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Review of Some Text in This Book

used them to pin scraps of silk and velvet over the holes in her jeans, and her mom hadn't even mentioned it.

Park looked good in black. It made him look like he was drawn in charcoal. Thick, arched black eyebrows. Short black lashes. High, shining cheeks.

Dear Park, I like you so much. You have really beautiful cheeks.

The only thing she didn't like to think about, about Park, was what he could possibly see in her.

park

The pickup kept dying.

Park's dad wasn't saying anything, but Park knew he was getting pissed.

"Try again," his dad said. "Just listen to the engine, then shift."

That was an oversimplification if Park had ever heard one. Listen to the engine, depress the clutch, shift, gas, release, steer, check your mirrors, signal your turn, look twice for motorcycles....

The crappy part was that he was pretty sure he could do it if his dad wasn't sitting there, fuming. Park could see himself doing it in his head just fine.

It was like this at taekwondo sometimes, too. Park could never master something new if his dad was the one teaching it.

Clutch, shift, gas.

The pickup died.

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pussy

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Chapter 3

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...knew he was thinking like this, he'd call Park a **pussy**. Out loud, for once. If his grandma knew, she'd...



Chapter 16

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That he was a **pussy**.



Chapter 45

Page 253

Jeez, now his mom was calling him **pussy**.

Clutch, shift, grind.

"Start it again.... Now, don't think, just shift.... I said, *don't think*."

The truck died again. Park put his hands at ten and two and laid his head on the steering wheel, bracing himself. His dad was radiating frustration.

"Goddamn, Park, I don't know what to do with you. We've been working on this for a year. I taught your brother to drive in two weeks."

If his mom were here, she would have called foul at this. *You don't do that*, she'd say. *Two boys. Different.*

And his dad would grit his teeth.

"I guess Josh doesn't have any trouble not thinking," Park said.

"Call your brother stupid all you want," his dad said. "He can drive a manual transmission."

"But I'm only ever gonna get to drive the Impala," Park muttered into the dash, "and it's an automatic."

"That isn't the point," his dad half shouted. If Park's mom were here, she would have said, *Hey, mister, I don't think so. You go outside and yell at sky, you so angry.*

What did it say about Park that he wished his mom would follow him around defending him?

That he was a **pussy**.

That's what his dad thought. It's probably what he was thinking now. He was probably being so quiet because he was trying not to say it out loud.

"Try it again," his dad said.

"No, I'm done."

"You're done when I say you're done."

"No," Park said, "I'm done now."

"Well, I'm not driving us home. Try it again."

Park started the truck. It died. His dad slammed his giant hand against the glove box. Park opened the truck door and jumped to the ground. His dad shouted his name, but Park kept walking. They were only a couple miles from home.

If his dad drove by him on the way home, Park didn't notice. When he got back to his neighborhood, at dusk, Park turned down Eleanor's street instead of his own. There were two little reddish blond kids playing in her yard, even though it was kind of cold.

He couldn't see into the house. Maybe if he stood here long enough, she'd look out the window. Park just wanted to see her face. Her big brown eyes, her full pink lips. Her mouth kind of looked like the Joker's—depending on who was drawing him—really wide and curvy. Not psychotic, obviously ... Park should never tell her this. It definitely didn't sound like a compliment.

Eleanor didn't look out the window. But the kids were staring at him, so Park walked home.

park

XTC was no good for drowning out the morons at the back of the bus.

Park pressed his headphones into his ears.

Tomorrow he was going to bring Skinny Puppy or the Misfits. Or maybe he'd make a special bus tape with as much screaming and wailing on it as possible.

He could get back to New Wave in November, after he got his driver's license. His parents had already said Park could have his mom's Impala, and he'd been saving up for a new tape deck. Once he started driving to school, he could listen to whatever he wanted or nothing at all, and he'd get to sleep in an extra twenty minutes.

"That doesn't exist!" somebody shouted behind him.

