

AN ALARMING MOVEMENT IN THE U.S. TO BAN BOOKS

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA RETIREES ASSOCIATION



KIMBERLY EDSON
ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY
HEAD OF READERS SERVICES
KEDSON@RPLMN.ORG
507-328-2325

University of Minnesota Libraries
Archives and Special Collections

Children's Literature Research Collections



Lisa Von Drasek, Curator
Lvondras@umn.edu



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities is located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people.

The University resides on Dakota land ceded in the Treaties of 1837 and 1851.

This land acknowledgement is one of the ways in which we work to educate the campus and community about this land and our relationships with it and each other.

A NATIONAL ISSUE

ALA documented **1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022**, the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling data about censorship in libraries more than 20 years ago. The record number of reported book bans in 2022 nearly doubles the 729 book challenges reported in 2021.

2022 Attempted Bans: 1,269

2021 Attempted Bans: 729

Number of Attempts to Ban or Restrict Library Materials in the U.S. by Year

1,000

500

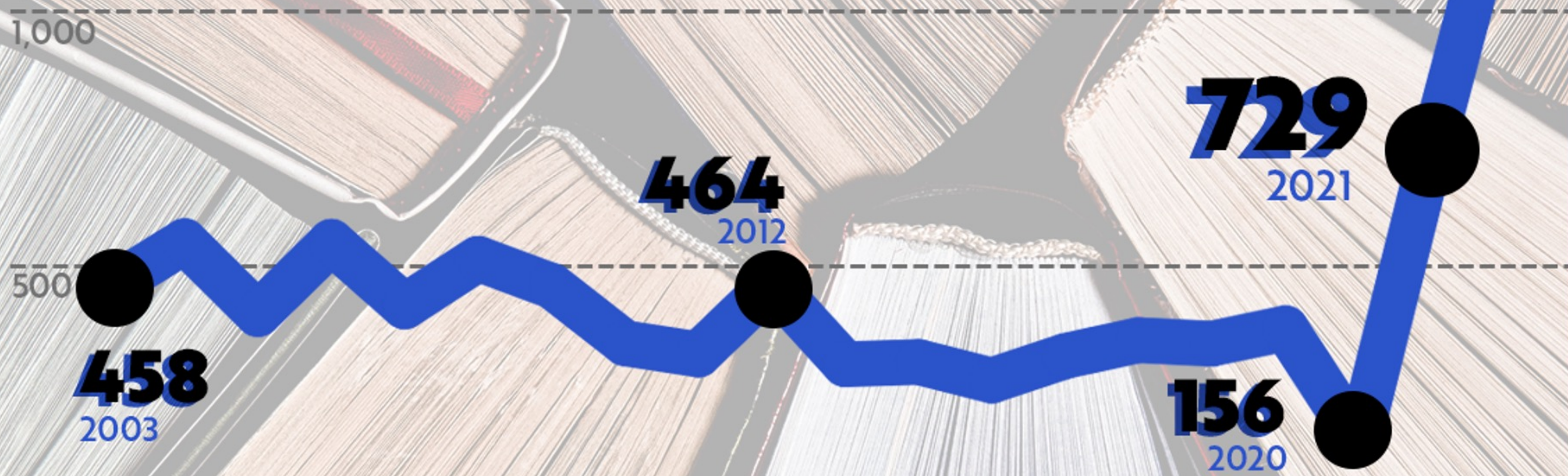
1,269
2022

729
2021

464
2012

458
2003

156
2020



JANUARY 1 – AUGUST 31, 2023

695

ATTEMPTS TO
BAN OR RESTRICT
LIBRARY MATERIALS
AND SERVICES



OFFICE FOR
Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association

JANUARY 1 – AUGUST 31, 2023

920%

OF THE BOOKS
CHALLENGED WERE
PART OF ATTEMPTS
TO CENSOR
MULTIPLE TITLES



OFFICE FOR
Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association

MORE THAN 100 TITLES CHALLENGED IN:

JANUARY 1 – AUGUST 31, 2023

COLORADO
CONNECTICUT
FLORIDA
IDAHO
MISSOURI
NORTH CAROLINA

OHIO
PENNSYLVANIA
TENNESSEE
TEXAS
VIRGINIA



OFFICE FOR
Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association

WHERE

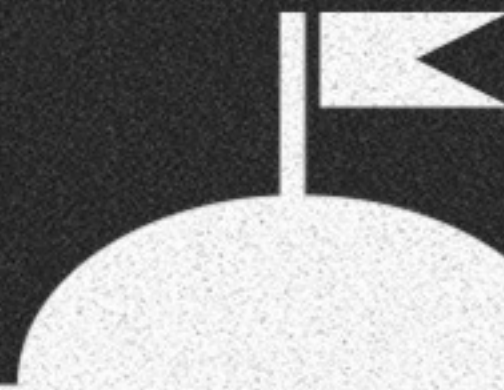
CENSORSHIP OCCURRED

JANUARY 1 – AUGUST 31, 2023



220

**SCHOOL
DISTRICTS**



208

**PUBLIC
LIBRARIES**



OFFICE FOR
Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association

TDP 13

MOST CHALLENGED BOOKS OF 2022

The American Library Association tracked **1,269 challenges** to library, school, and university materials and services in 2022. Of the **2,571 unique titles** that were challenged or banned in 2022, here are the top 13 most challenged.



