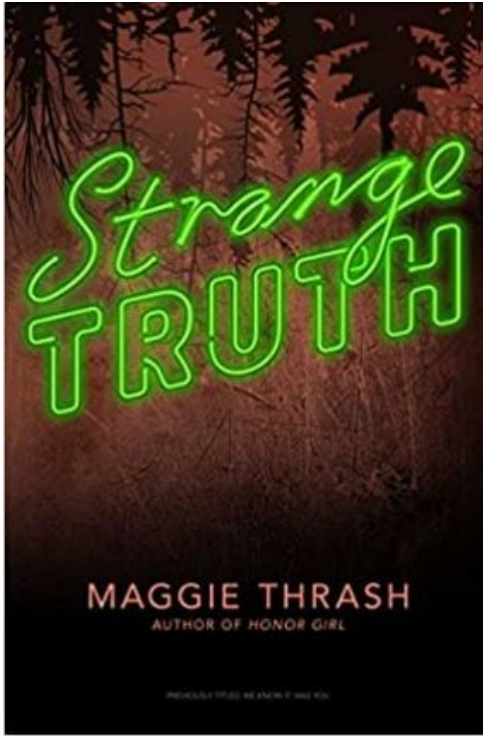


STRANGE TRUTH



Young Adult

By Maggie Thrash

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Book Summary:

A high school mascot's sudden death spurs an investigation exposing a child pornography ring.

Summary of Concerns:

obscene sexual activities; sexual assault; sexual nudity; voyeurism; profanity and derogatory terms; alcohol and drug use by minors; suicide

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Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

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5	Who's been sending dick pics to my private e-mail? ...Who wrote SKANKY YANKEE on the new girl's locker?
11	Benny remembered some kids getting drunk and falling to their deaths a few years ago.
18	Another cheerleader bounced into the frame for a second, carrying a pink Gatorade. She was completely naked. "Oh my God," Benny said, quickly covering his eyes. "They don't know there's a camera." Virginia stared at the screen. "Omgod. Corny Davenport's boobs are gigantic. She must wear like ten bras to keep those puppies down." It was the exact kind of tidbit that would have exploded in the old days on Winship Confidential. ..."Um..." Virginia squinted at the screen. "They're just, you know, bouncing around. They're changing into their uniforms." "Are they still naked?" "Yep." ...The lens slowly zoomed in and out, showcasing whichever girl happened to be the most naked. ..."Maybe the tape was for someone else," Benny answered, not looking at her. "The football players. Or some voyeur website."
44	She got way too drunk at parties, gave blow jobs to the wrong guys, and then bragged about it to the wrong girls.
46	They especially didn't know how to deal with suicide. Everyone had some crazy explanation for why Brittany jumped, mostly involving the supernatural: The mascot costume was cursed because the football team lost to Lowell four years in a row; the bridge was cursed because those kids who'd died a few years ago had been Satanists.
48	All Winn's teammates on the football team had an exact idea of her body, because she was always affectionately plastering herself on them, pressing her huge, pillowy boobs against their broad chests. Sometimes she even hugged them when they were sitting down, which was pretty much just smashing her boobs in their faces. Winn was always scanning the crotches of his friends to see if they got hard-ons when she jumped on them.
56	"Don't laugh! It's not funny! I think they banged her before the game. R-r-raped her." His voice stuttered over the word. "Raped her in the wildcat suit." Virginia stopped laughing. "And that's why she killed herself!" Gerard sobbed. ...She pulled out a silver flash drive and plugged it into the computer. Then she clicked open the video from Friday night, pointedly fast-forwarding past the locker room footage so she didn't have to endure Gerard weepily ogling the cheerleaders in their underwear.
70	Half the school was missing today, and Angie was the last person anyone expected to show up. And who could blame her for wanting to drug out- only why was she doing it at school?
76	"Leave us alone. Go cry on Corny's boobs." ..."Oh, that? I didn't know. He had some revolting theory about Brittany being raped in her mascot suit by Trevor Cheek. I felt sorry for him."