"It so **fucking** does!" Steve shouted back. "Drunken Monkey style, man, it's a real **fucking** thing. You can kill somebody with it...."

"You're full of shit."

"You're full of shit," Steve said. "Park! Hey, Park."

"It so **fucking** does!" Steve shouted back.
"Drunken Monkey..."

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Page 13

...back. "Drunken Monkey style, man, it's a real **fucking** thing. You can kill somebody with it...."

Q Chapter 1
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...couldn't find anything. He pointed instead. "I **fucking** told you."

Park heard him, but didn't answer. Sometimes, if you ignored Steve for a minute, he moved on to someone else. Knowing that was 80 percent of surviving with Steve as your neighbor. The other 20 percent was just keeping your head down....

Which Park had momentarily forgotten. A ball of paper hit him in the back of the head.

"Those were my Human Growth and Development notes, dicklick," Tina said.

"I'm sorry, baby," Steve said. "I'll teach you all about human growth and development—what do you need to know?"

"Teach her Drunken Monkey style," somebody said.

"Park!" Steve shouted.

Park pulled down his headphones and turned to the back of the bus. Steve was holding court in the last seat. Even sitting, his head practically touched the roof. Steve always looked like he was surrounded by doll furniture. He'd looked like a grown man since the seventh grade, and that was before he grew a full beard. Slightly before.

Sometimes Park wondered if Steve was with Tina because she made him look even more like a monster. Most of the girls from the Flats were small, but Tina couldn't be five feet. Massive hair included.

Once, back in middle school, some guy had tried to give Steve shit about how he better not get Tina pregnant because if he did, his giant babies would kill her. "They'll bust out of her stomach like in *Aliens*," the guy said. Steve broke his little finger on the guy's face.

When Park's dad heard, he said, "Somebody needs to teach that Murphy kid how to make a fist." But Park hoped nobody would. The guy who Steve hit couldn't open his eyes for a week.

Park tossed Tina her balled-up homework. She caught it.

"Park," Steve said, "tell Mikey about Drunken Monkey karate."

"I don't know anything about it." Park shrugged.

"But it exists, right?"

"I guess I've heard of it."

"There," Steve said. He looked for something to throw at Mikey, but couldn't find anything. He pointed instead. "I fucking told you."

"What the fuck does Sheridan know about kung fu?" Mikey said.

"Are you retarded?" Steve said. "His mom's Chinese."

Mikey looked at Park carefully. Park smiled and narrowed his eyes. "Yeah, I guess I see it," Mikey said. "I always thought you were Mexican."

"Shit, Mikey," Steve said, "you're such a fucking racist."

"She's not Chinese," Tina said. "She's Korean."

"Who is?" Steve asked.

"Park's mom."

Park's mom had been cutting Tina's hair since grade school. They both had the exact same hairstyle: long spiral perms with tall feathered bangs.

"She's fucking hot is what she is," Steve said, cracking himself up. "No offense, Park."

Park managed another smile and slunk back into his seat, putting his headphones back on

Chapter 1

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"What the fuck does Sheridan know about kung fu?" Mikey said.

Chapter 1

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"Shit, Mikey," Steve said, "you're such a fucking racist."

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"She's fucking hot is what she is," Steve said, cracking...

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"But what's the fucking point?" Mikey asked.

Chapter 1

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...would you want to fight a drunk monkey? They're fucking huge. Like Every Which Way But Loose, man...

Chapter 1

Page 16

...tell whether he was another jerk or what. "Jesus-fuck," Park said softly, nodding to the space next to...

Chapter 6

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...she got back to her room, she closed the door. Fuck the breeze.

"I hope he gets hit by truck."

"A garbage truck."

"Yeah," Maisie would say, gritting her teeth, "and all the garbage will fall on his dead body."

"And then a bus will run him over."

"Yeah."

"I hope I'm on it."

Maisie put the cat back on Eleanor's bed. "It likes to sleep up there," she said.

