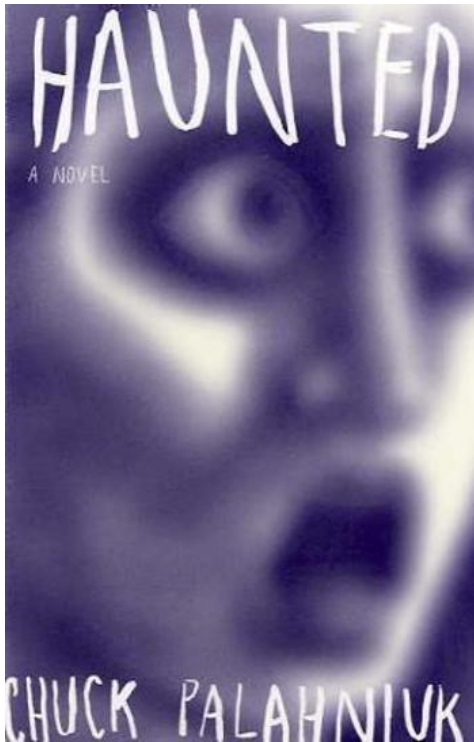


HAUNTED



Adult

By Chuck Palahniuk

ISBN: 978-0-385-51583-2

Book Summary:

A collection of short stories told by a group of individuals locked inside a facility together.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains aberrant sexual activities involving minors; explicit sexual battery; graphic violence including gore; cannibalism; profanity and derogatory terms; sexual nudity; abortion references; drug and alcohol use; self-harm including anorexia and self-mutilation; and alternate gender ideologies.

CONTENT WARNING

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5 /5

Aberrant Content
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
10	Up there, the shrine of Saint Wendy. "The Patron Saint of Therapeutic Abortion." ... "The Patron Saint of Masturbation."
12	<p>A friend of mine, when he was thirteen years old he heard about "pegging." This is when a guy gets banged up the butt with a dildo. Stimulate the prostate gland hard enough, and the rumor is you can have explosive hands-free orgasms. At that age, this friend's a little sex maniac. He's always jonesing for a better way to get his rocks off. He goes out to buy a carrot and some petroleum jelly. To conduct a little private research. Then he pictures how it's going to look at the supermarket checkstand, the lonely carrot and petroleum jelly rolling down the conveyor belt toward the grocery-store cashier. All the shoppers waiting in line, watching. Everyone seeing the big evening he has planned.</p> <p>...Like he's going home to stick a carrot cake up his butt.</p> <p>At home, he whittles the carrot into a blunt tool. He slathers it with grease and grinds his ass down on it. Then—nothing. No orgasm. Nothing happens except it hurts.</p> <p>Then this kid, his mom yells it's suppertime. She says to come down, right now. He works the carrot out and stashes the slippery, filthy thing in the dirty clothes under his bed.</p> <p>After dinner, he goes to find the carrot and it's gone. All his dirty clothes, while he ate dinner, his mom grabbed them all to do laundry. No way could she not find the carrot, carefully shaped with a paring knife from her kitchen, still shiny with lube and stinky.</p>
13	<p>Looking back, kid-psych experts, school counselors now say that most of the last peak in teen suicide was kids trying to choke while they beat off. Their folks would find them, a towel twisted around the kid's neck, the towel tied to the rod in their bedroom closet, their kid dead. Dead sperm everywhere. Of course the folks cleaned up. They put some pants on their kid. They made it look . . . better.</p> <p>Intentional at least. The regular kind of sad, teen suicide.</p> <p>Another friend of mine, a kid from school, his older brother in the navy said how guys in the Middle East jack off different than we do here. This brother was stationed in some camel country where the public market sells what could be fancy letter-openers. Each fancy tool is just a thin rod of polished brass or silver, maybe as long as your hand, with a big tip at one end, either a big metal ball or the kind of fancy carved handle you'd see on a sword. This navy brother says how Arab guys get their dick hard and then insert this metal rod inside the whole length of their boner. They jack off with the rod inside, and it makes getting off so much better. More intense.</p> <p>It's this big brother who travels around the world, sending back French phrases. Russian phrases. Helpful jack-off tips.</p>
14	<p>On the phone, the kid says how—the day before—he was just a little stoned. At home in his bedroom, he was flopped on the bed. He was lighting a candle and flipping through some old porno magazines, getting ready to beat off. This is after he's heard from his navy brother. That helpful hint about how Arabs beat off. The kid looks around for something that might do the job. A ballpoint pen's too big. A pencil's too big and rough. But, dripped down the side of the candle, there's a thin, smooth ridge of wax that just might work. With just the tip of one finger, this</p>

