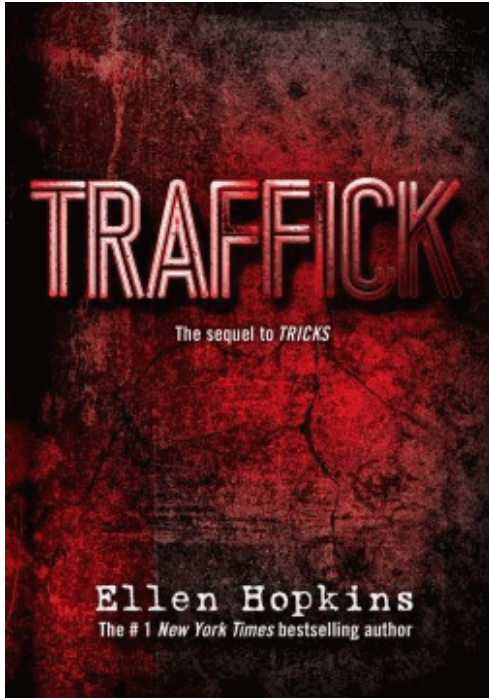


TRAFFICK



Young Adult

By Ellen Hopkins

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CONTENT WARNING

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Book Summary:

Five teenagers struggle to find their way out of prostitution.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities including child prostitution and molestation; sexual nudity; profanity; alcohol and drug use by minors; alternate gender ideologies; and alternate sexualities.

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Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

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7	<p>I dated Ronnie. It wasn't a date, it was a three-way meet. Oh shit, no. Misty... ...Misty is dead. Before that, what? Misty in bed with some squeaky guy with a teeny dick telling me to hurry. Time is money. Time. Tick. Bam.</p>
18	<p>For a time, Alex and I were a fantasy duet, working for Have Ur Cake Escort Service, despite being a couple of years underage. "Eighteen" isn't necessary to participate in a business that props up the underbelly of Vegas. It was not what I had in mind when I ran away, but then again, I had no plan, and sometimes it comes down to survival. We survived, stripping for pay in hotel rooms, mostly working bachelor parties, two for the price of one. I insisted on that, refused to do more than take off my clothes and dance. But Alex couldn't care less about spreading her legs and accepting foreign objects, as long as dudes were willing to pay the going rate. Then she got greedy, started working the streets so she wouldn't have to kick back Lydia's commission. I found her out there soliciting some guy wearing ugly purple Bermuda shorts. That pissed me off, but in hindsight, looking for revenge by offering to let him buy all he could eat, double-decker, wasn't the smartest move.</p>
20	<p>No one tied us up at the end of the day (although a few of our customers offered). And we weren't trafficked, as far as I knew then. ...Now, thanks to my recent interaction with law enforcement, the courts, and social workers, I understand that three things define trafficking: coercing someone to turn tricks, transporting them for that purpose, or in any way threatening or encouraging an underage person to sell their body. Oh, and how good 'ol Iris collected money for allowing men to force themselves on me? Uh, yeah. That, too. Then, there's Have Ur Cake. Since Alex and I haven't reached the age of eighteen- that magic birthday that supposedly makes you an adult- Lydia was definitely guilty of pandering minors for sex. She arranged our "dates," and collected a hefty fee for her trouble, so technically she was our pimp, though we asked for the work.</p>
22	<p>I GUESS I WAS LUCKY I don't really know what all Alex faced when she did outcalls solo. She refused to talk to me about it. I only did a few gigs alone, and I never exactly felt threatened. Together, there were a few times when I thought a client might hurt us, and on guy forced Alex to jerk him off. ...She had a way of doing that, although she never could talk me into stuffing condoms into my bag and earning a hell of a lot more money. I'm a dancer. A stripper. But I'll never be a whore.</p>
23	<p>Now My Stripping Days Are over, at least that's what Judge Kerry said. ...The law says I can only be released to a "custodial adult." Hey, at least I have one of those, unlike Alex, who ended up in a different group home- one that accepts pregnant teens. Pregnant. If she got that way, it means she wasn't using protection, and God forbid she picked up anything else besides sperm. The father?</p>

