

ONE LAST STOP



Adult

By Casey McQuiston

ISBN: 9781250244499



4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
37	Just what every public transit flirtation needs: old coworkers and a sweaty idiot dumping syrup on the table. What an extremely sexy proposition. Really out here smashing pussy, Landry. ...“We get about a hundred hot lesbians through here a week. You’ll find another one.”
42	“Fuck a dick,” Myla swears as one of the traps snaps on her finger.
53	“Welcome to the building. Amenities include luxurious World War II–era plumbing and a vegetarian drag queen who can do your taxes.”
71	She probably went home that night and sat at a bar with her equally hot motorcycle poet friends and talked about how funny it was that this weird girl on her train asked her out, and then went to bed with her even hotter girlfriend and had nice, satisfying, un-clumsy sex with someone who isn’t a depressed twenty-three-year-old virgin. They’ll get up in the morning and make their cool and sexy sex-haver toast and drink their well-adjusted coffee and move on with their lives, and eventually, after enough weeks of August avoiding the Q, Jane will forget all about her.
82	Through a slight fog of hysteria, she remembers those weird dudes from Billy’s talking about the vampire community. She was pretty sure that was some kind of BDSM role-play thing.
92	Isaiah grins. “That’s my new drag daughter. Freshly hatched little baby. Goes by Sara Tonin.”
110	“I remember moments. Sometimes days, or only hours. I knew I was stuck here, somehow. I know I’ve tried to get off and blinked and opened my eyes in a different car. I remember some people I’ve met. That half the things in my bag are something I traded for, stole, or found. But it’s—it’s all fuzzy. You know when you drink too much and black out except for random pieces? It’s like that. If I had to guess, I would’ve said I’ve been on here for ... maybe a few months.”
125	““Your friendly smile of acceptance—from the safe position of heterosexuality,”” Jane reads aloud, ““isn’t enough. As long as you cherish that secret belief that you are a little bit better because you sleep with the opposite sex, you are still asleep in your cradle ... and we will be the nightmare that awakens you.””
138	“She had long hair, like yours, but maybe blond? It’s weird, like—like a movie I saw, except I know it happened to me, because I remember her wet hair stuck to the side of her neck and how I had to peel it off so I could kiss her there.”
142	And Jane kisses her.
143	Jane kisses her and kisses her, and August has completely lost track of what this was even supposed to be about, because she’s kissing Jane back, swiping her thumb into the dip of Jane’s collarbone, and Jane’s tongue is tracing the soft seam of her lips, and August’s mouth is falling open. Jane’s hand drops from the wall to brace against August’s face, tangled up in her wet hair, and she’s everywhere and nowhere—in her mouth, at her waist, against her hips, touching too much for August to pretend this isn’t real to her but not enough to know if it’s real to Jane too.
148	So, no, she’s not sitting around, picturing Jane dropping her jacket on August’s bedroom floor and pushing her down onto the bed, breaking the bed, putting the bed back together—God, not the stupid bed-assembly fantasy again.
152	She’s looking at August’s mouth, eyes dark as the pit at a punk show. “When I kiss you, bite.” And before August can ask what she means, Jane closes the space between them.

Page	Content
	<p>The kiss is ... different this time. Hotter, somehow, even though it's not real. It's not real, August recites in her head as she tries to pretend there's absolutely anything academic about the way her mouth drops open at the press of Jane's lips, anything scientifically impartial about the way she pulls harder at Jane's hair and sinks into it, letting Jane drink her in.</p> <p>Jane's words come back to her, syrupy sweet and slow, bite, and so she sucks Jane's bottom lip between hers and digs her teeth in. She hears her sharp inhale, feels Jane's hand tighten in the fabric of her shirt, and thinks of it as progress. Results. She moves the way she imagines the girl Jane remembers would have moved, tries to give her the memory with her mouth—bites harder, tugs at her lip, runs her tongue over it.</p>
153	<p>"Kiss me slow," Jane says, grinning on a Tuesday afternoon, her sleeves rolled up enticingly, and it's still not about them.</p> <p>They kiss under the dappled sunlight of the Brighton Beach Station, strawberry ice cream on their tongues, and Jane remembers summer 1974, a month crashing with an old friend named Simone who'd moved to Virginia Beach, whose cat absolutely refused to leave them alone in bed. They kiss with August's earbuds split between them playing Patti Smith, and Jane remembers autumn 1975, a bass player named Alice who left lipstick stains on her neck in the bathroom of CBGB. They kiss at midnight in a dark tunnel, and Jane remembers New Year's Eve 1977, and Mina, who tattooed the vermilion bird on her shoulder.</p> <p>August learns all this, but she also learns that Jane likes to be kissed every kind of way: like a secret, like a fistfight, like candy, like a house fire. She learns Jane can make her sigh and forget her own name until it all blurs together, past and present, the two of them on Manhattan balconies and in damp New Orleans barrooms and the candy aisle of a convenience store in Los Angeles. Jane's kissed a girl in every corner of the country, and pretty soon, August feels like she has too.</p> <p>...It's not like kissing is all August does—the time she spends thinking about the kisses and chasing down leads from the kisses when she's not actually having the kisses notwithstanding.</p>
167	<p>"Kissing, okay, we've been making out—"</p>
168	<p>"She got off the train, and you led with the kissing? God, you are the most useless bisexual I've ever met in my entire goddamn life."</p>
170	<p>Thankfully, after the first, they're almost never songs that she used to eat girls out to.</p>
173	<p>How is she supposed to know if, when Jane requests "I've Got Love On My Mind," August is supposed to read into the lyrics? Dear Natalie Cole, when you sang the line When you touch me I can't resist, and you've touched me a thousand times, were you thinking about a confused queer with a terrible crush?</p>
178	<p>"No, dumbass, she's gonna show up with a bunch of Doritos and a ziplock bag of weed like she always does," Isaiah says with a happy laugh, and Wes turns delightfully pink.</p> <p>"Praise it and blaze it," Myla comments, flopping onto the couch.</p>
179	<p>"Is that—Jade, Jade, is that Vera Harry? Oh my God, I've never seen her out of drag, you were right, bitch!" He turns to them, gesturing across the room at an incredibly hot and stubbly guy who's walked in.</p> <p>..."That is a new queen, moved from LA last month, everybody's been talking about her. She's this crazy stunt queen, but then, out of drag? Trade. Best thing to ever happen to</p>