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82	Angie seemed very crisp and put together for someone who had been on drugs and sobbing in the girls' room an hour ago.
84	"Maybe Gerard was right, and there is a mascot rapist, and they've been hiding her from him this whole time!"
97	He went into the kitchen and poured a bourbon on the rocks. That was Rodrigo's drink, and the smell didn't feel new anymore. Before the accident Mr. Flax had been a scotch man; scotch had a cold, smoky smell, like a campfire extinguished by rain. Bourbon was different- rich and warm like leather or toast. It had taken Benny a while to get used to it. A little-known fact is that the nose is the strongest memory architect of all the senses. ...In this way Benny's life was defined and divided by two aromas: before the accident, scotch; after the accident, bourbon.
100	"Very coo," Rodrigo said, sipping his bourbon.
109	I've seen your boobs too.
112	"Let's talk about what you can do to show the ladies respect. Imagine what it's like to be a girl. You got this smokin' bod that everyone wants to get a peep at. Can you imagine what that feels like? No, you can't, because you're dudes, and your bodies are disgusting." Everyone laughed. "I'm serious; no one wants to see that," he said, pointing a finger toward Chase Creevey's crotch. "No one wants to see your hairy chest or your veiny dick! Your lucky if a girl will look twice at you! But imagine, y'all- what if you had to get through life being ogled and stared at from dusk till dawn?" ..."Because if the people ogling you were stronger than you, and faster than you, and could probably rape you." The room was suddenly silent. "Not so cool now, huh? And what you need to understand is that every one of you is a potential rapist. You've got the hardware." He made a crude, ball-cupping gesture.
113	"News flash, stud," Coach Miles snapped at him. "Sometimes even yes means no. So how can you tell? Well here's what you do, guys. If she says yes- and don't fuckin' count on it- if she says yes, you reach up her skirt and feel around. If she's nice and lubricated-" Everyone groaned. "Shut up, shut up. If she's nice and wet, then you go ahead and seal the deal. If she's not, then sorry buddy, yes means no, and you better seek other accommodations." He made a jerking motion with his hand. ..."Well what if she's wet but says no?" Chase asked sounding genuinely curious. "No trumps wet," Coach said authoritatively.
128	Benny was just an uppity Jew, and Virginia looked like a slutty alien, her gold skirt shining and her pale legs glowing blue under the light of the neon sign.
134	"Maybe Mr. Choi's bandmates knew about his peeping tendencies. Maybe he'd bragged about all the hot girls at Winship, and they wanted a piece of it." "Couldn't they just watch cheerleader porn on the Internet?" Virginia asked. Benny shook his head. "This would serve a different desire than porn. Porn invites you to watch; this would be the thrill of seeing bodies that are forbidden to you."

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135	"Did you see her face earlier? He had a brown smudge on his cheek. Zaire wears a shit-ton of makeup. I think it smudges off on him when they make out."
138	"Have you ever had soju?" Min-Jun asked her. ..."DO you sip it, or down it like a shot?" "Sip it," Min-Jun said.
157	"Young girls make easy targets for sexual predators, because you haven't learned boundaries and can be easily confused. This video will outline what is appropriate versus inappropriate behavior, and how to ask for help when someone crosses the line."
163	Virginia wondered how often he knocked on people's doors and they thought he was a male stripper. She imagined him peering through a comically huge magnifying glass as some bachelorette's boobs, declaring, Aha! A clue! Then "Funkytown" would start playing, and he'd rip his clothes off. Through the window, Virginia gave the detective a once-over, wondering what he would look like naked. Probably pretty good, she decided, though the thought wasn't especially titillating. She'd seen a Lifetime movie about male strippers once and found all their bulging and gyrating to be pretty ridiculous.
194	<p>The Zaire stood up and lifted her silky nightgown over her head. She posed in front of Gottfried, naked except for a pair of expensive-looking underwear. The lamplight reflected off the curves of her brown breasts with an unnatural sheen. Shimmery body lotion, Virginia decided. Her nipples were so dark they were almost black, sitting haughtily high on each plump mound. Virginia had seen so many boobs lately she thought she was immune to their allure. But Zaire's were incredible, she had to admit. And obviously Zaire knew it.</p> <p>Virginia watched as Zaire straddled Gottfried on the bed and kissed his pale neck. Gottfried's hands reached for her ass, and his fingers dug into their round cheeks. Soon they were making out really intensely, Gottfried fully clothed and Zaire almost naked. He shouldn't take advantage of her like that, Virginia thought.</p> <p>...They flopped over Gottfried's bed and were rolling around in the tangled sheets. Gottfried's hands pawed Zaire's smooth body, and Virginia could hear their soft moans. She held her breath, feeling weirdly transfixed. Gottfried was such a weirdo and a goofball, but all of a sudden he seemed brutally sexy. Maybe even the biggest goober in the world would seem sexy if you stuck a naked, shimmering, big-boobed girl on top of him, Virginia decided.</p> <p>Zaire squirmed beneath Gottfried to wrap her legs around him, and in doing so, they rolled out of Virginia's view. She craned her neck a little but couldn't see them without stepping perilously close to the light and possibly exposing herself. She knew she'd better leave and was embarrassed to realize that if her view hadn't been blocked, she probably would have stood there endlessly like a peeping blob, watching until they'd moved way past making out. It made her shudder, realizing how easy it was to become a pervert if you didn't stop yourself in time.</p>
199	"The Boarders ghost. I told you it wasn't the wind. It's Zaire Bolow blowing on a Coke bottle. I think she and Gottfried have, like, a sex ritual they do." ...Was the Coke bottle related to the sex ritual, or was she just making a random comment?