"Do you call him Dad, too?" Eleanor asked.

"He is our dad now," Maisie said.

* * *

Eleanor woke up in the middle of the night. Richie had fallen asleep in the living room with the TV on. She didn't breathe on the way to the bathroom and was too scared to flush the toilet. When she got back to her room, she closed the door. Fuck the breeze.

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fuck

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Chapter 6

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...she got back to her room, she closed the door. Fuck the breeze.

Chapter 7

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That was another fucked-up thing about this school—effed up, she...

just add to the big, creepy goon look he was rocking.

But Park's face was like art. And not weird, ugly art either. Park had the sort of face you painted because you didn't want history to forget it.

Was Eleanor supposed to be mad at him still? Was she supposed to be indignant? Was she supposed to shout at him when she saw him in English class, *Was that for me? Or for you?*

She hung his trench coat in her locker and leaned in to take a deep breath. It smelled like Irish Spring and a little bit like potpourri and like something she couldn't describe any way other than *boy*.

* * *

Park wasn't in English or history, and he wasn't on the bus after school. Neither was Steve. Tina walked by Eleanor's seat with her head in the air; Eleanor looked away. Everybody else on the bus was talking about the fight. "Fucking Kung Fu, fucking David Carradine." And "Fuck David Carradine—fucking Chuck Norris."

Eleanor got off at Park's stop.

park

He was suspended for two days.

Steve was suspended for two weeks because this was his third fight of the year. Park felt kind of bad about that—because Park was the one who'd started the fight—but then he thought about all the other ridiculous crap Steve did every day and never got busted for.

Park's mom was so mad, she wouldn't come get him. She called his dad at work. When his dad showed up, the principal thought he was Steve's dad.

"Actually," his dad said, pointing at Park, "that one's mine."

The school nurse said Park didn't have to go to the hospital, but he looked pretty bad. He had a black eye and probably a broken nose.

Steve did have to go to the hospital. His tooth was loose, and the nurse was pretty sure he'd broken his finger.

Park waited in the office with ice on his face while his dad talked to the principal. The secretary brought him a Sprite from the teacher's lounge.

His dad didn't say anything until they were driving.

"Taekwondo is the art of self-defense," he said sternly.

Park didn't answer. His whole face was throbbing; the nurse wasn't allowed to give out Tylenol.

"Did you really kick him in the face?" his dad asked.

Park nodded.

"That had to be a jump kick."

"Jump reverse hook," Park groaned.

"No way."

Park tried to give his dad a dirty look, but any look at all felt like getting hit in the face with rocks.

"He's lucky you wear those little tennis shoes," his dad said, "even in the middle of winter.... Seriously, a jump reverse hook?"

Park nodded.

"Huh. Well, your mom is going to hit the goddamn roof when she sees you. She was at your grandma's house, crying, when she called me."

His dad was right. When Park walked in, his mom was practically incoherent.

She took him by the shoulders and looked up at his face, shaking her head. "Fighting!" she said, stabbing her index finger into his chest. "Fighting like white-trash dumb monkey..."

He'd seen her this mad at Josh before—he'd seen her throw a basket of silk flowers at Josh's head—but never at him.

"Waste," she said, "waste! Fighting! Can't trust you with own face."

His dad tried to put his hand on her shoulder, but she shook him off.

"Get the boy a steak, Harold," his grandma said, sitting Park at the kitchen table and inspecting his face.

"I'm not wasting a steak on that," his grandpa said.

His dad went to the cupboard to get Park some Tylenol and a glass of water.

"Can you breathe?" his grandma asked.

"Through my mouth," Park said.

"Your dad broke his nose so many times, he can only breathe through one nostril. That's why he snores like a freight train."

"No more taekwondo," his mom said. "No more fighting."

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...**fuck**ing Chuck Norris."



Chapter 24

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Then she heard Richie cussing, "What the **fuck**?"



Chapter 24

Page 156

"What the **fuck**" he said, slamming his fist into the door. The...



