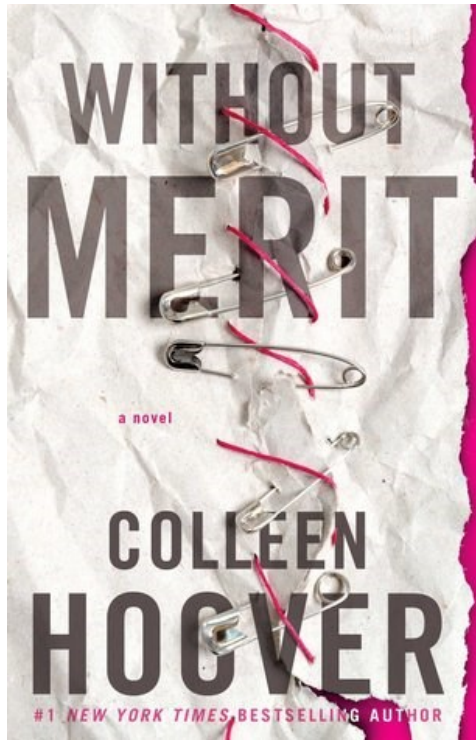


WITHOUT MERIT



Book Summary:

After several instances of sexual rejection and abnormal behaviors of her family members, a seventeen year old girl attempts to commit suicide.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; profanity; self-harm including attempted suicide; alcohol use; controversial religious commentary; and alternate sexualities.

Adult

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3 / 5

Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

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1	We had been dating two months and it was the first time I allowed him to put his hand all the way up my shirt. ...There I was, enjoying his hand on my boob, and all the while he was thinking of how he never wanted to his hand on my boob again.
5	It says LUBRICANT. It makes me wonder if someone placed the sexually suggestive signs together or if it was random. If I had enough money, I'd buy them and start a sexually suggestive sign collection for my bedroom.
11	He's pulling me to him when his tongue slides across my lips. ...Both of his hands move to hold my face now, like we have nowhere else to be today. ...I wrap one of my arms around his neck and decide I'll just let him continue for as long as he wants because I don't have anywhere to be right now.
19	About a month before we turned fifteen and two weeks after Honor lost her virginity to Kirk, his father found Kirk lying on the ground in the middle of their pasture, semiconscious and bleeding.
30	I go to the bathroom and search the drawers for some sleep medicine. I don't normally take it unless I'm sick, but the only thing I can think of that will get me through tonight without obsessing over my kiss with Honor's boyfriend is a few sips of NyQuil.
42	Unlike my father, Victoria believes in God. And Jesus. And the sanctity of religion.
69	It would be my luck to pick up a random stranger who is coming down from a high.
76	"I already pictured you naked," he mutters.
79	He doesn't even care if Honor gets knocked up at seventeen!
80	"Is your father a preacher or something?" "Quite the opposite, actually." "What's the opposite of a preacher? An atheist mime?" "My dad doesn't believe in God. But he got a good deal on the church, so he moved us in a few years ago. Right before he started sleeping with my mother's nurse."
118	She's got three years on me when it comes to losing her virginity.
121	I was a punk kid who was supporting a weed habit.
123	A few months and a fake ID later, I got a job on a cruise ship.
130	How- in the span of fifteen minutes- did he end up having sex with a girl he doesn't even know in the office of a hotel? ...I couldn't care less who Luck has sex with. ...I'm angrier about the fact that I wouldn't even know the first thing about having sex, much less a quickie with a guy I've never met before. Sex seems like such a monumental thing. It should take months to lead up to, and he accomplishes it in fifteen minutes.
131	"Did you really just have sex with Angela?" ..."Do people not have sex in this town?" ..."Yeah, well, sex doesn't mean as much to me as it must mean to you guys."

