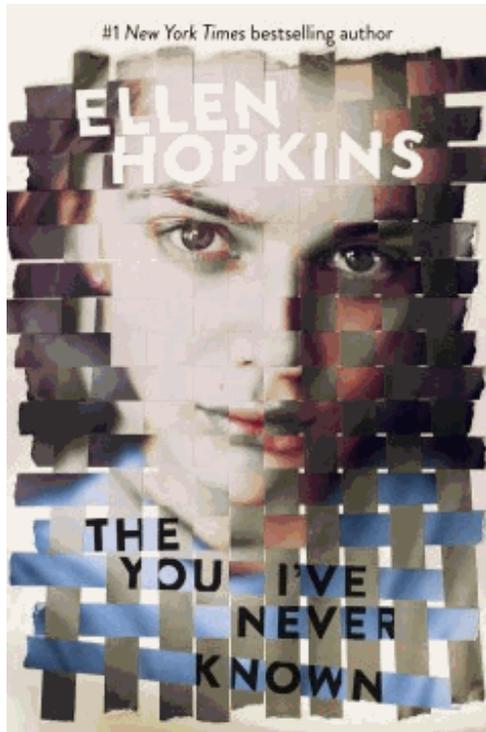


THE YOU I'VE NEVER KNOWN



Young Adult

By Ellen Hopkins

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Book Summary:

A seventeen-year-old girl struggles with her identity and sexual preference, eventually learning that her father has lied to her for the past fourteen years.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains controversial racial and sexual commentary; alternate sexualities; profanity and derogatory terms; alcohol and drug use; sexual activities; and violence.

3 /5

Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
10	Truthfully, I don't care that they have sex, or what variety it might be. Vanilla or kinky, doesn't matter at all to me.
12	It's Saturday night and Dad and Zelda are out getting trashed. ...Sonora has brought out Dad's inner Oklahoma hick, and that's okay except when he's knocked back a few too many and starts yelling about "them goddamn Muslims" or, worse, "fucking wetbacks."
13	Sonora is a small-town conservative, especially by California standards. Accepting to a point, but not exactly a mecca for the LGBTQ crowd. Monica Torres is not only a lesbian, but also a queer Mexican American, and while she's mostly okay carrying both banners, they make her an outsider in a school that takes great pride in its Wild West spirit. I would've run in the other direction if I'd known she was gay when I first met her. The last thing I wanted was a lezzie best friend.
14	I've hated my mother for running off with her lesbian lover. Dad has branded that information into my brain, and with it the concept that queer equals vile.
18	"Oh my God. If those taste half as good as they smell, my mouth's going to have an orgasm."
21	She reaches into her purse and, like magic, a full bottle of vodka appears, along with a couple of rolled cigarettes.
22	My mom stocks up on this stuff five bottles at a time. She was halfway to blitzed when I left. ...I take three tumblers from the cupboard, hand them to Syrah. "We have to go outside. I really don't need my dad to smell booze, let alone weed."
29	My hands shake as I pour vodka.
31	Byone the universal homo fog dyke butch muff diver carpet muncher etc. would come words he reserves for my lesbian mother and/or her girlfriend:
34	I have got to quit hanging out with dykes.
35	"Don't call me a dyke. I mean, just because one of my best friends is queer doesn't make me that way." ..."Anyway, I bet if one of us would give those boys head, we could be popular, too."
62	Porn star bitches don't count. ..."...They probably fantasize all night about the naked lesbian party happening just down the road..."
67	My plan was to buy some beer, take you home, and watch the Astros game at your house.
68	...dressed in yesterday's clothing, which is wrinkled and carries vague essences of tamales, vodka, and weed.
76	We were staying with Cecilia, one of several women Dad hooked up with along the way during our nomadic days. That was a pattern. Touch down somewhere he felt like hanging around, he'd pick up a woman hungry for a man and willing to put up with his kid.
77	Oh, not to mention fairly frequent sex for Dad, who happily accepted all benefits as long as they didn't require monetary compensation.

