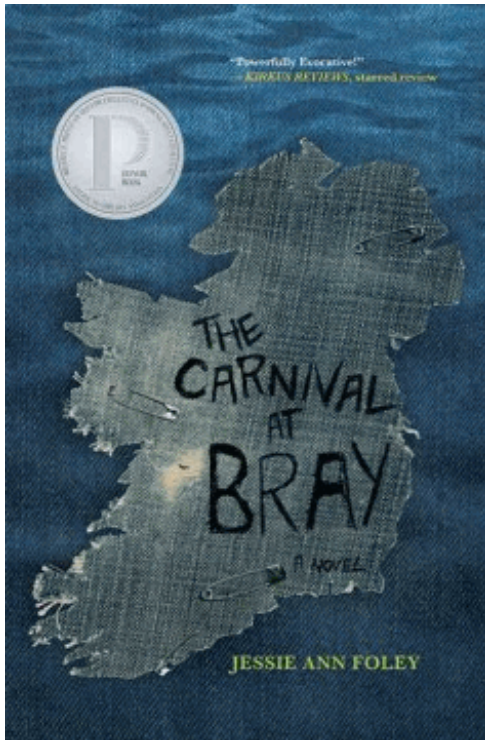


THE CARNIVAL AT BRAY



Book Summary:

A teenager moves to a new country where she experiences love and loss.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains alcohol use involving minors; profanity; sexual activities; sexual assault involving minors; and sexual nudity.

Young Adult

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CONTENT WARNING

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Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

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5	In the aftermath, Laura would lubricate her despair with great quantities of red wine and the occasional sleeping pill.
17	She woke up once in the middle of the night, feverish, and saw the shadows of two people moving up and down- Uncle Kevin and the blonde- and the blonde was moving on top of him and he was holding her breasts in each of his hands like Christmas ornaments. Maggie knew what they were doing but it didn't look so frightening or clinical as when she learned about it during those awful movies in health class. And it didn't look as disgusting as the porno she'd seen at Katie Grant's house, which was all spread legs and shaved bodies and smirking plastic faces.
20	He gripped her thin waist; his right hand snaking down the long pocket of her tight black jeans to squeeze her butt.
21	And although she sometimes missed the simple reassurance of her little sister's breathing in the night, Maggie could now listen to "Nightstick," without being asked what the lyrics meant, or cry when she felt sad without being asked what was wrong, or change her clothes without having to hide in the closet so that Ronnie wouldn't stare at her breasts and ask her how old she was when she grew them ("I don't know; it's not like they inflated one night while I was sleeping"), and what they felt like ("skin"), and whether she needed help with all those bra hooks("No, weirdo!").
28	But Maggie, dreamy and dizzy from the liquor, felt welded to her seat. ... "This is why I usually pour the drinks," said Mike, winking at her. Then he leaned over and whispered, "He does that for people he likes- pours 'em strong so it takes 'em longer to drink. Means he likes your company." Maggie blushed. "But I've barely said anything," she said.
30	There was nothing. She was just sitting there in silence, getting drunk. It occurred to her that a person's first drunken experience should be in the basement of a friend's house, in a forest preserve, behind the bleachers of a football field. Certainly not in the company of a sleeping ninety-nine-year-old man. She giggled a little and wondered what Uncle Kevin would make of it. "Hot port?" he would say. "Very impressive, Mags. I would have thought you'd be more of a wine cooler type of girl."
44	Paul's mouth was eager but not hideous in the starlight, and he put two firm hands on her waist, leaned in, and jammed a cold, limp tongue into her mouth. She didn't know what else to do, so she opened her mouth a little wider, trying to clear a breathing passage, closed her eyes tightly and concentrated on not drooling. His tongue began waving back and forth as if a tiny drunk man was weaving his way down the hallways of her throat. Then he began moving it in circles. Clockwise. Counterclockwise. ...He finished with a flourish, rearing his tongue back and striking forward, like a cobra.
61	The rows of older men standing at the bar with Kevin ogled Maggie's mother with the kind of detached fascination they might display watching strippers, wondering what it would be like to screw her while at the same time being thankful that she wasn't their wife.