Page	Content
	<p>Thursday nights.” ...“Where’s the keg? I was told there would be a keg.”</p>
180	<p>“You’re—you do drag? But you’ve never mentioned—and you’re not—” August fumbles with half a dozen ways to end that sentence before landing eloquently on, “You have a beard?” “What, you never met a bearded pansexual drag queen?”</p>
181	<p>He never did find the keg, but there’s a thirty-rack of PBR beside him, and he’s fishing one out. “Wanna shotgun a beer?” ...“I still think that knife is cool,” Wes says, and they pop the tops and chug.</p>
182	<p>And everything overflows into both apartments, drag queens perched on the steamer trunk, Popeyes aprons dropped in the hall, Wes reclined across Isaiah’s kitchen table like a Renaissance painting, Vera Harry cradling Noodles in his beefy arms.</p>
185	<p>Then she’s trading jokes with Vera Harry, and she’s laughing so hard she spills her drink down her chin, and Isaiah’s sister calls out, “Not saying shit’s gone off the rails, but I just saw someone mix schnapps with a Capri Sun and someone else is in the bathtub handing out shrooms.” ...“When did you know?” “That I was trans?”</p>
191	<p>She sways forward, and she lets herself kiss Jane on the mouth. ...August brushes her thumb behind Jane’s ear, and Jane’s mouth parts, and—</p>
200	<p>“Yes, thank you. I invite you to eat a dick. Goodbye.”</p>
208	<p>“Just text her like, ‘Hey Jane, you got a rockin’ bod, would love to consensually smash. XOXO, August.’”</p>
214	<p>She’s comparing Jane to a Van Gogh in her head, so obviously the wine is working on her. “That’s new for you, huh? Being able to get drunk?”</p>
216	<p>“Of course it fucking wasn’t,” Jane says, and she hauls August in by the sway of her waist and finally, finally kisses her. It starts hard, but quickly dissolves into something softer. Tentative. Gentler than August expected, gentler than she’s been in any of the stories she’s told August. It’s nice. It’s sweet. It’s what August has been waiting for, a soft slide of lips, the loose presence of her mouth, but August breaks off.</p>
217	<p>“Shut up and kiss me,” August says. “Like you mean it.” “Here?” She leans up and teases at the hinge of August’s jaw. “You know that’s not what I meant.” “Oh, here?” Another kiss, her earlobe this time. “Don’t make me—” Before August can get the threat out, Jane twists her around, backing her into the doors of the train. She pins August at the hips, shoulders braced against hers, hand wrapped around her racing pulse at the wrist, and August can feel Jane like lightning in her veins. Her knees part on an answering instinct, and Jane doesn’t waste time getting a leg between them, leaning in so August’s own weight grinds her down into Jane’s thigh. “So pretty for me,” she murmurs into the corner of August’s mouth when she gasps, and they’re kissing again. Jane Su kisses like she talks—with leisure and indulgent confidence, like she’s got all the time in the world and she knows exactly what she wants to do with it.</p>

