

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME



Book Summary:

A young man becomes romantically involved with an older houseguest.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains alcohol and drug use; profanity; alternate sexualities; sexual nudity; and sexual activities.

Adult

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CONTENT WARNING

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Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

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17	<p>To be with you, Oliver. With or without my bathing suit. To be with you on my bed. In your bed.</p> <p>...Do with me what you want. Take me. Just ask if I want to and see the answer you'll get, just don't let me say no.</p> <p>...And tell me I wasn't dreaming that night when I heard a noise outside the landing by my door and suddenly knew that someone was in my room, someone was sitting at the foot of my bed, thinking, thinking, thinking, and finally started moving up toward me and was now lying, not next to me, but on top of me, while I lay on my tummy, and that I liked it so much that, rather than risk doing anything to show I'd been awakened or to let him change his mind and go away, I feigned to be fast asleep, thinking, This is not, cannot, had better not be a dream, because the words that came to me, as I pressed my eyes shut, were, This is like coming home, like coming home after years away among Trojans and Lestrygonians, like coming home to a place where everyone is like you, where people know, they just know—coming home as when everything falls into place and you suddenly realize that for seventeen years all you'd been doing was fiddling with the wrong combination.</p>
18	<p>It never occurred to me that what had totally panicked me when he touched me was exactly what startles virgins on being touched for the first time by the person they desire: he stirs nerves in them they never knew existed and that produce far, far more disturbing pleasures than they are used to on their own.</p>
22	<p>But I was too self-conscious, like someone trying to feel natural while walking about naked in a locker room only to end up aroused by his own nakedness.</p>
26	<p>Let your hand travel wherever it wishes, take my suit off, take me, I won't make a noise, won't tell a soul, I'm hard and you know it, and if you won't, I'll take that hand of yours and slip it into my suit now and let you put as many fingers as you want inside me.</p> <p>...When I looked at my crotch, to my complete dismay I saw it was damp. Had he seen it? Surely he must have.</p>
27	<p>Shrugged my shoulders—and been okay with pre-come.</p> <p>...I had wanted other men my age before and had slept with women. But before he'd stepped out of the cab and walked into our home, it would never have seemed remotely possible that someone so thoroughly okay with himself might want me to share his body as much as I ached to yield up mine. And yet, about two weeks after his arrival, all I wanted every night was for him to leave his room, not via its front door, but through the French windows on our balcony. I wanted to hear his window open, hear his espadrilles on the balcony, and then the sound of my own window, which was never locked, being pushed open as he'd step into my room after everyone had gone to bed, slip under my covers, undress me without asking, and after making me want him more than I thought I could ever want another living soul, gently, softly, and, with the kindness one Jew extends to another, work his way into my body, gently and softly, after heeding the words I'd been rehearsing for days now, Please, don't hurt me, which meant, Hurt me all you want.</p>

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29	That foot in the water—I could have kissed every toe on it. Then kissed his ankles and his knees. How often had I stared at his bathing suit while his hat was covering his face? He couldn't possibly have known what I was looking at.
37	<p>Of course, he had no idea what I'd been thinking minutes earlier, but the firm, rounded cheeks of the apricot with their dimple in the middle reminded me of how his body had stretched across the boughs of the tree with his tight, rounded ass echoing the color and the shape of the fruit. Touching the apricot was like touching him.</p> <p>...Yours, like Later!, had an off-the-cuff, unceremonious, here, catch quality that reminded me how twisted and secretive my desires were compared to the expansive spontaneity of everything about him. It would never have occurred to him that in placing the apricot in my palm he was giving me his ass to hold or that, in biting the fruit, I was also biting into that part of his body that must have been fairer than the rest because it never apricated— and near it, if I dared to bite that far, his apricock.</p>
41	No one had studied every bone in his body, ankles, knees, wrists, fingers, and toes, no one lusted after every ripple of muscle, no one took him to bed every night and on spotting him in the morning lying in his heaven by the pool, smiled at him, watched a smile come to his lips, and thought, Did you know I came in your mouth last night?
44	Then it hit me that I could have killed myself instead, or hurt myself badly enough and let him know why I'd done it. If I hurt my face, I'd want him to look at me and wonder why, why might anyone do this to himself, until, years and years later— yes, Later!—he'd finally piece the puzzle together and beat his head against the wall.
45	<p>She was after him, that much was clear, while all I really wanted was one night with him, just one night—one hour, even—if only to determine whether I wanted him for another night after that. What I didn't realize was that wanting to test desire is nothing more than a ruse to get what we want without admitting that we want it. I dreaded to think how experienced he himself was.</p> <p>...It made me hard, even though I didn't know if what aroused me was her naked body lying in the sun, his next to hers, or both of theirs together. From where I stood against the balustrade along the garden overlooking the bluff, I would strain my eyes and finally catch sight of them lying in the sun next to one another, probably necking, she occasionally dropping a thigh on top of his, until minutes later he did the same. They hadn't removed their suits. I took comfort in that, but when later one night I saw them dancing, something told me that these were not the moves of people who'd stopped at heavy petting.</p>
47	<p>I described her naked body, which I'd seen two years before. I wanted him aroused. It didn't matter what he desired so long as he was aroused. I described him to her too, because I wanted to see if her arousal took the same turns as mine, so that I might trace mine on hers and see which of the two was the genuine article.</p> <p>...Not just to get him aroused in my presence, or to make him need me, but in urging him to speak about her behind her back, I'd turn Chiara into the object of man-to-man gossip.</p>

