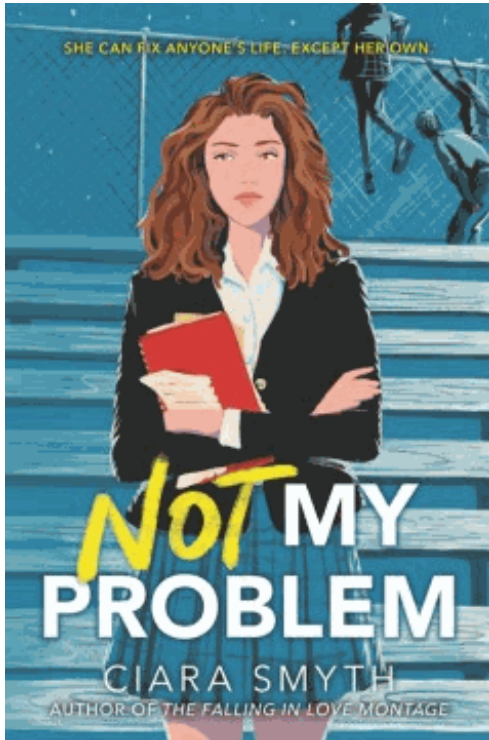


# NOT MY PROBLEM



*Young Adult*

**By Ciara Smyth**

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## CONTENT WARNING

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### Book Summary:

By helping a classmate solve her problems, a high school girl begins to understand how to fix her own.

### Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; excessive/frequent profanity; alternate sexualities; alcohol abuse; and controversial social commentary.

**3** /5

**Minor Restricted**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
6	"There's an idea," I agreed. "Instead of flyers and badges, she could hand out test paper answers and bags of weed."
13	Everyone would think I was class and then I'd be like, Have you met my wife, Kristen Stewart? We're flying on a private jet to Maui tonight to have lots of sex and lip biting. Fuckity bye, assholes.
22	"Maybe after I've given up on higher-level Maths I'll think I have time to go to that party." There was no party. "Someone offers me crack. And I think hey, sure, I have a biology lab to write up but I can do it in the morning." "I feel like you've missed a step. Who do we know who brings crack to parties?"
38	I gave the door a rap. It's never open because they're afraid someone will break in while the old nun who acts as a "nurse" is having a nap and steal all the ibuprofen to sell on the streets.
40	"Good thing she locked that cupboard again, eh?" I said when she was gone. "Else she might come back to find us here absolutely off our tits, snorting lines of ibuprofen off the sink."
68	Kavi mouthed the word sexts and pointed at his nipples.
79	"Maybe next year there'll be loads, and I don't want people going round thinking they're all my brother. Aren't you the one who said the other day that Ireland is a country that has entered a period of racial and cultural diversification and that now is the time to address the issues of systemic racism and xenophobia embedded in our society? And then you spent like ten minutes giving out about that lady politician who keeps posting pictures of brown kids and Eastern European kids and complaining about there being no 'Irish' people left, until Mr. McCann promised that he would not use the words Celtic and Irish interchangeably again?"
102	"I don't know anyone else who would help me do something like this, especially if I'd told them what I told you. Most people would say it was my own fault for sending sexts in the first place and to accept the punishment. My friends said it was my fault for lying and I should be honest about it. They don't get it."
103	"I didn't think it was fair for you to get in trouble when you didn't really do anything wrong. Whomst among us hasn't sent a dirty message?" I waved my arms grandly like the priest does in Mass when he gets going. "Let he who is without sext cast the first stone." I hadn't sent any sexts. But only because no one wanted to see them.
126	"How good you'd have to be at sex for it to be considered a public service to bag as many people as possible?" ...Ronan shuddered. "Miss, you cannot be telling us you've had sex." ...I heard him mutter, "Devlin has the clap," to the boy next to him.
128	"Unfortunately, this note only covers PE. Perhaps you could use the time to get some homework done? I believe the cure for hysteria is overthrowing the patriarchy, and you won't get much of that done if you're held back a year." ..."I'm always tits deep," she said absently. "I walk around brushing work off my nipples on a twenty-four seven basis."