Page	Content
218	<p>So she grabs at her hair and tugs, nips at her bottom lip, tilts her chin up and bares her neck for Jane’s lips, just to hear the soft little moans that fall out of her mouth, high on the feeling of giving Jane exactly what she wants. It’s better than any of their first kisses, any memory, red hot and real under her hands. The city glides past through the window, framing them in, and August’s skin is on fire. Her skin is on fire, and Jane’s dragging her fingers through the embers.</p> <p>“These fuckin’ thigh highs,” Jane mutters. Her hand grazes over the top of one, short fingernails skimming the place where elastic cuts into August’s thigh. She was nervous when she put them on, afraid of looking like she was trying too hard, worried about the way they dig into her soft fat. “What the fuck, August?”</p> <p>“What—ah—about them?”</p> <p>“They’re criminal, that’s what,” Jane says, pressing her thumb hard enough into the flesh there that August hisses, knowing it’ll leave a mark.</p> <p>Jane snaps the elastic over the same spot, and the sharp pain goes straight through her and out her mouth in a breathless “fuck.”</p> <p>“August,” Jane says. She dips into her shoulder, nosing at her collarbone through her shirt, and August’s brain slowly surfaces.</p> <p>...“You’ve never had sex with a girl before?”</p> <p>August feels her face flush. “I’ve never had sex with anyone before.”</p> <p>...She traces a thumb up the inside of August’s thigh, and her mouth melts into a loose smirk when August gasps quietly.</p> <p>...August watches Jane lick her bottom lip, and a thousand images flash through her mind so fast, she feels like she might black out—Jane’s short hair between her fingers, her teeth digging into the ink lines on Jane’s bicep, wet fingers, wet mouths, wet everywhere, Jane’s low voice pitched up an octave, Jane’s eyes burning up at her from the end of the bed, the insides of Jane’s knees, miles of skin shining with sweat and the light through her bedroom window. She wants Jane’s hands fistled in her bed sheets. She wants the impossible.</p> <p>“I want you to touch me,” she finally makes herself say.</p>
220	<p>She shifts, adjusting her weight on Jane’s thigh, and closes her mouth on the sound that tries to slip out at the friction.</p>
221	<p>It happens fast—August inhales, exhales, and suddenly Jane’s jacket is gone, thrown blindly at the nearest seat, and they’re kissing, hands everywhere, messy and wet and full of small sounds. August’s hair keeps getting in the way, and when she breaks off to rip a ponytail holder off her wrist and haphazardly pull it back, Jane’s at her neck, tongue soothing over every spot she introduces her teeth to.</p> <p>...Somehow the buttons of August’s shirt are undone, and she can’t think about anything but wanting more, wanting skin on skin. She wants to rip their clothes off, use her teeth and her fingernails if she has to, and can’t—not here, not the way she wants. Still, she slides her fingertips under the waistband of Jane’s jeans, catches the hem of her T-shirt, and she waits half a second for Jane to stop kissing her and nod before she’s untucking and pushing it up, and oh God, there she is, this is happening. In the moonlight, Jane’s body is kinetic. She shivers and tenses and relaxes under August’s hands, a nipped-in waist and sharp hip bones, a simple black bra, gentle ridges of ribs, tattoos winding up and down her skin like spilled ink. And August—August has never gotten this far before, not really, but something takes over, and she’s dropping a kiss on Jane’s sternum, and she’s pressing her open mouth to the swell just above the cup of her bra, the devastating give of it. Every part of Jane is spartan,</p>

