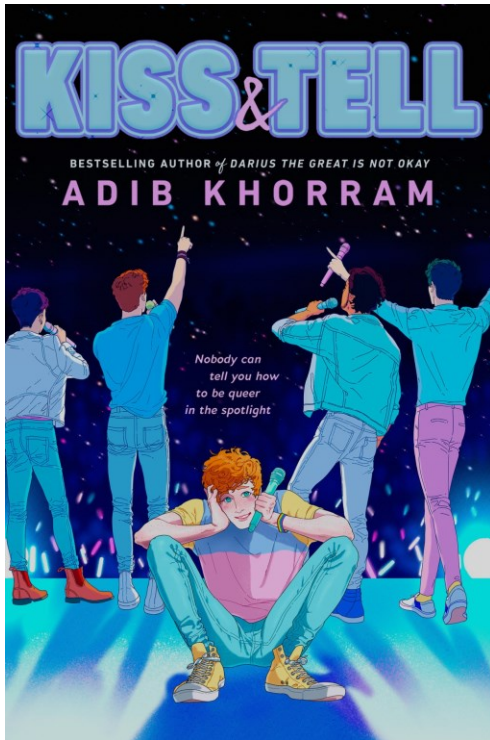


# KISS & TELL



*Young Adult*

**By Adib Khorram**

ISBN: 9780593325285

**CONTENT WARNING**

You are about to access material that may contain content of an ADULT nature. These files may include pictures and materials that some viewers may find offensive. If you are under the age of 18, or if such material offends you or if it is illegal for you to view these materials, please exit now.

## Book Summary:

A young man in a boy band yearns to live free from public opinion and control by his handlers.

## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains explicit sexual activities; sexual nudity; profanity and derogatory terms; controversial racial, social, and cultural commentary; alcohol use by minors; alternate sexualities; and alternate gender ideologies.

**3** /5

**Minor Restricted**  
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
11	I don't know why moms like the gay boy so much. ..."I came out because of you," one kid says.
12	And it makes me feel kind of shitty, too, because I'm a rich white gay cis boy and so many of them are poor and brown and trans. I thought they'd be sad. I thought they'd be mad at the world for the way it never cares enough for queer kids unless they look like me.
13	"Cheers. I mean, I try." "Well, it means a lot to all of us queer kids, seeing you out there doing this." ..."I guess I'm gay too," he says softly. "I came out a couple months ago." "Oh. Wow. Congrats, dude." ...I'm not the only gay boy on this tour.
15	I can't be into a new guy. Even if he is cute. Even if he does have those little dimples in his shoulders, and the kind of collarbone I want to press my lips against.
19	Either that or make it to the NHL, but everyone hopes that'll happen and the statistics aren't great, right? Especially for gay guys. PM: That didn't stop you from coming out while you were playing, though?  HD: No. I thought about it a lot, but me being gay was kind of obvious, if you know what I mean. But it was cool. The team was cool. And, you know, Aidan came out a couple years later, and we know how that turned out.  PM: Indeed. It's safe to say you're everyone's favorite gay couple. ...We're two middle-class white boys. I don't think we're supposed to be, like, the face of queer liberation or anything. ...On this new tour, we're giving out tickets to local queer youth, and donating to shelters and stuff.
24	"Oh man. There are so many." Like our first video, for "Kiss & Tell," where no one got the memo I was gay and they tried to have me kiss a girl, before Janet finally got it sorted out. Or the one for "No Restraint," where they tried to make it look like Ashton was hooking up with his schoolteacher.
26	"Nothing. It's just nice. Talking to another gay guy for a change." "Dude, you just talked to a whole line of queer kids."
27	But also, it just feels so nice to talk to someone like me. Ever since I got pulled out of school, I don't really have gay friends to talk to.
33	One user (since banned for terms-of-service violation) even suggested Nightingale should kill himself.
38	The only one I ever really talk to is Patricia, my guitar tech, this cool lesbian from Kamloops.
66	No one at The Label has ever said it to my face, but they've made it clear in lots of subtle ways that I'm supposed to stay as twinkish as possible. Which sucks, because I've always been too stocky to achieve the true twink look. Years of hockey have given me a big butt and muscular thighs, and though I've slimmed down a bit since my hockey days, I'm still thicker than they want me to be.
70	Sometimes I wonder what he would make of me being in a boy band, if he'd be embarrassed by the whole thing. Or by me being gay. He died before I got to come out to him.