Page	Content
	<p>kid snaps the long ridge of wax off the candle. He rolls it smooth between the palms of his hands. Long and smooth and thin.</p> <p>Stoned and horny, he slips it down inside, deeper and deeper into the piss slit of his boner. With a good hank of the wax still poking out the top, he gets to work. Even now, he says those Arab guys are pretty damn smart. They've totally reinvented jacking off. Flat on his back in bed, things are getting so good this kid can't keep track of the wax. He's one good squeeze from shooting his wad when the wax isn't sticking out anymore.</p> <p>The thin wax rod, it's slipped inside. All the way inside. So deep inside he can't even feel the lump of it inside his piss tube.</p> <p>From downstairs, his mom shouts it's suppertime. She says to come down, right now. This wax kid and the carrot kid are different people, but we all live pretty much the same life.</p> <p>It's after dinner when the kid's guts start to hurt. It's wax, so he figured maybe it would just melt inside him and he'd piss it out.</p>
15	<p>This kid, with his folks, his whole family, them looking at the black X-ray with the doctor and the nurses standing there, the big V of wax glowing white for everybody to see, he has to tell the truth. The way Arabs get off.</p>
16	<p>Sticking stuff inside yourself. Sticking yourself inside stuff. A candle in your dick or your head in a noose, we knew it was going to be big trouble.</p> <p>What got me in trouble, I called it Pearl Diving. This meant whacking off underwater, sitting on the bottom at the deep end of my parents' swimming pool. With one deep breath, I'd kick my way to the bottom and slip off my swim trunks. I'd sit down there for two, three, four minutes.</p> <p>Just from jacking off, I had huge lung capacity. If I had the house to myself, I'd do this all afternoon. After I'd finally pump out my stuff, my sperm, it would hang there in big, fat, milky gobs.</p> <p>After that was more diving, to catch it all. To collect it and wipe each handful in a towel. That's why it was called Pearl Diving. Even with chlorine, there was my sister to worry about. Or, Christ Almighty, my mom.</p> <p>...The best part of Pearl Diving was the inlet port for the swimming-pool filter and the circulation pump. The best part was getting naked and sitting on it.</p> <p>As the French would say: Who doesn't like getting their butt sucked?</p> <p>Still, one minute you're just a kid getting off, and the next minute you'll never be a lawyer.</p> <p>One minute, I'm settling on the pool bottom, and the sky is wavy, light blue through eight feet of water above my head. The world is silent except for the heartbeat in my ears. My yellow-striped swim trunks are looped around my neck for safe keeping, just in case a friend, a neighbor, anybody shows up to ask why I skipped football practice. The steady suck of the pool inlet hole is lapping at me, and I'm grinding my skinny white ass around on that feeling.</p> <p>One minute, I've got enough air, and my dick's in my hand. My folks are gone at their work and my sister's got ballet. Nobody's supposed to be home for hours. My hand brings me right to getting off, and I stop. I swim up to catch another big breath. I dive down and settle on the bottom.</p> <p>I do this again and again.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>This must be why girls want to sit on your face. The suction is like taking a dump that never ends. My dick hard and getting my butt eaten out, I do not need air. My heartbeat in my ears, I stay under until bright stars of light start worming around in my eyes. My legs straight out, the back of each knee rubbed raw against the concrete bottom. My toes are turning blue, my toes and fingers wrinkled from being so long in the water.</p> <p>And then I let it happen. The big white gobs start spouting. The pearls. It's then I need some air. But when I go to kick off against the bottom, I can't. I can't get my feet under me. My ass is stuck.</p>
19	<p>Here's all their hopes and dreams. Floating here, naked and dead. All around him, big milky pearls of wasted sperm.</p>
21	<p>Then my sister missed her period.</p> <p>Even after they changed the pool water, after they sold the house and we moved to another state, after my sister's abortion, even then my folks never mentioned it again.</p>
24	<p>Director Denial, petting her cat, she told us she'd written a memo to her entire agency, telling them: "Find your own objects to fuck." That memo she left on every desk, last night, ready for her staff to find, this morning.</p>
30	<p>You can give a late-term abortion with just acupuncture.</p>
33	<p>Don't laugh, but in school you'd hear the rumors. About how a good reflexologist might be lured away to the dark side. To work just certain pleasure centers on the sole of the foot. To give what people only whispered about. What giggling people would call "foot jobs."</p>
35	<p>You're doing a simple foot manipulation. Nothing sexual happens except your client has an orgasm that leaves them too weak to walk for the next couple days. Men or women, it doesn't matter. You work the right spot on their feet, and they come hard as a seizure. So hard there's a smell when they lose control of their bowels. So hard most clients can only look at you, drool running out one corner of their mouth, and motion with a trembling finger for you to take the stack of hundred-dollar bills on the dresser or the coffee table.</p>
36	<p>This flood of people doing footwork, it brings the price down. Soon enough, instead of software billionaires and oil sheikhs, you're loitering in a hotel bar, wearing your last year's Prada and turning foot tricks for twenty bucks a pop. ...You're in the lobby bar at the Park Hampton Hotel, trying to talk a drunk businessman into a ten-dollar foot job in the men's room.</p>
37	<p>She goes to stand next to him, putting her gloved hands on his shoulders from behind, and Angelique says, "Let Mommy show you how much she still loves her baby . . ."</p> <p>She steers Lenny to sit on the mattress. Then to lie back. She slips the yellowed sock off each of his feet.</p> <p>"Come on, baby," she says. Taking off her gloves, she says, "You know I give great foot . . ."</p> <p>Then Angelique does what you've never seen before. She gets down on her knees. She opens her mouth, her lips stretched wide and thin, and runs her tongue along the bottom of Lenny's sole. Angelique cups her lips around Lenny's heel, and</p>