Page	Content
	<p>practical, made into what it is by years of survival, and yet, somehow, it gives.</p> <p>...It occurs to August that Jane is thinner than her, and maybe she should care that her own hips are wider and her stomach is softer, but Jane's hands are on her, pushing her shirt open, everywhere she's afraid to be touched—the shape of her waist, the dimples of her thighs, the fullness of her chest.</p> <p>...“Look at you,” she says, dragging her thumbs out from the center of August's stomach to her hips, skimming over the waistband of her skirt. She leans in and tucks her face under August's collar, bites her shoulder, presses a kiss there, then pulls back and just looks at her. Looks at her like she doesn't ever want to stop looking. “You're like—like a fucking painting or something stupid like that, what the fuck. You just walk around like this all the time.”</p> <p>“I—” August's mouth tries to form several words, maybe even some that make sense, but Jane's hands are spanning her waist, brushing the delicate lace edges of her bra, and her mouth is trailing lower, and all that comes out is, “I didn't know. You—I didn't know you thought that.”</p> <p>...“You have no fuckin' idea, girl,” Jane says, and then she's pushing the lace out of the way. There are hands, and mouths, and fingertips, and tongues, and a sound coming out of August somewhere between a hiss and a sigh, and there's Jane's breath hot on her skin. There are, objectively, a lot of things going on, August understands vaguely, but all she can think is want—how much, how hard, how deep she's been wanting it, Jane's been wanting it, all of it held between Jane's lips now, pressing and blooming through her, so keen that it hurts. Jane bites down, and August sucks in a breath through her teeth.</p> <p>The hand on August's thigh is inching up her skirt, fabric gathering at Jane's wrist. When Jane leans into August's ear, the cotton of Jane's bra is against her, the insistent heat of her body, the unbearable slide of skin against hers.</p> <p>“I wanna go down on you,” Jane murmurs. “Is that cool?”</p> <p>August's eyes snap open.</p> <p>“Wha-what the fuck kind of question is that?”</p> <p>Jane's head drops back with a bark of laughter, eyes shut and lips swollen, the line of her throat obscene and gorgeous.</p> <p>“I need a yes or no.”</p> <p>“Yes, okay, Jesus.”</p> <p>“They call me Jane, actually,” Jane says, and August rolls her eyes as Jane sinks down to one knee.</p> <p>“That's the worst line I've ever heard,” August says, fighting to keep her breath steady as Jane tugs on the top of one of her thigh highs with her teeth. The elastic snaps back, and Jane grins against the inside of August's thigh at the little yelp it earns her. “Did that shit really work on girls in the '70s?”</p> <p>“It seems,” Jane says, kissing her way up, and August knows her hand is shaking when she pushes it into the hair at the crown of Jane's head, but she'll be goddamned if she'll act like it, “to be working just fine now.”</p> <p>“I don't know.” Jane's fingers catch on the waistband of August's underwear. August stares across the car at a Brooklinen ad, of all ridiculous things, because if she confronts the reality of Jane kneeling between her legs and tugging her underwear down her thighs, she's going to have a full-scale mental collapse. “Don't get too cocky.”</p> <p>“You might wanna use the door,” Jane says, “for balance.”</p> <p>“Why?”</p> <p>“Because in a minute you're not gonna be able to feel your legs,” Jane says, and when</p>

Page	Content
	<p>August finally looks down at her, mouth open in shock, she's smiling innocently. She pushes the hem of August's skirt up and says, "Hold this for me, yeah? I'm busy."</p> <p>"Absolutely fuck you." August laughs, and she does as she's asked.</p> <p>Truthfully: Jane has never once made a promise she couldn't back up.</p> <p>August turns her head to the side, trying to ground herself to the sturdiness of the door against her back, the way her shirt bunches up between her shoulder blades when she shivers, how her breath clouds the glass in a steady, too-fast rhythm. Through the glass, the city is shining—the bridges and buildings, the carousel on the edge of the water, the pinpricks of boats in the distance, and she's trying to take stock of it all, of how it feels to have someone so impossibly close to her for the first time. She can't believe she gets to have all this, this view and this girl on her knees.</p>
225	<p>She looks up at August, a strand of dark hair falling across her eyes, mouth busy, and August knows she'd tell it herself in five words: girl, tongue, subway, saw God.</p> <p>August never knew—she never worked it out in her head, exactly, what would qualify as sex with someone who has the same type of body as hers, no matter how much she wanted it, pictured it with one hand beneath the sheets.</p> <p>...But this, this—Jane's mouth on her, wet fingers, every hum and hitch of Jane's breath getting her off as much as a touch, the give and take of how good it feels to make someone else feel good—is sex. It's sex, and August is drowning in it. She wants more. She wants to fill her lungs up.</p> <p>"Jane," she says, and it comes out weak from the back of her throat. Her knuckles are white in Jane's hair, so she makes herself relax them, drags her fingers down to Jane's sharp cheekbone. "Jane."</p> <p>"Hm?"</p> <p>"Fuck, I—come back," she grinds out. "Up here. Please."</p> <p>When August pulls her into another kiss, she can taste herself on Jane's tongue, and that, more than anything, the fierce wave of possessiveness it pulls over her, is what has her fumbling at the fastenings of Jane's jeans.</p> <p>It's a blur—August doesn't know how she senses what to do. There's supposed to be an awkward learning curve with someone you've never fucked before, but there's not. There's this flow between them that's never made any goddamn sense since that static shock the day they met, and it's like she's found her way into this girl's jeans a thousand times, like Jane's had her figured out for years. She thinks dazedly that maybe it's time to start believing in something. The fucking divine construction of Jane's fingers when they press into her, maybe—that's a higher power for sure. It's over in a gasp, a trip over some edge August doesn't see until they're suddenly there, an open-mouthed kiss that's more a hot exchange of breath than anything else, teeth and skin, a low swear. Jane slumps forward, her shoulder digging into August's chest, one hand still tucked neatly beneath the lace of August's bra, and August feels alive. She feels present, somehow, here. Exactly, really here. She smears a messy kiss across the top of Jane's cheek and feels like Jane is the first thing she's ever touched in her life.</p> <p>"You were right," August says.</p> <p>"About what?"</p> <p>"I can't feel my legs."</p> <p>..."Get your hand off my boob. We're in public," she says as the train eases back into motion.</p>