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203	Behind him, Trevor got up and removed his pants. He was now wearing nothing but tighty-whities, and from his seat in the front row Benny could make out the entire shape of his genitalia. Trevor switched from Brittany to Corny, who covered her eyes in mock horror as Trevor gyrated his crotch in her face.
214	Is she flirting with him? Virginia thought. Slut.
215	Margaret's cheerleading skirt was flopped up so anyone could see her pink underwear and half a butt cheek. Virginia considered covering her up, but then decided she didn't care enough to bother.
217	Supposedly Trevor Cheek was his best friend, but best friends didn't wag their dicks in your girlfriend's face, did they? Best friends helped you castrate people who wagged their dicks in your girlfriend's face.
218	<p>Now as he stabbed and stabbed, Winn felt a tension growing in his crotch. For some reason, whenever Winn go really angry, he also got kind of horny. It was weird, but he tried not to think about it in a deep way. He just climbed into the driver's seat of his own tasteful blue BMW, unzipped his pants, and fished out his penis. Then he hurriedly jerked off, his dick in one hand and his gun in the other.</p> <p>Fuck you, Trevor. Fuck you, Trevor. FUCK YOU, TREVOR!</p> <p>In about five seconds he was shooting off all over himself. All his angry, righteous energy immediately went seeping out of him. He suddenly felt exhausted and as apathetic as a slug. He rested his head on the steering wheel. He waited for his breathing to get back to normal. Then he gave Bory a once-over to make sure he hadn't gotten any cum on the barrel.</p> <p>Poor old Bory, Winn thought. The indignities this gun had endured in his hands! This noble weapon that had once been used to defend the South and cut down Yankee aggressors, now reduced to slashing tires and witnessing masturbation.</p> <p>...There was the sound of a car pulling into the garage.</p> <p>Shit. Winn quickly zipped up his pants and wiped his sticky hand on the seat.</p>
240	Then Corny threw off her towel and was completely naked. Virginia watched, sort of stunned, as Corny stumbled across the locker room, her round, tan butt jiggling as she hopped clumsily into a pair of blue cheerleader panties. It was one of the weirdest things about being a girl- other girls just got naked in front of you. We're all girls here, you heard all the time, as if that meant something.
251	She saw Corny Davenport fall forward on her face, as if toppled by the sheer weight of her boobs.
254	<p>Virginia shrugged. How was he making her feel bad right now? He was the one with pinups of underage girls in his guitar case.</p> <p>...People only noticed your reputation at Winship, and Virginia's reputation wasn't for being a leggy sex kitten.</p>
265	<p>He was too wrapped up in his big-boobed, puffy-lipped, cheetah-print-wearing white-trash cougar to notice anything.</p> <p>...When he blew the smoke out, he said, "Mind hotboxing?"</p>

