



Request for School Board Reconsideration of Library Media Materials

Author: Elana K. Arnold

Title: What Girls Are Made Of

Publisher: Carolrhoda Lab ® (April 1, 2017)

Request initiated by: Cynthia R Martens (October 24, 2023)

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1. To what in the book/material do you object: (Please be specific; cite pages, frames of films, dialogues, etc.)?

- X Sexually Explicit- graphic descriptions of sex including use of vibrator, and oral sex.
- X Visits to Planned Parenthood for birth control pill and later for other birth control options.. Abortion via the “morning after pill” without parental notification or consent
- X Profane Language: see list at end
- X Anti-Christian – Depictions of virgin martyrs who were tortured for their chastity and dedication to Christ. Nurse at Planned Parenthood affirming abortion while professing atheism.
- X Drug and Alcohol use
- X Social Media Bullying
- X Misogynistic Feminism

See attached detailed references.

2. Where did you first learn of this item?

I first heard about this book when I was doing research about issues in the Manatee County schools. I was looking for opportunities to help improve the school culture and academics. I

reviewed a number of the books that were on the lists of books being banned by school districts throughout Florida and in other states. I was horrified to see the inappropriate materials that are being made available to students – **our** students.

I decided to become involved with the School Board Elections as a starting point. The candidates in the 2022 Manatee County School Board Elections had platforms that promised to address some of these shortcomings. I also attended some meetings with the Media Committee as they were grappling with the legislative changes that were being made in Florida, waiting for guidance on how to address challenges of some of the books that we had flagged. At these meetings I found out that materials in the Library are violating Florida Law with regard to the protection of the students from pornographic sexual materials. In addition, I take issue with books that promote immorality, drug abuse, sexual confusion, suicide, anti-America sentiments, racism, activism etc.

I am not challenging the freedom to read but wish to ensure that young people not be subject to topics that are not appropriate for their level of maturity or mental health. Public libraries and book stores are available for adults to access whatever materials that they may choose. Our schools should take the high road when it comes to our young people.

Oh -- Just a reminder, the district policy:

- Require book selections to be free of pornography and prohibited materials harmful to minors, suited to student needs, and appropriate for the grade level and age group;
- Require consultation of reputable, professionally recognized sources and school community stakeholders for each selection;
- Provide for library media center collections based on reader interest, support of state academic standards and aligned curriculum, and the academic needs of students and faculty; and
- Provide for the regular removal or discontinuance of books based on factors specified in the bill, including those removed because of an objection by a parent or resident of the county.

3. Have you read the book in its entirety?

No, I have read excerpts and reviews:

Summary

At age 14, Nina Faye accepted her mother's assertion that there is no such thing as unconditional love. Mother went on to say she could stop loving Nina at any time, for any number of reasons. Comments like these — along with Mother's stories about tortured virgins and her general anger at the way men have treated women through the ages — began to shape Nina's views of life, womanhood and herself.

When Nina is 16, she drives herself to **Planned Parenthood for a female exam so she can get birth control**. Her boyfriend, Seth, has been urging her to get on the pill. Nina has figured out very specific ways to behave around Seth so she will remain in his favor. These include readily providing **sexual favors**, not calling him and playing games that leave him just a little hungry for her attention.

She admits to being a chameleon who changes herself completely with Seth's moods. To some degree, she recognizes her actions are desperate and self-deprecating. But she's convinced it is the only way to keep the boy she's wanted for so long.

For their three-month anniversary, **Seth buys her a vibrator**. She's disturbed and embarrassed by the gift, partly because Seth's brother helped him come up with the idea. Nina is supposed to wait a week between starting on birth control pills and having sex. She waits a few days less than that.

Seth takes Nina for a long hike, and they see people bungee jumping from cliffs. When Nina doesn't share Seth's enthusiasm for the idea of cliff jumping, he becomes sullen. They hike back in silence for hours. The only way she knows to try to get back in his good graces is to **give him oral sex just off of the trail in the woods**. It still isn't enough, and he breaks up with her.

Although Nina is primarily consumed with pleasing Seth, she feels a sense of purpose at the animal shelter where she's working. The shelter, in a much seedier part of town than Nina's posh neighborhood, has a high-kill rate. She likes her co-worker Bekah, and always hopes the dogs there will be adopted.

Nina started working there because she's been forced to do community service. When Seth's then-girlfriend accidentally failed to flush in the girls bathroom at school, Nina photographed the toilet full of her feces and menstrual blood and sent the photo to a friend. The picture made its way to a number of other people. Seth's embarrassment over the incident was part of what made him break up with the girl. **Nina got community service for her cruel act**, but she also ended up getting Seth.