Page	Content
227	They just kiss until they pull into a station in Brooklyn, and a bleary commuter climbs on with a coffee and an unamused expression, and Jane muffles a laugh in her neck.
229	<p>“So you’re sleeping with Jane?”</p> <p>...She managed to dodge him when she stumbled back into the apartment at five in the morning with her shirt buttoned wrong and the shape of Jane’s mouth bruised onto the side of her neck.</p>
230	<p>It’s a miracle she wants to have sex with her.</p> <p>Sex. She and Jane had sex. She and Jane are, if they can figure out the logistics, possibly going to have more sex.</p> <p>...“The whole idea is based on cissexist and heteronormative and quite frankly colonial-ass bullshit from a time when getting a dick in you was the only definition of sex. If that’s true, me and Niko have never had sex at all.”</p>
231	“You can’t really call it ‘sleeping.’ There’s not really a bed involved.”
236	A dirty smile dawns on Myla’s face. “Oh my God. She literally shorted out the train because she was horny,” she says, eyes sparkling with absolute awestruck admiration. “She’s an icon.”
237	<p>“I thought we had gotten past your denial that she wants to eat chocolate fondue off your ass and then cosign a mortgage.”</p> <p>...“I thought you said virginity was a construct.”</p>
239	She didn’t mean to go three days without seeing Jane after they had sex, honestly—she just got caught up in the case.
240	<p>August wants to kiss her mouth again. August, inconveniently, wants to do a lot of things again.</p> <p>...Her skirt has fanned out behind her, draping over them both, and she’s acutely aware of the way Jane’s denim feels against her bare thighs, the rips that allow skin to touch skin.</p> <p>...One of Jane’s hands travels up, spanning the top of August’s thigh. August looks at her, and something tugs in her chest, and she wonders if that’s it—the electricity. Desire and chemistry coiled up inside something bigger, something deeper and softer.</p>
243	“Look,” Jane says, fingers spreading to grip right below her ass.
244	<p>“I know I got you,” Jane says, and there it is: the dull scrape of short nails against the cotton of August’s underwear.</p> <p>Fuck.</p> <p>...Jane’s hand stills carefully, but she leans up, into August’s neck, lips brushing her earlobe when she says, “Tell me to stop.”</p> <p>...But Jane’s fingertips are brushing against her, teasing out her nerve endings and making her hips ache, and she thinks about all the months of wanting honed down to an exquisitely fine point, sharp against her skin until it feels like it could draw blood.</p> <p>...So when Jane’s thumb swipes up under the cotton, and Jane looks into her eyes for an answer, August nods.</p> <p>...And here, between stops, between her legs, she’s anxious and tense and Jane is confident and smooth, dragging her fingers, finding her way, slick and maddening.</p> <p>...Jane’s middle finger does a tight circle and August wants to push into it, press down, but she can’t move. She’s never been so thankful for people who bring Ikea furniture on the subway. “Shit.”</p> <p>She feels the warm burst of Jane’s quiet laugh against the side of her neck.</p>