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266	Finally he produced a small stack of videotapes. He thrust them into Virginia's lap. Locker Room Wildcats Vol 4, Locker Room Wildcats Vol 8. The covers were splashed with cheap clip art of pom-poms and still-shots of boobs.
269	She looked down. But what she saw at her feet made it even worse. It was a pair of girl's underwear, blue spandex with a white W sewn into the side. It was the kind all the cheerleaders wore under their little skirts, flashing when they did flips and cartwheels. ..."Wann try 'em on?" he asked, nodding toward the panties, sounding half serious. ..."Just try 'em on," Min-Jun said. "They'll look good on you." ...She felt a hand on her thigh. She screamed.
287	Corny said a quick prayer before slurping up the gelatinous pink goo. The first time Corny ever got drunk, she'd felt so awful the next morning at church that she'd promised Jesus she'd never do it again. And she'd only done it three times since then, so that wasn't so bad. There were girls at Winship who got trashed every weekend, like Chrissie White, who had the worst drunk eyes of anyone. And besides, this was a special occasion. It was a beautiful, festive night, the boys had won the game, there was a keg, and Brittany and Angie's stepmom had made pink Jell-O shots for the girls. Jell-O shots were Corny's absolute weakness. They were the most magical substance in the world- pink and sweet and you couldn't even tell there was vodka in them at all! Corny's philosophy was that it was healthy to sin once in a while, because afterward when you repented, you felt closer to Jesus than ever before. And the buzz of holy forgiveness lasted for days, unlike being drunk, which only lasted a few hours. ...But tonight everyone was so excited and the night air felt so heavenly, and boys already had girls sitting on their laps, and girls were downing Jell-O shots and giggling and twirling their hair. Corny couldn't wait for Winn to get there so she could sit on his lap and twirl her hair too.
289	Margaret Inman passed by with another plate of Jell-O shots, and Corny grabbed one. ...She downed the Jell-O shot and licked the sticky sugar residue from her lips.
292	It was the same routine as last year: Chrissie changing her clothes a million times (as if pink V-neck and jeans were any more or less exciting than a blue V-neck and jeans) and then clinging to Virginia for an hour or however long it took to down five Jell-O shots and be drunk enough for Virginia to ditch. "Want one?" Chrissie asked, holding up a pink jiggling square. "No thank," Virginia said. She'd seen how stupid people got on that stuff.
294	Tell on me? It was something a ten-year-old would say. You don't "tell on" a child pornographer; you "report them to the authorities."
303	She poured a drink sloppily into a martini glass. ..."Are you drinking by yourself?" Virginia asked after a long silence. "Not anymore. Now I'm drinking with you." Zaire smiled, but it was a grim, lifeless smile. "Cheers." ...Zaire sat up a little and took a sip of her martini before lying back down again. Virginia did the same. The gin burned her throat going down.
307	Zaire snapped. She got up and started making herself another martini. ...Zaire rolled her eyes and stumbled back to the bed. She ignored Virginia's outstretched palm and downed her drink.

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309	"You need to stop hooking up with Zaire," Virginia said bluntly. "She can't get over you, and it's turning her into a bitch." ..."Hooking up? It means, like, having sex?" Virginia explained awkwardly.
310	"He has insomnia. Hypnotism is actually a very effective technique-" "No," Virginia interrupted. "She's hypnotizing him to hook up with her. To have sex with her." She could barely bring herself to say the actual words: "She's raping him."
313	"She's a whore."
315	"But they'll try to fuck her!" Winn cried. His glazed mask of a face suddenly contorted with emotion. "I have to keep them away from her! I have to watch her!"
330	"I don't know. I guess she should go to jail like a regular killer and rapist." Zaire scowled. "Rapist? What the hell do you mean, rapist?" "You need to examine your actions," Benny said. "You'll find they meet the criteria for sexual assault."
336	This was the best part- the blond twins lovingly rubbing mayonnaise on each other's faces as a moisturizing mask. He watched it through his tears, clutching a pair of pristine blue panties to his chest. It's over.
337	The problem was she had four hundred dollars that belonged to him. He imagined it hidden in her room- in her underwear drawer- the dirty bills pressed against fresh pairs of lacy pink thongs and B-cup bras. ...On the screen, the girls whizzed around in fast motion. Min-Jun hit play again as the two of them reached out tenderly to hug each other. There was something about watching girls hug each other, feeling excluded from their girlish bond...it gave Min-Jun a weird, jealous boner. He hit fast-forward again, skipping to the part where the girls came out of the shower, dripping in their skimpy towels. He know the video by heart, and every girl in it. It wasn't just the money he'd miss, it was them.

Profanity	Count
Ass	9
Bitch	3
Dick	10
Fuck	18
Goddamn	1
Kike	1
Piss	2
Shit	20
Tit	1