Page	Content
72	He raises the guitar to get his head out of the strap, and his shirt rides up just a bit to show his flat, brown stomach and the happy trail disappearing into his waistband.
73	Are yoi sleepin with him???? Why wont you anser me
74	The texts shed new light on what went wrong between the two, revealed the duo’s virginal façade to be just that, and answered gay Twitter’s most pressing question: whether Drake is a top or a bottom.
75	<p>TWEET FROM @AIDANNIGHTINGALE:</p> <p>Everyone’s thinks I’m the bad hut, that I broke your heart, they don’t know what you did, they dint know your a dirty bottom slut, they don’t know you broke mine first</p> <p>MAY 3, 2021 I miss you sm miss that d Miss you did you get the sheets clean Yeah no problem i’ll prep better next time Okay I’m a little drunj You safe? You have a ride? wanna ride you Wow slutty much lol Call me when you’re sober</p>
78	<p>LH: When you came out? HD: Yeah. I was, what? Twelve? AN: It was the summer before seventh grade. HD: Yeah, twelve. It took you a little longer to come out. ...HD: I swear it was like something out of a movie. I mean, Aidan was over by himself, ‘cause Ashton had choir rehearsal, and I was feeling really sorry for myself. And Aidan sat with me and held me, and told me everything was going to be okay, and the next thing I knew we were kissing. AN: I don’t know which of us started it. ...HD: The kissing was better than the telling, though. AN: Aw, thanks. You’re not so bad yourself. ...AN: Not really. At the end of the day, we’re still best friends, we just kiss a lot now. And nothing’s going to change that.</p>
85	<p>Slut. Aidan’s the only person I’ve ever had sex with. And yeah, I liked it a lot, once we figured some stuff out, like how to make sure I was clean. But it was supposed to be our thing. Personal. A part of our lives we didn’t share with our fans. The Label was pretty clear on that, after Ethan admitted to being sexually active in an interview. There was a whole petition to get him kicked out of the band. Everyone was supposed to think we were all virgins. Wholesome. ...I’ve always known exactly who I’m supposed to be: the clean gay. The gay best friend. The guy you get your nails done with. The guy who helps you plan a brunch.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...Everyone in the world knows. Slut.</p>
88	<p>@h34rtbr34kfever: okay but like do you think Hunter Drake swallows or no? @leviah59: yaaasss hunter honey bottom pride!!! ...@heckyeah_hunter: So was he hooking up with Kaivan? Is that why they broke up? ...@samalicious: @hunterdrake @aidannightingale sexts are fine but where are the nudes!</p>
90	<p>I mean, there are some that are supportive, saying people should let me keep my private life private, but there are plenty more making jokes about it, speculating on how good I am in bed, wondering if it's true I cheated on Aidan, and grossest of all, one person hoping for nudes. (Aidan and I never sent each other nudes. Back in grade nine sex ed we had to listen to a really terrible lecture about what happens to people who send or receive nudes of minors, even when they're minors themselves, and it basically scarred us for life.) ...I don't know how I'm supposed to go out there and perform for people who know all about my sex life. Who think I'm a slutty bottom. I mean, I am a bottom, and there's nothing wrong with it except for the value judgments heteronormative patriarchy attaches to it, but I don't need everyone knowing that.</p>
93	<p>A man in his forties asks me if I'm a lights-on or lights-off guy.</p>
94	<p>I'm a slut.</p>
95	<p>Once we're on the bus, I get out of my show clothes and pull on another pair of leggings (lightning bolt print), but then I get this really weird feeling, because Ethan was right, you can see my junk in them, plus my butt. ...I'm the one who wanted us to have sex in the first place.</p>
102	<p>"They want me to dress more like a bottom? Is that it?" "You don't have to. These are all suggestions." I mean. What else can I do?</p>
105	<p>Plus, my daily batch of dick pics seems larger than usual. The batch, I mean, not the dicks.</p>
108	<p>"It's different for the other guys. None of them are gay. None of them get treated the same as me. There's no shame in straight guys having sex, not like with me, being a—" I can't bring myself to tell my mother I'm a bottom.</p>
109	<p>"You had a vengeful ex share your sexts on social media?"</p>
110	<p>"That a new look?" I'm in a white button-up shirt with blue flowers (Julian called them gentians, but I've never been a Plant Gay), gray jeans, and a pair of yellow Chuck Taylors, which I actually do kind of like. "Yeah. The Label wanted it. I guess my old look wasn't 'bottom chic' enough." ..."It's not like it's a surprise, you and Aidan having sex. I'm not exactly a virgin myself, you know." "Really?" "Yeah. With my last girlfriend. I think I was still trying to convince myself I was straight."</p>
113	<p>"You know, I've never actually kissed a guy before." "Never?" "Never." Given how perfect Kaivan's lips are, that's basically a crime against humanity. He licks them</p>