1



GENDER QUEER
by Maia Kobabe
REASONS: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

2



ALL BOYS AREN'T BLUE
by George M. Johnson
REASONS: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

3



THE BLUEST EYE
by Toni Morrison
REASONS: rape, incest, claimed to be sexually explicit, EDI content

4



FLAMER
by Mike Curato
REASONS: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

5

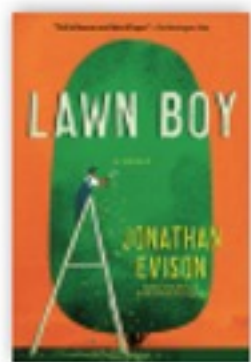


LOOKING FOR ALASKA
by John Green
REASONS: claimed to be sexually explicit, LGBTQIA+ content



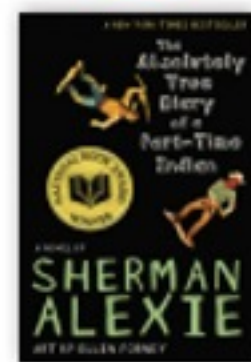
THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER
by Stephen Chbosky
REASONS: claimed to be sexually explicit, LGBTQIA+ content, rape, drugs, profanity

7



LAWN BOY
by Jonathan Evison
REASONS: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

8



THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN
by Sherman Alexie
REASONS: claimed to be sexually explicit, profanity

9

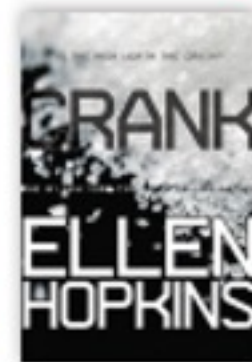


OUT OF DARKNESS
by Ashley Hope Perez
REASON: claimed to be sexually explicit

10



A COURT OF MIST AND FURY
by Sarah J. Maas
REASON: claimed to be sexually explicit



CRANK
by Ellen Hopkins
REASONS: claimed to be sexually explicit, drugs



ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL
by Jesse Andrews
REASONS: claimed to be sexually explicit, profanity



THIS BOOK IS GAY
by Juno Dawson
REASONS: LGBTQIA+ content, sex education, claimed to be sexually explicit



B.B. Alston (on hiatus)

@bb_alston



Book Banning: When you erase the history/experience of one kid to "protect" another, what you're also saying is that there is one type of kid worth protecting.

A LOCAL POLICY

What should the policy include?





REQUEST FOR REVIEW FORM & PROCESS



**ROCHESTER
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

101 Second Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Please complete this form and return it to library staff.

Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

What type of material or service are you commenting on? Book Magazine CD DVD Game Display/Exhibit Library Program Internet Resource/Website Other (brief description) _____

Title of item/event/display _____

Author/Performer _____

Date of event/item edition _____

How did this item/program/display/exhibit come to your attention?

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work or a portion of the work? All Part

Please describe your concerns regarding this item/program/display/exhibit:

What specific pages/sections illustrate your concerns?

Is there anything valuable about this item/program/display/exhibit?

Are your objections based on the age of the potential user or the point of view expressed?

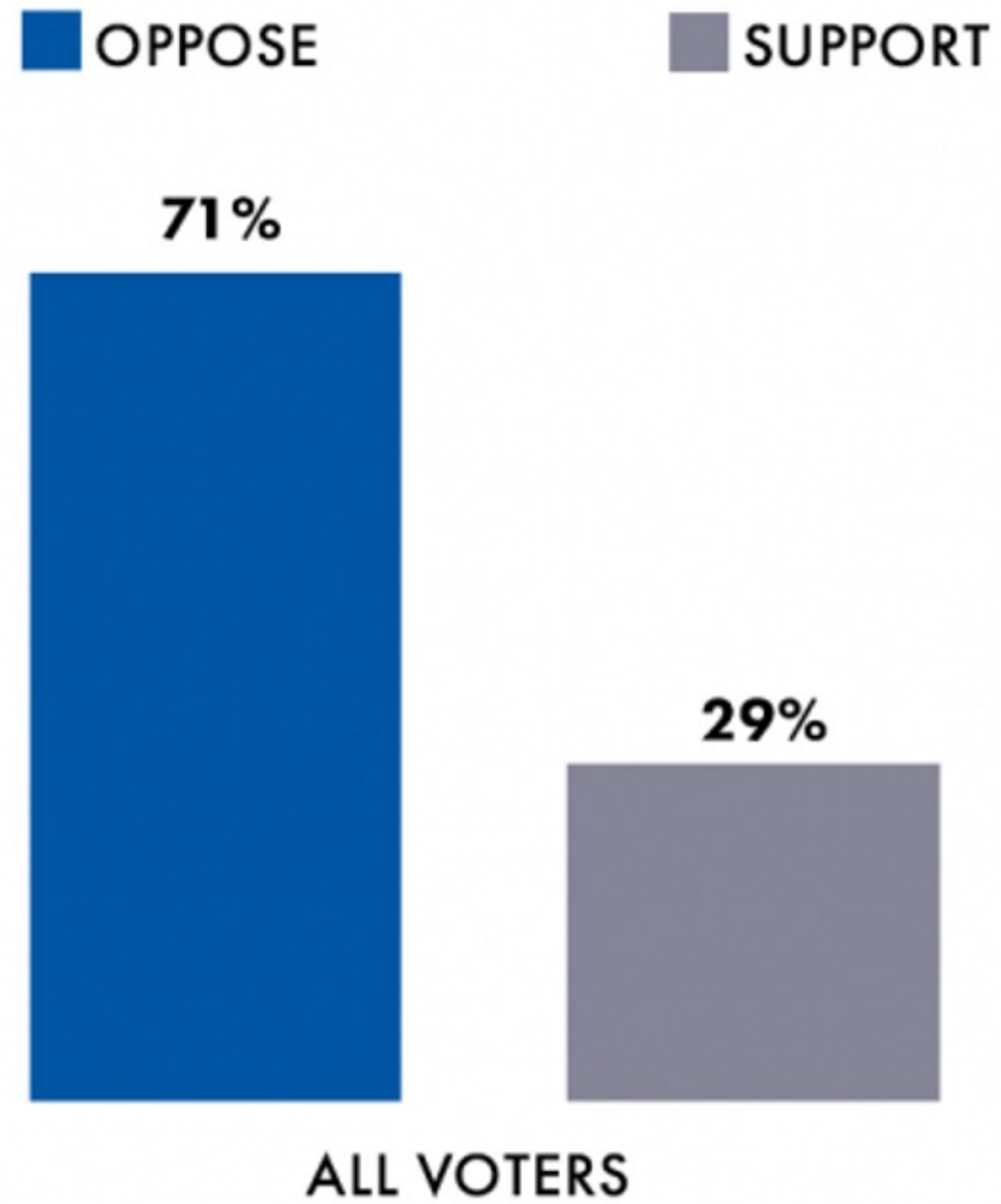
What action would you like the library to take regarding this item/program/display/exhibit?