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	..."Get your drunk ass out of this bar and into the truck," he said, jabbing a finger centimeters from her nose.
75	"Look what I brought," Paul grinned, pulling a small bottle of whiskey from the inside pocket of his coat. "Who wants some?..."
78	<p>The whiskey's powers hit her square in the face when she and Paul emerged into the cold night.</p> <p>...When they reached the Ferris wheel at the edge of the carnival, Maggie's head began to swim. She leaned up against the ride's cold iron base.</p> <p>"I don't feel so good," she said.</p> <p>"Are you going to gawk?" Paul asked.</p> <p>"Maybe."</p> <p>"See, I'm fine," he laughed. "Takes more than a little whiskey to get me drunk. I've been drinking with my older brothers since I was ten." He stood back to look at her face, to see if she was impressed by this fact. She tried to smile at him but her head hurt. He grabbed her waist and kissed her, his spit cold and wet on her lips. She kissed him back, her eyes drifting shut, her mouth lolling open.</p> <p>...She felt his cold fingers yank up her sweater and squeeze her breasts roughly.</p> <p>...He pulled her sweater off and then, after some fumbling, her bra and dropped both pieces of clothing on the wet ground.</p> <p>...She could feel her nipples pucker and tighten in the salted wind. He began to suck them, hard, and she grimaced, looking over his head...</p> <p>...It didn't occur to her to tell him to stop. With his free hand, he yanked at the button of her jeans, pulled down the zipper, and stuffed his hand down her underpants. He found her warm opening, and twisted two fingers inside. Her breath caught sharply on the tight tissue inside of her unknit and gave way. The strangest thing happened. The pain of what he was doing to her somehow made her feel better. A memory floated before her, of Samantha Steinle, a weird, quiet girl from her Chicago neighborhood who, in seventh grade, had taken Maggie into the bathroom stall during recess, unbuttoned the cuff of her school blouse, and showed Maggie the patterns of razor marks that she'd scored herself with from wrist to elbow.</p> <p>"Hurting myself is the only thing that makes me feel better," Samantha had said. Now, with Paul's fingers twisting inside of her, his teeth on the thin skin of her breasts, she finally understood what Samantha had meant.</p> <p>He pulled his hand from between her legs and she heard the dull clinking of his belt buckle, the sharp exhale of a zipper being undone.</p> <p>"Put your mouth on it," he whispered into her neck, his forearm a heavy pressure on her shoulders, and she crouched on the wet ground, her naked spine facing seaward, the puddles soaking into the knees of her jeans. He put his hands on the back of her head and pushed her closer to his thighs so she was nearly choking on it, and then his whole body stiffened and he moaned in just the way she'd heard her mother and Colm moaning through the thin walls of their bedroom. To stop herself from vomiting, she spit it out on the wet ground.</p>
80	He turned, shambling toward the road with his hands in his pockets. In the morning she found a streak of bright red blood in the crotch of her underwear. She balled them up tightly and threw them in the trash. Then she took a long,

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	steamy shower, even though she knew her mom would yell at her for using all the hot water, and she held her hands over her bruised breasts to protect them from the stinging water.
86	She could feel him hesitate for a moment, but then he relaxed and pulled her closer to translate, his lips moving in her hair: "Little Rose, don't be sad for all that has happened to you." His hand moved up her back and she felt his warm palm through her thin sweater.
87	Later, when they reached her front door, Eoin kissed her again, and she was grateful for the puffy layer of her winter coat so that he might not notice the way his kiss made her whole body tremble.
108	Maggie opened it gingerly, hating to intrude on the sexual den of her mother and stepdad. But this morning, there was none of the usual languid spooning, of naked shoulders poking out from under the covers.
125	There, underlined lightly in pencil, she found the following passage: "He put his face down and rubbed his cheek against her belly and against her thighs again and again." The memory of Eoin's kiss came to her for the thousandth time, the feeling of his hand at the small of her back, and she began wondering what it would be like if Eoin were to kiss her belly and her thighs again and again.
136	"He was drinking, he was doing drugs..." ..."He grabbed his blood thinner meds- you know, the stuff he takes for his heart. He went back to Jeremy's house and he took the whole bottle of pills. The party had mostly broken up by then, so no one was around. He locked himself in the bathroom. Jeremy broke down the next day and found in the bathtub with his wrists cut." ...A razor. A bathtub full of thinned, watery blood. A small jar of pills meant to help his heart.
149	"Meet us downstairs at the bar in an hour, okay? I'm up down there, you know?"
154	More joints were passed, small bottles of brown liquor.
157	Maggie dumped the contents of her duffel bag onto the bed and began clawing through them. Her brain rung from the liquor and the beer and the weed.
164	They sat together in high-backed velvet chairs, drinking from thick crystal scotch glasses: toasting, she supposed, their cleverness.
165	Ashley looked up at Maggie and Eoin. "Did you lose something last night? You were pretty fucked up." She smiled at Eoin, her teeth Wonderbread white. "First-time weed smoker."
170	He brushed the hair from her eyes, kissed her forehead, her neck, her lips, then eased out of bed again, winked down at her, and left for the train station.
184	Back in their sparse little hotel room, Eoin kissed her under the stacks of thin blankets. Maggie could feel the swell of him press against her thighs beneath his jeans. ..."Is this too much?" He kissed her neck. "No." He moved his hands down her sweater, tracing the outline of her breasts, and skimmed his fingers over the sheer fabric of her tights. Her knees began to shake.

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192	Bente offered the coke to Eoin first and he declined, mildly, in that judgeless way of his, able to say no without sounding prudish. She held it out to Maggie next, who waved the drugs away with a polite shaking of her head. Bente shrugged, and passed the bag down the line, leaving Maggie wondering: If Eoin had accepted the drugs, what would she have done?
193	He kissed her so hard that her back scraped up against the cold, ancient stone, as if the past was pushing back at her, as the past does. ...His eyes hovered over her collarbone and he was peeling off her wet black dress. She was totally and completely unafraid. She tugged at his sweatshirt and pulled it over his head. This wasn't something he was doing to her, or even something they were doing together. They were making something, or beginning something, or finishing something. Her bra fell away to the linoleum floor, his pants were kicked to the other end of the bed, and the rain shook the shutters. He moved on top of her and their lives became this moment, contained in the sheets, something that no one else would ever know, a secret to keep forever, the feeling of him inside of her.
205	"Goddamn nuns think they're so much better than everyone else. Brides of Christ my ass."

Profanity	Count
Ass	7
Bitch	2
Dick	1
Fuck	14
Goddamn	4
Piss	2