Dear Beaufort County School Board,

Please consider this a formal appeal to the Review Committee's recommendation to the Board for book numbers:

- **37- *The Black Flamingo*** by Dean Atta **— returned completely**
- **38- *Burned*** by Ellen Hopkins **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **39- *Clockwork Princess*** by Cassandra Clare **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **40- *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*** by Jonathan Safron Foer **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **41- *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*** by Melinda Lo **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **42- *Out of Darkness*** by Ashley Hope Perez **— returned completely**
- **43- *Rumble*** by Ellen Hopkins **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **44- *Smoke*** by Ellen Hopkins **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **45- *The Truth about Alice*** by Jennifer Mathieu **— returned to grades 9-12**
- **46- *Water for Elephants*** by Sarah Gruen **— returned completely**

Again, I will ask that all pertinent material concerning the Review Committees be made available to the complainants upon notification of decisions by the Committees. As it is now, a Freedom of Information Act request is required. This has yet to be addressed. I do not feel that I can fully complete my appeals without this information being provided in a timely manner.

As I've stated before, the committees already have a majority of District employees on them. To fill the community spots with District employees further stacks them with members that likely will be biased in their review. This should be more of a review by the community than a review by employees who may feel their integrity and professionalism are being questioned. I cannot tell you how many times I've heard that we just need to trust the teachers and librarians to do what they were trained to do. Were they trained to bring in material that is not age or grade appropriate? If not, why are there books in our school libraries that can be considered pornographic? Is it that they are intentionally bringing in these books or have they put too much trust in the associations and publishers to not actually look at a book's content to realize it is not appropriate? Books with content of this nature were not in school libraries 20 years ago. Why are they now? Is it intentional? Now that the books are being reviewed and returned to the library by a majority vote by the Board, it is intentional.

The second thing that I would like to address is a study by The American College of Pediatricians titled ***The Impact of Pornography on Children***[1] linked below.

[1] "The Impact of Pornography on Children American College of Pediatricians – June 2016 ." *ACPEDS.ORG*, June 2016,

I hope that each of you takes the time to read this study. It is extremely important to the topic that is being addressed- sexuality in books found in our School District's libraries.

ABSTRACT: The availability and use of pornography has become almost ubiquitous among adults and adolescents. Consumption of pornography is associated with many negative emotional, psychological, and physical health outcomes. These include increased rates of depression, anxiety, acting out and violent behavior, younger age of sexual debut, sexual promiscuity, increased risk of teen pregnancy, and a distorted view of relationships between men and women. For adults, pornography results in an increased likelihood of divorce which is also harmful to children. The American College of Pediatricians urges healthcare professionals to communicate the risks of pornography use to patients and their families and to offer resources both to protect children from viewing pornography and to treat individuals suffering from its negative effects.

https://acpeds.org/assets/The-Impact-of-Pornography-on-Children.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1sU7T1xhn3N04l49XDh1cDTgfBcjmrk9RZmW9PHIeJitWdmVDN3GtNcvc

I would like to address the misinformation about the reason for these book review requests. Many from the other side say that it is to target minorities (especially black) and LGBTQ+ authors. I will once again share the statistics with you for the 96 books that I submitted. I want to reiterate that the sole purpose of challenging these books was because of the adult content that they contain with some actually containing pornography. The racial makeup of the authors is 22% minority with only 11% being black. I was able to determine the sexual makeup of the authors as 16% identifying LGBTQ+ with another 3% probable out of the 68 authors. So in total a probability of 19% of the 68 authors.

Statistics for Submitted Book List

Total Number of Books Submitted	96
Number of Books with Authors	95

Racial Makeup of Authors

Percentage of White Authors	78%
Percentage of Minority Authors	22%
Black	11%

---

https://acpeds.org/assets/The-Impact-of-Pornography-on-Children.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1sU7T1xhn3N04l49XDh1cDTgfBcjmrk9RZmW9PHIeJitWdmVDN3GtNcvc.