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78	...it stretched awfully thin for two hard-drinking adults and one kid-...
82	The one about letting out next-door teenage neighbor touch my boobs for a dollar?
84	I've kissed a boy or five, but none has ever asked if it was okay. That surprised me, and so did the kiss. I expected a soldier's lips- rough, harsh. But his were gently, at least at first, and it might have stopped right there, except I wanted more. It was me who moved toward urgency, not that he complained. Truthfully, instinct drove me. His lack of demand pushed me forward, as if I had something to prove. And when he responded as men do, or at least as much as they can in a public place, I felt vindicated.
88	Monica snakes her fingers into mine, pulls my hand against the taut muscles of her belly. Beneath her shirt, her body is warm, and the connection is comforting, and this feels so right it makes me sigh contentment.
98	She left me- and you- for a goddamn dyke!
127	Meanwhile, he's buying the beer, and the sex is amazing. Jason wasn't my first. I've been with other guys, all around my age or a little older, but hurried backseat sex, fumbling with belt buckles and condoms, didn't really do much for me. ...we can be relaxed about making love.
136	He says other than the grease and porn on the wall it's decent.
159	It only crossed my mind once to wonder if having sex could hurt the baby inside me. ...So yesterday I turned seventeen. It started off as expected, with little recognition from my hum incubator.
163	"Can I get a beer first?" "No. Not for the kid."
172	Rules out Jack Daniel's and Coke, I guess, not that I should be drinking with Gabe. ...I go check out Dad's alcohol stash. He's got a big bottle of some generic rum, maybe two-thirds full. I think I can get away with swiping a little. Hot drinks, that's what we'll have. I microwave two mugs of water, add single shots (okay, big single shots) of cheap liquor, taste. Yech! Add sugar. Taste. Much better, if still not great. Dash of cinnamon, dab of butter. Hot buttered rums, and I'm sticking to that. I carry them into the other room, where Gabe has planted himself on the sofa.
173	You do this often? "Do what? Make drinks?" Not just make them, but invite guys in to share them with you when you're sure your dad's away.
174	"...My dad thinks he's funny, but only when he's drunk. So maybe I should just drink more." ...Inviting a guy- or girl, for that matter- to share drinks, or weed, or a kiss, or more, has never been a consideration until now, and it's all so new I have no clue how to deal with it.
175	And now I need more to drink I think I just bombed it.

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179	Are you into women or did my dirty little mind make that up?
180	"I wish I was one hundred percent sure about who or what I'm 'into,' as you put it..." ..."...I've got an excellent friend who happens to be a lesbian, and our relationship is very close to love at this point, but whether or not that will become sexual, I don't know."
184	I've heard people saying that's bull, that those who claim to be bisexual are nothing more than nymphos indulging unencumbered greed.
190	But it didn't matter anyway, because within ten seconds every inch of me was exposed to a strange man in a lab coat could feel up my boobs,...
191	"...You're fourteen weeks now, so you'll have to decide very soon."
192	She grabbed me by the hair, yanked my face toward hers. "Pregnant? You disgusting little whore! I knew you were sneaking around. How will I ever live this down?" ..."...I'm going to call and make an appointment for you to get an abortion..."
198	Even from ten feet away, the stink of alcohol almost knocked me onto my butt. Still, he denied being wasted. I'm fucking fine. Don't you dare talk down to me. ...You lazy bitch. I'm gonna kick the shit out of you. Come here.
199	My father was drunk the few times he actually hit me, and probably no more so than he was last night.
200	Those post-alcohol-soaked night encounters can end worse. Dad's only a vicious drunk once in a while and last night was not one of those occasions.
206	I didn't raise a pervert, did I?
226	I was glad he put a huge burrito in his gut to absorb some of the alcohol.
235	There's no such thing as "bi." That means they'll fuck anything. They're...(depending on who's talking) straight or gay, and going through a phase or in total denial. They're full of shit. They're mentally ill.
237	Then again, I can't be certain. Maybe every single person in that class is an oversexed full-of-shit lunatic.
239	Is there such a thing as promiscuous love, or does that only apply to sex?
242	The temptation to stare has become harder and harder, however, and now she turns to face me, a soft soap lather barely disguising the sinews of her breasts and black curls beneath her belly button, and I have to clear my eyes, pretending shampoo is what I'm worried about getting inside them.
247	The problem is I don't like gays. It ain't natural. Beside...He dares to run his hand down over my left breast. It's a waste of pussy. ...And what would you know about pussy?
249	"Maybe you got it right. They say the biggest homophobes are often closet queers."
256	You underage drink, you smoke weed and inhale, but driving without a license makes you a criminal?

