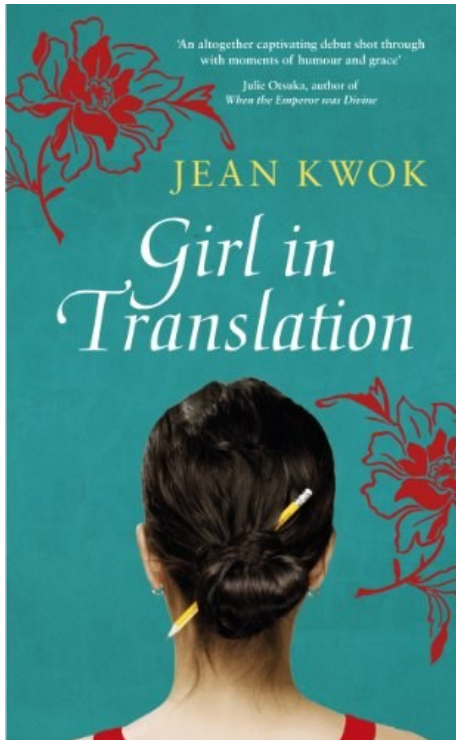


GIRL IN TRANSLATION



Young Adult

By Jean Kwok

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CONTENT WARNING

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Book Summary:

A teenage immigrant girl works to have a better life than her parents had.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; mild/infrequent profanity; alcohol and drug use by minors; and abortion commentary.

3 /5

Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

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87	There was a rumor that once a kid had rammed him in the stomach with his head and Luke had pulled a knife and cut him. He also used a lot of words I didn't know, like cock and mother finger. I asked Annette if she knew what cock meant. "Everyone knows that." Her smile was confident. "It means poop."
102	Inside the other buildings, I tried not to stare at the statues of women with bare breasts, their whiteness glowing in the alcoves; they even had nipples.
127	All of the other girls began stripping down. We'd never had to change for gym at my old school. We'd only had to switch to sneakers if we weren't wearing them already. I clutched my new clothes as I saw everyone else was wearing store-bought panties. Some even had on cotton bras or sleeveless camisoles. All of their underwear was colorful and expensive. Some of the girls were completely flat-chested and I envied them. I had begun to develop small breasts that summer and I did everything I could to hide them.
137	It was clear I could never fit into any of those huge bras on display. They were for women with real breasts, not the little bumps I was growing.
140	I missed in my nervousness, though, and kissed him on the corner of his mouth instead, which must have made my performance more convincing to all of the spectators. Despite his bravado, Greg was also only twelve years old at the time, and he was so shocked by my kiss that he started to sputter violently, as if he'd been stung by a hive of bees, and all of the skin that was visible in between his freckles flushed a dark red. ..."Still feeling the kiss?" Curt asked with a wicked smile.
145	I had no idea what in the world the Sahara Pipeline had to do with a nun, or how a pipeline could be dirty in a sexual sense.
148	"No, let's meet earlier. I can get some bears," Greg said. While they discussed the logistics of their evening, my mind whirled. A show that started at midnight. And some bears? Then I realized he had to mean the alcoholic drink, beer. When I finally looked up, Tammy was saying something to me again. "So, can you make it?" "It is not a problem for your parents?" I blurted out the question in my thoughts. "Beer?"
206	At school during my free periods, I spent a lot of time taking walks hand in hand with boys. We would walk and we would make out. This was exactly what Ma had warned me not to do with boys, which only made it more fun.
207	Sometimes he came to our sessions with a joint in his hand. And stoned or not, he never missed an opportunity to flirt with me. I didn't take him seriously because I'd seen him doing the same with other girls. I understood he was just practicing.
211	"Yeah," Godfrey, who was now thirteen, piped up. "What a stupid shirt." "You look gay," Nelson said. "You look like a pimp."
225	His fingertips were entwined in my hair, I could feel the warmth of them against my scalp, and then I was looking up at him. A shaft of light from the window in the door fell on his soft hair. His golden eyes were luminous in the half-dark, and finally, we were kissing in one long heat of melting, and the lush afternoon dissolved into yearning for Matt and Matt alone.