Signature _____ Date _____

Please use the back of this page for further comments if necessary.

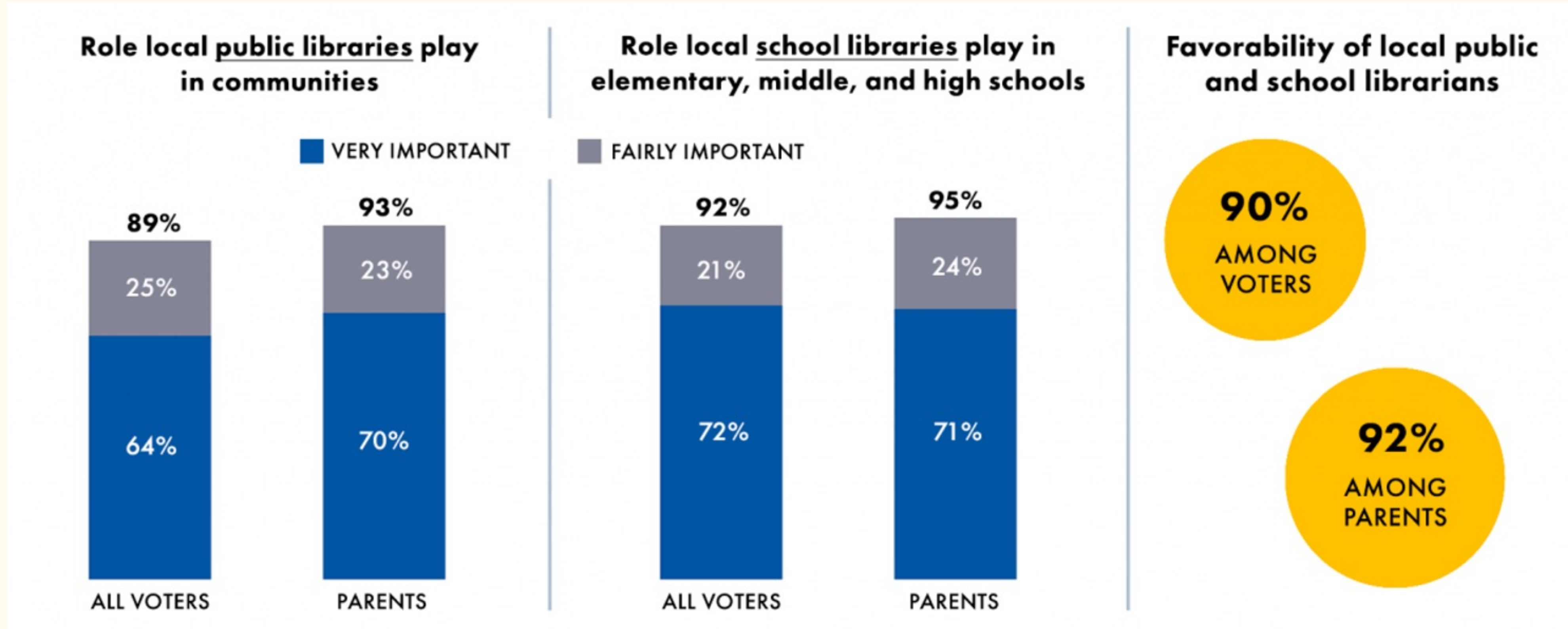
Library Staff Receiving Form _____

VOTERS' VIEWS ON BOOK BANNING



Source: March 2022 survey conducted by Hart Research Associates and North Star Opinion Research on behalf of the American Library Association

PEOPLE TRUST LIBRARIES



Source: March 2022 survey conducted by Hart Research Associates and North Star Opinion Research on behalf of the American Library Association

Parents' Opinions on Book Bans

A WASTE OF TIME

67%

**INFRINGE ON
PARENTS' RIGHTS**

74%

**TEENS SHOULD
HAVE ACCESS**

82%

Parent Perceptions of Public Libraries Survey

Every Library Institute NFP and Book Riot

September 2023 https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/parent_perceptions_survey_2023



RPL BOARD RESOLUTION

Rochester Public Library's (RPL) Board of Trustees supports the library's mission: "welcoming all to connect and learn." The Board upholds the library's values, including the "respect for intellectual freedom" especially as libraries across the nation are facing a rise in book challenges.

RESOLVED, the library's collection development policy supports intellectual freedom for RPL users; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board condemns censorship and book banning in all forms

More info at <https://rplmn.org/rpl-board-freedom>



I have been an avid reader since my Dad first taught me to read when I was five and would hate for other kids to miss the adventures and exposure to new worlds that books can bring. I love our Rochester library – the Bookmobile got me through the pandemic and lockdown with spirits intact. I am glad you are safeguarding it and its mission.

– RPL Library Customer 8/2022

Action Toolkit

American Library Association recommends supporting Freedom to Read through:

- Learning more uniteagainstbookbans.org
- Letters to the editor
- Support local library Banned Books Week activities (October 1-7, 2023)
- Adopt a resolution or proclamation



Governor Walz:

“In Minnesota, we are focused on investing in education, our future, and children and families across the state. We’re not in the business of taking books away from kids and schools – and we certainly don’t believe in banning books that tell our history,” said Governor Walz. **“This Little Free Library is one way we’re doing our part to ensure books remain accessible to teach, tell our story, and inspire the next generation of readers in Minnesota.”**