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132	"Have you ever had sex with that guy you have a crush on? What's his name again?"
136	"You've had sex forty-two times?" He shakes his head. "No, you asked how many people I've had sex with. That answer is forty-two. But I've had sex three hundred and thirty-two times."
137	I use his absence to try and imagine how anyone could possibly have sex with that many people, let alone know exactly how many times they've had sex in their life.
139	"...Society puts a lot of weight on losing your virginity, but in my opinion, it's better to just get it over with. Sleep with someone who doesn't mean much to you so it'll be less embarrassing than it already is. Then, when you finally do meet someone you really like, you can be with them without all the awkwardness." I think about what he's saying and surprisingly, it makes sense. Maybe that's why I can't understand it, because I'm equating intimacy with sex.
147	Did he just have sex with my mother? ..."Did you just have sex with him?"
148	"...Are you seriously having sex with him, knowing he sleeps in bed with Victoria every night?..."
151	Sex is more important to him than his wives. Than keeping his family together. ...I want sex to be meaningless so it has absolutely no control over me.
152	"I know you better than you knew Angela and you had sex with her."
153	"...Because sex is just sex to me and this won't mean a damn thing to me." "I don't want it to mean anything to you. That's the point." "So it's just a means to an end?" I nod. "The end of my virginity." He studies me closely, waiting for me to change my mind. When he sees I'm not going to, he shrugs. "Okay, then. Let me grab a condom." He hops out of the bed and I fall onto my back. ...And I can't believe this is where my train of thought is when I just asked a guy to have sex with me. A guy I'm not even attracted to.
154	I'm not sure that I even want to kiss him. Is that weird? Of course it is. This whole thing is weird. "I'll leave that up to you." Luck nods, just as his hand slides up to my waist. It isn't until he reaches my breast that I feel the weight of what's about to happen. I try not to let it weigh too heavily. It's just sex. I can do this. Almost every adult in the world has done this. I can do this. He gently rolls me onto my back and then reaches for the condom. As he's putting it on, a good thirty seconds go by that I could use to change my mind But I don't. Luck then rolls on top of me, holding his weight up with his hands on either side of my head. He brushes my hair back which is an oddly sweet gesture and then he reaches between us and spreads my legs. I close my eyes. He presses his forehead into the pillow beside my head. "You sure?"

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	<p>"Yes." I whisper.</p> <p>I keep my eyes closed and I try not to focus on the fact that I made such a spontaneous decision. But I can't really think of any negative consequences that will come of this. I won't have to worry about never losing my virginity and Luck will get to add another line in his book.</p>
157	<p>I'm not embarrassed that he might have caught me having sex with someone.</p>
159	<p>"...Are you finally going to explain why you were in the basement having sex with Mom today while everyone thought you were in the basement having sex with Mom while everyone thought you were at work?"</p>
160	<p>Probably a morbid picture of me losing my virginity.</p>
167	<p>"Did you have sex with him?"</p> <p>...He's having sex with his dying friend's girlfriend. It shouldn't be any of his concern who I'm having sex with.</p>
177	<p>She's off kissing some other guy right now.</p>
178	<p>I close my eyes and completely melt into him. I melt into his chest, his arms, his mouth. When his tongue finds mine I all but give up on trying to reciprocate. My mind isn't connecting with my limbs. It's like they're being controlled by some other force. My hands slide through his hair and his hands move to my waist, and then to my lower back. And it's nothing like the first time we kissed.</p> <p>...His mouth is like a cacophony of flavors right now, each fighting to over power the other.</p> <p>...He doesn't take his mouth off mine as he climbs on top of me, both of us equally as desperate to take in as much of each other as we can.</p> <p>It feels so surreal, I want to smile, but it's all so serious, I want to cry. My emotions are everywhere. Just like his hands. Sliding down my thigh, roaming around my leg, grasping the back of my knee and pulling my leg up and around him. The position he just put us in makes us both gasp for air. He breaks the kiss, but moves his mouth to my neck. "Merit," he says between kisses.</p> <p>I could listen to him breathe out my name like that for eternity.</p> <p>"Merit," he says again, kissing up my jaw. "What is it?"</p> <p>I shake my head, wanting him to stop questioning it. Don't stop. Just go. Green light all the way.</p> <p>He somehow mistakes my green light for a yellow light, because he pauses.</p>
186	<p>I walk to the kitchen and grab a red Solo cup. I open the cabinet above the refrigerator and pull out a bottle of liquor. I don't even know what it is. I've never had alcohol before, but what better time to try it than in the same week I almost lose my virginity and piss off the one person I actually feel something for in this house?</p> <p>I don't know how much it takes to get a person drunk, but I fill my glass halfway to the top. Or maybe it's halfway to the bottom.</p> <p>...I down as much as I can before I feel like I'm gagging on a fireball.</p> <p>...I somehow manage to get down the rest of what's in the cup. I take the bottle and the cup with me as I exit the kitchen.</p> <p>...I set the bottle of alcohol on my dresser, but the cup falls to the floor.</p> <p>Whatever. It's empty.</p>