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	Some anonymous trick, and who knows what color the baby will be, or what defects it might inherit from its paternal side?
28	My brother Ricardo runs dope for Los Surenos. He uses also, and too much on credit.
30	<p>How he touched me. She said I was a liar. A puta.</p> <p>...I don't add the part about my own mother pimping me out.</p> <p>Miranda nods. It happens to many of us. Men are coyotes. I was eleven the first time. Twelve when Ricardo traded me for his debt. I found that out later. But that day, I believed it was Mama's punishment. "But when can I go home?" I asked. Papacito tell me never, I'm his now. "Do exactly as I say," he said, "and Belinda, too, or I will hurt you so bad you'll wish were dead. But if you are a very good girl, I will be your boyfriend..."</p> <p>...But not so scared then as later that night, when Papacito come to my bedroom. "Such a pretty little girl," he said. "Now I will make you my woman." I knew what he meant and tried to say no. He slapped my face so hard I thought my head would snap off! Then he grabbed my neck and squeezed.</p> <p>I couldn't breathe. I begged him to stop but he choked me until I almost blacked out. I wore the marks from his fingers for many days. I had no fight left then, and he threw me on the bed, made me his wife for real. When he finished, he sent five friends to break me in better. After that, what did it matter?</p> <p>What came next, she says, is he pimped her online or sent her out to work truck stops, demanding a minimum \$800 per night. He kept every penny.</p>
35	Even the sex with Carl (and sometimes an added friend of his) didn't add much spice to our relationship.
38	<p>That house swarmed with men. Women. Undetermined. Gay. Straight.</p> <p>Unspecified.</p> <p>Everyone drinking. Everyone eating. Everyone smoking. Snorting. Popping pills.</p>
40	First, I took a big swig of my mint julep, loving the burn of exceptional bourbon.
41	<p>A few people offered cocaine. At first I refused, but David indulged and finally convinced me to try it. Oh, but you should. It makes every bad thing better, and everything good the experience of a lifetime. Especially sex.</p> <p>...One snort of what David said was damn fine coke, I shed worry like rainwater.</p> <p>Two, conversing came easier. Three, and the world righted itself.</p> <p>...I can't say exactly when because I was way too buys mellowing the coke buzz with bourbon and, conversely, fighting the alcohol sluggishness with yet another line.</p> <p>It's a great combination, once I've since enjoyed fairly regularly, though David doesn't keep a stash here at the house. Most of it comes with his guests.</p> <p>...I knew he was angling for sex, of course. David doesn't try to hide his attraction to pretty young men.</p> <p>When he discovered I was still a teen, though technically legal, he was intrigued immediately.</p> <p>...Without the cocaine stoking my mouth, I would never have told him as much as I did.</p>

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45	<p>I Wanted The Sex To Convince Him To let me move in, so I offered anything he wanted. Compared to Carl, who was all about the kink, David's requests weren't extraordinary. The thing is, he can have whatever he wants with any of the cute dancers in his stable who might be looking to advance his career. But David doesn't want easy sex, he wants affection.</p> <p>...I doubt it's possible for someone my age to fall in love with a man old enough to be his grandfather, no matter how good that person is to him. I want to experience real love again, wrapped around sex and infusing lust with meaning.</p>
46	<p>So I'm bartering my body on the side, via Have Ur Cake Escorts. People travel to Vegas specifically to create memories to leave here, and I'll stay in Vegas with them. When Lydia interviewed me, I was clear about the parameters- only clients willing to pay premium rates for a top-of-the-line barely adult. I won't risk losing life with David for anything less than a grand-five hundred in exchange for my company, another five for invading it, condoms required.</p> <p>Sometimes couples want three-ways, and that costs a third more. For fifteen hundred, I'll get it up for a woman, too. With limited hours available plus a relatively high price tag, I've had five dates, plenty to open a bank account.</p>
47	<p>I'm on My Way To an outcall now, meeting the guy at Picasso, one of the Bellagio's finest restaurants.</p> <p>...I expect my client to be older, but when the maitre d' brings me over to the table, the decent-looking man who stands is in his early thirties.</p> <p>...Would you like a drink? He asks, knowing I'm underage, not that it matters. Carding is rare in these situations, and should a waiter get too nosy, I have a forged ID. I request my favored mint julep, and Joe springs for the prix fixe dinner.</p>
48	<p>You must be wondering why a married man would arrange to meet someone like you.</p> <p>I shrug. "Everyone has fantasies or fetishes, but few are brave enough to act on them."</p> <p>When I was a kid at summer camp, there was this teenage counselor, Rob. He wasn't exceptional, really. Still, I used to daydream about him holding me. Touching me. Using me. The first time I masturbated, I pretended it was Rob jerking me off. It's strange, because I'm really not gay. I love my wife, and having sex with her. But once in a while, this need rises up, and I want Rob to jerk me off. After dessert, we go upstairs- Joe and Rob, who does a whole lot more than jerk Joe off.</p>
50	<p>I barely remember that last fix, Mexican black tar instead of my usual China white. The Lady, she took me on one hell of a ride before we dove over the cliff, falling, falling, falling. Falling in slow motion.</p>
53	<p>She couldn't finish, could not bring herself to put into words the things the cops must've told her, the awful things their evidence showed- that I'd been turning tricks in a stinking apartment in a disgusting neighborhood in America's filthiest city.</p>
57	<p>"I didn't use before I went to Vegas. Well, a little weed and alcohol, but everyone I knew got high once in a while. No big deal. It was just having fun."</p> <p>But it became a big deal, and when it did, it almost killed you.</p>