Page	Content
	<p>as I stare.            “Well.” My heart starts beating double time. “Would you like to?”            “God, yes.”            I reach for his cheek and pull our heads together, angling my nose to the left, but he angles his nose the same way and we bump. I giggle and angle the other way and bring my lips to his.            They’re warm and soft and smooth, like he put on ChapStick a while ago but it’s had time to wear off a little so it’s not greasy. He rests a hand on my knee. The other reaches for my hair. I tug on his lower lip a little, let my tongue dart out to meet it.            That makes him giggle, a nervous one, and I break the kiss. My skin is alive with electricity.            “How was that?”            “Awesome,” he says. I’m about to ask if he wants to keep going, but his eyes are looking watery.            ...He licks his lips again.            “Hey,” he says.            “Yeah?”            “I’m not sure I got the full experience. You know, with that kiss.”            “Oh really?”            “Yeah. Maybe we could do it again?”            I laugh and kiss him again.</p>
117	<p>A number of brands have distanced themselves from Drake, as well as several LGBTQ + charities.            Parvani came out as gay in a series of social media posts last December, in which he emphasized that he wants to be seen as a musician first, and that “being gay is only one part of who I am.”</p>
125	<p>“Are you kidding? Owen still has PTSD I think.”            One of our first videos with the label was for “Young and Free,” and it had this travel theme, but the costumes were some low-level racist shit.</p>
127	<p>He came out as gay last December.            He’s 17 years old, and his birthday is June 7—so he’s five days younger than Hunter.</p>
131	<p>“Yeah, I know he was drunk, Mom, but I don’t think . . . just a beer after the show sometimes, it’s fine. You can check the bills if you want . . .</p>
134	<p>Kaivan disappears into the washroom, which is both a disappointment and a relief, because I did enjoy seeing him in just his boxers. Kaivan’s lithe and long, with dimpled shoulders and collarbones I want to trace with my tongue.            I think about hockey drills to make my boner go away. I probably should’ve jerked off beforehand.</p>
137	<p>Kaivan’s laughing and grinning, but I take his neck and pull his face to meet mine. I kiss him, and he tastes of funnel cake and salt as he kisses me back.            And then I forget about the newly engaged couple, because Kaivan wraps his hands around my waist, tracing my hipbones with his thumbs, and I slip my hands into the butt pockets of his jeans.            ...Just Kaivan, and the way his jaw dances against mine.            ...Kaivan laughs against my mouth, which feels so funny it makes me laugh too.            ...“I’m pretty sure Ferris wheels are gay culture.” I point at the enormous wheel looming above us, its sides glowing with colored lights. “It’s even got rainbows.”</p>

Page	Content
	<p>Kaivan snorts, but his eyes sparkle and he gives me the softest smile that makes me want to kiss him again.</p> <p>He lets me grab a seat in the car first, then cozies up beside me. I link our fingers as we start rising.</p> <p>...“Everyone said swimming was gay.”</p> <p>“Oh.”</p> <p>“Yeah. If I’d realized I actually was gay, I might’ve stayed.”</p> <p>...I blush. He says it jokingly, but all I can hear is Aidan calling me a slut.</p>
144	<p>Kamran: And boys. The redhead is gay.</p> <p>...Karim: I don’t know, it’s still pretty cool to see a boy band where the people of color outnumber the white boys.</p> <p>Kaivan: Yeah, but look at them. None of them are that dark-skinned, so it’s colorism at work. And their names? Ethan, Ian, Owen? It’s assimilation porn. It’s a safe version of multiculturalism. Just like all their songs: safe and vapid.</p>
153	<p>Additional Tags: One-shot, Canon Compliant, fade-to-black, implied therapeutic blowjob, acrophobia not homophobia</p>
161	<p>Even “Your Room,” presumably about Drake’s longtime boyfriend Aidan Nightingale, could be mistaken for any number of heterosexual ballads.</p>
162	<p>Thank god I waited for my morning wood to go down before getting out of bed.</p> <p>Thank god I’m in shorts instead of my leggings.</p>
168	<p>From the moment their first song dropped on YouTube—a catchy, humorous ode to the ultimate Canadian comfort food, poutine—he’s made his name as one of the most famous out gay teens in our pop culture landscape.</p> <p>...They were the picture-perfect gay couple: two attractive, white, healthy young men, known for hand-holding, chaste kisses, and photogenic dates. In short, they did everything society tells young gay men to do: Be safe, be cute, perform your queerness for the masses in a digestible, harmless way.</p> <p>Drake certainly leaned into that, using his relationship to sell albums, and more insidiously, to sell an image of himself—of queer life—that appealed to all the people who think the fight for queer rights ended with marriage equality.</p> <p>Now, at last, the curtain is drawn back. In a series of angry (and grammatically inept) tweets, Nightingale aired his grievances against Drake following their breakup, exposing a relationship that was full of jealousy, infidelity, and painfully awkward sex.</p>
172	<p>“I wasn’t expecting you to get on your knees this early in our relationship,” Kaivan says, and I freeze for a second, because Paul’s camera is right over my shoulder and suddenly I can see how the whole scene looks. Hunter Drake, on his slutty knees again.</p> <p>A blush starts creeping up my neck.</p>
174	<p>Chris has been pretty cool up to this point. A little uptight and sometimes oblivious, but this . . .</p> <p>.. “Are you saying you want me to skate more gay?”</p> <p>...I don’t know how to skate gayer, but I do at least skate slower, keeping pace with Kaivan as we talk and laugh.</p> <p>...“No wonder I what?”</p> <p>He clears his throat. “No wonder you have such a nice butt.”</p> <p>“Thanks.” I dart in and kiss him, real quick. I’ve never kissed a guy on the ice before, not even Aidan. I like it.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>Kaivan laughs and leans in to try and kiss me, but he straightens his knees and starts to topple over. I catch him and let us gently fall to the ice, so he winds up on top of me. ...“It’s okay.” I lean up and kiss him again, a little longer. He kisses me back, sucks on my bottom lip, brings his hand up to stroke my chin.</p> <p>I giggle. “Hey, we’d better keep it PG,” I whisper. “Can’t skate with a boner.”</p> <p>“Well, they always say that sex sells,” Kaivan says, but I get a chill that has nothing to do with the rink. Straight sex sells. Gay sex means you need a “rebrand.”</p>
178	<p>Hunter, the gay one, is their favorite. Up until now it’s been fine: Compared to my kids’ TV habits, Hunter and his boyfriend were practically wholesome. But recently there were some revelations about Hunter, including stuff about his sex life. Not just that he was having sex before marriage, but also some more explicit mentions of specific sexual activities.</p> <p>I’m not really comfortable with my kids obsessing over him to the degree they do. My wife and I definitely weren’t expecting to have to explain anal sex to our children at this age.</p>
186	<p>I lean across his legs to kiss him.</p> <p>“It’s cool.” He pulls his foot out of my hands and scoots closer, returning the kiss, sliding his tongue against my Invisaligns, which is a super weird feeling. His hands find my hip crease and his thumbs dig in gently.</p> <p>...That’s what happens when Kaivan touches me, squeezes my waist, nibbles on my lower lip. When I run my hands through his hair and pull his tongue back into my mouth and suck it gently. He lets out this sound, somewhere between a gasp and a groan, and I’d do anything to hear it again. But instead he breaks the kiss and leans back to breathe.</p> <p>...My face is heating up, because I’ve got a boner and it’s probably super obvious. I shift around a bit, but that doesn’t fix it, so finally I just reach down and adjust myself.</p> <p>Kaivan chuckles. He was checking me out.</p> <p>He reaches down and adjusts himself too, gives me a shy grin when our eyes meet.</p>
191	<p>Hunter Drake has been a queer darling since he first rose to fame: He was out and proud even before Kiss &amp; Tell’s star began to rise, and has embraced his gay identity in his songwriting, his philanthropy, his activism, and his entire platform.</p> <p>...Which makes it all the more strange to see him dating musician Kaivan Parvani, of Iranian-American band PAR-K. PAR-K is fairly new to the scene—their first album released just last year—but they gave every indication, in marketing, music videos, and lyrics, that they were entirely heterosexual. Kaivan embraced the image of an attractive, straight young man, before coming out late last year in a series of posts in which he emphasized his desire to be seen first and foremost as a musician.</p>
192	<p>Kaivan has a unique opportunity to use his fame to advance the cause of queer liberation.</p>
196	<p>“Yeah, because I’m supposed to, because The Label asked me to, because people won’t support us if they think I’m a slutty bottom. I’m doing this for all of you.”</p>
197	<p>“Just, I was thinking about the other guys, and how like, they just get to be themselves. They don’t have to ‘dress like a gay guy’ or whatever. They don’t have to perform their identity for our fans, the way I do. And it’s kind of exhausting.”</p> <p>...“That’s a really weird thing to say, you know? We’re all doing it. You don’t think me and my brothers are out there performing our identities? I’ve never done a single interview where I didn’t get asked about being Iranian. And like, Ethan and Ian and Owen, you said yourself they got put in racist costumes for one of your videos?”</p>