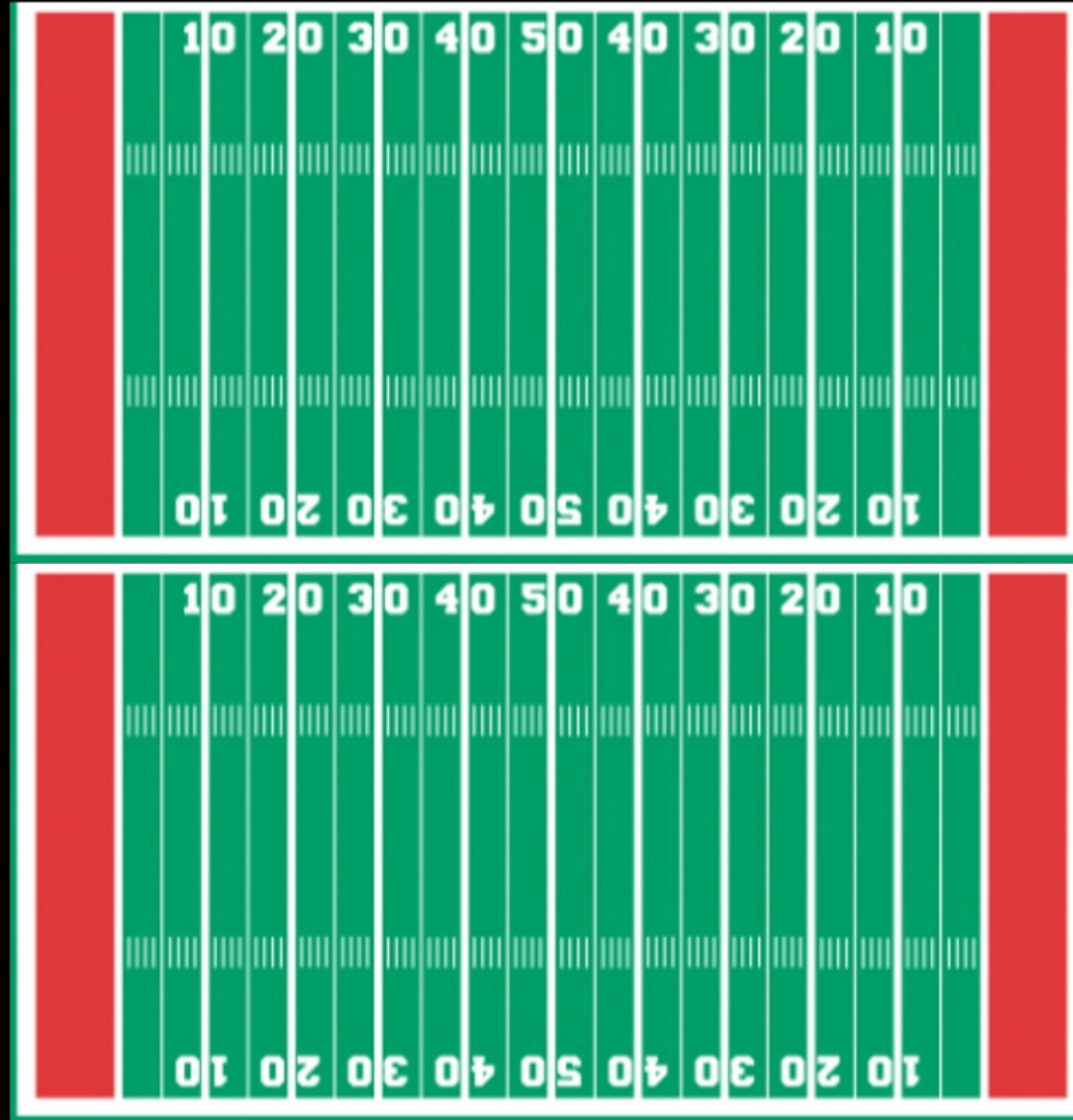
The Kerlan



The Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature

The Kerlan is an internationally recognized children's literature library and archive. It holds more than 100,000 children's books, original manuscripts, correspondence, artworks, galleys, color proofs, and other material for more than 1,700 authors and illustrators.





12,000 Square Meters



Dr. Irvin Kerlan, M.D.