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58	<p>"Look. I wasn't hooked on weed or booze. I don't even have an addictive personality or whatever. You can't not get hooked on heroin, you know?"</p> <p>Some people can use it once or maybe even a couple of times without developing an addiction, but it's rare.</p>
59	<p>According the police report, you were likely prostituting yourself. Is that accurate?</p> <p>At my nod, she asks, But why?</p> <p>"For love, at least at first." I rewarded her with a shortened version of how I met my former pimp outside the Gap. How he rescued me from a party where my so-called boyfriend was groping another girl. How he promised to put me to work modeling, convinced me to run away to Vegas with him, set us up in an apartment. How modeling segued into sex in front of a webcam, then...</p>
60	<p>I think I've heard this story. He needed you to earn some money so you could have a nicer place. "Just once, for me. Oh, and try a little taste of heroin. That will make everything easier." Before you knew it, you were hooked, and doing whatever you had to do to keep supplied.</p>
64	<p>Part of me would genuinely enjoy seeing him locked up in a cell with some beefy guy, looking for a little action. I'd probably pay to watch.</p> <p>...I'll never forget hours and hours, curled up in a corner, stomach knotting, body shaking beneath beads of salt sweat, waiting for him to bring powdered relief, cursing the day I met him, weeping at my need for him, screaming into the silence, "Please come, Bryn. Please come and make love to me!"</p>
66	<p>I'd been sleeping on the streets, crashing behind Dumpsters, offering myself up to passersby for meager money, barely enough to eat.</p>
67	<p>Teen Prostitute How can I ever reconcile that title in front of my name?</p> <p>...With love as my sin, it was only proper that my redemption would come at the hands of a devil, my savior Jerome, a Tears of Zion apostle with a sick appetite for sex with young girls like me, who he wanted to own. I did what he required in trade for an escape route across the desert- my path to prostitution when I fled from him.</p>
71	<p>Because when I ask, "You mean your mother knew you were turning tricks?" she has no compunction about sharing her entire story with me. Oh, yeah. My mom's the one who put me on the track. Well, she did it for Daddy. See, she was one of his "wifeys," too. And know what? Daddy was maybe my real daddy, ain't that a hoot? Mom was fourteen when she started tricking, and he was her man, so she didn't use no protection with him. She was fifteen when she had me.</p> <p>"Wait. Your mom wanted you to prostitute? How old were you?"</p> <p>My mother insisted I had to get married before I even allowed a boy to kiss me, let alone...</p> <p>We needed the money for rent and stuff. I was thirteen, but no big deal. One of Daddy's friends broke me in when I was nine. As Daddy says, tight pussy costs a pretty penny.</p>
73	<p>Daddy makes his girls give him five hundred every day. Mom was short too many times. He got mad, beat her down. I got home right as he put the gun to her head.</p>
74	<p>The Sex Trade Is a violent business. Pimps competing. Pimps keeping their girls in line.</p>