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	...Her fingers tiptoe across the seat, to my knee and up my leg, then come to rest on the inner thigh curve.
261	Sometimes I wake to find myself touching the most intimate parts of my body, satiating a hunger so deep, so vital, feeding it is integral to my well-being.
270	Just as I think my heart will pound out of my chest, the tip of her tongue traces the outline of my mouth before her lips kiss the excited pulse beneath my right ear, then move to the matching throb under the left. When she kisses down my neck, to the small cleft between my breasts, my instinct is to protest.
272	<p>Driven by instinct fueled by solid lust we are skin to skin tongue to tongue and tongue to skin</p> <p>She kisses in circles the arc of my neck the curve of my breasts the smaller circumference of my nipples.</p> <p>She licks in lines tracking contours down my right side back up my left and, finally, straight from chin to belly button.</p> <p>She touches tentatively in lines and circles show me what you like gaining momentum building intensity</p> <p>She nudges me closer and closer right up against the brink and, no way to hold back, pushes me over the cliff.</p> <p>It's one hell of a trip.</p>
276	<p>"...What good is a wife who won't please her man? The least you can do is jack me off."</p> <p>..."First of all, it might be the only time ever have big breasts. You'll enjoy them..."</p>
277	He got drunk and passed out...
280	<p>It's not that I can't accept the fact that I'm bi. I can. The problem I keep returning to is commitment. Shouldn't that be part of my identity?</p> <p>Until recently Identity wasn't something I thought much about, at least not anything beyond the concept of a name. I mean, I always felt like a girl, and not just because Dad was very clear that's what I was. (And not a dyke, like my mother.) When I was little, he wanted me to wear dresses, and keep my hair long, though I hated brushing through it every morning and again before bed.</p> <p>But even after I was old enough to choose my own wardrobe and cut my hair if that's what I wanted, I felt right in my own body.</p>
283	Boys are not cute, their wild animals, and I'd better not ever catch you with a Mexican, understand me, missy? He shook me hard for emphasis.
284	<p>What I took from the experience was the message that I should never bring up anything about boys to my dad. Especially no Mexican boys, or Mexican anything.</p> <p>So the time Debra and I were playing hide-and-seek, and I burst into Shayla's room while she and Carlos were doing some naked thing together, I kept my mouth sealed. And when she wound up pregnant at the tender age of fourteen, I barely knew enough to put the two things together.</p>
292	"Anyway, what if you flip me straight?"
310	<p>His arms encircle my waist, lift, and carry me to the bed, where he lays me down carefully, treasure.</p> <p>I watch him peel off clothing- his shirt, his Wranglers- until there's nothing left but the gray boxers that hid nothing.</p>

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	<p>...He also has goose bumps. The heater hasn't quite managed to shake the chill. I laugh. "Better get under the covers before you freeze." Good idea. But first... He reaches down, unzips my jeans, tugs them off by the cuffs. I wish I'd worn Victoria's Secret panties instead of the garden variety cotton, but that's all I've got in my drawer. Gabe doesn't seem to care. His hands travel my legs, knees to hips, then push up over the slight rise of my belly to the small hills jutting just above. Take off your sweater. He helps lift it over my head, then unhooks my bra before covering our exposed skin with sheet and quilt and lying beside me, facing me, and he pauses there. ...In response, I kiss him, plead for his lips and tongue and fingers to touch places only one other person has ever been given explicit permission to explore. He isn't Monica, no, not at all. She is silk. He is leather. She is lithe. He is brawn. She is low tide. He is high. She quivers. He quakes. The giving is different. He directs, and I follow the script, learn the action, rehearse until I get it right. The final act is approaching. I thought I would be scared but I'm anxious for the gift of knowledge denied by God in the book of Genesis. Instead, Gabe is the denier. Stop. I don't have a condom. ...The pause has resulted in a need to start over, and that's okay by me. I'm enjoying circling the bases. Home plate, now safe, can wait. We Take Our Time And we both score twice. And the seismic waves are incredible. Massive. Nothing like the gentle tremblors with Monica.</p>
319	<p>Okay, I've got several problems, and this one might actually not be an issue at all, though I think it has to be. I like sex. ...But I like sex. I like it with Monica. I like it with Gabe, though the two experiences were not the same. At the moment I'm not interested in liking it with anyone else. But if I like sex.</p>
321	<p>Look at Me I'm a regular sex expert. Not. The thought is hilarious. Totally. I've barely done two positions. Lame. But then, I've done a girl and a guy. True. ...What's that? Just say no. But what fun is that?</p>
327	<p>I might be a lesbian or at least halfway gay.</p>
353	<p>Top Dad's most-disgusted-by list. Right below come: queers</p>