Page	Content
200	<p>The group’s debut LP climbed the pop and alternative charts when it dropped this summer, but Kaivan found a different sort of attention when he announced via Instagram that he’s gay.</p> <p>...“Like, being Iranian was bad enough, in a school that was ninety percent white. It felt like every news cycle, my brothers and I had to deal with some sort of racist jerk or another. It was mostly just talk, but bullying is still bullying, you know?”</p> <p>...“Yeah, it was kind of a relief. So much of high school was just about surviving. Especially as I started to realize I maybe liked guys. There was this one kid in middle school, everyone always said he was gay, because of the way he dressed, the way he talked, the music he listened to, lots of boy bands and stuff. People were just merciless to him. And he was white! I knew I couldn’t just be out and gay, not when I was already brown.”</p> <p>When asked about being queer in a cultural heritage that has at times even denied the existence of homosexual men, Kaivan is quick to point out that Iranian-Americans are not a monolith.</p> <p>“My parents were the first people I told. Well, second, I guess, but only because my brothers already kind of guessed. They’ve been so supportive. I think people get this idea of Iranians that they, that we, all hate gay people or something. But just look around, there’s plenty of homophobia right at home too.”</p>
205	<p>“Living the dream. I’m Aaron by the way, he/ him.”</p> <p>“Hunter. He/ him.”</p> <p>...I let my shoulders relax and breathe a little deeper. There’s nothing quite like being in an all-queer space.</p> <p>...“Your publicist says you’re going for a new look?”</p> <p>“I guess.”</p> <p>“Hm. You guess?”</p> <p>“I don’t know, they think I don’t dress enough like a bottom.”</p> <p>“What do bottoms dress like?”</p>
210	<p>“Huh? Oh, it’s been okay. I mean, I get some haters and all that, you know, the ‘Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve’ stuff. But really, it’s been great, getting to live my truth. You know how it is.”</p>
211	<p>Masha gave this amazing talk about how important queer activism is (or Drag-tivism, as they put it) to address inequities in housing and health care and employment. And then they ended it with a fantastic drag number about the legacy of queer protest, from Stonewall to today.</p> <p>I mean, Masha’s a queer icon. They’re the real deal.</p> <p>...I mean, in addition to their public speaking, Masha’s got a foundation set up to support Black and brown queer youth, and a separate advocacy group that lobbies for nondiscrimination laws.</p> <p>...“Most of those shelters depend on funding from corporations looking for tax breaks. Corporations full of straight people. Straight people hate being reminded that queer people have sex. And you did just that.”</p>
213	<p>“You ever think about doing drag?”</p> <p>“Maybe someday, when all this is over,” I say. “I’ve even got the perfect name: Little Red Hiding Wood.”</p> <p>...“The Label always said that drag wouldn’t be a good look for me.”</p> <p>“Oh really? Why is that?”</p>