Karen Nelson Hoyle, PhD





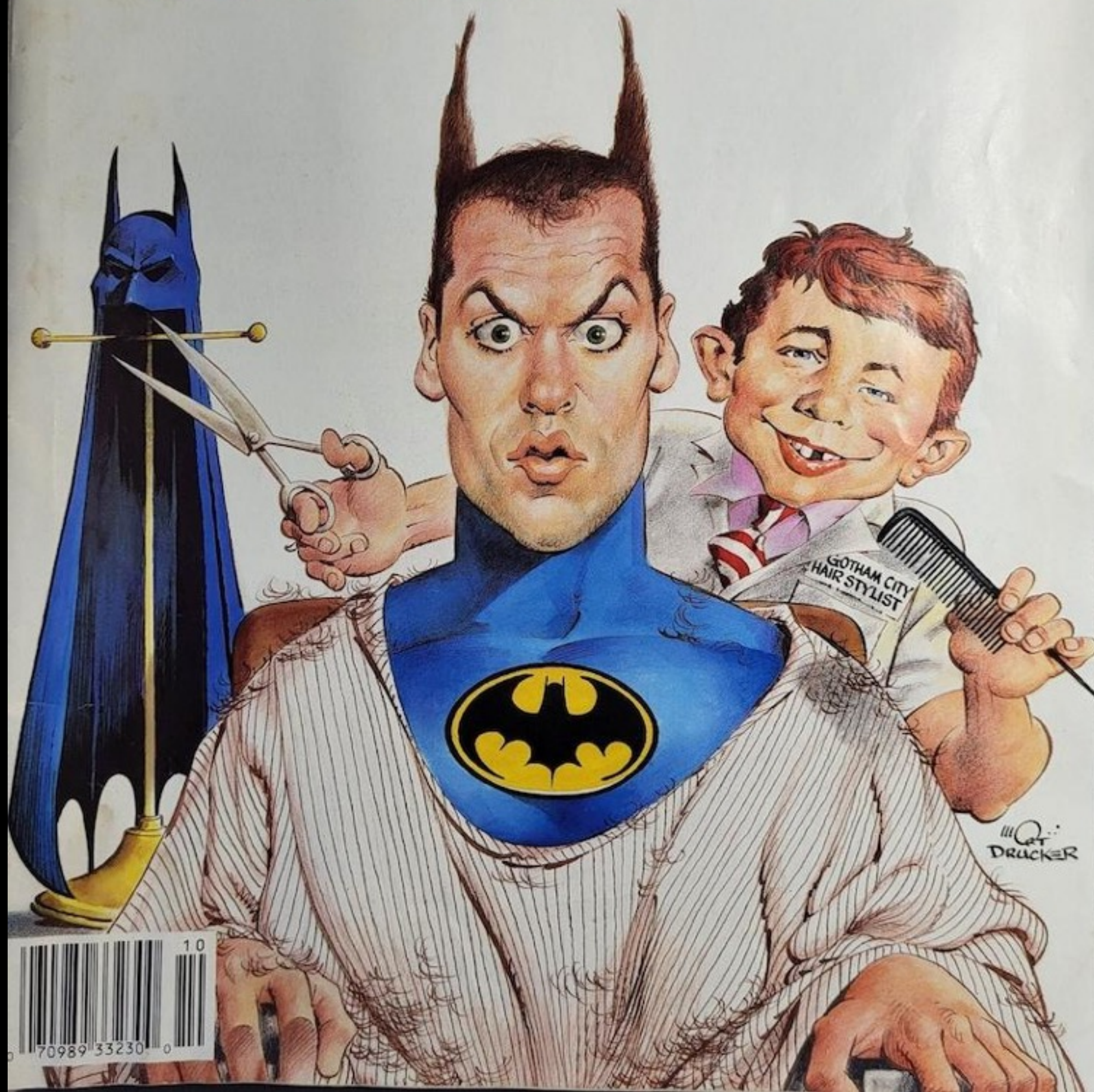


IN THIS ISSUE WE **CLIP** **BATMAN RETURNS** **BUZZ CUT** **TEASE**
THE OLYMPICS **BASIC INSTINCT**

No. 314
October 1992

MAD

Our Price \$1.75
Cheap!



"At last . . . a book for young people about sex and reproduction in language they can understand, plus pictures they will enjoy." — ANN LANDERS