Asian	4%
Hispanic	4%
Afghan	1%
Iranian	1%

<u>Sexual Preference Based on Biographies of Authors (68 Authors)</u>

Percentage of Authors Who are Heterosexual	81%
Percentage of Authors who are LGBTQ+	16%
Percentage of Authors who might be LGBTQ+	3%

The First Amendment does not protect supplying non-age appropriate material to minors. The state of South Carolina considers the age of majority to be 18. We do have 18 year olds in high school but that does not mean that younger students should be granted access to material that is not appropriate for them. Unfortunately, many of the Associations and Organizations are complicit in labeling literature "young adult" while defining that as age 12 and up. Ages 12-17 are MINORS! By definition, according to the state, a young adult is 18 and over.

Please use the hyperlink for each book to review why they should not be available to minors without parental consent:

The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta Rated 3
Voted to go back into circulation without restrictions meaning this book can be checked out by someone as young as Kindergarten. Although they likely cannot read it, an advanced 3rd grader would be able to. This is extremely concerning considering the content it contains.
Available at the following schools:
Beaufort Middle School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains alternate sexualities; inexplicit sexual nudity; sexual activities; drug and alcohol use; alternate gender ideologies; controversy racial commentary; and references to racism.

Profanity	**Count**
Bitch	3
Faggy	1

Piss	1
Shit	5

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/B/The%20Black%20Flamingo.pdf

Burned by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Battery Creek High School
Bluffton High School
HE McCracken Middle School
Hilton Head Island High School
May River High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; drug and alcohol use and abuse; profanity and derogatory terms; suicidal ideation; and violence including child abuse.

Profanity	**Count**
Ass	4
Bitch	8
Fag	1
Fuck	9
Goddammit/Goddamn	8
Gook	3
Piss	5
Shit	11

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/B/Burned.pdf

Clockwork Princess by Cassandra Clare Rated 3
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.

Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head High School
May River High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities.

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/C/Clockwork%20princess.pdf

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safron Foer Rated 3
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School
May River High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual nudity and sexual activities.

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/E/Extremely%20Loud%20and%20INcredibly%20Close.pdf

Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Melinda Lo Rated 4
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Hilton Head Island High School
HE McCracken Middle School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains obscene sexual activities; sexual nudity; alternate sexualities; and derogatory term.

LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB

By Malinda Lo

She brushed her nose against Kath's neck, and she wanted to bottle up the fragrance of her. She felt Kath's pulse beneath her lips, and Kath's hand cupping the back of her head, and at last, Kath's mouth touching hers.
It was still a shock to feel it: the connection between their bodies, as if it had risen from the marrow of her bones, thick and charged and sweet. Before, she had been afraid of being discovered and afraid of discovering herself, but the more they kissed, the less afraid she felt, until her fear was subsumed beneath much more powerful feelings.
She wanted to touch Kath's skin. She tugged the hem of Kath's blouse out from her skirt and slid her hands beneath it, and finally she felt the warm skin of her back, and the quiver of Kath's body as she touched her. Kath drew back briefly and reached for the buttons of Lily's blouse, asking, "Can I?" Lily helped her unbutton it, and then Kath put her hand on the bare skin of Lily's waist, and Lily closed her eyes. Kath's hand slid up over her ribs and cupped the curve of her breast, and her thumb trailed electrically over the outline of Lily's nipple through her bra. And then she pushed her leg between Lily's thighs, and Lily gasped at how it felt—the pressure and the movement there—and it was exactly what she wanted. She was astonished by the way this worked between them so instinctively, as if they had been made to do this together.
But Lily felt as if there were no time. She couldn't entirely forget that they only had an hour together. A desire for something more was rising inside her as Kath moved against her, their skirts riding up as their bodies rubbed together. It felt urgent, as if they were counting down the seconds till a bomb would explode. There was no time; they had to do this right now. And she reached for the hem of her skirt and tugged it up to her hips, and she took Kath's hand and moved it to the cleft of her body.
Kath hesitated. "Are you sure?" she whispered.
"Please," Lily said, overcome.