Page	Content
	<p>“I don’t know,” I say. Except I’m pretty sure I do know. “I think they have a certain idea of what a gay guy looks like, what I’m supposed to do in the band. Before all the stuff with Aidan it was be masc, be sporty, be a guy, and now it’s all be femme, be gentle, wear this floral shirt. They don’t want me to be complicated.”</p> <p>...Masha nods at Lou and then turns back to me with a theatrical wink. “Keep your chin up, Little Red Hiding Wood.”</p>
215	<p>We want the same things, and heartbreak feels the same if you’re gay or straight.</p> <p>...Like, I’m gay, but I don’t want to be known for my dating life.</p>
218	<p>HD: I guess, but it wasn’t like I could go back in the closet. I was already out when I was playing hockey, and then when we did our video for “Poutine,” it was just for fun, so I didn’t think I needed to pretend to be straight or anything. Like, who cared if some random guy in a YouTube video was gay? So then when we got big, it was kind of too late.</p> <p>...QM: You mentioned the guys, your bandmates. Is it hard being in a band with four straight boys?</p> <p>...But what I mean is, back home I had more queer friends, I had the QSA at school, I had spaces like this where everyone’s queer. I don’t know, I just feel lighter in queer spaces. Does that make sense?</p> <p>...</p> <p>HD: Yeah, I got it set up so we give out fifty tickets to local queer youth every show. It feels weird to say that: “queer youth.” Like I’m not one of them. But anyway, that goes so fast, it’s not like it’s community. It’s just a moment. An awesome moment, but then it’s over.</p>
224	<p>MP: Tiresome. I’ve been doing this for ten years. I’ve gone from being ignored to being vilified to being everyone’s Magical Negro. People expect me to sashay in, fix their white problems, and shantay away again. They’ll read my books, put my sayings on T-shirts, but they won’t do the work of smashing our white supremacist hetero patriarchy. And it’s built into the name, honey!</p> <p>QM: And yet it’s still hard to think of people doing more work for queer liberation right now than you.</p> <p>MP: Someone has to.</p> <p>...We’re still dreaming what queer futures look like. Especially for Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, fat people, disabled people.</p> <p>I’ll tell you what doesn’t work: conforming. Giving in to the expectations that the white supremacist hetero patriarchy puts on our behavior, on our expression of ourselves, our identities, our love. The future won’t be built by us becoming them. It’ll be built off of them slowly, painfully, learning that we’re human too.</p>
228	<p>“Nah, he smelled like Axe. But anyway, he was all like, I just want to be known for my music, not for being gay.” I do my best Texas accent. I’m Callum Wethers, I’m just like everyone else except I suck dick. Except I don’t suck dick because I don’t want the bad press.</p> <p>...“We shouldn’t have to survive by appeasing straight people, though.” Kaivan chuckles.</p> <p>“What?”</p> <p>“You sure about that mirror? You don’t think I survive by appeasing white people sometimes?”</p> <p>...He’s in his black tank top for the show, the one that shows off his collarbone, which is one of my favorite things ever. (Especially kissing it. Or licking it. Or nibbling on it.)</p>
230	<p>The dressing room speaker blares to life, playing the porn-sounding saxophone line from “Careless Whisper” at full volume.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...“BONER ALERT!” he squawks into the walkie-talkie as he rounds the corner, laughing the whole time.</p> <p>...I adjust myself so my boner’s trapped against my waistband and go back inside.</p> <p>...Kaivan’s still laughing, but I catch his eyes lingering on my sweats. “Boner alert, huh?”</p> <p>“Leave me alone,” I say, tugging my shirt down. “It was a sleepy-boner.”</p>
238	<p>A girl tells me she thinks she might be bisexual, but doesn’t know if she wants to come out, so I tell her that the main thing is to make sure she’s safe and has a good support network around her, and she can figure things out (and even change her mind if she wants) later.</p> <p>A nonbinary adult tells me that our music helped em rediscover eir own love of singing, and ey joined a queer chorus in Austin to meet other people like em.</p> <p>A dad tells me that me being both gay and a hockey player made it easier for his lacrosse-playing son to accept being queer.</p>
256	<p>“She was my first.”</p> <p>“First . . . like, sex?”</p> <p>“Yeah. I really liked her.”</p> <p>“Really?” I always figured he was already having sex when we were still in school, with all the girlfriends he had.</p> <p>...“Dude . . . we both got constantly dragged. Really racist shit. And like, the insults were bad enough, but there was all the insidious stuff too, stuff that sounds fine but wasn’t. Know what I mean?”</p>
268	<p>Kaivan snorts, but then he takes my hand and draws me closer, kisses me again, and I don’t pull away this time.</p> <p>Kaivan and I have kissed a lot at this point, but he surprises me with this kiss: It’s aggressive, almost forceful.</p> <p>“Ow,” I mutter as he butts his chin into mine, and my teeth clack.</p> <p>“Sorry,” he says. I rub my jaw for a second, but then he pulls me close again. I put my hand against his chest.</p> <p>“Hey,” I laugh. “Give me a second.” I don’t understand why he’s being so aggressive. He wasn’t like this when we were squeezed onto the couch with the guys, exchanging quick pecks between levels.</p> <p>...Kaivan pulls me in for another kiss, gentler this time, but still kind of weird. Usually when we kiss, it’s a chord progression, a steady rhythm of tension and release.</p> <p>But this time it’s a guitar solo: not a soaring one like David Gilmour, but a forceful one, like a Norwegian death metal band. His tongue is all over mine. His fingers run through my hair. Usually I like it when he does that, but this time it feels . . . weird. Dissonant.</p> <p>I break the kiss again. From the sidewalk, some of the gawkers are cheering and clapping, and Kaivan blushes and gives them a wave.</p>
274	<p>Kaivan’s jeans are hanging low on his hips, showing the red waistband of his underwear. Also not boxers.</p>
275	<p>I turn my head and kiss him. His lips are warm, and so is his mouth when he parts his lips and lets my tongue in. I’ve got a flutter behind my sternum.</p> <p>I draw little circles around Kaivan’s tongue with mine, twist around so I’m facing him, but I accidentally step on his foot, and he staggers back, still holding me. He breaks the kiss and laughs.</p> <p>...“Better?” he asks as I settle on top of him.</p> <p>“Yeah.” I kiss him again, lips, jaw, ear, that little tender spot right behind. I rest my hand</p>