CHANGING BODIES, GROWING UP,
SEX & SEXUAL HEALTH

It's Perfectly Normal



ROBIE H. HARRIS illustrated by MICHAEL EMBERLEY

ELLA
SARAH
GETS



DRESSED

Margaret Chodos-Irvine

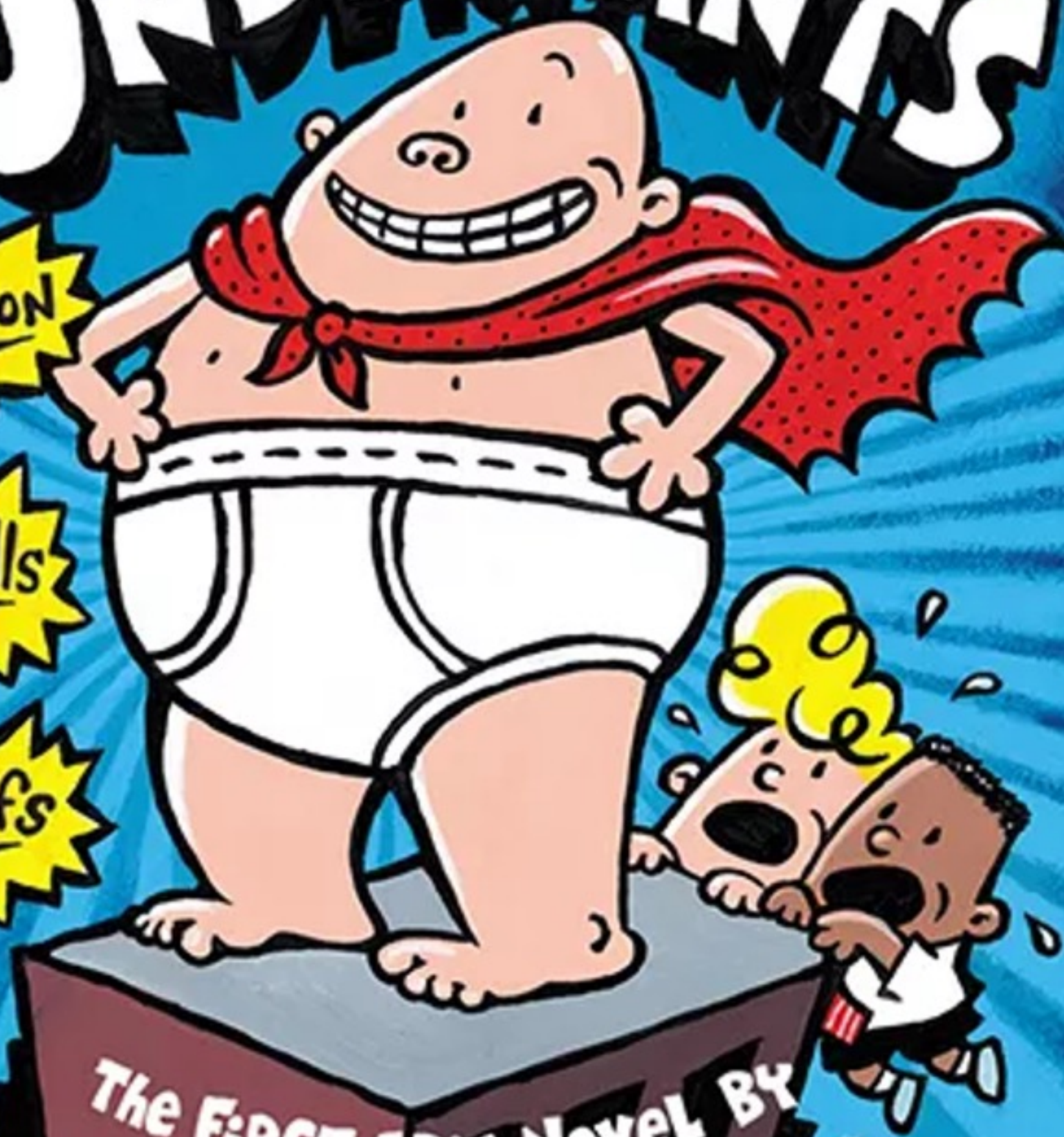


THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS

Action

Thrills

Laffs

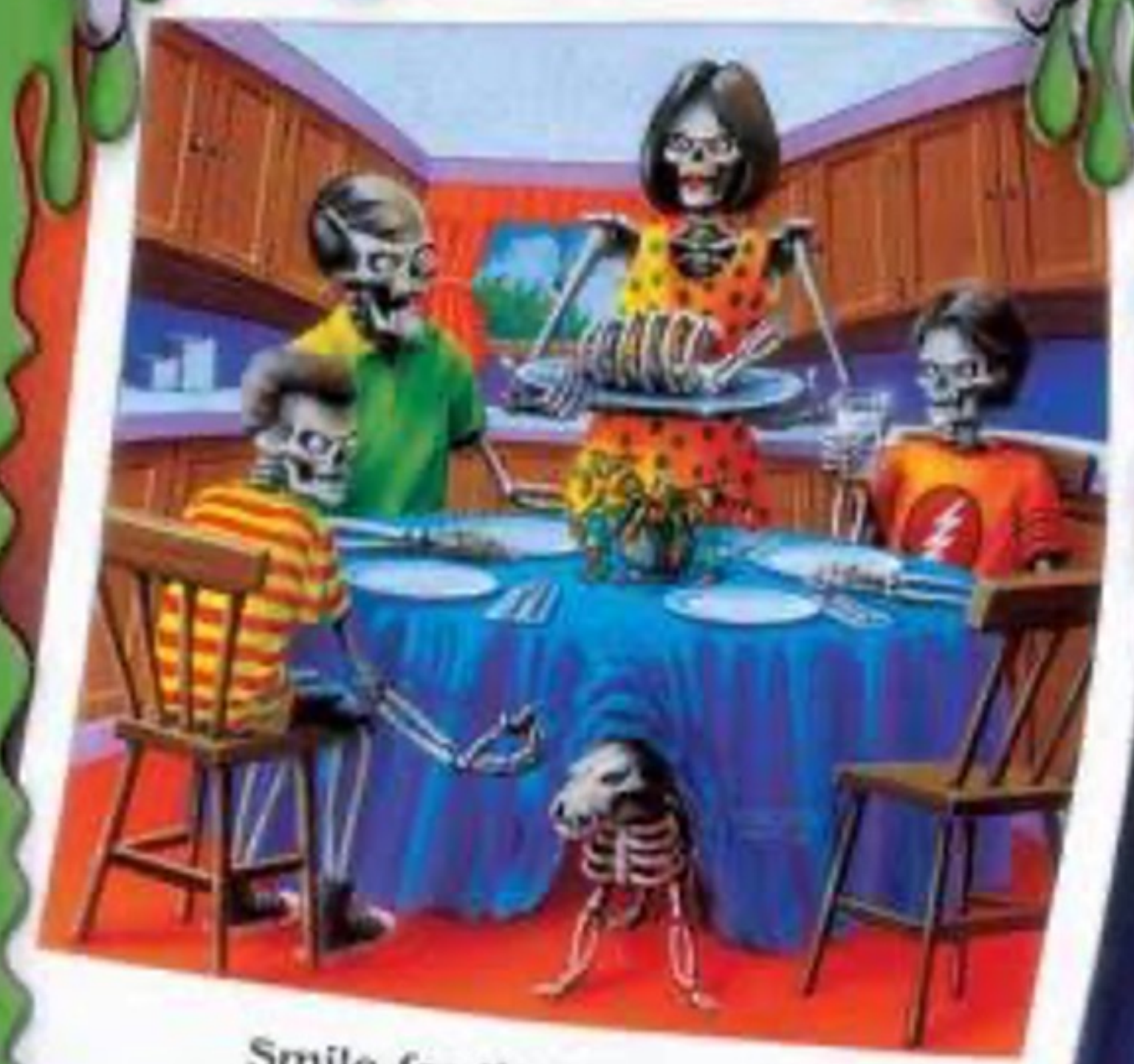


The First Epic Novel By
DAV PILKEY

SCHOLASTIC

R.L. STINE

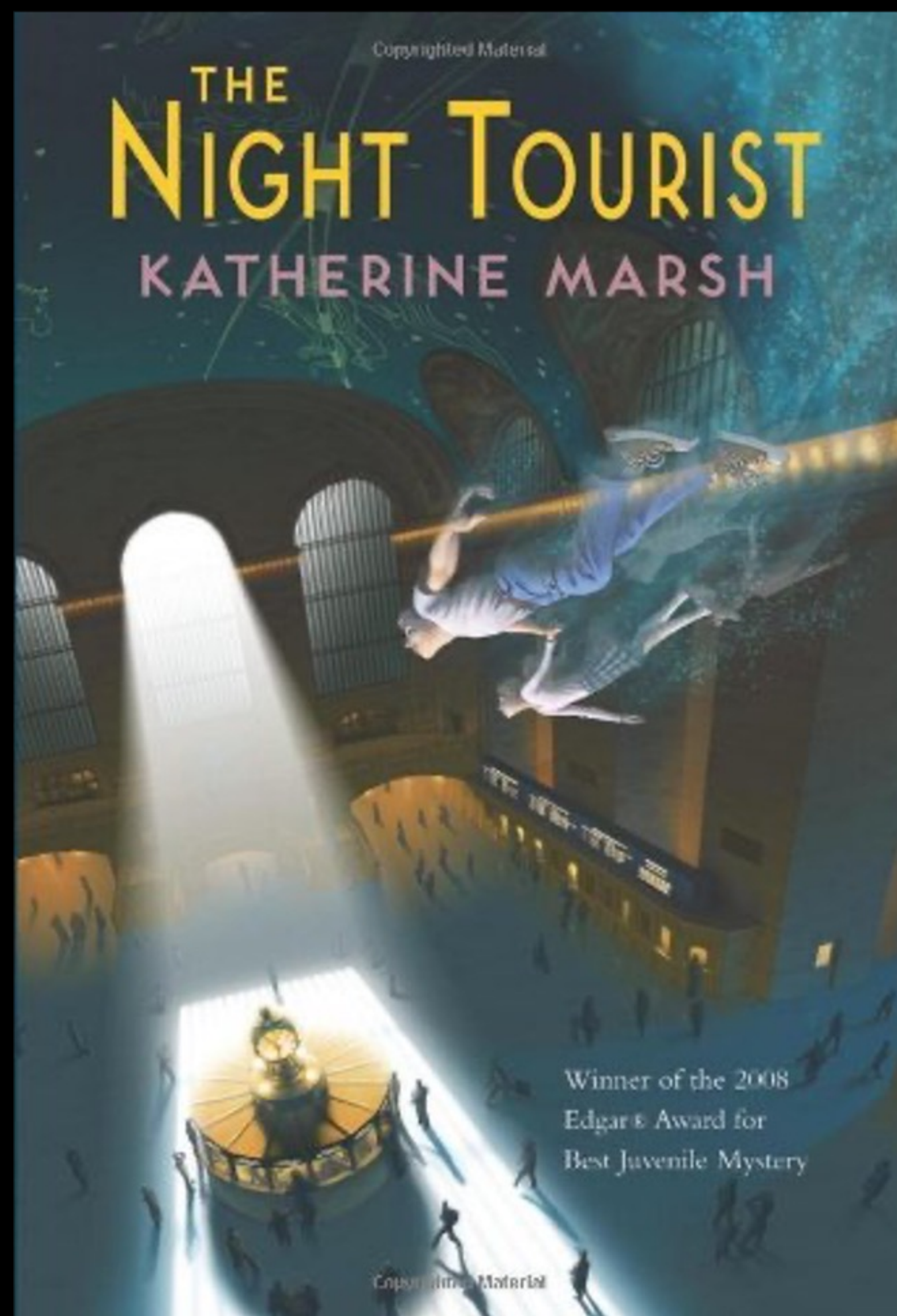
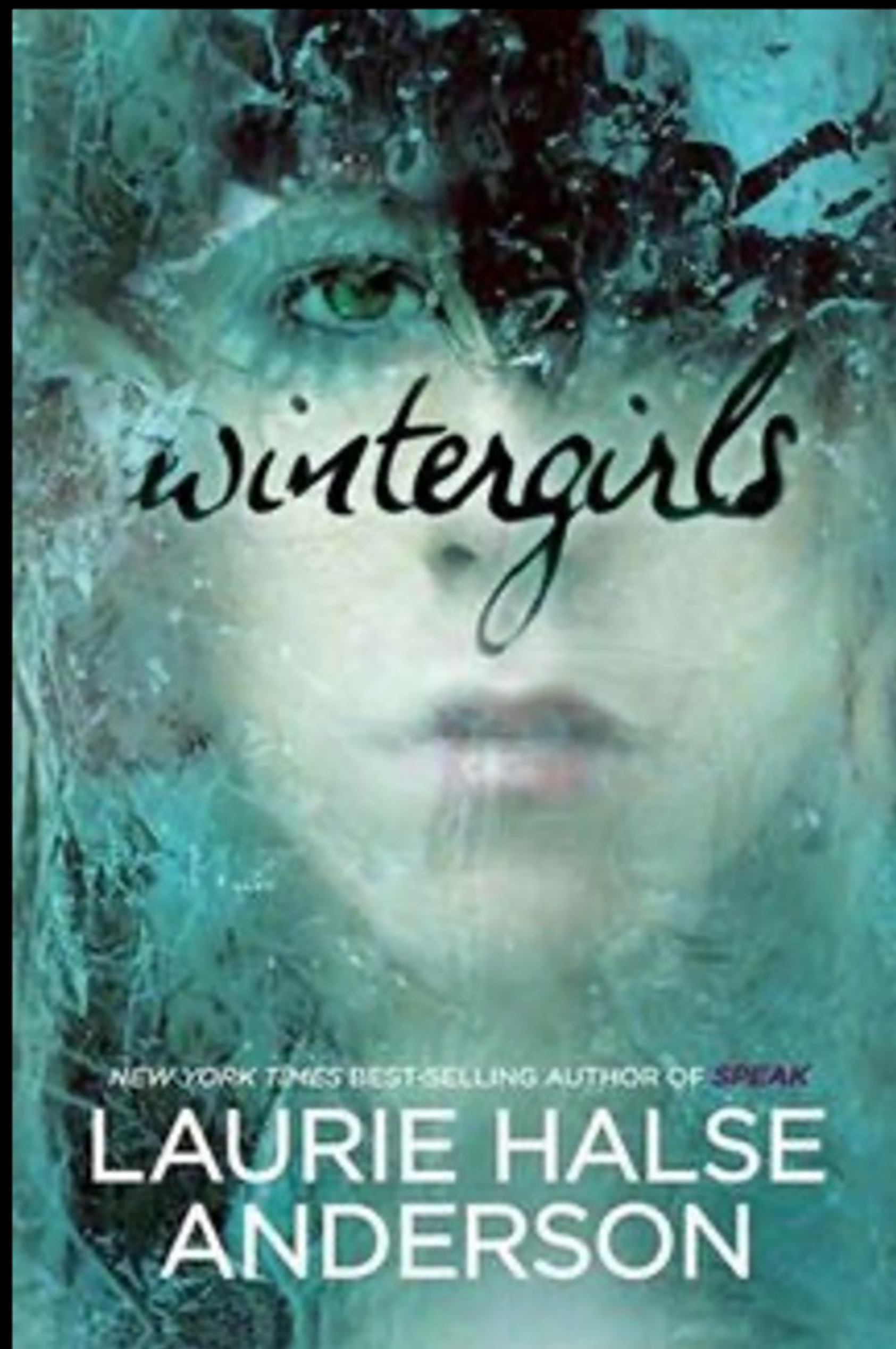
Goosebumps

