



Tricks by Ellen Hopkins

Margaret K. McElderry Books, Simon & Schuster, 2009

ISBN: 9781481498241

*Age Range: 14 and up (Suggested by Publisher)

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

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Meet five teens: Eden Streit, Seth Parnell, Whitney Lang, Ginger Cordell, and Cody Bennett. They're from different walks of life--some are rich; some are poor; some are from nuclear families; others are not. Regardless of upbringing, they share common needs: love, acceptance, safety, and family. Eden has a secret love affair and is the daughter of a hellfire-and-brimstone preaching father; Seth, aching over the death of his mother, is a gay farm kid and hides his sexuality from his father; Whitney is good-looking and smart, but lives in the shadow of her "better" older sister and her critical mother and semi-absent father; Ginger lives in poverty with her drug-using, sexually deviant, and abusive mother; and Cody, suffering the loss of his stepfather, shoulders his mother's emotional and financial needs. All five are betrayed or "tricked" by someone they love and turn down brutal paths in which they experience even deeper deception. What will they do to be loved? To survive? Can they return home? Their stories begin in alternating vignettes and interweave into one explosive Las Vegas ending.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"Written in Hopkins's trademark style--largely free-verse poems that make use of broken lines, double columns, linked phrases, and other devices--this hefty volume follows five teenagers as they flee troubled families and fall into prostitution. Each character is sympathetic with an independent voice." – *The Horn Book*

"From the punch delivered by the title, to the teens' raw voices, to the visual impact of the free verse, Hopkins once again produces a graphic, intense tale that will speak to mature teens." – *School Library Journal*

"A master of storytelling through free verse, [Hopkins] uses multiple poetic devices to construct well-defined, distinctive voices for the five teens. [...] The multiple protagonists are easy to identify and their stories compelling, especially when they begin to intersect. Teens will queue up for this one, some, admittedly, for the sensational subject matter, and find Hopkins trademark empathy for teens in rough situations." – *Booklist*

"Hopkins again tackles a serious societal problem, this time focusing on teen prostitution. Fans of her work will recognize both her signature free verses and the gritty details she weaves within them. [...]"

Updated 2/15/2024

Simon & Schuster

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While readers may connect with some characters more than others, they will long remember each painful story.” – *Publishers Weekly*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- 2009 New York Public Library Best Books for Teens, selection
- 2009 ALA Rainbow Book List, selection
- 2012 Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award
- 2013 Joan F. Kaywell Books Save Lives Award, honoree

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Reading Group Guide to *Tricks* by 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.