Page	Content
	<p>against his chest, feel the texture as he breaks into goose bumps. His breath hitches when I brush my thumb across the nub of his nipple, which surprises me, because I always figured that was something pornos made up. My own nipples don't really do anything, but sure enough, when I touch Kaivan's other one, he does that same sharp inhale.</p> <p>"Feel good?" I ask.</p> <p>"Yeah."</p> <p>I like making Kaivan feel good. I like the little hiccup noises he's making. I start kissing his chest, then plant my mouth over his right nipple and suck on it. He's got a little ring of hairs there. I pull one out of my mouth and keep kissing, then do the left one.</p> <p>"Hunter." He runs his hand through my hair, sending a glissando of desire up my spine. I kiss lower, down the valley of his stomach, to his waist.</p> <p>He's hard in his jeans. I wonder how he compares to Aidan. I wonder if he'd let me go down on him.</p> <p>Aidan always said I gave amazing head. (Not that he had any basis for comparison.) Aidan said I was a slut too.</p> <p>That glissando turns into a wave of ice. My throat clamps shut, which is less than ideal if you're thinking of giving someone a blowjob.</p> <p>So I kiss the divot of his belly button, and then all the way up his chest, teasing each nipple before I end up back at his jawline.</p> <p>He lets out this sweet laugh, uses a gentle hand to make me stop.</p> <p>"Hunter?"</p> <p>"Yeah?"</p> <p>"What . . ." His pupils are dilated. His nostrils flare.</p> <p>"What was that?"</p> <p>"What was what?"</p> <p>"I thought maybe . . . I mean, I kind of wanted you to keep going."</p> <p>I wanted to keep going too. I don't know what's wrong with me.</p> <p>"Hey." He sits up, his thigh brushing my own boner where it's trapped against my hip.</p> <p>...Kaivan sits all the way up, and I get off his lap. Without his body heat against me I shiver again.</p> <p>I adjust myself so I don't snap my dick in half as I start to get off the</p> <p>... "This okay, or you wanna spoon?"</p> <p>"Maybe when we don't have boners anymore."</p> <p>He snorts, kisses my temple. "Okay."</p>
279	<p>We see it every generation: Attractive young men and women taking the stage, clad in tight jeans and black shirts, giving voice to our collective desire. Gyrating hips and exposed skin promise sex, drugs, and rock and roll.</p> <p>Music and sexuality have always intertwined. From the Rolling Stones' notorious Sticky Fingers album artwork to David Bowie's sexually fluid career, from Grace Slick wanting "Somebody to Love" to Britney Spears asking "If U Seek Amy," popular music has always offered a framework for contextualizing human desire.</p> <p>...Innuendo is king, but respectability is queen, and so the boy band machine keeps cranking out plastic people with all the sex positivity of a Ken doll.</p>
280	<p>It was a watershed moment, one that could have opened honest conversations about sex positivity, safe practices, consent, and even bottom-shaming.</p> <p>...He could be using his own experiences to highlight the urgent need for sex positivity;</p>