Nina lives in a huge house with her parents. They are rarely home, and everyone goes into separate rooms when they are. Sometimes, Nina feels overwhelmed by the emptiness. Her parents' relationship is rocky. Nina's mother always wanted to return to Italy, where she met Nina's father. He was married to someone else at the time, and they had an affair.

Dad failed to follow through on a second honeymoon trip, so Mother took 14-year-old Nina instead. Nina recalls how she and her mother spent several weeks looking at museum after museum. **Nina was disturbed and fascinated to learn about virgin martyrs who were tortured for their commitments of chastity to Christ**.

Her mother shows her several pieces of art depicting women treated badly by men. One statue depicts a woman in holy ecstasy, but Nina's mother explains that the woman was just having an orgasm. She relays many other negative beliefs about men, both in history and present day. She also gets Nina drunk, because she says Nina will get drunk at some point anyway.

Shortly after her breakup with Seth, **Nina discovers she's pregnant. She doesn't even consider telling her distant parents and drives herself to Planned Parenthood. There, she**

receives an in-depth explanation of the different abortion processes. She chooses to take pills that will make her abort at home. Her nurse tells Nina that she doesn't believe in God, but if she did, she would thank Him every day for both of her abortions. She also urges Nina to have someone with her for support during the process.

Nina knows her parents are both going to be out of town for a while, so they won't even have to know. She decides to ask Bekah, even though they're not close. Bekah brings the ingredients for soothing foods and stays overnight with Nina through the pain and bleeding until the abortion is complete. At Nina's follow-up appointment with Planned Parenthood, she feels relieved to learn she's no longer pregnant.

Although she says she has no desire to have sex with anyone, the nurse urges her to choose a type of birth control. The text provides details about the several options Nina is given. She finally chooses to get an implant so she'll be safe for several years. Nina leaves feeling the abortion was the best and kindest decision she ever made for herself.

One night at the animal shelter, people bring in a dog that has been abused nearly to death. The people say a car hit it and leave before they can be questioned. Nina and the woman on duty are forced to put the dog out of its misery by giving it a euthanizing shot.

Distraught, Nina goes to find Seth. He's back together with his old girlfriend and tells Nina to go home. The woman at the shelter tells Nina she *does* believe in unconditional love but that it is supremely dangerous. She says that when you love someone unconditionally, they are your god and you are their fool.

Nina writes a collection of magical realism stories about the martyred virgins and their tortures. She can't bring herself to turn it in for a grade because it's so personal. When she apologizes to Seth's girlfriend, she gives her the stories. Nina talks to Bekah about love and abortion and her parents.

Bekah says lots of people don't get good, loving parents. She says she believes service is more important than love, because you are doing something active rather than waiting around for someone to give you something. Nina is inspired by this idea and vows to be more than the sum of her family, history and mistakes. She takes a hike on her own and says the crisp air around her smells like baptism.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN

Nina writes stories about young women with strong faith and a passion for the Lord. All are tortured for keeping their vows of chastity to Christ. They live happily ever after only once they are dead and with Jesus. Bekah says her mom's family is full of **right-wing Christian nut jobs** who were upset when her mom converted to the Jewish faith.

SEXUAL CONTENT

The text includes detailed descriptions and information about gynecological exams (including pap smears and breast exams), contraceptive choices and use, periods, STDs, **foreplay, intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, vibrator use, orgasms, erections, emergency contraception (morning-after pill), pregnancy tests (at home and in a clinic), abortion (in-clinic and**

medical abortion at home with pills), pot smoking and wishbone dolls (sex toys).

Body parts and bodily function including *labia, pubis, vulva, vagina, breasts, penis, nipples, cum, semen, hardness, erections and orgasms* are mentioned frequently.

4. **Is there any additional information you would like us to consider in our evaluation? What would you like the final outcome to be for this library media item or items?**

This book is a depressing and disturbing. I can't understand the "literary merit" of having a lonely, tortured young girl from a highly dis-functional family in engage in sex, then experience a horrific abortion almost as a rite of passage only to be rejected by her boyfriend. The sexual activities and information is also not appropriate as it promotes sexual activity for teens. This book is not appropriate for a minor according to Florida guidelines and for anyone with taste.