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52	She was slow to kiss me back, but then she didn't want to stop.
63	<p>I brought the bathing suit to my face, then rubbed my face inside of it, as if I were trying to snuggle into it and lose myself inside its folds—So this is what he smells like when his body isn't covered in suntan lotion, this is what he smells like, this is what he smells like, I kept repeating to myself, looking inside the suit for something more personal yet than his smell and then kissing every corner of it, almost wishing to find hair, anything, to lick it, to put the whole bathing suit into my mouth, and, if I could only steal it, keep it with me forever, never ever let Mafalda wash it, turn to it in the winter months at home and, on sniffing it, bring him back to life, as naked as he was with me at this very moment. On impulse, I removed my bathing suit and began to put his on. I knew what I wanted, and I wanted it with the kind of intoxicated rapture that makes people take risks they would never take even with plenty of alcohol in their system. I wanted to come in his suit, and leave the evidence for him to find there. Which was when a crazier notion possessed me. I undid his bed, took off his suit, and cuddled it between his sheets, naked. Let him find me—I'll deal with it, one way or another. I recognized the feel of the bed. My bed. But the smell of him was all around me, wholesome and forgiving, like the strange scent which had suddenly come over my entire body when an elderly man who happened to be standing right next to me in a temple on Yom Kippur placed his tallis over my head till I had all but disappeared and was now united with a nation that is forever dispersed but which, from time to time, comes together again when one being and another wrap themselves under the same piece of cloth. I put his pillow over my face, kissed it savagely, and, wrapping my legs around it, told it what I lacked the courage to tell everyone else in the world.</p> <p>Then I told him what I wanted. It took less than a minute.</p>
67	<p>It seemed clear that after Chiara there had been a succession of cotte, crushes, mini-crushes, one-night crushes, flings, who knows. To me all of it boiled down to one thing only: his cock had been everywhere in B. Every girl had touched it, that cock of his. It had been in who knows how many vaginas, how many mouths. The image amused me. It never bothered me to think of him between a girl's legs as she lay facing him, his broad, tanned, glistening shoulders moving up and down as I'd imagined him that afternoon when I too had wrapped my legs around his pillow.</p>
68	<p>Is it your body that I want when I think of lying next to it every night or do I want to slip into it and own it as if it were my own, as I did when I put on your bathing suit and took it off again, all the while craving, as I craved nothing more in my life that afternoon, to feel you slip inside me as if my entire body were your bathing suit, your home? You in me, me in you...</p>
80	<p>I did not answer but lifted my face to his and kissed him again, almost savagely, not because I was filled with passion or even because his kiss still lacked the zeal I was looking for, but because I was not so sure our kiss had convinced me of anything about myself.</p>
81	<p>So, sensing there was probably not going to be a sequel to our kiss, I began to test the eventual separation of our mouths, only to realize, now that I was making mere motions of ending the kiss, how much I'd wanted it not to stop, wanted his</p>