Page	Content
	instead, he perpetuates the veneer of propriety and larval sexuality that the boy band industry has always embraced.
281	I do want to have sex with Kaivan. I don't know why I'm so hesitant. I always loved it when Aidan and I did it. Even if it was bad or awkward or messy, it made me feel close to him. It made me feel beautiful. It made me feel wanted. And it made me feel vulnerable.
286	Because the boy is different, but I'm still that same Hunter, unwound because the boy I like invited me up to his room, held me and kissed me and made me feel so loved.
294	It's hard to buy gifts on the road, unless you've got a dark day, but the musicians' dressing room always has way more alcohol than they can actually consume. I don't know if Kaivan drinks, but without any better options, I snag one of the little half bottles of champagne that the musicians won't miss, and make a little card out of a page ripped from my notebook.
295	I hand over the half bottle of booze, along with the little card. It's got two kissing stick figures on it, one of them with my best attempt at a stick-hockey-butt.
303	"Not much, I guess. I knew some of PAR-K's songs. But I didn't even know he was queer until he told me."
305	"Did you show me all that stuff just because you thought I'd be easier to hook up with if I was a mess? Is that what all this is?"
311	<p>"No, the point was that I liked you, and you said you liked me. And we weren't going to give in to The Label deciding we should date just because we're gay. We were going to be the ones in control."</p> <p>..."You're so fucking white sometimes. Maybe you actually do have some control over your career. Everything gets handed to you. Everything is easy. Hunter Drake, Gay Savior."</p> <p>..."What, so it's my fault? I can't help being white."</p> <p>"No, it's not your fault. But you benefit from it all, don't you? You do your little charity stuff, give out your shelter tickets, and act like you're fucking saving the world. But we don't need you to save us."</p> <p>"That's not . . . that's not what I'm doing. I don't know what else to do. I'm trying to do good. I'm trying to learn and be better."</p> <p>"I'm not a fucking lesson, Hunter. I'm a person. I have feelings. Not some token you can date to prove how woke you are. Not some rebound for you to get over your ex."</p>
325	<p>"It sucks, having my love life posted all over the Internet. Having my sexuality examined and dissected by strangers. How everyone wanted to know if me and Aidan were having sex but no one was happy with the answer. There's no part of me that I get to keep for myself anymore. Every piece is up for public consumption. You know I get like twenty dick pics a day?"</p> <p>..."Not to mention all the shit we get for being in a boy band. No one takes us seriously. Not even our peers. Not even our openers! People act like we're talentless hacks, just because we write songs that appeal to teen girls. People act like our fans are crazy. Did you know the Whisper Network raised over a million dollars to wildfire relief last summer? But no, none of that matters. All that matters is whether I'm a fucking bottom!"</p>
330	<p>Strange fingers run through my hair. Gentle hands press against mine. Rude ones grab my ass.</p> <p>...I hug myself as I walk. My nipples could cut glass right now.</p>