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	...Plenty of Daddy's DNA in that place. Then my counselor here made me fess up about my pimp, so now they've got him for murder and for trafficking children.
86	"Look, dude. I'm lying here with a tube hanging out of my dick, leaking piss into a bag. That dick, by the way, is totally useless for anything worth getting excited about. Yeah, yeah, Dr. Harrison told me ninety percent of men with incomplete injuries, T12 and lower, get it up, and some higher than that, too. But that's not the real problem, is? Not like I want to go above and beyond, just to whack off. How many girls go looking for cripples?"
89	"...You've never seen..." I skid to a halt before I mention her glorious tits. ...And then I went and fucked it all up with drugs and gambling and financing those by offering myself up for sale.
108	And from my roomie, Miranda: Fear feels like a snake, wrapping around and around your throat and squeezing tighter and tighter until the light goes all the way out. And after that comes a gang rape.
114	Maybe it's just passion for creation, or maybe it's got everything to do with white lines snorted in dressing rooms. Probably both. I'm glad he refuses to maintain a stash here, or I might be tempted to indulge far more often than I do. I like the cool, numbing escape; love the delicious rush of goose bumps and shivers. But not enough to lose the "me" I've worked hard to find and encourage in a more positive direction. Coke is more addictive than alcohol, and that's saying a lot. I'm trying desperately to keep a handle on both.
115	Even without actually witnessing him use, it's not much of a stretch to conclude famed choreographer David Burroughs has a tidy drug habit himself.
121	"How about me, what? Do you mean, am I liberal? Or morally bankrupt?" Her answer is a massive shrug. Okay, then. I have to think about how to respond. Let's see. Gay? Makes me a liberal, at least in Indiana, where leaning left is not exactly celebrated. Gun rights? Used to go hunting with my dad, and target shooting with a black powder rifle kind of turns me on. Probably conservative. Enjoy a good buzz? Could go either way. "Politically, I suppose I'm a white line kind of guy..." Oops. Freudian slip.
122	You are eighteen, yes? Because, left, right or "middle of the road," you have a voice, and damn it, we need more queer voices shouting that we won't be ignored, and while we might be underrepresented, we're no less consequential than all those straight, white evangelical voters who somehow believe they matter more than anyone who doesn't look or think or dissect biblical scriptures exactly the way they do.
134	He lied to me, and not only that, but he lied about loving me, and that is unforgiveable. He used me, almost all the way up. Pimped me out for his own selfish purposes. Hurt me by allowing me to be abused by a long parade of johns. He hooked me on the vicious Lady, to keep me at his mercy completely, and within that addiction, he made me suffer.

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138	<p>What do you want, and what can you give in exchange for it? I shrug. "Powder or pills, doesn't really matter. What I've got is a talent for great sex." Still, she makes me wait. How old are you, anyway? And are you really sure you want to fuck up your rehab? "I'm sixteen, Age of Consent in California, so whoever is safe that way. And yes, I'm sure, or I wouldn't be asking. Will you help me, or point me to someone else who will? I'll be generous." My delivery arrives on Sunday. She reaches her hand across under the table, rests on my knee. So have you ever been with a girl? The Unexpected Question Gives me pause. I figured she'd hook me up with a male staff member who'd cut lose with a finder's fee. The truth is, though I've been with more men than I want to consider, I haven't ever had sex with a girl. But how hard could it be? "Of course." The lie slips past my lips like custard. You're pretty. I can spare a couple of pills. No powder. Too risky. Sunday night, my room, after lights-out. I promise you'll sleep like a baby, no dreams, good or bad. Until then...she flicks her tongue, serpent like. You can dream about me.</p>
143	<p>I wait almost an hour after lights-out before venturing down the hall and slipping inside. She waits for me in bed, two little tablets in hand. "What are they?" I ask, hoping for the exact answer she gives. Oxycodone. You into opiates? Oh, darling, if you only knew. "I'll try anything once." I pop one, put the other in my pocket to save for right before out next drug test. Tonight I'm going to sink down, down, down. It's a slow, lovely drop, and oh, how I've longed for this feeling! Denial is pointless. Okay, baby. Payment required. Take off your clothes. Sex is better naked. She watches me strip, pulls back her covers, and I shimmy in beside her already nude body. There's a pretty girl. Kiss me. The one thing I never did with a john was kiss them, or let them kiss me. But, even as a form of payment, kissing Dana isn't so bad. In fact, it's nice. Maybe it's the oxy, or maybe it's because she's a girl, not in spite of that fact, or maybe it' just because I've missed being intimate with anyone, but the heat of her skin, which is satin soft, and the rich perfume of her femaleness turns me on completely. No. I've never been with a woman before, but everything feels familiar, from the curves of her heavy breasts to the invitation between her slim thighs, and my mouth and tongue and fingers know exactly what to do to pay my debt in full. She signals the end with a shudder and quiet moan, then draws me into her arms, laying my head against her chest, where I can hear the stutter of her heart. That was outstanding. I'll expect you back tomorrow night. When I start to question her, she shushes me. Those are eighty-milligram oxys, and go for thirty a pop. How much do you think you're worth?</p>
149	<p>Little evidence of God in the backseat of a john's car, or some seedy motel room, and even less in the eyes of your pimp when he's beating you while ranting about your failures as a good little prostitute. Almost every little girl here tells a similar</p>