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188	<p>Luck almost had sex with me yesterday. ...Now he's having sex with my brother? ...Luck would rather have sex with my brother than me. Sagan called me an asshole right after we made out on the couch. Drew Waldrup broke up with me with his hand on my boob.</p>
190	<p>I grab the bottle of...what the hell am I even drinking? I read the label. Tequila. I grab the bottle of tequila and slide to the floor because I'm starting to feel dizzy.</p>
194	<p>Why would he? You open your legs to him any time he wants it. ...Granted, it was my idea to lose my virginity to him. Not like it would have made a difference to him since he's had sex over three hundred times! But now that I know he's making his way through ALL the Voss siblings, I feel even cheaper than I felt after what I'm sure would have been the worst sexual experience in history...had he been able to go through with it. Maybe he couldn't finish with me because he prefers dick. Utah's dick, at least. Oh! Did no one know Utah was gay?</p>
195	<p>She's off with some guy tonight, probably naked with him on his bed.</p>
197	<p>I laugh because I think I finally drank enough to make all my feelings go away. Or maybe it was the letter I just wrote. Either way, I think I like tequila. I feel freaking great. I like it so much; I drink the rest of it before I head to my father's office to make copies. ..."Is there anyone you won't have sex with on this earth besides me?"</p>
199	<p>I find the bottle of tequila but it's still empty. That doesn't help me much because I still feel things. I stumble my way into the kitchen and open every single cabinet, but I can't find more alcohol. I open the refrigerator and the only thing that might help me numb what's happening in my chest right now are three beers.</p>
201	<p>I pull out the bottle of stolen pills and I open the lid. I reach for the third beer and my hands are shaking so bad, it takes me three tries to pop it open. I look down at the beer in my left hand and the bottle of pills in my right. I don't even give it a second thought. I pour some of the pills in my mouth and then try to swallow. I pour a few too many so I end up spitting them back out in my hand. I relax my throat and then try it again. They go down this time, so I pour a few more and then swallow. I can't get but about three or four down at a time, so it takes me the entire beer to wash them all down. I toss the empty beer can aside and then grab all seven stacks of pages.</p>
205	<p>It's pathetic. My voice is pathetic through my tears and this is how I'm going to die. On my bathroom floor, leaving behind what is about to become the most despicable suicide letter anyone has ever written. ..."Are you drunk?" "Her pills," I say, choking back more tears. "I took them, I wasn't thinking, Utah I wasn't thinking." ..."Mom's! I took her pain pills!" Utah looks at Sagan and I know they're trying to figure out what's happening but they aren't getting it! "I swallowed them!"</p>
216	<p>I'm not suicidal- I was drunk.</p>
222	<p>"I'm a girl who found out her parents were having an affair, so I took my anger out on a few illegal substances. It doesn't make me suicidal, it makes me a teenager."</p>

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223	"What about your ex-wife who hasn't seen the sun in two years? Or your daughter who's one heartbeat away from being a necrophiliac! Or your son who thinks it's okay to molest his sister!"
224	"I have no idea. But If that marquee is true and humans really are that insignificant to the earth's history, it makes me question why a God would go through all the trouble to revolve an entire universe around us."
234	"...But last night I dressed up as her and kissed him again, only to find out he's not even dating my sister. We got into an argument and he left, I went to my step-uncle's room and he was having sex with my brother. So I got drunk, swallowed a bunch of pills and almost killed myself. Sagan," I point outside at him.
254	<p>Apparently, neither can he because he stalks toward me and grabs hold of me, one arm around my waist, one splayed out against the side of my neck. I tilt my face up to his, hoping he's about to realize how wrong he was so he can just kiss me. I want it hard and frantic and fast, but he's painfully slow as he draws closer. He lets out a quiet sigh and his mouth is so close to mine, I steal his sigh with a gasp. And then his lips finally connect with mine. It's both unexpected and overdue. I moan with relief against his kiss and immediately reciprocate. As soon as our tongues collide, it becomes so frantic, I lose my way around him. My hands get lost in his hair, my reservations get lost in his touch, my anger gets lost in his groan. His tongue strokes mine with delicacy, but his hands are making up for the patience of his mouth. His right arm slides down my back and down to my thigh where my T-shirt ends. He slides his hand up my bare thigh, over my panties and then up my back, this time skin to skin. He pulls me against him but walks me backward at the same time until my back meets the wall behind me. "My God," he whispers against my lips. "Your mouth is amazing." I think his is pretty amazing, too, but I don't respond because I'd rather give him back my tongue. He takes it, kissing me deeper, pressing himself against me and into the wall.</p> <p>This kiss is everything I thought it would be and more. I'm amazed at how healing his mouth is. As soon as he pressed it against mine, it's like all the stress that's been swimming around in my head disappeared. All the angst, the frustration, the anger- it subsides with every stroke of his tongue.</p> <p>This is exactly what I needed.</p> <p>His hand is now sliding around my waist, but before he goes any higher, he pauses to catch his breath. I gasp when I have air again, clasping my arms around him, trying to stop the room from spinning. I let my head fall back against the wall. Sagan drags his lips across my cheek and then kisses me on the mouth, soft and gentle, before pulling back to look down at me. He runs a hand down my hair, stopping at the nape of my neck. "That was fucking dazing," he whispers.</p>
261	"I tried to kill myself once," he says nonchalant. "Jumped off the deck of a cruise ship into the water. I thought it was high up enough that I would hit the water and it would knock me out and I'd drown peacefully."
263	<p>"You can't make gay jokes. Merit. You aren't gay."</p> <p>"Does being gay make you the gay authority on who can or can't tell gay jokes?"</p> <p>"I'm not gay, either," he says.</p> <p>"Could have fooled me." I laugh. "If you don't think you're gay, you're sexually</p>