Page	Content
	<p>Lenny starts to moan. ...After Lenny moaned and thrashed. After Angelique mouthed his foot until the one long moment Lenny sat up on the mattresses, clutching his chest in both hands and gaping his open mouth at her still sucking his heel.</p>
44	<p>And Saint Gut-Free lost the feeling in his left hand, a repetitive-motion injury, trying to climax without a picture.</p>
47	<p>“For the Talent portion of my program,” she says, “I’ll show you how to unswallow.” A bellyful of peach ice cream, a Halloween bag of miniature candy bars, six frosted doughnuts, two double cheeseburgers. The usual stuff. And sometimes, sperm.</p>
69	<p>The wino has a knitted brown stocking cap pulled down on his head. He’s pawing the bag lady, shoving one hand down the front of her stretch-polyester pants and crawling his other hand up under her sweatshirt. The bag lady, she’s twisting inside her clothes, moaning, her tongue rolling around her open lips. The bag lady, where her sweatshirt is pulled up, her stomach looks flat and tight, her skin massaged pink. The wino, his baggy sweatpants are tented in front with an erection. The peak of his tent shows a dark spot of wet leaked through. Packer and Evelyn, they must be the only ones watching these two grope each other. ...The wino pulls the bag lady’s face against the outline in his pants. The bag lady’s lips, they crawl around on the dark stain growing there. The bag lady’s lips, Evelyn tells Packer, she knows those lips. ...Her lips still on the wino’s crotch, from between layers of bandages her fingers take a little black handful. ...She fingers it and says, “Hello?” She takes her mouth off the wet bulge in the wino’s pants, and she says, “Are you writing this down?” She says, “Lime is the new pink.” ...It’s then the bag lady looks up and says, “Muffy? Packer?” The wino’s hand still feeling around deep in the front of her stretch pants, she pats the bench beside her and says, “What a nice surprise.” The bum pulls back his fingers, shiny wet in the streetlight, and he says, “Packer! Come say hello.”</p>
72	<p>The Global Airlines wino, he has a bottle of wine, wrapped in a brown paper bag. The wine, he says, is mixed with equal parts of mouthwash, cough syrup, and Old Spice cologne, and after one drink the four of them go strolling through the dark, through the park, where you’d never go at night. What you have to love about drinking is, every swallow is an irrevocable decision. You charging ahead, in control of the game. It’s the same with pills, sedatives and painkillers, every swallow is a definite first step down some road. ...She says the only place left to have sex is out in the open. The sidewalk. The subway. People only want to watch if they think they can’t. ...A tedious dinner in New York, and falling asleep, drunk, during just another blow job in L.A.</p>
74	<p>He swings her around, and they kiss, reduced to just two wet mouths while the city around them, it disappears.</p>

Page	Content
77	At night, when Packer and Evelyn hold each other, under some bridge or on cardboard laid across a steaming, warm manhole cover, his hands inside her clothing, bringing her to climax as strangers walk past, the two have never been so in love.
82	Even the house party itself had become a legend. Around the shores of Lake Geneva, the vacation hotels set up telescopes in their lakeside windows so guests could watch what everyone said was an orgy of incest at the villa. Middle-class tourists, bored on their summer tour, they put their worst fears under Lord Byron's roof. Just that handful of young people, trying to live outside the million rules of their culture, and people spied on them through telescopes, expecting to see monsters.
94	<p>People want to read about Rusty Hamer, the little boy on Make Room for Daddy who shot himself. Or Trent Lehman, the cute kid from Nanny and the Professor who hanged himself on a playground fence. Little Anissa Jones, who played Buffy on Family Affair, clutching a doll named Mrs. Beasley, then swallowing the biggest overdose of barbiturates in the history of Los Angeles County.</p> <p>...It's the kind of joy we felt when Dana Plato, the little girl on Diff'rent Strokes, got arrested, posed naked in Playboy, and took too many sleeping pills.</p> <p>...Most people, they want to read about Lani O'Grady, the pretty daughter on Eight Is Enough, found dead in a trailer house with her belly full of Vicodin and Prozac.</p> <p>...The editor tells me, "Find Wilcox with kiddie porn on his computer. Find him with dead bodies under his house. Then you got a story."</p>
95	Turning a human being into a movie star. Your real payday is at the back end of the deal. Then you get to pull out the rug. Knock down the cards. Show the handsome ladies' man cramming a gerbil up his ass. Reveal the girl-next-door shoplifting and stoned on painkillers. The goddess beating her kids with a wire hanger.
96	<p>Here's a different kind of child star: Russian schoolboys without pubic hair, sucking off fat old men. Czech girls still waiting for their first period, getting butt-fucked by monkeys. I save all these files to one thin compact disk.</p> <p>Another night, I clip a leash on Skip and risk a long walk through my neighborhood. Coming back to my apartment, my pockets are stuffed with plastic sandwich bags and little paper envelopes. Squares of folded aluminum foil. Percodans. OxyContin. Vicodins. Glass vials of crack and heroin.</p> <p>...I bring a bottle of red wine spiked with Vicodin and Prozac.</p> <p>...My version is all about little Kenny's long slide from the spotlight to the autopsy table. How he lost his innocence to a long list of network executives in his campaign to become Danny. To keep the sponsors happy, he was farmed out as a sexual plaything. He took drugs to stay thin. To delay the onset of puberty. To stay up all night, shooting scene after scene. No one, not even his friends and family, nobody knew the depths of his drug habit and perverted need for attention. Even after his career collapsed. Even becoming a D.V.M. was just to get access to good drugs and sex with small animals.</p> <p>The more wine Ken Wilcox drinks, the more he says his life didn't start until Danny-Next-Door was canceled.</p>