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	<p>story of being scooped up by some predatory man when it was obvious they had nowhere else to go.</p>
159	<p>I escorted her for a little over three years. I can't say it was an awful experience because, like I said, the men who pay upwards of a thousand dollars an hour for your company tend to be looking for exactly that, with fringe benefits, of course. For the most part, they're respectful, even kind, if a little kinky. What got me out was two things. The first was my boyfriend, who found out what I was doing and issued an ultimatum. ...The second was watching younger and younger girls being moved into the business, and really coming to understand just what was at stake.</p>
160	<p>"But why did you get involved with Walk Straight? You were already an adult when you started escorting." Yes, and there was some rather ugly lobbying being done by adult sex workers who don't like the term "sexual exploitation" because they say there's no coercion involved.</p>
166	<p>With zero regard for my mom's presence, Ronnie leans into me, covers my mouth with hers. Her lips are sticky with cherry-flavored gloss. The kiss is a slow ride to heaven, and transports me back to the post-funeral afternoon we spent in bed, sponging comfort from the heat of our intertwined bodies. If Mom wasn't watching, I'd try to assess the boner I must be wearing. Muscles have memories, right? Hey. What happens to a catheter when your dick gets hard?</p>
174	<p>Yeah, My Eyes Work Fine But other things don't work at all, and the truth is, sex with Ronnie was an important part of who "we" were. ..."My favorite memories are lying in bed with you, holding you close, touching you, and you teasing me, making me hard, but making me wait so it would last a very long time. And then, being inside you, God! You are just so incredible, all I want is to make you feel half as good as I feel, remembering. What if I can't?"</p>
182	<p>I Only Hope She never auctioned off my sisters. ...It was totally selfish, and what if it only opened the door to one of the kids being traded for cigarette money? I could probably forgive the fact that Iris was a sex worker, but making one out of me, and profiting from the rapes that ground my childhood into oblivion?</p>
193	<p>Seems Rick had quite a thing for teenage girls. When he got too friendly, Brielle told him she was a lesbian. One night he decided to "fix her little problem," and to help convince her he brought a gun into her room, forced it into her mouth and gave her the choice. Suck the thirty-eight, or suck him. Then he proceeded to do his best to "turn her." Acutely aware that the pistol was nearby, Brielle didn't fight, but she ran away later that night and was on the street for a couple of days when a proactive cop picker her up before one of Vegas's numerous pimps could.</p>
197	<p>Hell, even Have Ur Cake expects a slow evening. Guess L-tryptophan and pumpkin pie bloat aren't especially conducive to the desire for paid sex. Tomorrow, Black Friday, johns will probably be looking for deals.</p>