Page	Content
332	<p>New York is supposed to be a rite of passage for gay guys. It's the dream: Stonewall and Broadway and pizza and hot dog carts.</p>
335	<p>It's dark, so no one pays me any special attention. We're just a bunch of queer people, reveling in our community, laughing and dancing and existing. ...A guy presses up against my butt for a second, but I don't feel dirty. I don't feel like a slut. I feel sexy and alive and at home. ...Another stands behind, grinning at me, or maybe ogling me. I feel the press of skin against my arms as I let another dancer twirl me. Someone's grinding against my back; I can feel their erection pressed up against me.</p>
337	<p>"You're even hotter in person," he says. I can barely hear him over the music. ...He laughs and presses his skin against mine. Our hearts beat in time to the music. Hot Guy's hands reach lower so they're cradling my butt. He doesn't squeeze or anything but I wouldn't mind if he did. Someone presses another drink into my hands, another fizzy thing with limes, and I take this one slower as I dance. Hot Guy's cologne is subtle and fresh and citrusy, unless that's just the lime wedge from my drink. ...I take another swig of my drink, press the cup against the pulse point on my wrist to feel the cold, because I'm sweaty all over, and the warmth in my belly is spreading lower. My boner is trapped against my jeans, and the dancing is not helping. "What's your name?" "What?" he asks. He's holding me from behind now, his chin resting against the crook of my neck, his chest pressed against my back. "What's your name?" I shout, turning a little so he can hear me better, but that brings his lips in range of my ear and he nibbles it a little bit. ...Another nibble. I giggle and try to finish my drink, but I spill it down my front. "Oh no." I think it was vodka. It's definitely stronger than the shitty beers I'm used to. "I spilled." "It's cool." He rubs his hand across my stomach, where the drink is trickling down toward my waistband.</p>
339	<p>I lean in and he leans in and then we're kissing. We're kissing and it's hot and amazing, his breath in my lungs, my tongue against his teeth, my hands tracing the valley of his spine, his dipping below my waistband to squeeze my ass through my underwear. I know what's happening and I am here for it. "You want to . . . ?" His voice trails against my collarbone. "I don't have any condoms." "There's a bowl in the bathroom." "Okay." He takes my hands and smiles at me. And pulls me toward the washroom door.</p>
343	<p>Next to that is the bowl of condoms. There's a bunch of different kinds: flavored ones and ribbed ones, ones with desensitizing gel or tingly gel or warming gel. Aidan and I only ever used the regular ones, which Aidan ordered online from Shoppers since neither of us wanted to be spotted buying condoms at the store. ...Jared reaches into the bowl, pulls out a gold-foil Magnum, and winks at me. I swallow.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>“Just kidding.” He drops it and grabs two flavored ones and two warming ones. I don’t care. I just want to go back to kissing him, feeling him.</p> <p>“Doesn’t matter,” I say, and mash my lips against his.</p> <p>He pulls me into the corner between the urinals and the counter, which feels sleazy and excellent. The light casts a rosy glow across his flush cheeks. Our breaths echo off the tiles. I kiss along his jaw, down his neck, hit that little spot between his collarbones with my tongue. He laughs and squeezes my butt again, starts to pull my pants down a little bit to expose my underwear.</p> <p>“Is it okay to block the sink?” I ask. “What if someone needs to wash their hands?”</p> <p>If we’re going to hook up in a washroom, we can’t be dicks about it.</p> <p>Jared laughs. His fingers have slipped under the waistband of my underwear again, warm and insistent against my skin.</p> <p>“Come on.” Without letting go, he maneuvers us into one of the stalls, walking me backward until my legs hits the toilet and I fall over laughing.</p> <p>He helps me up and I plant my face into his chest. It’s firm and hot.</p> <p>“You okay?” he asks as I giggle.</p> <p>“I’m fine,” I say. “I’m not drunk. Promise. Just buzzed.”</p> <p>“You sure?”</p> <p>My everything feels warm, and I’m annoyed that he’s stopped kissing me, so I mash my face against his, relishing the scratch of stubble against my chin.</p> <p>He wants me.</p> <p>And I don’t even care anymore if he wants me because he likes my ass or because he thinks I’m cute or because he thinks it’d be cool to fuck someone famous.</p> <p>It doesn’t matter.</p> <p>He wants me, and sex is fun, and I like to do it, and fuck Aidan and fuck the world for making me feel bad about that. Fuck Kaivan too, for making me feel bad about . . . I’m not even sure. Just, fuck him too.</p> <p>Fuck everyone.</p> <p>I kiss Jared’s chest, do a little exploratory nipple-biting, but that doesn’t seem to do anything for him, so I move to the valley of his chest, keep kissing lower.</p> <p>The door to the washroom opens but we both ignore it. Jared plants his feet a little firmer as I keep kissing down, down, kneeling to get a better angle on his zipper. He runs a hand through my hair and lets out a shaky breath.</p> <p>“Hunter? You in here?”</p> <p>I snap back and somehow hit my funny bone right on the rim of the toilet bowl. I grab my arm to massage the spot, but knock Jared against the stall.</p> <p>...“Hey,” Jared says. “We’re in here.”</p> <p>“Let him out,” Kaivan growls.</p> <p>“We’re busy.”</p> <p>“He’s seventeen, asshole. That’s statutory.” Jared studies me for a second. “Point taken.”</p> <p>...“You are drunk.”</p> <p>...“Worried I was going to hook up with that guy. Jealous much?”</p> <p>“No. I mean, I’m glad you didn’t, but—”</p> <p>“You’re just mad I didn’t give you a blowjob,” I say. “You should be. I give amazing blowjobs.”</p>
348	<p>I hold on to the counter to stay upright.</p> <p>Maybe I’m drunker than I thought.</p> <p>Shit.</p>

Page	Content
	<p>...The sad-drunk part of me wants to lean against him and soak up his warmth. The angry-drunk part of me wants to push him out of the car.</p> <p>...“You’ve been drinking. What if someone slipped you something? How do you know that guy wasn’t going to hurt you? He was at least twenty-five. Maybe thirty. That’s gross.”</p>
353	My armpits smell rank. I don’t know if it’s the club or the alcohol seeping out of my skin.
362	Ashton says, “We could do something for making sports more queer-inclusive. Maybe?”
371	<p>“I had honestly forgotten about all those old interviews. They were before I came out, and I was trying to read as straight, you know? And it was easy to shit on you, and music like yours, because that’s what all the straight guys at school did.”</p> <p>...“You know the first time I got called a fag?”</p> <p>I close my eyes. I hate that word.</p> <p>I’ve always felt comfortable reclaiming queer, but the f-word always felt . . . I don’t know. More violent.</p> <p>“I was ten, and I was on the bus home from school, and one of the girls was singing along to One Direction, and so I joined in. And my best friend at the time turned and asked me if I was a fag.”</p>
373	<p>“You’re sweet. You’re funny. You’re brave. You’re kind of a disaster. But I like that about you. Not to mention your hockey butt.”</p> <p>...I press my lips against his, feel him laugh and smile against me.</p> <p>I kiss him. I hold him. I hum as he wraps his arms around me and pulls me down on top of him. He breaks the kiss, cheeks flushed.</p> <p>...I shut him up with another kiss.</p>
377	“Well, it’s pretty amazing being up here, with all of you. Getting to sing together with my friends. Being gay and doing crimes.”

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	22
Dick	17
Fag	2
Fuck	57
Piss	11
Queer	52
Shit	57