Page	Content
97	<p>He's asleep, still smiling, when I slip the gun into his mouth. "Happy" doesn't do anybody any good. A gun not registered to anybody. My hand in a glove, the gun in his mouth with his finger wrapped around the trigger. Little Kenny's on his sofa, stripped of his clothes, his dick smeared with cooking grease, and a video of his old show playing on the television. The real clincher is the kiddie porn downloaded to his computer hard drive. The hard-copy pictures of kids getting screwed, they're printed and taped to the walls of his bedroom. The bags of painkillers are stashed under his bed. The heroin and crack buried in his sugar canister. ...He drank and popped pills all evening and said he wasn't afraid to die. In my version, he died after I'd gone home.</p>
114	<p>Because he's never been high, the angel steals dope from her kid's stash box and teaches Mr. Whittier how to use a bong.</p>
115	<p>The one wish he wanted most was to love someone. To really make love. Not die a virgin. ...The angel stroking his bald, spotted head, he'd tell her, "My name is Brandon." And he'd wait. And she'd say it: Brandon. Of course, after that, they'd fuck. Her, gentle and patient. The Madonna and the whore. Her long, yoga-trained legs spread to this naked, wrinkled goblin. Her, the altar and the sacrifice. Never as beautiful as she looked, next to his spotted, veined old skin. ...And, damn—for a virgin—if he didn't take his own sweet time. He'd started missionary-style, then had one of her legs in the air, splitting the reed. Then both her feet, gripped tight around the ankles and framing his panting face. ...Viagra-hard, he rode her on all fours, doggy-style, even taking himself out and poking at her ass until she said to stop. She was sore and stoned, and as he bent her legs to force her feet up, behind her head, by then her bright, fake angel's smile had come back. After all that, he came. In her eyes. In her hair. He asked her for a cigarette she didn't have. Taking the bong off the floor beside the bed, he torched another bowl and didn't offer her a hit. The angel, she got dressed and tucked her kid's bong under her coat. ...Behind her, as she opened the door to the hallway, Mr. Whittier was saying, "You know, I ain't ever had a blow job before, neither . . ." ...It would be Whittier suggesting bondage, better drugs, blow jobs. And when the angel finally told him, "I can'tIt's then he'd tell her—he lied. About his age. ...And Brandon Whittier would say, "I'm not eighteen years old." He wasn't eighteen, and he had the birth certificate to prove it. He was thirteen years old. Now a victim of statutory rape. But, for enough cash money, he wouldn't squeal to the cops. Ten grand, and she wouldn't suffer through an ugly courtroom drama.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...All for a quick fuck with a little kid. Worse than nothing—her the pedophile, now a sex criminal who would need to register her whereabouts for the rest of her life. Maybe get divorced and lose her kids. Sex with a minor carried a mandatory five-year prison sentence.</p> <p>...Ten grand and maybe just one little knob job for old times' sake . . .</p> <p>So of course she paid. They all paid. All the volunteers. The angels.</p> <p>...And the money? It just kept piling up. Until Mr. Whittier was too old and tired and bored to just fuck.</p> <p>...And, the same way he'd bagged one angel after another, this wasn't his first experiment. We weren't his first batch of guinea pigs. And—until one of those stains came back to haunt him—he told us, we would not be his last.</p>
140	<p>It wasn't worth the effort to start drinking or start measuring the car for a hose long enough to connect the exhaust pipe with the driver's-side window. No way was it worth the effort to go see a doctor at her HMO and lie hard enough he'd prescribe a good sleeping pill. Anything else she might do, like pushing a razor blade into her wrist, taking that kind of action just looked like another stupid plan to solve all her problems one more time.</p> <p>...Committing suicide just seemed to be another aggressive plan to fix her life. If she turned on the movie lights and camera, they could get the death on tape. A snuff movie in two parts. A miniseries. Another Big Project. Killing herself would just be: Tess Clark, getting the job overdone. Another beginning, middle, and end.</p> <p>...It was him who said the only way they could afford to have a baby is by making an adult video.</p>
142	<p>Her lips she got threaded inside with tubes of puffed-foam fillers, giving her a blow-job pout for the rest of her life.</p> <p>...This path of images, it has to lead the viewer from one sex act to the next. You have to fake a continuity.</p> <p>...They got most of the oral coverage shot before 10: 22: 19: 02.</p> <p>Then they did a lot of genital footage until 25: 44: 15: 17.</p> <p>They shot some perianal and then perivaginal footage until 31: 25: 21: 09.</p> <p>And they finished off with the anal stuff at 46: 34: 07: 15.</p> <p>Since these movies always end the same way, the story about getting there, the journey to the big orgasm, is what's most important. The orgasm, just a formality. Stock footage.</p> <p>...Their marriage was still where sex was fun, but after that first day of filming, the only thing that kept them going was the money they'd make. The money and the baby.</p> <p>...Even linked together just twenty seconds at a time, they must've had sex for a total of some forty-eight hours.</p> <p>...To keep excited, they set up a television just outside the shot and ran adult movies they could watch while being taped. These became their cue cards or TelePrompTer they could mimic. The same as the Clarks, the people in each movie seemed to be looking off camera at a movie of their own. This chain of voyeurism, the Clarks watching someone watch someone watch someone, it felt good. The video that Tess and Nelson watched, it was at least five years old. The men had long sideburns and the women wore dangle earrings and blue-sparkle eye</p>