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	tongue in my mouth and mine in his—because all we had become, after all these weeks and all the strife and all the fits and starts that ushered a chill draft each time, was just two wet tongues flailing away in each other’s mouths. Just two tongues, all the rest was nothing. When, finally, I lifted one knee and moved it toward him to face him, I knew I had broken the spell.
82	In a desperate move which I knew I’d never live down if he did not relent, I reached for him and let my hand rest on his crotch. He did not move. I should have slipped my hand straight into his shorts. He must have read my intention and, with total composure, bordering on a gesture that was very gentle but also quite glacial, brought his hand there and let it rest on mine for a second, then, twining his fingers into mine, lifted my hand.
85	I didn’t know what light of my eyes meant, and part of me wondered where on earth had I fished out such claptrap, but it was nonsense like this that brought tears now, tears I wished to drown in his pillow, soak in his bathing suit, tears I wanted him to touch with the tip of his tongue and make sorrow go away. I didn’t understand why he had brought his foot on mine. Was it a pass, or a well-meaning gesture of solidarity and comradeship, like his chummy hug-massage, a lighthearted nudge between lovers who are no longer sleeping together but have decided to remain friends and occasionally go to the movies?
86	What would happen if I saw him again? Would I bleed again, cry, come in my shorts?
87	And right away I’d take off my pajama bottoms and slip into his bed. If he didn’t touch me, then I’d be the one to touch him, and if he didn’t respond, I’d let my mouth boldly go to places it’d never been before. The humor of the words themselves amused me. Intergalactic slop. My Star of David, his Star of David, our two necks like one, two cut Jewish men joined together from time immemorial. If none of this worked I’d go for him, he’d fight me back, and we’d wrestle, and I’d make sure to turn him on as he pinned me down while I wrapped my legs around him like a woman, even hurt him on the hip he’d scraped in his bicycle fall, and if all this didn’t work then I’d commit the ultimate indignity, and with this indignity show him that the shame was all his, not mine, that I had come with truth and human kindness in my heart and that I was leaving it on his sheets now to remind him how he’d said no to a young man’s plea for fellowship.
96	If he ran the shower it meant he’d had sex. ...Was he as hard as I was, and was his cock already pushing out of the bathrobe, which was why the belt was just about caressing my face, was he doing it on purpose, tickling me in the face, don’t stop, don’t stop, don’t ever stop.
97	“Did you have a lot to drink last night?” “That—and other things.”
104	I smiled right away, because I caught his attempt to backpedal, which instantly brought complicit smiles to our faces, like a passionate wet kiss in the midst of a conversation between two individuals who, without thinking, had reached for each other’s lips through the scorching red desert both had intentionally placed between them so as not to grope for each other’s nakedness. ...And then I’d want him to feel something as darting as sorrow and fiercer than

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	<p>regret, maybe even pity for me, because in the bookstore that morning I'd have taken pity too, if pity was all he had to give, if pity could have made him put an arm around me, and underneath this surge of pity and regret, hovering like a vague, erotic undercurrent that was years in the making, I wanted him to remember the morning on Monet's berm when I'd kissed him not the first but the second time and given him my spit in his mouth because I so desperately wanted his in mine.</p>
107	<p>But sleep would not come, and sure enough not one but two troubling thoughts, like paired specters materializing out of the fog of sleep, stood watch over me: desire and shame, the longing to throw open my window and, without thinking, run into his room stark-naked, and, on the other hand, my repeated inability to take the slightest risk to bring any of this about.</p> <p>...We were in his room, and, contrary to all my fantasies, it was not I who had my back on the bed, but Oliver; I was on top of him, watching, on his face, an expression at once so flushed, so readily acquiescent, that even in my sleep it tore every emotion out of me and told me one thing I could never have known or guessed so far: that not to give what I was dying to give him at whatever price was perhaps the greatest crime I might ever commit in my life.</p>
108	<p>Regardless of how much he wished to have nothing to do with me, regardless of those he'd befriended and was surely sleeping with each night, anyone who'd revealed his entire humanity to me while lying naked under me, even in my dream, could not be any different in real life.</p> <p>This was who he truly was; the rest was incidental.</p> <p>No: he was also the other man, the one in the red bathing suit.</p> <p>It was just that I couldn't allow myself to hope I'd ever see him wearing no bathing suit at all.</p>
115	<p>I leaned over and kissed her lightly on the lips. She took her bike, placed it against the door of a closed shop, and, leaning against a wall, said, "Kiss me again?" Using my kickstand, I stood the bike in the middle of the alley and, once we were close, I held her face with both hands, then leaned into her as we began to kiss, my hands under her shirt, hers in my hair.</p> <p>...It was in every word she'd spoken to me that night—untrammelled, frank, human—and in the way her hips responded to mine now, without inhibition, without exaggeration, as though the connection between lips and hips in her body was fluid and instantaneous. A kiss on the mouth was not a prelude to a more comprehensive contact, it was already contact in its totality. There was nothing between our bodies but our clothes, which was why I was not caught by surprise when she slipped a hand between us and down into my trousers, and said, "Sei duro, duro, you're so hard." And it was her frankness, unfettered and unstrained, that made me harder yet now.</p> <p>I wanted to look at her, stare in her eyes as she held me in her hand, tell her how long I'd wanted to kiss her, say something to show that the person who'd called her tonight and picked her up at her house was no longer the same cold, lifeless boy—but she cut me short: "Baciami ancora, kiss me again."</p> <p>I kissed her again, but my mind was racing ahead to the berm.</p>