Remove from all Manatee School District Schools and Media Centers and disallow future purchases– see below

**Manatee High School
Parrish Community High School**

February 15, 2023

WHAT *Girls* ARE MADE OF

BY ELANA K. ARNOLD

Instead I flick the vibrator's switch back on, I grip the black handle tightly, and I press the nose of it against the center of me. The next orgasm hits almost at once, more of a tsunami than a wave, and I'm overcome and lost in it. When the crest of it passes, I don't turn off the vibrator, I don't take it away. I shove it more firmly against me, and I squirm beneath its relentless hum. I force myself to come again and again, until the pleasure morphs into punishment, until I ache, until I lose count of how many times I've come and how many ways I've lost Seth. The orgasms are a seething ocean, each cresting atop the one before...

Page 68

Seth thrusts forward onto the bed and between my legs and against the thin barrier that separates us. The hard nose of my teddy bear pokes against my back and I twist to reach it, grab it by the arm or leg, and toss it to the ground. My thong gets twisted as Seth takes it off, and I hear it rip when he grows impatient and yanks too hard... and then Seth rises above me like a wave and smiles, and I smile back and then he pushes into me, hard and fast and it hurts and feels good all mixed together. He puts one hand on my stomach to hold me still- he likes it best, he says, when I don't move a lot, when I let him be in charge, and I know too that he likes to feel himself inside of me, under his hand, the back and forth motion of it. It's clear from his face when he's close, and I brace myself for a second, for the way he usually pulls out roughly right at the end, but then he looks into my eyes and grins, asks, "Okay?" "Okay," I answer, and then his eyes close and his mouth twists and a vein on his forehead bulges out and he thrusts again and again hard into the center of me and I want to like it but I sort of don't, and I feel him spasm, and spasm, and he makes a sound that would be funny in different circumstances before he is still. "Fuck," he says, collapsing against me.

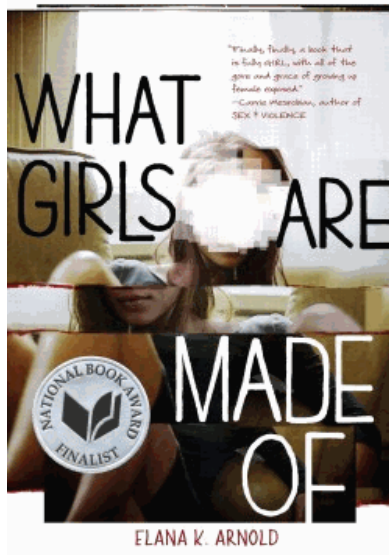
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...and don't restart the vibrator until it's muffled underneath the blankets. ...I let my knees splay open and find my slit with my fingers, the soft hooded nub at it's apex, and I guide the red rubber ball against it...My back arches and I hiss in a breath at its first wonderful, terrible contact. A jolt of pleasure shoots through me and I yank the vibrator away before placing it back against me, this time very gently...It almost hurts, the hum, the buzz, the stroke of it, so different from the jet of warm water that pours from the showerhead, so different from the press of my own hand, so different from the wet lapping of Seth's tongue. It's remembering Seth's tongue that pushes me into the first orgasm, the sweet way he'd press it just there, right where I'm holding the rubber tip of the vibrator, the anxious, ineffective, hopeful lapping of his tongue. And I squeeze my eyes shut and my hips buck up against the vibrator, and my neck gets tight and my toes are stuck in a weird curled spasm, and I can't tell and don't care which way is up and which way is down.... I'm hearing the buzz of the tool in my hand, and every part of me vibrates in a way that makes me forget my name, and I don't care I don't care I don't care, just as long as this feeling persists...I'm lost in the vibration of my coming...and my legs spread into butterfly pose then and fold up like wings. that pleasure.

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WHAT GIRLS ARE MADE OF



Summary of Concerns: The book contains explicit sexual nudity and sexual activities; controversial religious commentary; and profanity.

Young Adult

By Elena K. Arnold

ISBN: 978-1512410242



4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page 8

I'd driven myself there, to the Costa Mesa Planned Parenthood, which was joke of a name because no one went there planning for parenthood, they all went planning for un-parenthood.

Page 9

As long as they're at it, what's a little boob play, between friends?

Page 14

The gloves go in the bin marked MEDICAL WASTE next to the door on her way out, as though the touch of me- of my vagina- is toxic.

Page 19

I laid a towel on the sheet in case I bled, and then I watched Seth roll the condom over his penis, and I rested my head on my pillow and watched his hands push into the flesh of my thighs, spreading them apart, and I watched him maneuver his latex wrapped erection, as he pushed and tried to get inside.