Page	Content
245	<p>“I guess criminal behavior isn’t as much of a turn-on for me.” “That’s interesting,” Jane says conversationally. “Because it seems like doing things you’re not supposed to do kind of gets you off.”</p> <p>...Jane leans in and says, “Try not to come, then.”</p>
246	<p>She bites her lip through the build, the whiteout, her eyes screwed shut and her hips burning from the effort not to move. Jane kisses the side of her neck, beneath her hair.</p> <p>...She gets to be an adult who has sex, sex with Jane, and Jane gets to feel something that’s not boredom or waiting, and it’s fun. It’s good, so good that August’s mouth will start watering in the middle of a graveyard shift at Billy’s just thinking about it.</p>
247	<p>August starts a sex notebook.</p> <p>It’s not that they’re having that much sex.</p> <p>...She starts with the things she already knew. Hair pulling (giving and receiving), August writes at the top of the first page. Below it, lip biting, followed by thigh highs, and, leaving marks. She pauses, sucks on the end of her pen, and adds, semi-public sex* and notes at the bottom of the page, *unsure if always into this or simply making best of situation.</p> <p>She keeps it in her bag alongside the other notebooks for geographic locations (the green one), biographical anecdotes (blue), and dates and figures (red), and she updates it meticulously. If she doesn’t have it on her, she’ll write on her hand, which is how she ends up having to explain to Winfield in the middle of a shift why she has the words neck biting scrawled from her first to third knuckles.</p> <p>Sometimes she adds things that aren’t sex but turn Jane on anyway. Long hair makes the list the third time she catches Jane watching her tie her hair up. One afternoon, she goes on a five-minute tangent about UV light and document facsimiles only to find Jane staring at her with her mouth halfway open and her tongue resting wetly between her teeth, and she pulls out the notebook and writes, niche technical expertise + competence.</p> <p>Most of the items, though, are pretty straightforward. She boards the Q in the middle of the night wearing a pair of fishnets to test a theory, and when she stumbles off an hour later kiss-drunk with the thin strings of nylon ripped in two places, she adds, lingerie.</p>
249	<p>“Uh-huh,” August says, heat flaring up the back of her neck. She crosses her legs, squeezing her thighs together. “Keep talking.”</p> <p>By the time the buzzer announces the end of the wash cycle, Jane’s described in quiet detail just how she’d get August into the bathroom at Max’s, the black leather dog collar she used to wear at shows, and the way she’d let August slip her fingers under it when she got on her knees. August pulls her skirt back down, takes the notebook out, and writes, blood & bruises. Then light bondage. She goes back up several lines and underlines semi-public sex.</p> <p>...Jane kisses her hair, slips her thumb under the hem of August’s Billy’s T-shirt.</p> <p>...Jane laughs and swipes her tongue against the side of August’s neck. “It tastes nice on you, though.”</p>
250	<p>She stomps home forty-five sweaty, delirious minutes later, Jane still laughing in her ear, and she whips her shorts across her bedroom and furiously adds to the list, orgasm denial. (Jane makes it up to her eventually.)</p> <p>August guesses it’s predictable that this is how a person like her would handle entry into the mythical ranks of sex-havers—itemized lists, shorthand, the occasional unhelpful diagram.</p> <p>But it’s not her usual compulsive need to organize. It’s the way Jane kisses her like she’s trying to know everything about her, the revelation of what her own body can do, the way Jane’s willing to work for it in five stolen minutes between stops.</p>

Page	Content
255	<p>“Christmas in July,” Myla says grandly, with a broad gesture that knocks Wes’s phone back to the floor, “is an annual Fourth of July tradition at Delilah’s in which we celebrate the birthday of this great nation”—she does a jerk-off gesture and Niko boos—“ with themed beverages and an all-star lineup of drag royalty doing holiday-themed performances.”</p> <p>...“They still call it Christmas in July, but it’s evolved to include all holidays. Last year, Isaiah did a Thanksgiving dessert burlesque number to ‘My Goodies’ and wore sweet potato titty tassels and an apple pie g-string. It was amazing. Wes just, like, walked out of the building and sprinted ten blocks.”</p>
256	<p>“The path of my boner,” Myla echoes.</p>
257	<p>She leans out of the car, just barely, just enough to piss off the universe, and she hauls August in by the front of her idiot T-shirt and kisses her so hard that, for a second, she feels sparks down her spine.</p>
262	<p>He’s gone with a flourish of his robe, flashing a nice, long view of leather leggings and an ass produced by dancing in heels and doing squats to fill out catsuits.</p> <p>...“Wes,” August says. “Have you ever heard of a hairy frog?”</p> <p>Wes eyes her with suspicion. “Is that, like ... a sex act?”</p> <p>...The night goes on, a blur of cheek kisses, a bathroom with Sharpie and lipstick graffiti that says GENDER IS FAKE and JD MONTERO REARRANGED MY GUTS, people with hairy legs jutting out of pleated skirts, a lipstick-stained joint making the rounds.</p>
268	<p>Jane would love this. It keeps coming back and back and back, Jane tossing her head and laughing up at the disco ball, pulling August into a dark corner and kissing her dizzy.</p>
272	<p>Her last shred of self-preservation was pretending it was enough to have Jane temporarily, and she shoved that like a twenty-dollar bill down Annie Depressant’s tits last night.</p>
292	<p>“Did they call the cops?”</p> <p>“Nah. Me and some guy shoved him off at the next stop, and I doubt his ego could handle calling the cops on a skinny Chinese girl.”</p> <p>“I meant for you. You’re hurt.”</p> <p>Jane knocks August’s hands off of her, finally making eye contact. August flinches at the razor’s edge there.</p> <p>“I don’t fuck with pigs. You know I don’t fuck with pigs.”</p>
296	<p>A muscle clenches in Jane’s jaw, and August wants to kiss it. She wants to kiss her and fight her and hold her down and set this storm loose on the world, but the doors open at the next stop, and for just a second, Jane glances through them.</p>
319	<p>But a lot of the time, it’s this: August shoving a PBR tallboy into a brown paper bag and carrying it down to the subway at one in the afternoon like a lush, hoping the smell of shitty beer will jog something in Jane’s brain.</p>
321	<p>“He spilled a beer,” Jane says. “Jerry. We were ... we were drinking Pabst from my backpack on the beach. It was the middle of a heat wave, and he kept giving me shit for carrying my leather jacket around, but I told him he just didn’t understand my devotion to the punk lifestyle, and we laughed. And he...”</p>
328	<p>“So, we have a perfect in at the exact place we need access to, but we can’t use it because of your inability to keep it in your pants.”</p> <p>“Says the woman getting subway head from a revenant,” Myla counters.</p>