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116	<p>I couldn't understand how boldness and sorrow, how you're so hard and do you really care for me?</p> <p>...Nor could I begin to fathom how someone so seemingly vulnerable, hesitant, and eager to confide so many uncertainties about herself could, with one and the same gesture, reach into my pants with unabashed recklessness and hold on to my cock and squeeze it.</p> <p>While kissing her more passionately now, and with our hands straying all over each other's bodies, I found myself composing the note I resolved to slip under his door that night: Can't stand the silence. I need to speak to you.</p> <p>By the time I was ready to slip the note under his door it was already dawn. Marzia and I had made love in a deserted spot on the beach, a place nicknamed the Aquarium, where the night's condoms would unavoidably gather and be seen floating among the rocks like returning salmon in trapped water.</p>
118	<p>It amused me to think that the verb "to throw," iacere in Latin, has the same root as the verb "to ejaculate." No sooner had I thought this than I realized that what I wanted was to bring him not just her scent on my fingers but, dried on my hand, the imprint of my semen.</p>
126	<p>I loved the boldness that was pushing me forward; it aroused me, because it was born of arousal itself.</p>
127	<p>"I didn't know you smoked."</p>
128	<p>He tried to smile away the awkwardness between us and passed me the reefer. ...Because he'd mind if our knees touched, just as he'd mind the hug, just as he minded when, for want of a better way to show I wanted to stay awhile longer on the berm, I'd placed my hand on his crotch.</p>
130	<p>"Can I kiss you?" What a question, coming after our kiss on the berm! Or had we wiped the slate clean and were starting all over again?</p> <p>I did not give him an answer. Without nodding, I had already brought my mouth to his, just as I'd kissed Marzia the night before. Something unexpected seemed to clear away between us, and, for a second, it seemed there was absolutely no difference in age between us, just two men kissing, and even this seemed to dissolve, as I began to feel we were not even two men, just two beings.</p>
131	<p>He got under the covers too and, before I knew it, started to undress me. I had worried about how I'd go about undressing, how, if he wasn't going to help, I'd do what so many girls did in the movies, take off my shirt, drop my pants, and just stand there, stark-naked, arms hanging down, meaning: This is who I am, this is how I'm made, here, take me, I'm yours. But his move had solved the problem. He was whispering, "Off, and off, and off, and off," which made me laugh, and suddenly I was totally naked, feeling the weight of the sheet on my cock, not a secret left in the world, because wanting to be in bed with him was my only secret and here I was sharing it with him. How wonderful to feel his hands all over me under the sheets, as if part of us, like an advance scouting party, had already arrived at intimacy, while the rest of us, exposed outside the sheets, was still struggling with niceties, like latecomers stamping their feet in the cold while everyone else is warming hands inside a crowded nightclub. He was still dressed and I wasn't. I loved being naked before him. Then he kissed me, and kissed me again, deeply this second time, as if he too was finally letting go. At some point I</p>