Page 20

I know it isn't okay to care this much about a boy. I know it's not feminist, or whatever, to make all my decisions based on what Seth would think.

If Seth wants to have sex and I'm on my period, I'm the one to suggest that I give him head.

Page 22

It's the way his fingers look glazed like donut after they have been inside of me.

Page 25

"It's a vibrator," he says.

Then I do get it, and I feel melted by the shame.

"It's no big deal," he says. "Wade says it's hard for some girls to come without some...help."

"So you know the girl I'm dating, Nina? She's pretty cool. But no matter how much we do it, or how long I lick her, she just can't come."

Page 34

Then he's there, naked, the thick horn of him we-tipped and hard, a rush of wetness floods the cotton lining of my thong.

"Take off your bra."

Seth thrusts forward onto the bed and between my legs and against the thin barrier that separates us. The hard nose of my teddy bear pokes against my back and I twist to reach it, grab it by the arm or leg, and toss it to the ground.

My thong gets twisted as Seth takes it off, and I hear it rip when he grows impatient and yanks too hard. I shouldn't care but I do, because the thong is brand new and it matches the bra, and lace can't be sewn back together. But I don't say anything, and then Seth rises above me like a wave and smiles, and I smile back and then he pushes into me, hard and fast and it hurts and feels good all mixed together.

He puts one hand on my stomach to hold me still- he likes it best, he says, when I don't move a lot, when I let him be in charge, and I know too that he likes to feel himself inside of me, under his hand, the back and forth motion of it.

It's clear from his face when he's close, and I brace myself for a second, for the way he usually pulls out roughly right at the end, but then he looks into my eyes and grins, asks, "Okay?" "Okay," I answer, and then his eyes close and his mouth twists and a vein on his forehead bulges out and he thrusts again and again hard into the center of me and I want to like it but I sort of don't, and I feel him spasm, and spasm, and he makes a sound that would be funny in different circumstances before he is still. "Fuck," he says, collapsing against me.

Page 35

Soft now, his penis shrinks inside me and then slips out.

When I get up to go to the bathroom, a runny path of semen, like egg whites, trails down my leg. I am horrified. It feels like I've just peed myself. I don't know what I expected. I guess I thought it would just sort of absorb inside me, or really, I guess I never thought about what would happen at all. The other times when we didn't use a condom, Seth would pull out and come on my stomach or- those two times- on my back. And then he'd use his T-shirt or a sock to wipe me off. But this time, as I walked to the bathroom connected to my room, the sticky wetness drips down my thigh, a couple of drops falling silently to the carpet.

Page 36

And I don't need the stupid vibrator, either.

Page 49

The box is in front of her. It's violet and white with a green arc over the letters that read Plan B One-Step, and beneath, in pink, Emergency Contraceptive.

"It's just one pill," the pharmacist says. "You take it by mouth withing seventy-two hours of unprotected sex. Has it been less than seventy-two hours?"

Page 57

I pull him off the trail behind some tree, and I push him against a tall rock and before I can worry if someone will come by and see us I go down on my knees like the guy on the bridge, except instead of tightening a harness I'm unfastening his pants.

I pull him out of his underwear and he's soft in my hand. I don't look up at his face before I open my mouth and pull him into it, and I pull and I suck until he grows hard and he makes sounds that mean he likes it, and I keep going and going and when he says, "I'm going to come," I don't pull away.

The jet of him is warm and salty and tastes like thickened sweat. He breathes hard and his hands are tight fists at his eyes.

Page 58

Yet I, least of all souls

Take him in my hand

Eat Him and drink Him,

And do with Him what I will!

...She was talking about worshipping Jesus, but come on. She was talking about sex, right? Sex with Jesus?

That was what she wanted- to give Jesus head. And I totally understand it.

Page 59

You want to consume the person you love. You want to eat him so he's inside you, so he becomes part of you, so he can't leave you.

Grandparents eating grandchildren. Chewing the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus every Sunday in church. Swallowing Seth's cum on the trail. Is it different? Is it?

Page 67

I tun up the volume and yank back the covers on my bed, slide beneath them, and don't restart the vibrator until it's muffled underneath the blankets.

Between the closed door and the loud music and the heavy quilt, no one but me could possibly hear the angry buzz of Seth's first and final gift to me. I let my knees splay open and find my slit with my fingers, the soft hooded nub at it's apex, and I guide the red rubber ball against it.