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134	She took a deep breath. "I need you to get the morning-after pill for me."
135	<p>"It was with my ex-boyfriend," she went on. "They're going to judge me for the backslide."</p> <p>"I don't think you can get pregnant that way."</p> <p>"That's not what that means," she said, and I could practically feel the heat from her blush. "He broke up with me and broke my heart and then I slept with him the second he showed any interest again. I thought it meant he wanted to get back with me but it didn't. It's embarrassing. I should be less pathetic."</p>
149	<p>"Have you had unprotected sex in the last seventy-two hours?"</p> <p>"Yep. With a boy. And his bare penis. My bad." But that was fine.</p>
152	Dad had married this woman, Sarah, a year or two before he met Mam. Dad had an affair with Mam and then I arrived.
171	"Uh . . . I suppose they span the range from mildly rude to a suggestion that he's a case for post-birth abortion?"
200	There had been times too, after I'd just started at St. Louise's, when they'd invited me out, to hang around, drink in the park and whatever, but back then Mam had been trying to stay sober and I needed to stay in and look after her.
224	People didn't get up and tell stories and no one said, Hi, my name is Betty and I'm addicted to drinking Lambrini and scrolling Instagram or whatever. There was an actual therapist there and they chatted as a whole group. Antabuse was a pill that was supposed to stop you drinking because the side effects of drinking on it were awful. But it didn't stop you wanting to drink.
230	"Okay, if you're going off to have sex, make sure you don't catch chlamydia please. GP appointments are € 55 before you even get a script, and I'm not made of money."
231	I wanted to believe this was just her regular brand of lackadaisical parenting and that she wasn't cracking open a hidden bottle of wine as I stomped downstairs.
246	<p>"I'm a boy," Daniel piped up. "But this is my good shirt. I'll ruin it for you ladies though."</p> <p>"Sexist," Meabh replied. "Chivalry is simply another form of misogyny that places women on a pedestal, thus denying them full humanity and agency."</p>
250	"OH RIGHT, RONAN, BECAUSE AT A PARTY YOUR TONGUE IS NO LONGER REAL AND HER MOUTH IS NO LONGER REAL AND I SUPPOSE IF YOU HAD SEX YOUR DICK WOULDN'T BE REAL EITHER."
252	<p>"I haven't seen anything you have under there before," she said. "You always skip PE. When do you think I've seen you undress?"</p> <p>"That's not what I meant." I blushed. "I mean, I just have. You know. Like regular boobs. You've seen boobs. I mean, probably."</p> <p>"You think I go around the changing rooms looking at girls getting undressed?" she said, affronted. "How can you think I'd do that? I'm not a pervert just because I'm a lesbian. You should know that better than anyone."</p>
253	I couldn't help but notice where her nipples pressed against the fabric of her sports bra and when my eyes reached her neck, this thought, this picture flashed in my mind. I looked at her and she was looking back at me. It felt like she could see what I'd imagined. I'd thought of kissing her there, of pulling her close and feeling her skin against mine. I thought about trailing my fingers down her waist and sliding them down past the open