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	<p>realized he'd been naked for a long while, though I hadn't noticed him undress, but there he was, not a part of him wasn't touching me.</p> <p>...I looked away, because he was staring at me, and I knew I was flushed, and I knew I'd made a face, though I still wanted him to stare at me even if it embarrassed me, and I wanted to keep staring at him too as we settled in our mock wrestling position, his shoulders rubbing my knees. How far we had come from the afternoon when I'd taken off my underwear and put on his bathing suit and thought this was the closest his body would ever come to mine.</p>
137	<p>Perhaps we might have avoided sleeping together. I wanted to tell him that I had made love to Marzia the other night not two hundred yards away from where we stood right now.</p>
139	<p>When we reached our balcony, he hesitated at the door and then stepped into my room. It took me by surprise.</p> <p>"Take your trunks off." This was strange, but I didn't have it in me to disobey. So I lowered them and got out of them. It was the first time I'd been naked with him in broad daylight. I felt awkward and was starting to grow nervous. "Sit down." I had barely done as I was told when he brought his mouth to my cock and took it all in. I was hard in no time.</p>
140	<p>Watching him wearing my clothes was an unbearable turn-on. And he knew it. It was turning both of us on. The thought of his cock rubbing the netted fabric where mine had rested reminded me how, before my very eyes, and after so much exertion, he had finally shot his load on my chest. But what turned me on wasn't this.</p>
141	<p>To be in his mouth while he was in mine and no longer know whose it was, his cock or mine, that was in my mouth.</p>
142	<p>I came up to his ear as he was just about to enter the post office and whispered, "Fuck me, Elio." He remembered and instantly moaned his own name three times, as we'd done during that night. I could feel myself already getting hard. Then, to tease him with the very same words he'd uttered earlier that morning, I said, "We'll save it for later." Then I told him how Later! would always remind me of him. He laughed and said, "Later!"—meaning exactly what I wanted it to mean for a change: not just goodbye, or be off with you, but afternoon lovemaking.</p>
143	<p>I loved her smell, loved her mouth. She took off her top and asked me to put some sunscreen on her back, knowing that my hands would inevitably cup her breasts.</p> <p>...I locked the door from the inside, sat her on the table, took off her bathing suit, and put my mouth where she smelled of the sea. She leaned back, and lifted both legs over my shoulders. How strange, I thought, how each shadowed and screened the other, without precluding the other. Barely half an hour ago I was asking Oliver to fuck me and now here I was about to make love to Marzia, and yet neither had anything to do with the other except through Elio, who happened to be one and the same person.</p>
144	<p>All I wanted was for him or Marzia to pass by my balcony door and, through the half-drawn shutters, make out my naked body sprawled on the bed.</p>

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	<p>...I saw one of them enter my room and reach for the fruit, and with the fruit in hand, come to my bed and bring it to my hard cock. I know you're not sleeping, they'd say, and gently press the soft, overripe peach on my cock till I'd pierced the fruit along the crease that reminded me so much of Oliver's ass.</p> <p>...I got up and reached for one of the peaches, opened it halfway with my thumbs, pushed the pit out on my desk, and gently brought the fuzzy, blush-colored peach to my groin, and then began to press into it till the parted fruit slid down my cock. If Anchise only knew, if Anchise knew what I was doing to the fruit he cultivated with such slavish devotion every day, him and his large straw hat and his long, gnarled, callused fingers that were always ripping out weeds from the parched earth. His peaches were more apricots than peaches, except larger, juicier.</p> <p>...The fruit was leaking all over my cock. If Oliver walked in on me now, I'd let him suck me as he had this morning. If Marzia came, I'd let her help me finish the job. The peach was soft and firm, and when I finally succeeded in tearing it apart with my cock, I saw that its reddened core reminded me not just of an anus but of a vagina, so that holding each half in either hand firmly against my cock, I began to rub myself, thinking of no one and of everyone, including the poor peach, which had no idea what was being done to it except that it had to play along and probably in the end took some pleasure in the act as well, till I thought I heard it say to me, Fuck me, Elio, fuck me harder, and after a moment, Harder, I said! while I scanned my mind for images from Ovid—wasn't there a character who had turned into a peach and, if there wasn't, couldn't I make one up on the spot, say, an ill-fated young man and young girl who in their peachy beauty had spurned an envious deity who had turned them into a peach tree, and only now, after three thousand years, were being given what had been so unjustly taken away from them, as they murmured, I'll die when you're done, and you mustn't be done, must never be done? The story so aroused me that practically without warning the orgasm was almost upon me. I sensed I could just stop then and there or, with one more stroke, I could come, which I finally did, carefully, aiming the spurt into the reddened core of the open peach as if in a ritual of insemination.</p> <p>...I let myself hang back, holding the fruit in both hands, grateful that I hadn't gotten the sheet dirty with either juice or come. The bruised and damaged peach, like a rape victim, lay on its side on my desk, shamed, loyal, aching, and confused, struggling not to spill what I'd left inside. It reminded me that I had probably looked no different on his bed last night after he'd come inside me the first time.</p> <p>...He grabbed it and kissed it, then lifted the sheet and seemed surprised to find me naked. He immediately brought his lips to where they'd promised to return this morning. He loved the sticky taste.</p> <p>...I told him and pointed to the bruised evidence sitting on my desk.</p> <p>"Let me see."</p> <p>He stood up and asked if I'd left it for him.</p> <p>..."Is this what I think it is?"</p> <p>I nodded naughtily in mock shame.</p> <p>...He brought the half peach to bed, making certain not to spill its contents as he took his clothes off.</p> <p>"I'm sick, aren't I?" I asked.</p> <p>"No, you're not sick—I wish everyone were as sick as you. Want to see</p>