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	(zero exceptions) foreigners (white Europeans mostly exempt) pussies (except the feminine kind)
361	She's borderline wasted.
364	How 'bout we have a little fun? The alcohol on his breath almost buckles my knees.
365	You a cock tease? ...You a switch-hitter?
366	Ooh. Tough girl, huh? Tough goddamn dyke. Let's see if you're into guys or girls. Bet I could eat you better. He pushes me sideways and back, into a nearby bedroom, and is on me so suddenly I can't react. Next thing I know, I'm on the bed beneath him, held fast by the weight of his body. "No, Garrett, no! Stop!" But the words are trapped by the booze-flavored drool inside his mouth. His teeth rake my lips and one hand snares my hair, snaps my head against the mattress. Don't fight, baby. I'll make you feel so good you'll never want a girl again. Here, check this thing out. His free hand unzips his jeans, and just as I start to panic, a familiar voice interrupts the scene.
367	What the fuck's it to you? I'm just breaking her in a little. And, hey, if you want, you can take a turn, too. A good screw or two might flip her totally. Gabe assesses the front of Garrett's pants. Breaking her in? With what you've got there? Nah, I don't think so. What I witnessed looked like assault. You like forcing yourself on girls? Garrett shakes his head. Nope. Can't assault the willing. Goddamn cock teaser wanted it. "That's a lie! You're the last person on this planet I'd want to have sex with. The last!"
368	Friends don't let friends get raped.
369	Why don't you tuck your teensy pecker back into your pants and get the hell out of here?
375	If tonight had resulted in actual penetration- rape- would I feel differently and report it?
386	Once Syrah's house emptied we smoked a little weed, and then it was past time for bed.
388	Oh, that was sex as it should be.
389	What I Can Say In retrospect is I like sex.
397	Last night taught me I'm not the party type. Except maybe private parties with you.

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419	Not like he and I are an actual couple, just friends with privileges.
426	"Dad never called her Maya. He called her Jenny, when he bothered to call her anything other than dyke, bitch, or whore..."
475	Did you ever tell her you and I had sex?
490	"Sleep with him again. Because we did have sex a couple of times."
491	"I did like having sex with Gabe. But it's not the same as making love with you. I've come to the conclusion that I enjoy the physical act, and I refuse to feel guilty about that.
505	I dare to slip my hand beneath the covers, cup one breast and then the other, circling her attention-seeking nipples with one finger. "Wish we had more time, not to mention privacy..." ...I do want her, and very soon.
540	...tried to off herself.
558	Did you really believe you could desert me, run off with your "best friend," the one I can just see you finger banging? And you didn't even let me in on the fun. Oh, that would be a picture, wouldn't it? You and me and lezzie makes three?
568	He's been drinking, of course, though that isn't any kind of excuse for slapping me around.
570	But after he left, his daily alcohol consumption increased steadily until it reached overdose levels. ...I turned myself into a regular party girl.

Profanity	Count
Ass	7
Bitch	16
Cock	1
Dick	2
Dyke	8
Fuck	32
Piss	10
Prick	1
Pussy	2
Shit	34
Wetback	1