So Kath put her hand between Lily's legs, and Lily helped her, fumbling with her underwear. It was awkward, but when Kath's fingers touched her, they both gasped.
"Am I in the right place?" Kath asked.
"Yes," Lily whispered.
It all felt like the right place. Kath's fingers rubbed and rubbed, and it was so marvelous, so intoxicating—she'd never even really touched herself like this before—and now she was pinned against the side of the filing cabinet, and it made a dull metallic thud as her hand slapped against it.
"I'm sorry," she gasped, but she couldn't really be sorry because it was all happening so quickly, so unexpectedly, and she clutched Kath close to her as the sensations took over, her body shuddering, and she pressed her face into Kath's neck until it was over.
There was a minute in which she breathed in and out, in and out, and Kath held her gently, her head resting against the filing cabinet. Then Kath kissed her neck and shifted herself over Lily's thigh and whispered, "Can I—is this all right?"
"Yes," Lily said, and she leaned into Kath, holding her as she moved, feeling Kath's wetness slide against her leg.
…How different this was from when Lily was alone in her room. How different, and how much more: an overflowing amount of more. Kath kept rocking against her thigh, her breath ragged against Lily's cheek, and Lily stroked her hand over Kath's hair tenderly, feeling impossibly close to her. How precious she was, and how miraculous.

-Page 286

4/5 Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

rated by BookLooks.org

Profanity	Count
Dyke	4

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/L/Last%20Night%20at%20the%20Telegraph%20Club.pdf

Out of Darkness by Ashley Hope Perez Rated 3
Voted to go back into circulation without restrictions meaning this book can be checked out by someone as young as Kindergarten. Although they likely cannot read it, an advanced 3rd grader would be able to. This is extremely concerning considering the content it contains.
Available at the following schools:
Battery Creek High School
Beaufort Middle School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School School
May River High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains controversial racial commentary; derogatory terms and mild profanity; violence; explicit sexual nudity and explicit sexual activities including sexual assault and battery of a minor.

Profanity	Count
Ass	1
Bitch	1
Cunt	1
Nigger	12
Piss	1
Pussy	3
Shit	6

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/O/Out%20of%20Darkness.pdf

Rumble by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
May River High School
Hilton Head Island High School
Book Summary:
A teenage boy's entire life and belief system is turned upside-down after his younger brother commits suicide.
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; alcohol and drug use; profanity; suicide; and controversial religious commentary.

Profanity	**Count**
Ass	16
Bitch	17
Dick	14
Fag	3
Fuck	30
Piss	23
Prick	23
Pussy	8
Shit	35

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/R/Rumble.pdf

Smoke by Ellen Hopkins Rated 3
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
May River High School

Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual activities including sexual assault; sexual nudity; profanity and derogatory terms; alcohol and drug use; and violence including domestic violence and child abuse.

Profanity	**Count**
Ass	7
Bitch	7
Dyke	1
Faggot/Fag	4
Fuck	5
Piss	1

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/S/Smoke.pdf

The Truth about Alice by Jennifer Mathieu Rated 3
Voted to only go back into Circulation to High Schools. Meaning this book could be checked out by someone as young as 14.
Available at the following schools:
Battery Creek High School
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
Hilton Head Island High School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual nudity; sexual activities; alcohol use; and profanity.

Profanity	**Count**
Ass	11
Bitch	2
Dick	7
Fuck	3
Piss	9
Pussy	3

Shit	23
Tit	6

http://booklooks.org/data/files/Book%20Looks%20Reports/T/the%20truth%20about%20alice.pdf

Water for Elephants by Sarah Gruen Rated 4
Voted to go back into circulation without restrictions meaning this book can be checked out by someone as young as Kindergarten. Although they likely cannot read it, an advanced 3rd grader would be able to. This is extremely concerning considering the content it contains especially since it is rated 4 out of 5.
Available at the following schools:
Beaufort High School
Bluffton High School
May River High School
HE McCracken Middle School
Summary of Concerns:
This book contains sexual nudity; sexual activities; and profanity.
Page 44 The woman is a statuesque redhead with eyelashes too long to be real and a beauty spot painted next to her full lips. Her legs are long, her hips full, her chest a stupefaction. She is down to a G- string, a glimmering translucent shawl, and a gloriously overflowing brassiere. She shakes her shoulders, keeping gelatinous time with the small band of musicians to her right.
She takes a few strides, sliding across the stage in feathered mules. The snare drum rolls, and she stops, her mouth open in mock surprise. She throws her head back, exposing her throat and sliding her hands down around the cups of her brassiere. She leans forward, squeezing until the flesh swells between her fingers.
I scan the sidewalls. A pair of shoe tips peeks under the edge of the canvas. I approach, keeping close to the wall. Just in front of the shoes, I swing the pipe and smack the canvas. There's a grunt, and the shoes disappear. I pause with my ear to the seam, and then return to my post.
The redhead sways with the music, caressing her shawl with lacquered nails. It has gold or silver woven through it and sparkles as she slides it back and forth across her shoulders. She drops forward suddenly at the waist, throws her head back, and shimmies. The men holler. Two or three stand, shaking their fists in encouragement. I glance at Cecil, whose steely gaze tells me to watch them.
The woman stands up, turns her back, and strides to the center of the stage. She passes the shawl between her legs, slowly grinding against it. Groans rise from the audience. She spins so she's facing us and continues sliding the shawl back and

