

The Ribs and Thigh Bones of Desire

By Sandra Hutchison

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Handy Synopses of Different Lengths

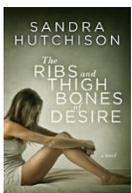
22-word: In a small town in 1977 a teenage girl and a recently-widowed physics professor help each other grow up.

33-word: In a small Western Massachusetts town in 1977 a thirty-two-year-old widowed physics professor and the sixteen-year-old who used to babysit his daughter help each other survive loss, guilt, fear, trauma, and growing up.

67-word: In a small Western Massachusetts town in 1977 a thirty-two-year-old widowed physics professor and the sixteen-year-old girl who used to babysit his daughter forge a bond fraught with potential scandal as they try to help each other survive loss, guilt, fear, trauma, and growing up. This provocative coming-of-age novel asks: Is there ever a time when doing the wrong thing might be exactly right?

142-word: It's the summer of 1977 in a small town in Western Massachusetts. Physics professor David Asken has just lost his young family in a plane crash he somehow survived. Sixteen-year-old neighbor Molly Carmichael used to be the babysitter, but now will be keeping house for him while he recuperates. He's quietly planning to end his life just as soon as he can drive again. She's trying to cope with being known as Tampon Girl, thanks to the sculpture her notorious artist mother made of her out of feminine hygiene products and titled "Puberty." Both man and girl are going to have to grow up the hard way, and it's their unexpected connection — fraught with potential scandal — that may just help them do it. This provocative coming-of-age novel asks: Is there ever a time when doing the wrong thing might be exactly right?

268-word: It's the summer of 1977 in a small town in Western Massachusetts. Physics professor David Asken has just lost his young family in a plane crash he somehow survived. Sixteen-year-old neighbor Molly Carmichael used to be the babysitter, but now will be keeping house for him while he recuperates. He's quietly planning to end his life just as soon as he can drive again, but may not be willing to wait that long after he comes across his dead wife's journal and encounters more hostility than he had ever imagined. Molly's trying to cope with being known as Tampon Girl, thanks to the sculpture her notorious artist mother made of her out of feminine hygiene products and titled "Puberty." (Meanwhile, her mother's current art project entails photographing as many erect penises as possible.) But Molly is still grossed out by French-kissing, and horrified by her best friend Kim's cynical sexual transactions. Over the course of the year, Molly and David will forge a bond of protectiveness and affection that verges on something more — something that could get them both into trouble — as he copes with anger, grief, and depression, and she gains a boyfriend her own age and must cope with her own pain and anger in the aftermath of a traumatic rape at a drunken teenage party. When she decides that she wants to replace that terrible experience with something more loving, David faces a difficult decision. Is there ever a time when doing the wrong thing might be exactly right? Although not particularly explicit, this novel contains adult themes, bad language, violence, and a blistering feminist critique of how men always leave that crap in the bottom of the sink.



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