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	<p>And when we were done with that kiss, there was another and then another, before Matt broke off to say, in a husky voice I'd never heard from him, "They'll be looking for me."</p> <p>"Me too," I breathed.</p> <p>Then we kissed again and again before I made myself remember that he had a girlfriend and she wasn't me. I wanted to be the one to end this. I pulled myself away.</p>
226	<p>After work that day, Vivian was waiting in her usual spot outside the factory. I'm ashamed to say I had trailed him downstairs, and I saw him go up to her and kiss her on the lips.</p> <p>...It may not seem like much—a few kisses in the dark—but it was enough to burn a hole like an ulcer in my heart.</p>
229	<p>I felt my way down the hallway and opened the bedroom door. I flicked on the light. There was a pile of clothing and handbags on the mahogany bed. Suddenly, something shifted. I almost screamed, then realized that it was a boy from my year making out with some girl. He had his hands up her shirt and she was pulling on his hair.</p> <p>He dragged his lips from hers and glared at me. "Do you mind?"</p> <p>...They were standing by a long counter that must have been a minibar. Annette made me a gin and tonic from the bottles on the bar, heavy on the tonic. The music was as loud as the machines at the factory. Annette pulled me onto the floor and we started to dance.</p>
230	<p>One of the boys sitting there was someone I'd kissed a while back.</p> <p>...They were passing around a huge Chinese water pipe. It was about two feet high and I could see I'd need both hands to wrap around the diameter of the shaft. From the smell, I knew they weren't smoking tobacco.</p>
231	<p>When the water pipe came to me, I ran my finger over its intricate carvings. Everyone was looking at me from under their eyelashes, probably to watch the newcomer cough and not know how to take a hit. But I had seen plenty of men smoking water pipes in cafés in Hong Kong.</p> <p>I put my mouth inside the wide shaft, so tightly that I created an airtight seal, held a lighter to the small metal bowl attached to the main shaft and inhaled through my mouth. I could hear the water bubbling as the smoke was pulled through it and then up into my mouth. I was prepared for the burn of the smoke and I held it in my lungs while I passed the pipe to Curt.</p> <p>He was laughing. "You're a natural. You should give up being a brain and become a pothead, like me."</p>
232	<p>"You've never had a real kiss until you've been kissed stoned," Curt said.</p> <p>"All right," I said, already having a great deal of fun turning my head from side to side.</p> <p>Slowly, I felt Curt lean over me and capture my head in between his large hands. I felt his hair brush my face. Instead of giving me a quick kiss on the lips as I'd expected, he started by kissing my neck, the tender places underneath the jaw and behind the ear. My world was filled with the touch of his mouth, the scent of his hair. He started gently sucking on my earlobe.</p> <p>"Mmmmm," I murmured. "Does this still fall under 'kissing'?"</p>

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	<p>In answer, he kissed me full on the lips, leisurely, as if he were savoring every moment. His kiss was soft and full: like a butterfly, it fluttered against the closed door of my heart and then was still.</p>
235	<p>It was a brilliant autumn day, cold for that time of year, and Curt and I were sitting huddled together under the bleachers of the stadium. After the first time, I didn't get stoned with him again, because I didn't like being so dazed in my normal life. My cheap jacket was much thinner than his and he'd wrapped his long cashmere coat around the both of us like a tent. I was rubbing my finger against his bottom lip.</p> <p>In between kisses placed on my fingertip, he asked, as casually as always, "How come you're not in love with me?"</p> <p>I didn't want to hurt him. "Curt, just about every girl in school's in love with you." He held my finger still and started sucking on it. In contrast to the chilly air, the warmth of his mouth was incredible. "Except you."</p> <p>"True," I sighed, closing my eyes with pleasure.</p> <p>"Is it because of before?"</p> <p>"What do you mean?"</p> <p>"Because I went along with Greg teasing you. In seventh grade. You remember." ...An image of Matt drifted into my head but I pushed it away. "I guess I'm only in love with your body."</p> <p>Curt burst out laughing. "Well, I guess that'll have to be good enough." And we left it at that.</p>
245	<p>He leaned over and kissed me.</p>
250	<p>Our clothes were wet and I got the two thin towels from the bathroom. I handed one to Matt, but instead of starting to dry himself off, he took it and wiped it gently over my face. I stood there, motionless, while he lifted my hair and dried the base of my neck with the towel. He unzipped my jacket and pushed it off my shoulders. It fell on the floor.</p> <p>His lips were all I could look at, and I abruptly disengaged myself and started walking toward the kitchen.</p> <p>"I better find another towel," I said, knowing we didn't have any other towels. But he'd caught me by my sleeve and his hands were pulling me back. I closed my eyes. I felt his arms go around me and before I knew it, his hands were under my shirt, stroking and tantalizing. He kissed me and I stopped breathing. He was filled with need, he seemed unable to control himself.</p> <p>"Please," I whispered. "Wait."</p> <p>He already had my shirt off. We fell back on the pile of stuffed-animal blankets. He pinned me to the mattress, his weight was delicious, and now he was moving his lips against mine, agonizing and luscious, the brush of stubble against my temples, the sweep of his hair. I felt I couldn't breathe, I couldn't move, I was his and he was mine. I could feel the heat of him burning through his wet clothes. He was a man possessed, by grief and passion together.</p> <p>Finally, I made myself say, very clearly, "We have to use a condom." With some embarrassment, he regained control of himself. He took a deep, shuddering breath, then said, "I have a couple in my wallet."</p> <p>"Let's use two," I said. "Just to be sure."</p>