forth, pulling it so tight the cleft of her vulva shows.
“Take it off, baby! Take it all off!”
The men are getting rowdier; more than half are on their feet. Cecil beckons me forward with one hand. I step closer to the rows of folding chairs.
The shawl drops to the floor and the woman turns her back once again. She shakes her hair so it ripples over her shoulder blades and raises her hands so that they meet at the clasp of her brassiere. A cheer rises from the crowd. She pauses to look over her shoulder and winks, running the straps coquettishly down her arms. Then she drops the bra to the floor and spins around, clutching her breasts in her hands. A howl of protest rises from the men.
“Aw, come on, sugar, show us what you got!”
She shakes her head, pouting coyly.
“Aw, come on! I spent fifty cents!”
She shakes her head, blinking demurely at the floor. Suddenly her eyes and mouth spring open and she pulls her hands away. Those majestic globes drop. They come to an abrupt stop before swinging gently, even though she’s standing perfectly still. There’s a collective intake of breath, a moment of awed silence before the men whoop in delight.
“Atta girl!”
“Lord have mercy!”
“Hot damn!”
She caresses herself, lifting and kneading, rolling her nipples between her fingers. She stares lasciviously down at the men, running her tongue across her upper lip. A drum roll begins. She grasps each hardened point firmly between thumb and forefinger and pulls one breast so that its nipple points at the ceiling. Its shape changes utterly as the weight redistributes. Then she drops it—it falls suddenly, almost violently. She hangs onto the nipple and lifts the other in the same upward arc. She alternates, picking up speed. Lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping—by the time the drum cuts out and the trombone kicks in, her arms move so fast they’re a blur, her flesh an undulating, pumping mass. The men holler, screaming their approval.
“Oh yeah!”
“Gorgeous, baby! Gorgeous!”
“Praise the sweet Lord!” Another drum roll begins. She leans forward at the waist and those glorious tits swing, so heavy, so low—a foot long, at least, wider and rounded at the ends, as though each contains a grapefruit.
She rolls her shoulders; first one, and then the other, so her breasts move in opposite directions. As the speed increases, they swing in ever-widening circles, lengthening as they gain momentum. Before long, they’re meeting in the center with an audible slap.
Jesus. There could be a riot in the tent and I wouldn’t know it. There’s not a drop