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	<p>sick?"</p> <p>...“Just think of the number of people who’ve come before you—you, your grandfather, your great-great-grandfather, and all the skipped generations of Elios before you, and those from places far away, all squeezed into this trickle that makes you who you are. Now may I taste it?”</p> <p>...He dipped a finger into the core of the peach and brought it to his mouth. “Please don’t.” This was more than I could bear. “I never could stand my own. But this is yours. Please explain.”</p> <p>...“Look, you don’t have to do this. I’m the one who came after you, I sought you out, everything that happened is because of me—you don’t have to do this.”</p> <p>“Nonsense. I wanted you from day one. I just hid it better.”</p> <p>“Sure!”</p> <p>I lunged out to grab the fruit from his hand, but with his other hand he caught hold of my wrist and squeezed it hard, as they do in movies, when one man forces another to let go of a knife.</p> <p>...I watched him put the peach in his mouth and slowly begin to eat it, staring at me so intensely that I thought even lovemaking didn’t go so far.</p> <p>“If you just want to spit it out, it’s okay, it’s really okay, I promise I won’t be offended,” I said to break the silence more than as a last plea.</p> <p>He shook his head. I could tell he was tasting it at that very instant. Something that was mine was in his mouth, more his than mine now.</p>
149	<p>“Kiss me now, before it’s totally gone,” I said. His mouth would taste of peaches and me.</p>
151	<p>I had taken a giant step last night. Yet here I was, no wiser and no more sure of things than I’d been before feeling him all over me. We might as well not even have slept together.</p>
155	<p>Just because he’d let me be his top last night.</p>
156	<p>Perhaps we were friends first and lovers second. But then perhaps this is what lovers are.</p> <p>When I think back to our last ten days together, I see an early-morning swim, our lazy breakfasts, the ride up to town, work in the garden, lunches, our afternoon naps, more work in the afternoon, tennis maybe, after-dinners in the piazzetta, and every night the kind of lovemaking that can run circles around time.</p>
159	<p>Then the rolling fields of the valley leading up to the hills seemed to sit in a rising mist of olive green: sunflowers, grapevines, swatches of lavender, and those squat and humble olive trees stooping like gnarled, aged scarecrows gawking through our window as we lay naked on my bed, the smell of his sweat, which was the smell of my sweat, and next to me my man-woman whose man-woman I was, and all around us Mafalda’s chamomile-scented laundry detergent, which was the scent of the torrid afternoon world of our house.</p>
167	<p>“Our bodies won’t have secrets now,” I said as I took my turn and sat down. He had hopped into the bathtub and was just about to turn on the shower. “I want you to see mine,” I said. He did more. He stepped out, kissed me on the mouth, and, pressing and massaging my tummy with the flat of his palm, watched the whole thing happen.</p>

