'll kill you. No fight left in me. Fuck me. Kill me. Don't care. He wants both. His penis stabs me, his hands lock around my throat. Air. No air. Black...Air! My lungs grab it suddenly. I float up into gray light, roll onto my side, vomit. Only nothing comes out. Noise. Someone's screaming. Get the fuck out of here, you son of a bitch. I'm calling the cops right now, so you'd better run.

546 Since the revelation about Iris sicking her snarling dogs on me, other faces--other mutts--materialize when I least want to recognize them, often just as I sink into an alcohol fueled stupor, praying it will let me sleep, dreamless. I was so young the first time, I didn't know what it meant, only that nothing had ever hurt so bad. Walt tore me up and I bled and bled and when I screamed, nobody came. And he laughed. That's it, little baby. Scream for your daddy. Only he wasn't my daddy at all. My daddy was a brave soldier, fighting far away. Iris told me so. I still believed the stuff she told me then. When I told her about the man, not my daddy, she said, He was only making you into a real girl. I didn't understand. But I made myself believe her. I was a real

girl now. But what was I before? Walt Was the First There were others. Nameless. Faceless. I figured out how to close off my brain when they did it to me, to withdraw into a dark little room inside my head, where I couldn't see them. Couldn't smell their sweat, their stagnant breath. Couldn't taste the tobacco coating their tongues, or the beer tainting the spit they left in my mouth. Couldn't feel what was down between my legs. But now they revisit me. Is it because of what 'm doing?

550 Bastard screwed me, then robbed me.

551 We both have a date with some sexually confused out-of-towner. Three-ways aren't quite so bad. Misty isn't the brightest girl. But she's got a killer body to focus on. It's okay to be turned on by that. The evening's little snort party will help me out too.

565 I do, find her already mostly naked. The guy, who's a totally forgettable middle-aged nothing, is completely naked. ...The dude, who isn't much down there either, despite it being at full mast, turns his attention away from Misty, focuses on me. What are you waiting for? Time is money, you know. Like it's going to take him much time at all. But whatever. It is his money. And less time is better. Misty distracts him with her yummy boobs and I start to pull my Tshirt over my head Suddenly the door explodes behind me. What the...? Something-- bear or bulldozer--knocks me face forward to the floor, forcing my breath into the Page Content carpet. knocks me face forward to the floor, forcing my breath into the carpet. Yells, What the fuck, as my right kidney takes two massive punches. My shirt is still over my head and I can't see a damn thing as I fight for air. But I hear crack-crack-crack. And the room goes silent, except for strained breathing, right above me. And the room goes silent, except for strained breathing, right above me. And You fucking whore. It is Chris's voice. You promised... no more... you said... and you... he means me. aid... and you... he means me.my God. Is he going to kill me? ...Snap! Lightning? White-hot. Electric. Shattering. My back. Pieces. Bone. Shattering. My back. Pieces. Bone. Suck air. Where? Can't... No, please. Ronnie? Sorry. So sorry. Ron...

570 I've managed four or five showers, when the man of the hour wanted a motel room. More often, it's the seat of his car. Quick and easy, five minutes or less. No emotion.

572 "...I mean except to tell me to suck harder, or..."

587 "I was just hoping maybe you had a little something in your pocket." I run my knee up over his bulging groin. "Something besides that, I mean, and something to take me down." ...He wants to get off, not an easy thing, high on meth. I hate doing guys on meth. Takes too long. But hey, this was my deal. ...You wanna pay for one and fuck for one, or what? We start to walk. ...You never seen black tar? Baby, it's the best. Believe me, those boys in Mexico know their shit. Now come over here. Take a taste of this. ...Never tried it, but guess I'm gonna. Ol' Lorenzo gets a ride around the world. Doesn't take as long as I thought.

599 How much to do the two of you? ..."Three hundred for all you can eat." Right on. Bermuda reaches into his back pocket.

--
Administrative Services

Get a weekly dose of our events and services

Reading Public Library

64 Middlesex Avenue

Reading, MA 01867

781-942-6709

rdgadmin@noblenet.org



Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Re: Fw: Tricks - Request for Reconsideration

1 message

Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 9:48 AM

To: "Admin, Reading" <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Hello,

Thank you for letting me know.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

On Tuesday, July 11, 2023, 9:46 AM, Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org> wrote:

Thank you for your email. It has been received and forwarded to the Library Director.

On Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 9:49 PM wrote:

Hello,

See attached request for reconsideration regarding Tricks by Ellen Hopkins.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

--

Administrative Services

[Get a weekly dose of our events and services](#)

Reading Public Library

[64 Middlesex Avenue](#)

[Reading, MA 01867](#)

781-942-6709

rdgadmin@noblenet.org

FORM TO REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Date: July 10, 2023
Name: _____
Address: Reading
Email: _____
Telephone: _____

You represent: Self Organization: (Please Name) _____

MATERIAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

Format: Teen Fiction Hop
Title: Tricks
Author / Date: Ellen Hopkins
Call #: Not Sure

1. What brought this material to your attention?
A concerned parent who wants to know why books containing raping children, child molestation, child prostitution and other sexually explicit content are in our town public library?
2. Have you examined or read the entire item? If not, why?
The book is over 600 pages and I have not read it cover to cover, but have read several sections and excerpts.
3. What concerns you about the material? Please be specific
Book contains sexually explicit content involving minors including child rape, abuse, illegal drug use, violence, underage drinking and adult and child prostitution. It is not appropriate for the library and certainly not appropriate for children to read in the teen section
4. Are there materials you suggest that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?
Content involving minors including child rape, abuse, illegal drug use, violence, underage drinking and adult and child prostitution does not belong in our public town library and is not appropriate for children to read.
5. What action are you requesting the Board of Library Trustees to consider?
Would like the book removed from the town library. Would like the book removed from the teen section. Would like an audit performed to ensure other books like this are not allowed.
Dr. Seuss books have been removed but books like this are appropriate for our children?

Signature _____

Date July 10, 2023

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@nolenet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request.



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: future Agenda item

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 9:12 AM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nancy Docktor**

Date: Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 7:24 AM

Subject: future Agenda item

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

RE: b. Request for Reconsideration: "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins and "The Best of Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle

Dear Library Board Members

I am writing in support of ALL the Reading Library books in circulation. It is upsetting that attempts to restrict and ban material that one individual has concerns with impinges on everyone else's right to education. The practice of book banning is a threat to education and democracy itself. Please do not cater to the whims of such extremism.

Might I suggest a Town wide reading and discussion of Fahrenheit 451?

Nancy Docktor
371 Pearl St



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: Monday Meeting

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 9:08 AM

To: Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>, Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jodi Cloney**

Date: Tue, Aug 8, 2023 at 12:15 PM

Subject: Monday Meeting

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Hello

I am writing in support of the book Tricks. I think it is important for kids to have access to all kinds of stories through the library.

I am a resident of N. Reading but please let me know if there is any way I could be of support because I have heard a number of folks are planning to attend the meeting on Monday who are opposed to the book.

Thanks,
Jodi

From: Geraldine Tolman
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:55 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning of Books

Please do not give in to any attempts to ban books.

Thank you,
Geri Tolman
547 Summer Ave
Reading, MA

From: Mary Rienzo
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:00 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Attempt to ban books in Reading

Book bans are censorship and all public library's should be free from such. Please do not succumb to the hate and fear of subjects that pervades some people to request books be banned.

I support all book access in our town.

Your work is hard. Please know you have my support.

Mary Rienzo
150 High St
Reading

From: Steve Theo
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:05 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Please do not ban Tricks, or any books for that matter.

Thanks,
Stephen Theodoridis
22 Union St. #1

From: Lynda Hersey
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:05 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Stop the banning of all books. Let parents decide what's appropriate.

From: Kelli Bacon
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:06 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Ban

Good morning,

I am (almost) a lifelong resident of Reading and have just purchased a house to move back to town after a year away from Reading.

I was so sorry to hear of a potential book ban - the teen book Tricks. As a parent (and a librarian by training) I soundly reject the idea of any book ban at the Reading Public Library.

Please let me know if there is anyone else I should contact with my concerns.

Thank you for all you do to support the greatest suburban library I know.

Kelli Bacon

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:09 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library!

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library!

From: Deb
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:09 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempts to ban Tricks from the library.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Beth Mosier
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:11 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library

Or any other book. Do not take away citizens right to choose what to read or right.
Thank you!
Beth Mosier

Sent from my iPad

From: v rimkunas
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:20 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

From: Eric P. Heinemann
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:21 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban

Do not ban any books including Tricks from our library

From: Samantha Scola
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:33 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Reject the book challenge

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library. My six year old son and I love and appreciate the hard work of the librarians and library staff.