Chapter 25

Page 159

Fuck.



Chapter 25

Page 159

...knew that word from books and bathroom walls. **Fuck**ing woman. **Fuck**ing kids. **Fuck** you, you little bitch—who the...



Chapter 25

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...**fuck** touched my stereo?



Chapter 25

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She heard Richie complaining. "What the **fuck** is that noise?" And, "**Fuck**, Sabrina, can't you shut her up?"



Chapter 25

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...to make out what he was shouting at her. FAT and **FUCK** and BITCH.



Chapter 25

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FAT and **FUCK** and BITCH. And I WARNED YOU SABRINA.



Chapter 25

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FAT and **FUCK** and BITCH and BEGGING FOR IT, JUST **FUCK**ING BEGGING FOR IT.



Chapter 25

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FUCK THIS.

Crunch-lap.

Her fingertips trembled over the keyboard.

RE

Crch-crch-lap-tap.

Nothing happened. No one stirred. The house was hot and stiff and as quiet as a library in hell. Eleanor closed her eyes and jerked her chin into the air.

YOU GOING TO SCRABOROUGH FAIR PARSLEY SAAGE ROSEMARYRY AND THYME

Richie came up the stairs so fast, in Eleanor's head he was flying. In Eleanor's head, he burst open the door by hurling a ball of fire at it.

He was on her before she could brace herself, tearing the typewriter from her hands and throwing it into the wall so hard, it broke through the plaster and hung for a moment in the lath.

Eleanor was too shocked to make out what he was shouting at her. FAT and FUCK and BITCH.

He'd never come this close to her before. Her fear of him crushed her back. She didn't want him to see it in her eyes, so she pressed her face into her hands in her pillow.

FAT and FUCK and BITCH. And I WARNED YOU SABRINA.

"I hate you," Eleanor whispered into the pillow. She could hear things slamming. She could hear her mother in the doorway, talking softly, like she was trying to put a baby back to sleep.

FAT and FUCK and BITCH and BEGGING FOR IT, JUST FUCKING BEGGING FOR IT.

"I hate you," Eleanor said louder. "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you."

FUCK THIS.

"I hate you."

FUCK ALL OF YOU.

"Fuck you."

STUPID BITCHES.

"Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you."

WHAT DID SHE JUST SAY?

In Eleanor's head, the house shook.

Her mother was pulling on her then, trying to pull her out of bed. Eleanor tried to go with her, but she was too scared to stand up. She wanted to flatten herself to the floor and crawl away. She wanted to pretend that the room was full of smoke.

Richie was roaring. Her mother pulled Eleanor to the top of the stairs, then pushed her down. He was right behind them.

Eleanor fell against the banister and practically ran to the front door on all fours. She got outside and kept running to the end of the sidewalk. Ben was sitting on the porch, playing with his Hot Wheels. He stopped and watched Eleanor run by.

Eleanor wondered if she should keep running, but where would she go? Even when she was a little girl, she never fantasized about running away. She could never imagine herself past the edge of the yard. Where would she go? Who would take her?

When the front door opened again, Eleanor took a few steps into the street.

It was just her mom. She took Eleanor's arm and started walking quickly toward the neighbor's house.

If Eleanor would have known then what was about to happen, she would have run back to tell Ben good-bye. She would have looked for Maisie and Mouse and kissed them each hard on the cheek. Maybe she would have asked to go back inside to see the baby.

And if Richie had been inside waiting for her, maybe she would have dropped to her knees and begged him to let her stay. Maybe she would have said anything he wanted her to.

* * *

If he wanted that now—if he wanted her to beg for forgiveness, for mercy, if that was the price she had to pay to stay—she'd do it.

She hoped he couldn't see that.

She hoped none of them could see what was left of her.

park

She ignored Mr. Stessman in English class.

In history, she stared out the window.

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FUCK THIS.

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FUCK ALL OF YOU.

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"Fuck you."

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"Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you."