Page	Content
336	<p>Then she opens her mouth and says, “Sometimes I like to have my ass slapped during sex.” August squawks out a laugh, caught off guard. “What? You’ve never asked me to do that.” “Angel, there are a lot of things I’d like to do with you that can’t be done on a train.” ...“You’re not that discreet, August. One time I swear you whipped it out before I even got my pants buttoned.”</p> <p>August moans in dismay. She knows exactly what entry Jane is talking about. Page three, section M, subheading four: overstimulation.</p>
339	<p>She waits for the magic hour, and from the way Jane drags her hand along her waist, she’s waiting too.</p> <p>There’s no convenient darkness this time, no perfectly timed stall, but there’s an empty car and the Manhattan Bridge and Jane pressing into her, hips moving and short breaths and kiss-slick lips. It should feel dirty, to be with Jane like this, here, but what’s crazy is, she finally understands it all. Love. The whole shape of it. What it means to touch someone like this and want to have a life with them at the same time.</p> <p>Deliriously, the image of Jane with her house and her plants and her windchimes swims into view, and August is there too, wearing the shape of her body into an old bed. Jane slots between her legs and she thinks, fifty years.</p> <p>...Jane tightens against her fingertips and she thinks, home. Her eyes shut for Jane’s mouth and a good night’s sleep just the same.</p>
348	<p>He pops open an ornate wooden cigar box on his nightstand and retrieves a heavy silver lighter and a joint.</p>
349	<p>“How so?” Wes asks, flicking ash before passing the joint back.</p> <p>August manages to hold the second hit longer. She feels it in her face, spreading across her skin, starting to soften her edges.</p>
351	<p>Wes takes a hit and laughs it back out. “Thank you.”</p> <p>He stubs out the joint and pulls himself to his feet.</p>
361	<p>The night blares on—the guys from the post office next to Billy’s having a disjointed dance-off, a person with a lip ring shotgunning two White Claws at once, bodies jumping and swaying as the queen who is sometimes Winfield takes the stage in a magenta beard and performs an elaborate socialism-themed number set to a mix of “She Works Hard for the Money” and clips from AOC speeches.</p> <p>...But this is a full-tilt, balls-to-the-wall, someone-getting-a-tattoo-of-Chuckie-Finster, drag-king-named-Knob-Dylan-doing-a-full-gymnastics-routine shitshow.</p>
397	<p>August grabs her hand, and they throw themselves into the back of a cab.</p> <p>As soon as the door slams shut, she’s in Jane’s lap, swinging a leg over to straddle her hips, and she can’t stop, not when she thought she was never going to see Jane again. Jane’s fingers dig into her waist, and hers twist into Jane’s hair, and they kiss hard enough that the days they missed all fold together like a map, like the pages of a notebook shut, like it was no time at all.</p> <p>Jane’s mouth falls open, and August chases after it. She skims that soft bottom lip with her teeth and finds her tongue, and Jane makes a low, hurt sound and holds her tighter.</p> <p>The first time Jane kissed her for real, it felt like a warning. This time, it’s a promise. It’s a sigh of relief in the back of her throat. It’s a string of fate August never thought she’d believe in, pulling tight.</p>