Thank you,

Samantha Scola
Francis Drive, Reading, MA

From: Janice Baker
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:37 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks and other books

My husband Ted and I are strongly against banning books in our library. Fully understand if you determine some books should have age or other restrictions.

Thank you so much for all the wonderful work you do for our community!

Janice and Ted Baker
15 Tamarack Rd
Reading, MA 01867

Sent from my iPhone

From: Katrina Madden
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:39 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org

Dear Reading Public Library Board of Trustees,

I understand that there will be a meeting on Monday regarding possibly banning the book Tricks by Ellen Hopkins at our library. Please do not ban this book. Books need to be available for those who want to read them.

Thank you for all that you do to make our library a welcoming space for all members of our community.

Sincerely,
Katrina Madden
109 Prescott Street
Reading

From: Amy Stephens
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:50 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Ban

I understand there is an ongoing attempt to ban another book, *Tricks*, from the Reading Public Library. I wanted to write to urge the Board of Library Trustees to reject any attempt to ban this book from the library.

Thank you,
Amy Sane

From: Linda L. King
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:51 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Another book banning?

Please OPPOSE any effort to ban the book "Tricks."

Thanks you.

Linda King
836 Main Street
Reading

From: Al Mosier
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:56 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban? NO!

Please protect our first amendment rights by refusing to ban the book TRICKS. Parents should decide whether the book is suitable for their OWN children, not someone else's.

Al Mosier
30 Taylor Drive

Sent from my iPhone

From: Carolyn Galiza
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:07 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Bans

Board of Trustees,

As a long time resident of Reading, I am strongly against banning any books. People who do not want to read a book can choose not to read it. They should not be able to make that decision for everyone else.

Please keep *Tricks* available to all residents who want to read it.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Galiza MD
38 Temple Street
Reading, MA 01867

Sent from my iPhone

From: Kim Myatt
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: No Book Banning Please

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

Thank you,
Kim Myatt

From: Christine Curtin
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:31 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banned Book Target - Tricks

To Whom it May Concern:

I strongly urge the Board of Trustees to reject the idea of banning the book Tricks by Ellen Hopkins, or really any book. It is our place as parents to decide what our children are ready to read. It is outside our rights to determine what all children should read.

Thank you,

Christine Curtin
Reading Resident

From: Travis Estes
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:40 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject banning attempt for Tricks

Board of Library Trustees,

Given the upcoming meeting to consider the banning request for Tricks, I want to express my opposition to this request as a Reading resident and parent. **Please reject the banning request** and uphold the integrity and community value of our amazing library.

Thank you,

Travis Estes

From: Carolyn Whiting
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:55 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please Reject Book Ban Attempt

Hi Reading Public Library Trustees,
I am writing to urge you to please reject any attempt to ban the book "Tricks" from our wonderful library.

I appreciate you and the work that you do in support of our library.

Thank you!

Carolyn Whiting
17 Chestnut Road
Reading MA 01867

From: Brandy King
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:59 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Support for keeping "Tricks" at the library

Dear Board,

Here is an email I just wrote to the RPL librarians, wanted you to see it too:

"Dear Librarians,

Wanted to send you some support as you face another attempted book ban for Tricks. Just yesterday I was in the teen section looking for books with LGBTQ characters for my son who is part of that community. A librarian helped me find some and he was so excited when I brought them home. It is so important to me that he have access to books with characters he can relate to, and more broadly, for him to have access to books with characters from ALL kinds of backgrounds so he can develop his sense of empathy for people who are different from him. Thank you for all you do to make a diverse collection of books available and to protect the freedom for families and individuals to choose books appropriate for themselves.

Best,

Brandy King, MLIS"

From: Peggy Harrington
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:11 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Hello,

I am a Reading resident of 29 years. My husband and I have raised two children who went through the Reading Public school system. We have enjoyed the Reading Public Library and appreciate the hard work of the staff.

We are totally against banning the book Tricks. Please allow parents and families make that decision themselves.

Thank you

Peggy Harrington

12 Franklin Terrace, Reading, MA 01867

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:17 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Books in the library

Dear Amy Lannon, Michelle Filleul and Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee

The Reading Public library is exposing children to PORNOGRAPHY with books like Tricks, Gender Queer and others. This is wrong! This damages the child's mind. They should be concerned about being children and playing not exposed to how to give blow jobs and seeing different positions to have sex. Would you like your child or grandchild having sex at 11 years old? Wouldn't you rather see them having fun outdoors, swing on a swing set or playing a game of kickball, swimming at the beach or pool, riding their bike - All things I did as a child.