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168	<p>Shame trailed instant intimacy. Could intimacy endure once indecency was spent and our bodies had run out of tricks?</p> <p>...Was our intimacy paid for in the wrong currency? Or is intimacy the desired product no matter where you find it, how you acquire it, what you pay for it—black market, gray market, taxed, untaxed, under the table, over the counter?</p>
169	<p>He looked at me in wonderment. “You’re just horny.”</p>
177	<p>The people of Thailand are beautiful—so loneliness can be a cruel thing when you’ve had a bit to drink and are on the verge of touching the first stranger that comes your way—they’re all beautiful there, but you pay for a smile by the shot glass.”</p>
184	<p>By then I had decided not to drink wine because the two scotch whiskeys gulped down in a rush were only now starting to have their full effect.</p>
185	<p>His features are a girl’s. But he looks like a girl who looks like a boy. The girl at the American Express desk stares and I stare back. She looks like a boy who looks like a girl and who’s therefore just a boy.</p>
187	<p>“Like every experience that marks us for a lifetime, I found myself turned inside out, drawn and quartered. This was the sum of everything I’d been in my life—and more: who I am when I sing and stir-fry vegetables for my family and friends on Sunday afternoons; who I am when I wake up on freezing nights and want nothing more than to throw on a sweater, rush to my desk, and write about the person I know no one knows I am; who I am when I crave to be naked with another naked body, or when I crave to be alone in the world; who I am when every part of me seems miles and centuries apart and each swears it bears my name.</p>
190	<p>“I’m not sleeping with you.”</p> <p>“Maybe you won’t. Maybe you will. The night is young. And I haven’t given up.”</p> <p>“At which point he removes his cap and lets down so much hair that I couldn’t understand how such a huge tumble could have been wrapped and tucked under so small a bonnet. He was a woman.</p>
194	<p>She was dressed in white and her tanned skin had a sheen that made me want to touch every pore in her body.</p>
196	<p>“Water,” I gasped. “I’m not made for martinis. I’m so drunk.”</p> <p>“You shouldn’t have had any. You had scotch, then wine, grappa, now gin.”</p> <p>“So much for the evening’s sexual buildup.”</p>
200	<p>He pressed me against the wall and started to kiss me, his hips pushing into mine, his arms about to lift me off the ground. My eyes were shut, but I knew he had stopped kissing me to look around him; people could be walking by.</p> <p>...Then we kissed again.</p> <p>...I could spend the rest of my life like this: with him, at night, in Rome, my eyes totally shut, one leg coiled around his.</p> <p>...There were a few tourists lugging huge knapsacks, a few drunks, and the usual drug dealers.</p>
202	<p>I can, from the distance of years now, still think I’m hearing the voices of two young men singing these words in Neapolitan toward daybreak, neither realizing,</p>

Page	Content
	as they held each other and kissed again and again on the dark lanes of old Rome, that this was the last night they would ever make love again.
214	He kissed me on the mouth, but it wasn't the kiss after the Pasquino, when he'd pressed me hard against the wall on via Santa Maria dell'Anima.
219	"I'd love nothing better than to take your clothes off and at the very least hold you. But I can't."
229	"I said a drink, not a fuck."
231	"The first night is the one I remember best—perhaps because I fumbled so much. But also Rome. There is a spot on via Santa Maria dell'Anima that I revisit every time I'm in Rome. I'll stare at it for a second, and suddenly it'll all come back to me. I had just thrown up that night and on the way back to the bar you kissed me. People kept walking by but I didn't care, nor did you. That kiss is still imprinted there, thank goodness. It's all I have from you. This and your shirt." ...“They serenaded you—and you were drunk out of your mind. In the end you borrowed the guitar from one of them and you started playing, and then, out of nowhere, singing. Gaping, they all were. All the druggies of the world listening like sheep to Handel. One of the Dutch girls had lost it. You wanted to bring her to the hotel. She wanted to come too. What a night. We ended up sitting in the emptied terrace of a closed caffè behind the piazza, just you and I and the girl, watching dawn, each of us slumped on a chair.”

Profanity	Count
Ass	6
Bitch	1
Cock	31
Fuck	10
Piss	9
Shit	1