Chapter 32

Page 193

"It's just a fucking box!" Richie yelled. "If knew that you..."

Chapter 33

Page 206

"What the fuck is this?" he said, flicking his spoon in the...

Chapter 33

Page 206

"How could you forget the fucking pumpkin on Christmas," Richie said, hurling...

Chapter 33

Page 206

...pumpkin pie ... so this family can have a real fucking Christmas dinner."

Chapter 34

Page 213

...was twelve, and she couldn't imagine a guy fucking her mom over worse than her dad had.

Chapter 35

Page 225

"What the fuck, Park?"

Chapter 35

Page 225

"Look at him, Mindy, he's wearing makeup! Are you fucking kidding me, Park?"

She looked like a different person, and Park didn't *know* if he liked it better. Or at all.

He couldn't figure out why it upset her so much. Sometimes, it seemed like she was trying to hide everything that was pretty about her. Like she wanted to look ugly.

That was something his mother would say. Which is why he hadn't said it to Eleanor. (Did that count as holding back?)

He got why Eleanor tried so hard to look different. Sort of. It was because she *was* different—because she wasn't afraid to be. (Or maybe she was just *more* afraid of being like everyone else.)

There was something really exciting about that. He liked being near that, that kind of brave and crazy.

Unsettling, how? he'd wanted to ask her.

The next morning, Park took the Onyx eyeliner into the bathroom and put it on. He was messier than his mom, but he thought that might look better. More masculine.

He looked in the mirror. *This really make your eyes pop*, his mom always told her customers, and it was true. The eyeliner did make his eyes pop. It also made him look even less white.

Then Park did his hair like he usually did—flared up in the middle, all messy and tall, like it was reaching for something. Usually, as soon as he did that, Park combed his hair out and down again.

Today he left it wild.

* * *

His dad flipped at breakfast. *Flipped*. Park tried to sneak out without seeing him, but his mom was nonnegotiable about breakfast. Park hung his head over the cereal bowl.

"What's wrong with your hair?" his dad asked.

"Nothing."

"Wait a minute, look at me.... I said *look at me*."

Park lifted his head, but looked away.

"What the **fuck**, Park?"

"Jamie!" his mother said.

"Look at him, Mindy, he's wearing makeup! Are you **fucking** kidding me, Park?"

"No excuse to cuss," his mom said. She looked nervously at Park, like maybe this was her fault. Maybe it was. Maybe she shouldn't have tried out lipstick samples on him when he was in kindergarten. Not that he wanted to wear lipstick ...

Probably.

"Like hell it isn't," his dad roared. "Go wash your face, Park."

Park stayed where he was.

"Go wash your face, Park."

Park took a bite of cereal.

"Jamie..." his mom said.

"No, Mindy. No. I let these boys do pretty much anything they damn well please. But, no.

Park is not leaving this house looking like a girl."

"Plenty of guys wear makeup," Park said.

"What? What are you even talking about?"

"David Bowie," Park said. "Marc Bolan."

"I'm not listening to this. Wash your face."

"Why?" Park pressed his fists into the table.

"Because I said so. Because you look like a girl."

"So what else is new." Park shoved his cereal bowl away from him.

"What did you say?"

"I said, *what else is new*. Isn't that what you think?" Park felt tears on his cheeks, but he didn't want to touch his eyes.

"Go to school, Park," his mom said softly. "You miss your bus."

"Mindy..." his dad said, just barely restraining himself, "they'll tear him apart."

"You tell me Park all grown up now, almost man, make own decisions. So let him make own decisions. Let him go."

His dad didn't say anything; he'd never raise his voice to Park's mom. Park saw his opportunity and left.

* * *

He went to his own bus stop, not Eleanor's. He wanted to deal with Steve before he saw her. If Steve was going to beat the shit out of him for this, Park would prefer that Eleanor not be in the audience.

But Steve hardly mentioned it.

"Hey, Park, what the **fuck**, man, are you wearing makeup?"