My back arches and I hiss in a breath at its first wonderful, terrible contact. A jolt of pleasure shoots through me and I yank the vibrator away before placing it back against me, this time very gently.

It almost hurts, the hum, the buzz, the stroke of it, so different from the jet of warm water that pours from the showerhead, so different from the press of my own hand, so different from the wet lapping of Seth's tongue.

It's remembering Seth's tongue that pushes me into the first orgasm, the sweet way he'd press it just there, right where I'm holding the rubber tip of the vibrator, the anxious, ineffective, hopeful lapping of his tongue. And I squeeze my eyes shut and my hips buck up against the vibrator, and my neck gets tight and my toes are stuck in a weird curled spasm, and I can't tell and don't care which way is up and which way is down, and the music is playing and I hear the words of the song and picture myself heeled at Seth's side, a faithful pet, a happy dog, an obedient good girl who follows rules and gets rewarded. I'm hearing the buzz of the tool in my hand, and every part of me vibrates in a way that makes me forget my name, and I don't care I don't care I don't care, just as long as this feeling persists, and I'm wound so tight that I might break like a thread, like a cord, like a promise, and then I do break, I break and I shatter and I'm lost in the vibration of my coming, and maybe I make a sound and maybe I bite my lip and my legs spread into butterfly pose then and fold up like wings and I fly, and then I shiver and it's behind me, that pleasure.

Page 68

Instead I flick the vibrator's switch back on, I grip the black handle tightly, and I press the nose of it against the center of me. The next orgasm hits almost at once, more of a tsunami than a wave, and I'm overcome and lost in it. When the crest of it passes, I don't turn off the vibrator, I don't take it away. I shove it more firmly against me, and I squirm beneath its relentless hum. I force myself to come again and again, until the pleasure morphs into punishment, until I ache, until I lose count of how many times I've come and how many ways I've lost Seth. The orgasms are a seething ocean, each cresting atop the one before, and they drag me back and away, like an undertow.

Page 91

I lay in a bath full of tepid water, imagining myself as Teresa, massaging myself with a rough washcloth, pretending it was the hand of God, until I came, suddenly and hard, for the first time. My mother was in the next room, and she heard me in there, she heard the sound I made, a sharp inward breath, a little high-pitched cry.

Page 105

I have options. I can continue the pregnancy. I can get an abortion.

“I don’t want a baby,” I say. I’m done crying now, and I absolutely know the answer to this question. I know it more surely than any question I’ve ever answered, ever.

“Okay,” says the counselor. “This is California, so you aren’t required to have parental permission to move forward, but we do recommend that you consider having someone with you.”

Page 107

Equal opportunity abortion.

“Have you ever had an abortion?”

Jesus. That’s not the kind of question you ask someone.

But Angie doesn’t look offended. “Yes,” she says. “I’m not really supposed to talk about my own experiences, but yes. Twice. Once the kind you’re having, with the Abortion Pill, and once before that, the surgical kind.”

I don’t ask why, but Angie smiles like she knows I’m wondering.

“The first time, I was a little younger than you. My boyfriend and I were sexually active, but the condom we were using broke. I should have come to a place like this and gotten the Morning After Pill, but I didn’t even know it existed. By the time I admitted to myself that my period was never going to come, I was thirteen weeks pregnant. Too far along for the Abortion Pill. The second time was just last year.”

“Oh,” I say. “Were you sorry? Are you sorry?”

Angie shakes her head. “I don’t believe in God,” she says, “But if I did, I’d thank him every day for both of my abortions.”

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“That’s everything. The abortion begins after you take this first pill. A pregnancy can’t survive without the progesterone to support it. So take a few minutes if you’d like, for yourself, before you take it. Then make a follow-up appointment at the front desk before you leave.”

I don’t need a few minutes. I pick up the cup that holds the pill and tip it into my mouth and swallow it down with the water.

“I’m pregnant and I’m taking pills so that I can stop being pregnant and the doctor said I shouldn’t be alone”-

Page 120

I sit on the toilet and I cramp and bleed, liquid blood and blood clots, something that might be tissue.

Page 124

I lie back, for a third time, my uterus looks like an empty cave. “Great,” she says. “You’re no longer pregnant.”

Page 181

That nurse practitioner and Angie at Planned Parenthood, and how much they helped me.

Page 188

“I could rape you,” he said.

Profanity Count

Ass 2 Bitch 2 Cunt 1 Dick 3 Fuck 14 Piss 1 Shit 16