Page	Content
	shadow. How old the movie those people were watching, it was anybody's guess, but it felt better, knowing that all of them were daisy-chained throughout history.
145	<p>Their lips suction-cupped each other, and their loose skin looked baggy and wadded around every orifice. Their bodies rocked together as if they were some terrible old machine forced to work at top speed until it would break apart. Nelson's erection looked twisted and dirt-dark, something from a bin in the back of a Chinese grocery. Tess's lips and her chest looked sideshow-too-big, the scars still burning-red.</p> <p>So what.</p> <p>Tess Clark cried as they watched themselves from every angle, in every position. Every part of them, from the soles of their feet to their scalps, the secrets they kept between their legs, the hair they hid under their arms, they watched it all, until the tape ran out and left them sitting in the dark.</p> <p>...“These two huge breasts,” Mrs. Clark says, “they were supposed to be a tax deduction.” Just the appearance of something big and motherly.</p>
150	It's clear, he just wants his feet rubbed, some new way to get his rocks off. A foot job. Another hands-free method beyond the invisible carrot, the candle wax, and the swimming pool. Not so much a romantic subplot as sexual need.
158	Yeah, the lab team said, the ooze was sperm. Some of it maybe six months old. Dating back to the last mouth-to-mouth class session. But, hey, there was so much of it. Besides, running it for DNA, the genetic signifiers showed this was the work of twelve, maybe fifteen different men.
160	<p>Nobody had a problem with Cora Reynolds before the little girl and boy arrived from Russia. Really, the problem was, Cora never sees a little kid, a freckle-faced, pigtailed little girl, unless somebody's fucked her.</p> <p>Every rapscaillon little boy, every scamp in bib overalls with a slingshot stuck in his back pocket, Cora's only meeting him because he's been forced to suck cock.</p> <p>Every kid's gap-toothed smile, here it's a mask. Every grass-stained knee, a clue. Every bruise, an indicator. Every wink or squeal or giggle, there's a blank to check for it on the victim-intake form.</p> <p>...Still, what happens here is just damage control. You can't unfuck a kid. Once you bang a kid, there's no getting that genii out of the bottle. That kid's pretty much wrecked for good.</p> <p>No, most kids come in here quiet. Stretch-marked. Already middle-aged. Not smiling.</p>
161	<p>These dolls are something the intake kids can use to play-act. To demonstrate what Mommy or Daddy or Mommy's new boyfriend did.</p> <p>The kids stick their fingers in the dolls. Drag the dolls by their yarn hair. Hold the dolls by the neck and shake them until their stuffed heads flop. They hit and lick and bite and suck the dolls, and it's Cora's job to sew the nipples back on. Cora will find two new marbles when the little felt scrotum gets yanked too hard.</p> <p>Everything done to the kids gets done to those dolls.</p> <p>...Threads come loose from too many molested children molesting the dolls. Too many diddled little boys suck that same pink felt penis. Too many little girls have forced a finger, two fingers, three fingers into that same satin-lined vagina.</p> <p>Ripping it at the top and bottom. Little hernias of cotton batting were bulging out.</p>