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202	Born Philip That explains a lot. But transitioning, or just cross-dressing? Only one way to find out, at least if she feels like sharing the information with me. ...Her gentle voice is more male than female, but it belongs to a boy, not a man.
204	They stopped worrying about me years ago, when I wouldn't quite insisting God put me in the wrong body. My mother says God doesn't make mistakes, but I identified at three. All I wanted was to play with my sister's Barbies. All my father wanted was to beat the girl out of me. Couldn't do it.
205	"My dad didn't beat me when I came out, but he completely disowned me. I can't imagine what he might have done if I'd told him I was a girl in a boy's body. Gender dysphoria is not in his vocabulary. Are you transitioning?" Pippa nods. Started hormones, and I've done a few rounds of electrolysis, but that's so expensive. I want to go all the way at some point, though. A girl doesn't need a penis. In fact, it's counterintuitive to who I'm becoming. ...Let alone affording estrogen supplements and facial hair removal. ...As for how I pay my bills, you can probably guess. No back alley blowjobs, not anymore. I'm not proud of it, but I've no other way to make that kind of money, and I'm saving up for procedures. ...I'll quit someday, once I've become the woman I was meant to be.
207	"Believe it or not, I might have an in for you. And not pole dancing, either." She smiles. I'd do that, too, except...Yet another reason I don't want a dick. But I'd give my left nut for a chance to dance. Nah. I'd give both of them.
212	My Arms Are Tattooed With long silver scars- damage from shooting up over and over in the same general location, once I forgot to care about hiding it. ...Not like drug programs teach you how not to inject, when they're warning you about using at all. Not like I thought I'd ignore that advice and go walking with the Lady. She calls to me, and I'm terrified. I'm weak. I didn't take that second oxy back in rehab, not because I tried to be strong, but because I lost it somewhere, and figured it must have been a sign. ...And I reclaim my body, abused and broken as it might be, I can take ownership of it. Dana thought it was hers for the price of two pills- pharms that would slide me back into the arms of the Lady.
217	"Mom," I try, but it's a weak attempt, and she can't hear it above the clamor. "Mom!" It's Dad who falls back, takes a long look at me. What's the matter? Now he grabs my hand, and his skin is hot and I can't stand the touch of a man- any man, really, but especially not this Vegas wolf, who rushes me and I feel his grasp at my throat, and he's telling me that he doesn't pay for sex and now he's cursing. Fight, you goddamn whore! Fight or I'll kill you.
221	Would he want to know that I met Bryn, the phony "fashion photographer" who convinced me to run away so he could pimp me out, right here in this very mall?
224	Rough? My hair has grown out. My skin's mostly clear. And I'm wearing a cut long-sleeved sweater, which covers the tracks.
228	For many, the best thing about the day is their pimps understand that men usually spend it with their families, rather than trolling for sex. Fewer customers, less money, not the girls' fault, they get a pass.

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229	I tell him, yeah, but I gotta feed my kid brother, hoping maybe he let me go, maybe for a blowjob or whatever.
251	You've thought about suicide, yeah? He looks at me intently. "Strangely, no. I mean, I did ask the Great Squash to please haul my ass home to the pumpkin patch in the sky, but he ignored me, and I'm way too much of a coward to do the deed myself."
269	Shaylee Reynold just turned seventeen. She should have been struggling with chemistry and reading Jane Austen novels. Instead, the former child prostitute was found beaten, raped, and left to die in a remote stretch of desert north of Las Vegas. In a highly publicized trial last week, Ms. Reynold testified against Lawrence Reynolds, her pimp and alleged biological father (court-ordered DNA testing has yet to return results) for murdering her mother, another prostitute. ...It is believed her death was retaliation for her testimony, which resulted in Lawrence Reynold's conviction for first-degree murder and pandering a child under the age of fourteen, which in itself carries a life sentence in the state of Nevada. The case highlights the growing problem of trafficking children for sex in Las Vegas and across the US.
275	But I'm even more uncomfortable there. The parties have grown old. It takes ever larger quantities of drugs to get high. Ditto alcohol to dull the buzz.
276	Sex with David has become worse than routine.
277	That makes me want to try is Micha. Our relationship has grown beyond infatuation all the way to serious love, and it's killing me because I just want to be with him. If his show was dark tonight and circumstances were different- yeah, right- I could spend the entire evening with him. Nice dinner. Take in a movie. Go home and straight to bed, where sex would be anything but boring. ...But he's dancing and David's entertaining, and as for me, the sex I'll have, but not enjoy, will be paid for by Peter from Kansas or Oklahoma or New Mexico, who's here for a roll on the wild side. We're connecting at Liaison, a relatively mainstream gay nightclub housed inside a major casino right on the strip. One thing I've learned is to meet these guys somewhere very public first, to gauge demeanor and hopefully avoid problems once we go upstairs or next door or down the street to wherever they're staying. A couple of times I hooked up with creeps who wanted rough play and figured since they were paying premium rates I'd be happy to accommodate. I will, to a point. But I do have limits, and stuff like fisting or asphyxiation are high on my no-can-do list. ...Luckily those two men weren't interested in getting that rough. We compromised instead. And while I didn't get the hefty tip they promised, I still got paid for my time. There's a learning curve to the escorting business.
279	Becomes your best friend, and mine tells me Peter from Wherever is safe enough. The slender fortyish man is sitting at a table for two, looking a bit unnerved by the hunky guys dancing onstage. ...He stands and offers a weak handshake. Please. Sit down. Drink? At my request for bourbon, he goes to the bar, returns with two whiskey sours. It's well liquor, which suggests that the bundle he'll drop to spend time with me is beyond his budget.