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	<p>“Okay.”</p> <p>But once he started to kiss me again, the taste and smell of him overwhelmed me and I became frantic to get his clothes off too. I felt hypnotized, as if I were in a dream, and I kept thinking, This is Matt, he’s mine now, mine, at last. I looked at him up close and he was more beautiful than I’d ever imagined, the shimmer of his lashes, the thin white scar that ran across his collarbone, the darkened hollow of his throat. Despite all of my experimentation, I’d never been naked with a man before, and Matt’s skin felt warm and rough. He must have taken care of the condoms somehow and then suddenly he was inside me. I gasped, but it hadn’t hurt as much as I’d expected it to and then I couldn’t think at all anymore. When he finally came, he started to cry again. I held him tenderly in my arms. We lay there together, both breathing hard, returning to ourselves.</p>
252	<p>After he'd gone and I was trying to get the stains out of the blankets so Ma wouldn't suspect anything when she came home, I stopped short, my hands flying to my mouth. There were the condoms. I should have known. The two condoms had rubbed against each other and they'd both torn. What a stupid idea of mine it'd been. Neither of us had even noticed.</p>
259	<p>I couldn't believe I was actually on a date with Matt and that I hadn't had to lie to Ma about it. The moment we got outside, Matt kissed me. Some of the guys on the street hooted.</p>
261	<p>“When we kissed in the bathroom at the factory, it gave me hope for the first time. But then you just ignored me again and I couldn't figure it out. I told myself it'd been a one-time thing, that your heart was somewhere else. But when . . .”</p> <p>...“I just needed more time to figure it out. When I'm with you, I can't think, especially after I've been kissing you. But I did feel guilty about Vivian too. I don't want to be like my pa. And you are too good for me.”</p>
262	<p>“Never,” I said, and I leaned across the table, pulled him toward me and kissed him.</p>
267	<p>He took me in his arms and kissed me hard.</p>
268	<p>“Okay, okay.” There was another silence and then Curt said, “Three choices. One, he dumped you. Two, you dumped him. Three, you're knocked up.”</p>
269	<p>“Curt, I love you.” I paused. “But not like that. And you don't love me that way either. Actually, we're friends. Friends who fool around.”</p> <p>...“I've already used you for your body. I draw the line at using you for your money.”</p> <p>...When it was time for me to go, Curt bent over to kiss me on the lips. I held his face in my hands, then turned so that his kiss landed on my cheek, to the side of my mouth.</p>
271	<p>Now she lifted her head and stared at me. “You're not thinking about dropping the fetus.” Having an abortion.</p> <p>I could hear how dead my voice sounded. “What else can I do? How could I ever take care of you and Park and Matt and the baby?”</p>
283	<p>Slowly, we kissed. I was engulfed by the softness of his lips, the delicious taste of him. I had lived all these years for this kiss, so that I could be here, on this morning, with him.</p>

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288	<p>Ma and Annette had both come with me for the abortion, both sat outside in the waiting room as I was being prepped. Before they could do anything, the doctors needed to confirm the length of the pregnancy by means of an ultrasound. A mere technicality, I'd thought. The technician smeared a viscous gel across my stomach. I had goose bumps on my skin. I felt I would die from the cold. She kept my hospital gown open so she could use the ultrasound wand to locate the fetus. I expected a clump of cells attached to the uterine wall. I kept my mind carefully blank but without warning, an image of the fetus sprang onto the screen and I gasped.</p>

Profanity	Count
Ass	2
Cock	2
Dick	3
Shit	2