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	<p>buttons of her jeans to—            ...In the space of a few seconds I'd turned into some kind of sex pest.            ...Yeah, because bickering never leads to sexual tension.</p>
254	<p>My inner voice snorted. Meabh wrapped herself in a towel as well and we both awkwardly shuffled out of our underwear. She was naked under there now.</p>
257	<p>"I think you have a great body," she said, almost in a whisper.            I didn't know what to say to that but I didn't hate hearing it.            "I have no boobs," she said, in the most genuinely plaintive tone I'd ever heard. It made me laugh. "Who's gonna want to see me naked? There's nothing to see!"            "Well, first off, all the media lesbians are elfin and flat chested and they get to wear clothes that are sexy in an androgynous kind of way. You don't see TV lesbians with big tits. We don't exist cos we don't look good in button-ups." I thought about it. "Besides, more than a handful's a waste," I said.            She snorted. "Not to me," she said. "I feel bad about it because it makes me feel like I'm being objectifying or something, but I want a girl with boobs."            I felt my cheeks heat up. "You can have one. There isn't some kind of soul mate matching-up service based on bra size." I put on a gruff voice: "Nah, you two can't date, one of you is an A cup and the other has double Ds. What was that? True love? This is the Titty Equity Commission, take that shit somewhere else."            Meabh laughed.            "I never thought we'd one day be having a conversation about breast preferences," I mused, grateful that at least she hadn't tried to talk to me about Holly.</p>
258	<p>"Hey, Kav, c'mere and tell us what kind of boobs you're into."            ..."Uh. A girl asked if she could do a belly shot off my stomach. That was weird."</p>
261	<p>I found Angela and, slightly drunk, she threw me the keys.</p>
271	<p>So it wasn't just a slip. She was drinking again.</p>
275	<p>One day of sobriety wasn't enough. She had probably been drinking fairly steadily since her bender and I hadn't noticed because I'd been caught up in all my favors and problems with Holly and Meabh.</p>
280	<p>That I might break down and actually tell them that I couldn't sleep at night because I was afraid that Mam would get up and leave and that she would come back drunk hours later.</p>
287	<p>She'd thrown her jumper off and so she was just in her school shirt. I could just see the shadow of a lime-green sports bra underneath.            What should I say?            Her skirt was hitched up again and her long legs caught my eye. I remembered our almost kiss the night of the party.            How should I say it?            I remembered seeing her in her wet T-shirt, watching her peel it off, and I felt a hot rush through my body. I wondered what she would do if I kissed her now and I thought about how much more fun that would be than doing Math homework every PE class.            ...A montage of images flooded my head. Even though I knew that Meabh would never consider letting me kiss her neck, loosen her school tie, unbutton her shirt, and slide my hands up her thighs on school property. It would be sacrilegious to her.</p>

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302	When I went back into the living room she was sitting on the sofa with her arms crossed, her tea half drunk.
337	Mam was asleep on the sofa. She hadn't hidden the bottle of wine this time. Maybe she'd hidden the first one, the second one even.
348	<p>I cut her off with a kiss. I didn't think about it, I just leaned in and held the back of her head gently. Her lips parted and she kissed me back. My other hand wrapped around her waist and I pulled her close so I could feel the length of her body press against mine. The kiss deepened and I felt a sense of urgency. Like I'd been wanting to kiss her for so long that it had burst out of me and now I could barely control it.</p> <p>A honk of the horn brought us back to reality, just as I was feeling the urge to throw her down on her own stairs and kick this thing up a notch. We were both breathless and caught by surprise. I'd expected something soft, quick, gentle. But I got heat. Of course I got heat. Meabh didn't do anything without passion.</p> <p>...“Did you kiss me to shut me up?”</p> <p>“Yes, and if I'm going to do it again, I'm going to need to get a stepladder,” I said, rubbing the back of my neck.</p> <p>“Or we could just do it lying down next time,” she said archly, and my heart sped up. In a single second I pictured one thousand different scenarios of me and Meabh kissing. Most of them involved the memory I had of her in her underwear.</p> <p>...“Jeez, Angela. Don't be such a clam jam,” I muttered as I climbed into the driver's seat again.</p>
352	I wanted to leave Meabh off last and sneak up to her bedroom and have her give me a lecture about how to correctly get her off, but tonight was not the night.
357	“And my mam is drinking again. If I tell anyone there'll be a social worker at my door before I know it and I don't know what will happen then.”

Profanity	Count
Ass	12
Bitch	5
Dick	10
Fuck	54
Piss	6
Shit	32
Tit	13