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	<p>...Not disappointed. In fact, I'm please. I kind of thought you might be more...effeminate, I guess. I mean, I did request a...He lowers his voice. A top. But you're exactly right.</p> <p>...See, when I was a kid, there was this guy who lived around the corner. He looked a lot like you, except older. I used to ride my bike by his house and one day I got a flat out in front. He was working in his yard and offered to fix it. I followed him around back to his shed. There were lots of pictures on the wall- not naked ladies, like most men have, but guys in the buff, doing unmentionable things. While he fixed my tire, I kept staring at them. I didn't even know penises were meant to do anything but pee. Finally, he says, "You know, it feels really good to have someone touch your wiener. I'll show you if you want."</p> <p>He showed me, and it did feel really good. I kind of knew it was wrong, but that made it even better. I went back a few times. At first it was just hand jobs. Then he taught me oral. One day, he wanted to demonstrate "the very best way." I was only ten, and penetration hurt like hell. Plus, it made me bleed. My mother noticed my underwear, and that was that.</p>
282	<p>What Peter Wants Is for me to play dirty old neighbor. Hey, it's his cash, and I do ask for it up front before we head to his room, which happens to be at the Mandarin Oriental, a short walk from the club. We go up to the twelfth floor, to superb accommodations. Apparently Peter is flush after all. Maybe he just likes cheap booze. He pours two deep glasses of Jack Daniel's before going to the bathroom to get ready. I return most of mine to the bottle, turn on the TV and find a country music channel. I'm betting Peter is a country kind of guy. If not, I am, and I get to be in charge. I take off my shirt, leave the jeans on so I can order him to unzip them. I also take a quick whiff of powdered encouragement from a little bottle hidden in my sock.</p> <p>By the time he wobbles back, I'm ready to go. Ready to play dirty neighbor who has gay porn hanging on the walls of his shed. "Come here, kid. Get down on your knees." And, we're off, Toby Keith warbling in the background. Peter has come prepared with a number of toys, including his favorite vibrator. If I wasn't buzzed and expecting a very good tip, I'd have a hard time stomaching the coming play. Instead, I jump into the game and an hour passes before I know it. Little boy Peter finishes, completely satisfied. "If it's okay, I'd like to clean up before I go." He nods mutely, and doesn't even put on his underwear again before shuffling over to say hi to Jack Daniel's again.</p>
284	<p>I've read that a lot of men who don't identify as queer enjoy a good male-to-male romp once in a while. Apparently, some of them don't believe it's cheating on their partners if they have sex with a man instead of another woman.</p>
285	<p>I'm almost there when I hear a couple of male voices yelling and, just underneath them, soft pleading. Shit. Last thing I need is to get involved in a row, but someone is getting pummeled.</p> <p>I move closer, and sure enough, back up against a building, a female form is on the sidewalk with two large men standing over her, and I can see her arms raised to protect her face. Fucking fag! Screams one of the dudes.</p> <p>I don't let no queer touch my dick. I'm gonna kill you, fucking whore.</p>