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Page 225

"Look at him, Mindy, he's wearing makeup! Are you **fucking** kidding me, Park?"



Chapter 35

Page 227

"Hey, Park, what the **fuck**, man, are you wearing makeup?"



Chapter 35

Page 227

...said. "You look ready to bite the head off a **fucking** bat."



Chapter 40

Page 248

...and shook her head, reaching down for the bag. **Fuck** you, Tina. **Fuck** you to the moon.



Chapter 42

Page 253

...a can of Old Milwaukee. "Tina's house must be **fucking** Disneyland, huh? You can't get enough."



Chapter 48

Page 253

..., throwing a beer can across the garage. "Your **fucking** stepdad? Do you want me to kill him for you..."



Chapter 48

Page 253

" **Fucking** stepdads," Steve said. "Mother **fuckers** , all of them." He burst into laughter. "Oh, **fuck** , Mikey, did you hear that?" He kicked the Camaro...



Chapter 51

Page 253

Fuck . Just ... **fuck** .



Chapter 51

Page 253

"That little **fucker** ..." His dad looked down at the gun, then looked...



Chapter 57

Page 253

" **Fuck** ," Richie said, raising himself up on his knees...

"Hey, Red."

Eleanor ignored the girl's voice. She looked back at the street. What if somebody had heard her leave the house? What if Richie came after her? She stepped off the sidewalk into someone's yard. Behind a tree.

"Hey. Eleanor."

Eleanor looked around. She was standing in front of Steve's house. The garage door was mostly closed, propped open with a baseball bat. Eleanor could see someone moving inside, and Tina was walking down the driveway, holding a beer.

"Hey," Tina hissed. She looked as disgusted with Eleanor as ever. Eleanor thought about running again, but her legs felt weak.

"Your stepfather's been looking for you," Tina said. "He's been driving around the neighborhood all goddamn night."

"What did you tell him?" Eleanor said. *Did Tina do this? Is that how he knew?*

"I asked him if his **dick** was bigger than his truck," Tina said. "I didn't tell him anything."

"Did you tell him about Park?"

Tina narrowed her eyes. Then shook her head. "But somebody's going to."

He looked back at the book. He was going to think about this later, after she went home. He was going to think about Eleanor sitting in class, thinking about him, carefully writing his name someplace she thought only she would see.

And then he noticed something else. Written just as small, just as carefully, in all lowercase letters. *i know your a slut you smell like **cum***

"What," Eleanor said, trying to pull the book away.

Park held on to it. He felt the Bruce Banner blood rushing to his face. "Why didn't you tell me that this was still happening?"

"That what was still happening?"

He didn't want to say it, he didn't want to point to it. He didn't want their eyes on those words together.

Tina perched next to him on the arm of the couch and lit a cigarette. "We had quarters," she said. "We spent them on beer, remember?"

"Those weren't quarters," Steve said. "That was a ten."

Tina closed her eyes and blew smoke at the ceiling.

Eleanor closed her eyes, too. She tried to think about what she should do next, but nothing came to her. The music on the car radio switched from Sabbath to AC/DC to Zeppelin. Steve sang along; his voice was surprisingly light. "Hangman, hangman, turn your head awhile...."

Eleanor listened to Steve sing song after song over the wet hammer of her heartbeat. The beer can went warm in her hand.

*i know your a slut you smell like **cum***

She stood up. "I've got to get out of here."

"God," Tina said, "relax. He won't find you here. He's probably already at the Rail drinking it off."

"No," Eleanor said. "He's going to kill me."

It was true, she realized, even if it wasn't.

Tina's face was hard. "So, where you gonna go?"

"Away ... I have to tell Park."

MUST WATCH: BC MLA reads excerpt from book available to 11 year old's in public school "I know your a slut you smell like cum, Nothing but a bitch in heat."

<https://thecanadianindependent.substack.com/p/must-watch-bc-mla-reads-excerpt-from?r=15ijjv#play>

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