Page	Content
163	<p>The male doll had an optional foreskin that you could roll onto the head of its penis. The girl doll had a replaceable plastic hymen you could send away for. Both dolls, the brochure said, had deep tight throats and rectums, for vigorous oral or anal entry.</p> <p>...Their nipples could be tugged to five times their original length without tearing. The labia, scrotums, rectums could be stretched to accommodate almost any desire. The dolls, the brochure said, could take years of violent, strenuous enjoyment.</p>
164	<p>Director Sedlak was tugging at a nipple on the boy's chest. With her fingers, her thumb and index finger, just the dark-red fingernails, the director twisted and pulled at the pink nipple. With her other hand, the director trailed her fingertips up and down between the girl's legs, saying, "Damn, that feels real."</p> <p>To the director, Cora said she was sorry. She leaned down to brush some hair off the boy's forehead, and said she had no idea. She crossed the girl's arms across her pink nipples. Then, she crossed her plastic legs at the knee. She put both the boy's hands spread open in his lap.</p>
165	<p>One receipt for a hotel room, the same night the detective had taken the girl home for an interview the next morning. The hotel room was a stakeout, the detective had said. Another detective the next night, the girl again, one hotel room, one room-service meal. An adult movie ordered on the television. Another stakeout, he said.</p>
166	<p>Some men may only want pictures of naked women. But some women only want a man's dick. Or his sperm.</p> <p>..."Stop fussing about some damned rubber dolls," Director Sedlak told Cora. "If you're jealous, go out and buy yourself a nice vibrator."</p>
170	<p>The little boy wears just his white underpants, dark with grease in the seat. The girl, a white satin slip, stiff with stains. The detective scoops them both, the weight of two kids, with just one arm and hugs them to his chest. Their nipple rings and tattoos and crab lice. Their stink of dope smoke and what drips from Breather Betty.</p>
171	<p>Even if they run out of gas, nobody will fuck her kids.</p> <p>...Their nipples and noses. She'll leave them nothing any man would stick his dick into.</p>
187	<p>For instance, just before they got set up and ready, in the parking lot outside the Mountain States Gem and Mineral Show, Webber looks at Flint and says, "Your goddamn boobs are too big . . ."</p> <p>...Flint's wearing a halter kind of long dress, with straps that tie behind his neck to keep the front up. And, yeah, his boobs look big, but Flint says it's the new dress. And Webber says, "No, it ain't. Your boobs been growing for the past four states."</p>
197	<p>Even starved-skinny, her lips still look silicone-fat, frozen mid-blow job. Her breasts swell, but full of nothing you'd want to suck.</p>
199	<p>This girl, she wanted a taller man, with a deep tan, long hair, and a bigger dick.</p> <p>...So, the Matchmaker hired a whore named Steed, a male prostitute who advertised:</p> <p>Long hair and a dick as thick as a can of chili.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...The Matchmaker paying two hundred dollars per date, and taking notes as the whore told him how much the girl liked her nipples played with from behind. And how best to make her come two or three times.</p> <p>...Steed fucked her in back seats and hot tubs, where he swore eternal love and devotion.</p>
200	<p>His last meeting with Steed, he paid an extra fifty bucks for a blow job. Steed kneeling there, at work between his knees.</p> <p>This way, when his future wife had her well-researched, multiple orgasms, the man in her head would not be a total stranger to her husband, the Matchmaker.</p>
203	<p>The officer, if he saw a Gypsy woman he liked, he'd take her out of line. After that batch was dead, while the uncles hauled away the bodies, the officer would make this woman undress. Standing there in his uniform, crawling with gold braid in the bright sun, surrounded by guns, the officer made the Gypsy woman kneel in the dirt and open his zipper. He made her open her mouth.</p> <p>The uncles, they'd seen this happen too many times to remember. The Gypsy would bury her lips in the front of the officer's pants. Her eyes closed, she'd suck and suck and not see him take a knife from the back of his belt.</p> <p>The moment the officer came to orgasm he'd grab the Gypsy by her hair, holding her head tight with one hand. His other hand would cut her throat.</p> <p>It was always the same sound: Shooo-rook. His seed still erupting, he'd push her naked body away before the blood could explode from her neck.</p> <p>...Until, one day, the officer took a Gypsy and had her kneel naked in the dirt. With the firing squad watching, the uncles watching with their feet buried in the layer of dead bodies, the officer made the Gypsy open his zipper. The woman closed her eyes and opened her mouth.</p> <p>...The officer gripped the Gypsy's long hair, wrapped it in his fist. The knife flashed, and there was the sound. That sound. Now the family's secret code for laughter. Their greeting to each other. The Gypsy fell back, blood exploding from under her chin. She coughed once, and something landed in the dirt next to where she died.</p> <p>They all looked, the firing squad and the uncles and the officer, and there in the dirt was half a cock. Shooo-rook, and the officer had cut off his own erection stuck down the throat of this dead woman. The zipper in the officer's pants was still erupting with his seed, exploding with blood. The officer reached one hand to where his cock lay coated with dirt. His knees buckled.</p>
212	<p>Her notes say, "The man hung himself . .</p> <p>...That dress, it was black and stitched with black sequins and beads. It was a crust of rough black glitter with her breasts pink and meaty inside. A hard black shell.</p> <p>...Her bare shoulders, her hair coming apart, her high heels clenched the muscles of each leg, pushed her ass up, curving it out at the bottom of a long zipper.</p>
219	<p>The stiff front of her dress bags forward, gapping out away from her breasts with no bra inside.</p> <p>...The two rock-hard halves of her ass, they go soft.</p> <p>...If you're tall enough, you can see her nipples.</p>
256	<p>"I lost my virginity," Comrade Snarky says, "through my ear." So young, she still believed in Santa Claus.</p>