of blood left in my head.
The woman straightens up and then drops into a curtsy. When she stands, she scoops a breast up to her face and slides her tongue around its nipple. Then she slurps it into her mouth. She stands there shamelessly sucking her own tit as the men wave their hats, pump their fists, and scream like animals. She drops it, gives the slick nipple a final tweak, and then blows the men a kiss. She leans down long enough to retrieve her diaphanous shawl and disappears, her arm raised so that the shawl trails behind her, a shimmering banner.
“All right then, boys,” says Cecil, clapping his hands and climbing the stairs to the stage. “Let’s have a big hand for our Barbara!” The men cheer and whistle, clapping with hands held high.
“Yup, ain’t she something? What a lady. And it’s your lucky day, boys, because for tonight only, she’ll be accepting a limited number of gentleman callers after the show. This is a real honor, fellas. She’s a gem, our Barbara. A real gem.”
The men crowd toward the exit, slapping each other on the back, already exchanging memories.
“Did you see those titties?”
“Man, what a rack. What I wouldn’t give to play with those for a while.”
I’m glad nothing requires my intervention, because I’m trying hard to maintain my composure. This is the first time I’ve ever seen a woman naked and I don’t think I’ll ever be the same.
Page 63 I’m lying on the floor, looking up at the stripper’s dangling breasts. Her nipples, brown and the size of silver dollar pancakes, swing in circles—out and around, SLAP. Out and around, SLAP. I feel a pang of excitement, then remorse, and then nausea. And then I’m…
I’m…
Page 78 Rumor has it that Chaz's tiny penis even gets erections.
Page 81 I flip one open. A crudely drawn Olive Oyl lies on a bed with her legs open, naked but for her shoes. She spreads herself with her fingers. Popeye appears in a thought bubble above her head, with a bulging erection that reaches to his chin. Wimpy, with an equally enormous erection, peers through the window.
Page 107 Bathing is even more embarrassing, because I have to strip down to my birthday suit in front of a nurse. Now, there are some things that never die, so even though I’m in my nineties my sap sometimes rises. I can’t help it. They always pretend not to notice. They’re trained that way, I suppose, although pretending not to notice is almost worse than noticing. It means they consider me nothing more than a harmless old man sporting a harmless old penis that still gets uppity once in a while. Although if one of them took it seriously and tried to do something about it, the shock would probably kill me.
Once she’s gone I quite enjoy my shower. I take the shower head from its mount and spray my body from up close, aiming it over my shoulders and down my back

and then over each of my skinny limbs. I even hold my head back with my eyes shut and let the spray hit my face full on. I pretend it's a tropical shower, shaking my head and reveling in it. I even enjoy the feel of it down there, on that shriveled pink snake that fathered five children so long ago.

Sometimes, when I'm in bed, I close my eyes and remember the look—and especially the feel—of a woman's naked body. Usually it's my wife's, but not always. I was completely faithful to her. Not once in more than sixty years did I stray, except in my imagination, and I have a feeling she wouldn't have minded that. She was a woman of extraordinary understanding.

Page 131 I hear thrashing in the long grass and pause to investigate. I see a woman's bare legs spread wide with a man between them. He grunts and ruts like a billy goat. His trousers are down around his knees, his hairy buttocks pumping up and down. She grasps his shirt in her fists, moaning with each thrust. It takes me a moment to realize what I'm looking at—when I do, I wrench my eyes away and wobble forward.

Page 133 "Well now, what have we here?" says a sultry voice from somewhere very nearby.

My eyes pop open. A foot's length of tightly packed cleavage is directly under my nose. I run my eyes up it until I see a face. It's Barbara. I blink quickly, trying to see only one of her. Oh God—it's no use. But no—wait. It's okay. It's not multiple Barbaras. It's multiple women.

"Hi, honey," says Barbara, reaching out and stroking my face. "You doing okay?"

"Mmm," I say, trying to nod.

Her fingertips linger under my chin as she turns to the blonde crouching beside her. "So young. Oh, he's cute as a button, isn't he, Nell?"

Nell takes a drag from a cigarette and blows the smoke from the side of her mouth. "Sure is. Don't think I've seen him before."

"He was helping out at the cooch tent a few nights ago," says Barbara. She turns back to me. "What's your name, honey?" she says softly, running the backs of her fingers up and down my cheek.

"Jacob," I say, around the edges of a belch.

"Jacob," she says. "Oh, say, I know who you are. He's the one Walter was talking about," she says to Nell. "He's brand new, a First of May. Handled himself real well at the cooch tent."

She grabs my chin and raises it, gazing deep into my eyes. I try to return the favor but am having some trouble focusing. "Oh, you are a sweet thing. So, tell me, Jacob—you ever been with a woman?"

"I…uh…,"Isay."Uh…"

Nell giggles. Barbara leans back and puts her hands on her waist. "Whadya think? Wanna give him a proper welcome?"

"We practically have to," says Nell. "A First of May and a virgin?" Her hand slips

between my legs and slides over my crotch. My head, which had been wobbling on its stem, snaps upright. “You think his hair is red down there, too?” she says, cupping me in her palm.

Barbara leans forward, unclasps my hands, and lifts one to her mouth. She turns it over, runs a long nail across the palm and then stares me in the eye while running her tongue along the same path. Then she takes my hand and places it on her left breast, right where the nipple must be.