Please let children be children.

Thank you,
C. Mathieu

From: Susan Woods
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:27 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Censorship threatens democracy

Dear board,

I am a 60 year old former Reading business owner and 23 year resident of Reading whose 3 children attended and graduated from the Reading public school system and used the public library from the time they were preschoolers. Never was there a time when the library board dictated to me which books my children could or could not read. That decision is a personal one and the viewpoints of individual library board members should not have any bearing on what citizens choose to read. Censorship limits freedom and deprives students of the right to knowledge.

Please fight against banning "Tricks" or any other book.

Sincerely,

Susan Woods

12 Benton Circle

Sent from my iPhone

From: Christy Magoon
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:44 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Ban Attempt

Dear Library Board Trustees,

It's come to my attention that there is a request to ban and/or remove another title from our local library. As a high school librarian and former English teacher, I fully support the right to read as well as the first amendment. I support the inclusion of this text (Ellen Hopkin's *Tricks*) as well as all Young Adult literature and ask that you please reject any attempts to ban *Tricks* from our library. I do not support banning books in any form.

Please refer to the American Library Association and their Freedom to Read statement, if you need additional support:

The Freedom to Read Statement
ala.org



Thank you for your time and service.

Best regards,
Christy Magoon
350 Franklin St.
Reading

The Freedom to Read Statement

On June 25th, 1953 we said that
**we trust the people of this nation
to make their own decisions about
what they read and believe.**

*70 Years later, we still trust
them to make their own
decisions.*



On the 70th anniversary of the Freedom to Read Statement, we are asking for individuals, authors, organizations, and associations to sign on to support the freedom to read.

TAKE ACTION: SIGN YOUR NAME! (<https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/freedomtoread/>)

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association (/)

Association of American Publishers (<http://www.publishers.org/>)

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression (<http://www.bookweb.org/abfe>)

The Association of American University Presses (<http://www.aaupnet.org/>)

The Children's Book Council (<http://www.cbcbooks.org/>)

Freedom to Read Foundation (<http://www.ftrf.org>)

National Association of College Stores (<http://www.nacs.org/>)

National Coalition Against Censorship (<http://www.ncac.org/>)

National Council of Teachers of English (<http://www.ncte.org/>)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

From: Emily Maughan
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 2:05 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban attempt yet again

Please refuse to ban the book Tricks! And please consider instituting a policy whereby there are reasonable repercussions for book ban petitioners who waste valuable librarian time with their bigoted, ignorant, and foolish attempts to ban books that they fear. Thank you. Emily Maughan

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 2:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Against banning Tricks

Dear Board of Library Trustees,

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library."
Please join in and keep our library books open and free for all.

Sincerely,

Jill Mayberry

Reading resident

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 3:07 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please, no banning of books

Respectfully, as a resident of Reading, I ask that the Board reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.
Thank You,
Joe Harrington

From: Lindsay Conti
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 3:12 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Dear Board of Trustees,

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library. It's not up to a few people to decide what others can read. Nor can others decide what my children can read.

Best,
Lindsay Conti

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:19 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to encourage you to refrain from banning the book Tricks. The topic may not be appropriate for some teens. However, please continue to support the inherent right to choose.

Thank you.
Michele

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

From: Eileen Collins
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:49 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Banning

Please do not let this happen here. I support the Library Trustees to uphold free speech in Reading and to refuse to ban books v

Eileen C. Collins

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:52 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library

I plan to attend the meeting this coming Monday. I am thoroughly opposed to book bans.

R. Michael McSweeney

15 Orchard Park Drive

Reading

Sent from my iPad

From: William Quinn
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 5:08 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Please do not remove this novel from the shelves of Reading Public Library.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 5:27 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Ban Redux

Dear RPL Board of Trustees-

I am so sorry to hear of another attempt to ban a book at RPL. I have not read *Tricks* myself- hadn't even heard of it until now. This is not surprising since it is a YA novel published in 2015. It is not a new book with a current advertising campaign. Well, not until this latest ruckus began. Now it will have a revival.

Why is the book being challenged now? It's eight years old. Are we looking at a variation on Book of the Month Club? Is there a list of titles somewhere that will be used to mount a challenge every few months?

I did read multiple reviews of the book and agree it is not for younger teens. It is a disturbing book about disturbing topics involving vulnerable youth. It's about more than the sex scenes. How why those came about is the point of the book. The fact that it is written in free verse means, in my opinion, that the reader really wants to read it.