Page	Content
257	<p>your father ever tiptoes into your room: you, come tell me.</p> <p>Her mother said, “If your father ever tugs down your pajama bottoms and fingers you . . .” You, come tell me.</p> <p>If he takes a fat, heavy snake out from the zipper in the front of his pants—that hot, sticky club that smells bad—and tries to force this in your mouth . . . You, come tell me.</p>
258	<p>He was born Miranda Joyce Williams. He says this and snaps open his little pink lizard-skin pocketbook. He takes out a driver's license. With a long, pink fingernail he slides the license across the table, tapping where there's a letter “F” under the category of sex. The state may recognize his new gender, we tell him, but we choose not to.</p>
259	<p>He's a total sex-doll fantasy, the kind of woman only a man would become.</p>
260	<p>This silly man. This “Miranda.” Here's every male fantasy brought to life in a kind of Frankenstein monster of stereotypes: The perfect big round breasts. The hard muscle of long thighs. The mouth, a perfect pout, greasy with lipstick. The pink leather skirt too short and tight for anything but sex. He speaks with the breathy voice of a little girl or a movie starlet. A huge gush of air for what little sound comes out. It's the kind of whispery voice Cosmopolitan magazine teaches girls to use, to make listening men lean closer.</p>
261	<p>The whole idea of men creating perfect robot women for their own pleasure, it happens every day.</p>
262	<p>Being a woman is special. It's sacred. This isn't just some club you can join. You don't just get a shot of estrogen and show up here.</p> <p>“Miranda” says: You just need a little makeover. To pretty yourself up.</p> <p>Men, they just don't get it. Being a woman is more than just wearing makeup and high heels. This kind of sex mimicry, this gender parroting, is the worst insult. A man thinks, all he has to do is put on lipstick and cut off his dick and that makes him a sister.</p> <p>...Then somebody in the group says, “Let's see your tits . . .”</p> <p>...We're all female, here. It's not like we haven't seen tits before. Somebody standing close, she reaches toward the top button on “Miranda's” pink blouse. The blouse is pink silk, tented over his breasts.</p> <p>...One of his pink hands slaps the woman away. When no one else makes a move, then “Miranda” lets out a little sigh. With all of us watching, he undoes the top button, himself. His pink fingernails open the next button down. Then the next. He's looking back at us, looking from woman to woman, until all the buttons are done and the blouse gaps open. Inside is a pink satin bra embroidered with roses and trimmed with lace. His skin is airbrush-pink, centerfold-clear, without the moles or hairs or red bug-bites you see on real skin. Around his neck, a pearl necklace points straight down into his big ass-crack cleavage.</p> <p>The bra is the kind that hooks open in the front, and “Miranda” waits a beat, holding the clasp and looking from woman to woman.</p> <p>And somebody in the group says, “How much estrogen do you have to shoot up to keep a rack on you that big?” Somebody else whistles. The rest of the group whispers together. The breasts are too perfect. Both the same size and not too far apart. They look engineered.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>The pink fingernails twist, and the bra falls open. The bra falls open, but the breasts stay up, firm and round, with nipples pointed at the ceiling. The exact set of breasts a man would choose.</p> <p>Someone standing close, she reaches out a hand and makes a grab. Her hand squeezes flesh. Thumbing the nipple, she says, "Everybody. You've got to feel this—God, it's so gross." Her hand squishes, then lets go. Squishing again, she says, "It's like . . . I don't know . . . bread dough?"</p> <p>"Miranda" twists to get away, his body pulling back against his chair.</p> <p>But the hand clutching his breast, the fingers grip hard, and the woman says, "Don't."</p> <p>Someone else says, "I wouldn't mind having hooters that nice."</p> <p>They have to be silicone. Another hand reaches into the open blouse and grabs the second breast, rolling it, forcing it up against the pearl necklace, so we can look for a surgical scar underneath.</p> <p>"Miranda" sits there, his arms bent forward at the elbow, each hand still holding half the pink bra, holding it open while we look. He starts to bring the bra back together, to seal things back inside.</p> <p>And someone still groping a titty says, "Not yet."</p> <p>The driver's license still on the table in front of us, the big "F" printed under "sex."</p> <p>...His skin glows, clear as the pearl earring in each ear. His nipples pink as the lizard-skin pocketbook, he lets this happen.</p> <p>Somebody throws the blouse off into a corner of the room.</p> <p>And somebody else says, "Let's see your pussy."</p> <p>And "Miranda" says: No.</p> <p>It's obvious. This poor, sad, misguided fuck, he's using us. The way a masochist goads a sadist. The way the criminal wants to be caught. "Miranda" is begging for it. This is why he's shown up here. It's why he's dressed this way. He knows this shorty-short skirt, these big casaba boobs, they drive a real woman wild. In this case, "no" does mean "yes." It means "Yes, please." It means, "slap me."</p>
264	<p>Together, we've shopped for sex toys and studied the G-spot.</p> <p>A little pushing, and "Miranda" is up on the table. Even on his hands and knees, his breasts still look round and solid, not stretched and hanging down. Six inches of zipper, and his skirt slides down his skinny ass. He's wearing pantyhose: more proof he's not a real woman.</p> <p>...Somebody rolls the pantyhose down, off his ass. Somebody else says, "Arch your back."</p> <p>Nobody's surprised at how "Miranda's" labia look. The skin too frilly. The wet-flower look a stylist works hard to get in Playboy or Hustler. Still, the flesh doesn't look soft enough, and the color's too pale, not pink or light brown. Surgical scar tissue. The pubic hair trimmed and waxed down to a thin stripe. Perfumed. Not the way a pussy is supposed to look. The longer we look, the more we agree it's not real.</p> <p>Somebody pokes at "Miranda" with a car key. Not ever a finger. Somebody pokes at the folds of her skin and says, "I hope you didn't pay a lot for this . . ."</p> <p>Another member of the group says we should see how deep it goes.</p> <p>Whatever he is, "Miranda" is crying. Caught up in his little drama, all his eye makeup and blusher mixed with his foundation and coming down his cheeks to</p>