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286	"Hey, assholes! You like beating up girls?" They straighten, turn toward me. This ain't no girl, dickwad, says one. Besides, what business is it of yours?
290	I mean, wouldn't celebrate having sex with any number of slaves, then trading them in for newer models as soon as boredom sets in? ...Think of the opportunities, no cares in the world except having an exceptional time just being alive and getting laid by pretty young girls like Whitney.
296	Skylar says you were probably doing porn. You weren't, were you?
297	As daylight fails and the lights glitter on, I start to feel pretty good. Like maybe I don't really need a romp with the Lady after all. ...After a while I kind of want to tell them I was doing porn, if only to see the shock in their eyes and determine the velocity of rumors.
300	I already had a candy cane, and if I eat I'll have to go puke it up. I need to lose five pounds before winter break. We're going to Hawaii and I want to look good in my new bikini.
303	His sister got scorched. She OD'd.
321	That scene fades into another, out on his ranch, inhaling alfalfa green while we made love for the first- and only- time.
350	"You do realize that paying for sex with an underage girl is not only illegal, but also feeds child sex trafficking operations?" He Looks Confused Eighteen is okay by me. ..."Yeah, and you're a fucking pervert. Why don't you go whack off and call your first Sweet Little Miss, you disgusting piece of crap."
359	Thank you for teaching me that independence is more valuable than a cocaine-and-caviar lifestyle. Thank you for allowing me the time to understand that sex is undervalued as barter, and that I am worthy of love.
374	Wonder if he's ever raped someone. Wonder if he's ever hired a whore. Wonder if I'll ever quit thinking like a whore.
375	I don't freak out when the lights go down, so that's good. I like sitting next to sweet James, who totally acts the gentleman role quite naturally. I'm surprised he doesn't come on to me- don't all guys use a dark theater as an excuse to run a hand along your thigh?
380	I want to fly, and I find my magic carpet inside a bottle in Dad's medicine cabinet. Ambien As if someone taking it needs to know, the label says to take one tablet immediately before bed, but only if you have a firm seven or eight hours to sleep, and to expect dizziness in the morning. It comes with a stiff warning: Do not exceed recommended dose. I've never been real good at following directions. Let's see. I have nowhere to be tomorrow but here. It will be eight o'clock before it kicks in, and I can sleep till noon if I want to. That gives me sixteen hours. So yeah, I'll take two. I do, then replace the bottle exactly where I found it before going to my room. Screw it. What good is staying clean? Your brain has too much time to work. ...About the time I slip beneath the covers, plug headphone into my phone and

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	turn on my music, the Ambien kicks in, and hard. My head spins, hopefully quickly toward sleep because I'm also feeling a bit nauseous. Don't want to throw them back up.
413	Tomorrow is Christmas And that is the best gift I can imagine- the knowledge that I might actually be able to give Ronnie pleasure, and not just with my hands and mouth, but the way an intact man does, and maybe even come myself.
417	...to Walt, the first of my so-called mother's men who paid to have a little fun with her daughter or, as Iris puts it, "to make me a real girl" by ripping me apart. I don't try to remember all the others I've invested so much effort into trying to forget. I just tell Gram Walt wasn't the only one, finishing the bulk of my confession with the man who forced my hand that day, convinced me running away was my only option. "Also, so you know, not that it matters I guess, Alex and I did strip for money in Vegas, but I never let a man touch me, and I probably never will in the future." I keep the part about sleeping with girls to myself for the time being.
437	My faith, stolen by one who claimed to stand fast representing it. One deviated priest, and my God was taken from me. And Dad, who deserted this world in favor of the next where, he believed, the love of his life awaits him in eternity.
442	It Would Be So Easy To go back into the other room for that little plastic bag of powdered courage. Snort myself brave. Chase the dragon, and smoke myself fearless. Send Bryn into a drugstore for clean needles. Shoot myself heroic. How many heroes require such encouragement to face their enemies, conquer them- or not? Dope or no, you'll never be a hero, says Girl-in-the-Mirror, and your past is the enemy.
447	The first thing I'm going to do is fuck you dirty. I actually hate clean. He pushes me facedown on the bed, ignoring my weak plea to leave me alone. Just as he starts to rip at my clothes, there's pounding on the door.
448	Bryn was arrested, charged with rape and kidnapping with the intent of trafficking a child under the age of seventeen. With all the crazy commotion, I managed to sneak the heroin out of my purse and toss it under a car in the parking lot without being spotted.
489	I'm scared I can't escape the legacy of turning tricks, that too much filth and too little affection will forever define my relationships.
507	I first became interested in the subject of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) when I came across the statistic that the average age of young women introduced into prostitution is twelve.

Profanity	Count
Ass	14
Bitch	5
Dick	8
Fag/Faggot	1
Fuck	28
Goddamn	5
Piss	14
Pussy	1
Shit	15