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	<p>confused." ..."I'm very comfortable with my sexuality. It seems like you're the one who's confused by it." I nod, because I am definitely confused by it. "Are you bisexual?" Luck laughs. "Labels were invented for people like you who can't grasp a reality outside of a defined gender role. I like what I like. Sometimes I like women, sometimes I like men. A few times I've liked girls who used to be guys. Once I liked a guy who used to be a girl." He pauses. "I like him a lot, actually. But that's an after-school special for another day."</p>
264	<p>"...How did you not know Utah was gay? Have you seen his wardrobe?"</p>
273	<p>"You're calling him out when you admitted to the whole family that you tried to lose your virginity to our uncle?"</p>
277	<p>"I thought maybe if I kissed a girl it would fix me. But I was a kid, and I didn't know the first thing about kissing or girls. All I knew was that there was one person I wanted to kiss, and according to society, I wasn't supposed to want to kiss Logan." ..."...He showed everyone at his lunch table and then called me a queer when we were walking out of the cafeteria. I was so upset after that. I didn't want to be queer; I didn't want to like Logan. I just wanted to be what I thought was normal. So that night, I didn't even think about the consequences of what I was doing. I was desperate to fix myself, so I made Merit kiss me, hoping it would...I don't know. Cure me."</p>
309	<p>She glances at me and mutters under her breath, "I can't believe you almost had sex with him." ...That wouldn't end well. I also don't argue with her because...well...I can't believe I almost had sex with him, either.</p>
311	<p>"He's an atheist," Luck says.</p>
328	<p>"I know that, Merit. I don't care if he's gay. I'm referring to whatever is happening between him and Luck. How am I supposed to explain to Moby that his uncle and his half brother are...a thing?"</p>
329	<p>"Why don't you believe in God?" ..."I'm just a pragmatic person."</p>
337	<p>He isn't wearing a shirt now. Only a pair of black sweat pants. I sit up, but keep the covers pulled up to my stomach. After everyone left my room earlier, I took off my pajama bottoms. Now I'm only wearing a T-shirt. Put us together, and we could make a whole naked person.</p>
349	<p>Utah laughs and says, "Being gay just means a guy might like to marry another guy instead of a girl." Victoria adds, "Or a girl might marry a girl." Luck nods. "And some people like guys and girls."</p>
358	<p>He slips a hand behind my neck and then slowly lowers his mouth to mine. "But the kiss was nice, wasn't it?" he whispers. Our mouths connect, and it's soft and delicate. It's not accidental, like our first kiss, it's not deceiving, like our second, and it's not frantic, like our third. This kiss is the first genuine kiss we've shared, and I want to drag it out for as long as I can. His lips move over mine with patience, and I love the patience in this kiss more</p>

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	than anything else. It means we both know there will be many more that follow. He rolls on top of me, and as soon as we get in the most perfect position I've ever been in while kissing him, my phone rings.

Profanity	Count
Ass	14
Bitch	11
Dick	1
Fuck	4
Piss	3
Queer	3
Shit	13