Page	Content
	<p>each corner of his mouth. He's almost naked with his stretched pantyhose webbed between his ankles, his feet still in gold-elegant high-heeled sandals. His blouse is gone and his pink lace bra is open and hanging off his shoulders. His firm, round breasts shiver with each sob. He's on the conference table this way. His fur coat on the floor, kicked off into a corner. His blond hair falling down. His own little horror story.</p> <p>Somebody tells "Miranda" to shut up. Shut up and turn over.</p> <p>Somebody takes him by an ankle. Someone takes the other ankle, and they twist his legs until he lets out a little shriek and turns over. Now on his back, his feet are still pulled wide apart, each gold sandal gripped by a different set of hands.</p> <p>This isn't a woman. Maybe if someone from the planet Mars only ever saw a woman in Cosmopolitan, this is what they'd create. We point out how the clitoris must be the penis whittled down. Somebody describes how the artificial vaginal vault is just the penis, gutted and stuffed inside, a section of mucus-producing lower intestine spliced in for depth. Where the cervix should be, they use the skin salvaged from the empty scrotum.</p> <p>"Waste not, want not," somebody says.</p> <p>Someone gets a little flashlight out of her tote bag and says, "I've got to see this."</p> <p>Somebody else says, "All this fuss. It proves he's never had a pelvic."</p> <p>...Somebody is digging with her fingers. Someone holds the flashlight, pushing it forward.</p> <p>The group asks, did he expect a gang of man-hating bulldykes getting together for some hot girl-on-girl rug munching?</p> <p>The flashlight, the little halogen lightbulb must be hot, because he's squealing, squirming so hard it takes all of them to hold him down. To hold his legs apart and force him open for a look.</p> <p>Someone says, "What's it look like?"</p> <p>The rest of the group wait for their turn.</p> <p>"Miranda" thrashing on the table, the group leans over him, his pearl necklace breaks and goes rolling everywhere. The pins drop out of his hair. His breasts bounce and jiggle, two mounds of gelatin.</p> <p>And someone pinches one by the nipple, tweaking it and saying, "Shake 'em, sexy mama."</p> <p>Someone else says, "We just want to see where you put your balls, bitch."</p> <p>It's an interesting juxtaposition. A fascinating sociopolitical power relationship, being fully clothed and examining a naked person held down, wearing only his high heels and jewelry.</p> <p>The two women digging between his legs, they stop. Someone says, "Wait."</p> <p>The one holding the little flashlight says, "Hold him still," and she leans in, forcing the flashlight deeper. She asks him, "Is this what you wanted to happen?"</p> <p>"Miranda," spread-eagled on the table, he sobs, trying to bring his knees together. To roll to one side and curl into a ball.</p> <p>"Miranda" is sobbing, saying: No. Saying: Please stop. Saying: It hurts.</p> <p>...Then she stands straight and says, "The batteries are dead," and towers there, looking down on "Miranda," his legs still spread open in front of her.</p>
275	"Instead," he tells himself, "we have marijuana and television. Beer and Valium."

Page	Content
298	<p>“Chewlah men all have a big dick and balls for their face,” she says. What she means is, Chewlah men have square chins that stick a little too far out. They have cleft chins so deep it could be two balls in a sack.</p> <p>...Guys from the Chewlah Reservation, they only have one eyebrow, a bush of black thatch, thick as a stand of pubic hair on the bridge of their nose, then trailing away to almost reach their ears on either side.</p> <p>...When you meet a guy from the Chewlah tribe, all you see at first is pubic hair, a big half-hard dick hanging down, and the two balls hanging a little behind it. “Like Nicolas Cage,” she says, “but more so. Like a dick and balls.”</p>
301	Guys have listened to worse shit, trying to get a piece of ass.
306	<p>Guys have listened to worse shit, trying to get a piece of ass. Even Chewlah guys with their dicks on their face.</p> <p>...“Oral sex,” Mandy Somebody says, “is not out of the question . .</p>
313	Everyone hated the monster who'd tortured her, and they all wanted to see him caught and put on trial. After all their searching and effort, they deserved that much. They deserved to see her on the stand, weeping while she described how the monster had cut off her fingers. Carved her chest. Shoved a wood stake up her starving ass.
333	It's hard to imagine college boys waiting an hour in line to fuck her.
336	He'd inventory the sins of each hotel maid out loud. Olson's voice rising with the steam, he prayed for Nola, who pinned up the hem of her skirt too high and committed the act of oral sex with any hotel guest willing to cut loose a twenty-dollar bill. The tourist families standing back, safe on the boardwalk behind him, Olson begged mercy for the dining-room waiters, Evan and Leo, who assaulted each other with lewd acts of sodomy every night in the men's dorm.
356	<p>We come up the stairs from the imperial-Chinese promenade, rushing from the red to green, and today the Matchmaker has his dick flopped out.</p> <p>...From behind his camera, Agent Tattletale says, “If you're cutting it off, cut it off now.”</p> <p>...He says, “Here's your last chance. Be a man and whack off that dick.”</p>
365	And I pay her off with Elvis CDs I order but don't want. Most nights, Shirlee wants to educate me about current events, like who's dropping bombs on what country and who's the new boy singer every girl wants to fuck.
367	Behind a bookshelf, I let a boy named Raymon kiss me on the mouth. As long as he keeps saying I'm beautiful, I let him put one hand up inside my shirt.
371	<p>The new guy with the huge dick. She's seen it through his two-way mirror.</p> <p>...She says what's important is getting me deflowered.</p> <p>...And sex, that wouldn't be bad, either.</p>
379	<p>Saint Gut-Free turns to Mother Nature and says, “Now that we're a romantic subplot . . . how about you give me that foot job?”</p> <p>Agent Tattletale says, “After we're outside, I'm staying high for a month . . .”</p>
394	<p>People hunkered in caves. People roamed on camels over vast, empty deserts. Any of these stupid, backward people could fuck.</p>

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	49
Bitch	15
Cock	5
Dick	32
Dyke	1
Fuck	27
Goddamn	7
Piss	15
Prick	1
Pussy	2
Shit	33
Tit	7