Page	Content
398	<p>Jane pins her to the bathroom sink and kisses her, and when August is finally down to only her wet bra and underwear, she opens her eyes.</p> <p>...But here she is, standing in August's bathroom, hair damp and sticking out in every direction from where August has been tugging at it, in a black bra and briefs. There are her hipbones, and her bare thighs, and the rest of her tattoos—the animals up and down her sides.</p> <p>August reaches down and trails her fingers over the snake's tongue just below Jane's waist. Jane shivers.</p> <p>...There's a pause as Jane's eyes sweep open and closed, her fingertips grazing over the porcelain of the sink behind August's back.</p> <p>...August's hand slides up her back, to the clasp of her bra.</p> <p>...She leans back down, kissing the top of August's cheekbone. She's moving again, restless, finally let off the leash. "I can think later. Right now I just want to be here, okay?"</p> <p>...They manage to work wet underthings off wet bodies and then, in the shower, they dissolve into each other, graceless and messy. August loses track of who washes whose hair or where the suds are coming from. The whole landscape of the world becomes golden-brown skin and fluid black lines of ink and a feeling in her chest like flowers. She kisses, and Jane kisses back, again, forever.</p> <p>It's supposed to be just a shower—August swears—but everything is wet and warm and slick and it's too easy and natural for her hand to slip down between Jane's legs, and Jane's pushing back into her palm, and it's been so long. What else is she supposed to do?</p> <p>"Missed you so fucking much," August breathes out. She thinks it's lost in the rush of the shower, but Jane hears it.</p> <p>"I'm here," Jane says, licking water from the hollow of August's throat. August replaces her hand with her thigh, bearing down on Jane's in return, and they move together, one of Jane's hands on the wall for balance. Her breath hitches when she says it again: "I'm here." They're kissing, and Jane's grinding against her, and she feels herself sinking into a fog of want, molten skin, a mouth on hers. It's too much, and it's not enough, and then they're stumbling out of the tub and August's back is on the bathmat, on the bathroom floor, and Jane is kissing her like she wants to disappear into her, hands roaming.</p> <p>"Hang on," Jane says, moving to pull back. August grabs her wrist.</p> <p>"Why—ah—" August gasps at the change of angle before Jane takes her fingers away completely. "For God's sake—why would you ever stop doing that—"</p> <p>"Because," Jane says, pinching August on the hip, "I don't want to fuck you on the bathroom floor."</p> <p>"We've fucked on the subway," August says. Her voice comes out pouty and petulant. She does not care. "The bathroom floor is an upgrade."</p> <p>"I'm not against the bathroom floor," Jane says. "I mean, there are a lot of places in this apartment where I have every intention of fucking you. I just want to start with the bed." Oh, right. The bed. They can have sex in a bed now.</p> <p>"Hurry up, then," August says, clambering to her feet and pulling a towel with her. It's a testament to all they've been through together that she doesn't even think to care what her body looks like as she wrenches the door open and crosses into her bedroom.</p> <p>"You're so annoying," Jane says, but she's close behind, shutting the door and pulling August into her, throwing the towel across the room as carelessly as she threw August's glasses that night on the Manhattan Bridge.</p> <p>She backs August toward the bed, and August can feel warm, shower-fresh skin</p>

Page	Content
	<p>everywhere, and she's going crazy over it. Jane's waist and hips, the tight swells of her ass and thighs, ribs, breasts, elbows, ankles. She's losing it. She's a lifelong heretic suddenly overwhelmed with blissful gratitude for whatever made this possible. Her mouth is watering, and it tastes like honey, but maybe that's because Jane tastes as sweet as she smells.</p> <p>Jane gives her a little push, and she lets herself fall into the sheets.</p>
401	<p>She throws herself at the bed, and August bounces and laughs and lets Jane push her onto her back, already gasping.</p> <p>"You're always so," she says, kissing the patch of skin behind August's ear, her right hand finding its way, "sensitive."</p> <p>..."I'm not making fun of you." She moves one of her fingers in a teasing little circle and August gasps again, one hand fisting in the sheets.</p> <p>...When August opens her eyes, Jane's hovering over her, face gentle and awed. At August. She's looking at August like that. August can literally split time open, apparently, but she still can't believe the way Jane looks at her.</p>
402	<p>She throws herself at the bed, and August bounces and laughs and lets Jane push her onto her back, already gasping.</p> <p>"You're always so," she says, kissing the patch of skin behind August's ear, her right hand finding its way, "sensitive."</p> <p>..."I'm not making fun of you." She moves one of her fingers in a teasing little circle and August gasps again, one hand fisting in the sheets.</p> <p>...When August opens her eyes, Jane's hovering over her, face gentle and awed. At August. She's looking at August like that. August can literally split time open, apparently, but she still can't believe the way Jane looks at her.</p>
405	<p>Almost every night, she lies half-naked in bed, running her fingers over the tattoos on her side, again and again.</p>
406	<p>August buys out a whole shelf of strawberry milkshake Pop-Tarts at Target, and they spend the rest of the day dancing around their bedroom in their underwear, shoving pink frosting and sprinkles into their mouths and spreading sugary kisses everywhere.</p>
408	<p>Myla pulls some strings she refuses to disclose and matter-of-factly comes home one afternoon with a fake ID for Jane, complete with a photo and a 1995 birthdate.</p>
409	<p>Last week, August watched her shout down a guy with a racist sign in Times Square and then snap it in half over her knee.</p>
410	<p>There's this thing Jane likes to do when August kneels over her. August will be a few feet down the mattress, straddling her waist or sitting on her heels between Jane's legs, trying to work out where she wants to go first, and Jane will do this thing. She closes her eyes and stretches her arms out on either side of her, skims the back of her knuckles across the sheets, arches her back a little, moves her hips from side to side. Naked as anyone in the world has ever been with a silent, broad, closed-lipped smile on her face, wide open and reveling. Soaking it in like it's the ultimate indulgence to be here in August's bed and under August's attention, unblushing, unafraid, content.</p>

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	49
Bitch	13
Dick	10
Dyke	1
Fuck	167
Goddamn	15
Piss	10
Pussy	1
Queer	12
Shit	96
Tit	7