



People Kill People by Ellen Hopkins

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Margaret K. McElderry, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2019

*Age Range: 14+ (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 9+ (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

People kill people. Guns just make it easier.

A gun is sold in the classifieds after killing a spouse, bought by a teenager for needed protection. But which was it? Each has the incentive to pick up a gun, to fire it. Was it Rand or Cami, married teenagers with a young son? Was it Silas or Ashlyn, members of a white supremacist youth organization? Daniel, who fears retaliation because of his race, who possessively clings to Grace, the love of his life? Or Noelle, who lost everything after a devastating accident, and has sunk quietly into depression?

One tense week brings all six people into close contact in a town wrought with political and personal tensions. Someone will fire. And someone will die. But who?

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"Hopkins does a fine job of avoiding the didactic while creating a compelling, page-turning story. Yes, there are guns, but it is made obvious that death can come in other ways, for violence never takes a vacation. Librarians should expect a large demand for this one." —[Booklist](#)

"[Hopkin's] essential message...will reverberate with readers long after they put the book down."— [New York Times Book Review](#)

"Readers are left guessing which character will kill and which will die." —[Kirkus Review](#)

"Writing via an omniscient narrator called Violence, which also slips into the minds of characters, Hopkins (*The You I've Never Known*) tackles issues of immigration policy, racism, gun control, and the idea that "Given the right circumstances,/ any person could kill someone."—[Publishers Weekly](#)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Updated 3.17.26

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing
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MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Reading Group Guide](#)
- [Teen Press Corps member, Rosie, interviews *People Kill People* author, Ellen Hopkins](#)
- [FRIDAY CONVERSATION WITH ... Ellen Hopkins](#)
- <https://ellenhopkinsbooks.com/>

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[KIDS' RIGHT TO READ PROTESTS EFFORTS TO CENSOR YA AUTHOR ELLEN HOPKINS](#)

[NCAC DEMANDS RETURN OF 13 BOOKS BY ELLEN HOPKINS TO HERNANDO SCHOOL DISTRICT LIBRARIES](#)

[NCAC PROTESTS CANCELLATION OF ELLEN HOPKINS APPEARANCE AT TEEN LIT FEST IN TEXAS](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

“Censorship comes from a place of fear. We fear that which is different, what we cannot comprehend. Books gift us with understanding, empower us with knowledge. So, obviously, would-be censors have it all wrong.” —Ellen Hopkins

*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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