Oh God. Oh God. I’m touching a breast. Through a dress, but still—

Barbara stands up for a moment, smooths her skirt, looks furtively around, and then crouches. I’m pondering this change of position when she takes hold of my hand again. This time she pulls it under her skirt and presses my fingers against hot, moist silk.

I catch my breath. The whiskey, the moonshine, the gin, the God-knows-what—all of it dissipates instantly. She moves my hand up and down, over her strange and wonderful valleys.

Oh shit. I may come right now.

“Hmmmm?” she purrs, rearranging my hand so that my middle finger presses further into her. Warm silk bulges around both sides of my finger, pulsing under my touch. She removes my hand, places it back on my knee, and then gives my crotch an experimental squeeze.

“Mmmmm,” she says, her eyes half-closed. “He’s ready, Nell. Damn, I love them at this age.”

The rest of the night passes in epileptic flashes. I am aware of being propped up between two women, but I think I fall out the door of the stock car. At least, I am aware of finding myself cheek down

in the dirt. Then I’m swept upward again and jostled along in the dark until I’m sitting on the edge of a bed.

There are definitely two Barbaras now. And two of the other one, as well. Nell, was it?

Barbara steps backward and raises her arms in the air. She throws her head back and runs her hands over her body, dancing and moving by candlelight. I’m interested—there is no question about that. But I simply can’t sit upright anymore. So I fall back.

Someone’s yanking on my pants. I mumble something, not sure what, but I don’t think it’s encouragement. I’m suddenly not feeling well.

Oh God. She’s touching me—it—stroking experimentally. I prop myself up on my elbows and look down. It’s limp, a tiny pink turtle hiding in its shell. It also seems to be stuck to my leg. She peels it free, delves both her hands between my thighs to spread them, and reaches down for my balls. She rests them on one hand, juggling them like eggs while she examines my penis. It flops hopelessly under her manipulations while I watch, mortified.

The other woman—now there's only one again, how the hell am I ever going to keep this straight?—lies next to me on the bed. She fishes a skinny breast from her dress and lifts it to my mouth. She rubs it all over my face. Now her lipsticked mouth is coming at me, a gaping maw with tongue extended. I turn my head to the right, where there is no woman. **Then I feel a mouth close around the head of my penis.**

I gasp. The women giggle, but it's a purring sound, an encouraging sound, as they continue trying to get a response. Oh God, oh God, she's sucking it. Sucking it, for God's sake.

I'm not going to be able to—

Oh my God, I need to—

I turn my head and hurl the unfortunately varied contents of my stomach onto Nell.

Page 136 "Where am I?" I croak. I cough and try to clear my parched throat.

"Clown Alley," says Kinko, fingering some paint jars on a dresser.

I lift an arm to cover my eyes and notice it is clad in silk. A red silk dressing gown, to be exact. A red silk dressing gown that is wide open. I look down and discover that someone has shaved my genitals.

I snatch the edges of the gown together, wondering if Kinko saw.

Dear God, what did I do last night? I have no idea. Nothing but scraps of memory, and—

Oh God. I threw up on a woman.

I struggle to my feet, tying the dressing gown. I wipe my forehead, which feels unusually slick. My hand comes away white. "What the—?" I say, staring at my hand.

Kinko turns and hands me a mirror. I take it with great trepidation. When I raise it to my face, a clown looks back at me.

I POKE MY HEAD out of the tent, look left and right, and then streak across to the stock car. I am followed by guffaws and catcalls. "Whooeeee, look at that hot mama!"

"Hey, Fred—check out the new cooch girl!"

"Say, honey—got plans tonight?"

I dive into the goat room and slam the door, leaning against it. I breathe heavily, listening until the laughter outside dies down. I grab a rag and wipe my face again. I rubbed it raw before I left Clown Alley, but somehow I still don't believe it's clean. I don't think any part of me will ever be clean again. And the worst part is that I don't even know what I did. I have only snippets, and as horrifying as those are it's even more horrifying not knowing what happened in between.

It suddenly occurs to me that I have no idea whether I'm still a virgin. I reach inside the dressing gown and scratch my stubbly balls.

Page 142 Photo of nude woman from a collection of the Ringling Circus Museum, Sarasota, Florida.