Surely parents in Reading are capable of supervising their own children, deciding what materials are appropriate reading. Do Reading parents really need a group of unrelated adults telling them what is suitable?

I am more concerned about cyberbullying, real life bullying, depression and the stresses of the pandemic on our youth than about a book. A book is inert. It won't attack anyone.

Long story short, please don't pull *Tricks* from the collection.

Thank you for your dedicated hard work. Please convey to all the Library staff that they are also admired for their dedication and knowledge.

Best regards,
Ellen Lenart
Reading resident

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 6:25 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Any effort to ban a particular book is allowing someone else to determine what is appropriate for everyone else. It cannot be allowed. Please once again reject any effort to remove a book from the library.

Kate Harrington
Reading resident

From: Steve Baker
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 7:02 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please do not ban any books

To whom it may concern

I am not sure why we are again at this place of banning books. There is no place in our society for others to choose what we can and cannot write. Why can't there be a parents signature required section. Or must be accompanied by someone over 18? Banning is not a solution. It's enforcing your beliefs on others. I would think we are past this. Please stop the insanity.

Steve Baker

Sent from my iPhone

From: Susan Cuffe
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 8:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library.

Sent from my iPad

From: Kelsey Flynn
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 8:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please Do NOT Ban Tricks

I am writing to encourage the Reading Public Library to keep *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins on your shelves and available to patrons. Please do NOT ban this book.

Thank you,
Kelsey Flynn

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 8:15 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Banning Tricks

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

Thank you,
Tiffany McEachern

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 9:21 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: book ban

Hello,

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.
We don't need to narrow the worldview of our teens because someone else wants to decide what is best for everyone.

Thank you for your support on this matter.

Lauren Bennett

From: Jay Wallace
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 9:47 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Greetings RPL Board of Trustees,

Please reject any attempt to ban "Tricks" from our library.

Thank you,
Jay Wallace
Forest St., Reading

From: Martha Moore
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:44 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Dear Board of Library Trustees:

I am concerned to hear that there is another attempt to ban a book from the library.

I am also concerned that the hearing on this is on August 14. I have requested a copy of the book to review, but there are none now available in the Noble network. Please do not vote to ban a book that is not available in time for the public to form an informed opinion on this matter. If the hearing about the last book banning attempt is any indication, people at that hearing were reading out loud descriptions of a book they had actually never read themselves and taking excerpts of the book out of context.

Though I would prefer that the Library Board of Trustees not be in the business of banning any books, I would at least ask that you move to continue the hearing to a month later to allow time for people to read the book in question before they speak at the hearing.

Thank you,
Martha Moore
102 Sanborn Ln, Reading, MA 01867



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: In support of Tricks

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 9:35 AM

To: Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>, Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Paula Tucci**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 9:29 AM

Subject: In support of Tricks

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Dear Board of Trustees,

I understand there is another attempt to ban a book from Reading Public Library.

I hope your board will continue to offer all books at our library, which of course is a public library. Offering a full spectrum of materials, including *Tricks*, is important for a public library to do so that learners who wish to more fully understand the world and to think on their own behalf can do so.

If a parent deems a book inappropriate for their child, the parent is free to act as a parent and say no. It is, however, inappropriate for the parent to ask the public library to be in the business of doing their parenting.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and for serving in this important library function.

Paula Tucci
8 Buckskin Drive



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: Book bans

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 12:15 PM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Emily Lindemer**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 11:03 AM

Subject: Book bans

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Hi,

I am a resident of Reading, and I am writing to ask that the Board of Library Trustees reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

Banning books is a bad road for our town to go down!

Thank you,

Emily Lindemer



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: Stand strong against attempts at censorship

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 12:16 PM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Liam Loscalzo**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 11:29 AM

Subject: Stand strong against attempts at censorship

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Dear Board of Trustees,

I recently learned that there is yet another attempt to have a book, *Tricks*, banned from our library, and I wanted to voice my strong opposition to this effort. I was proud to see the Board unanimously reject the last attempt to remove a book from the collection, and hope to see the same again.

Thank you,
Liam Loscalzo
59 Federal St



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: book banning & August 14th meeting

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 12:17 PM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Michele Clopper**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 11:33 AM

Subject: book banning & August 14th meeting

To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Hello,

I would like to voice my support for no book banning in Reading. Tricks should be able to remain on the shelves of the Reading Public Library and individuals should be given to make their own decisions about book selection.

Sincerely,

Michele Clopper she, her