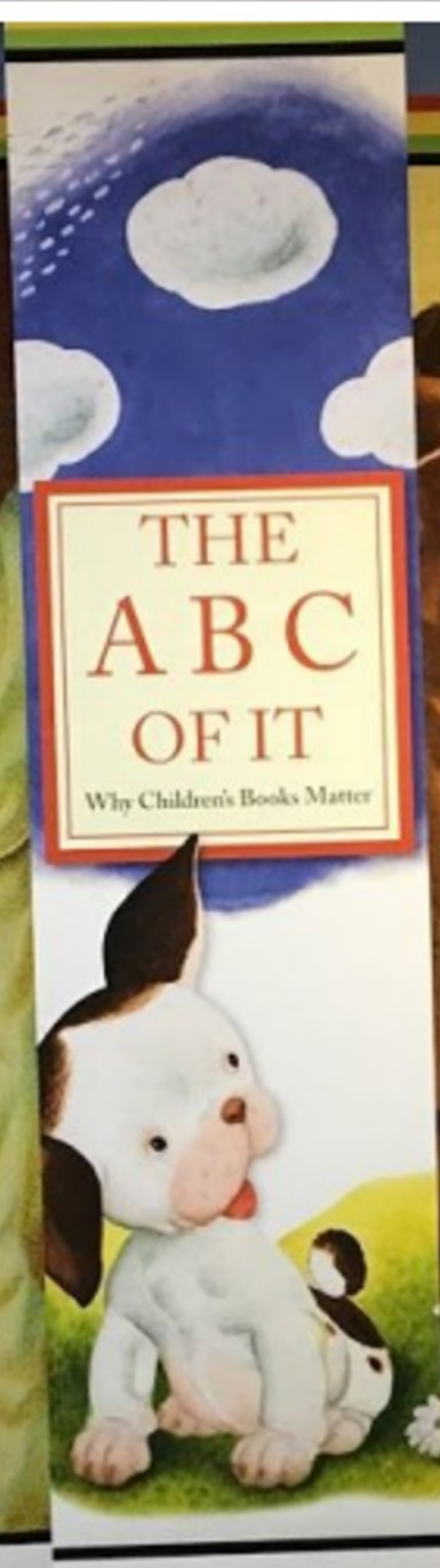


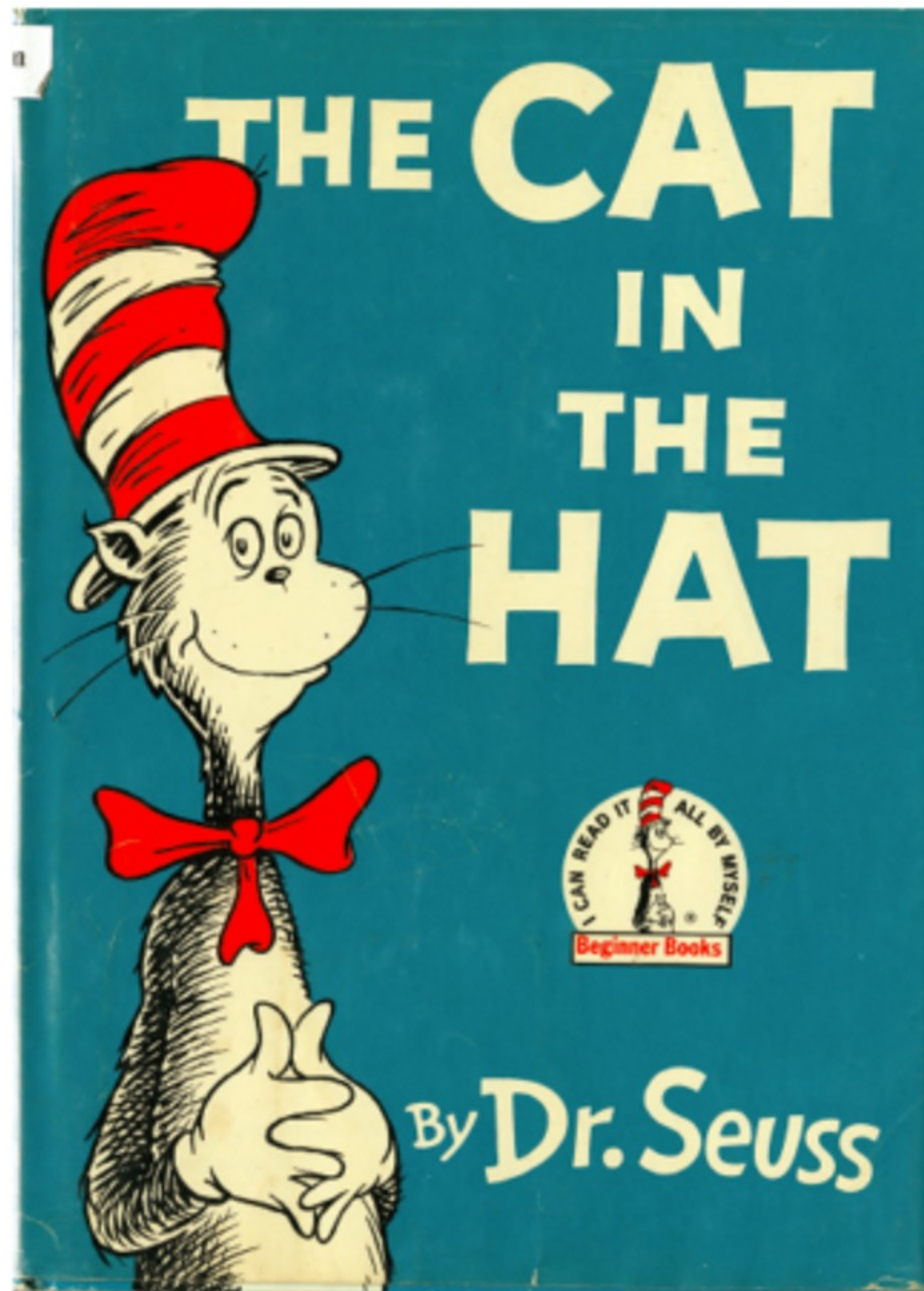
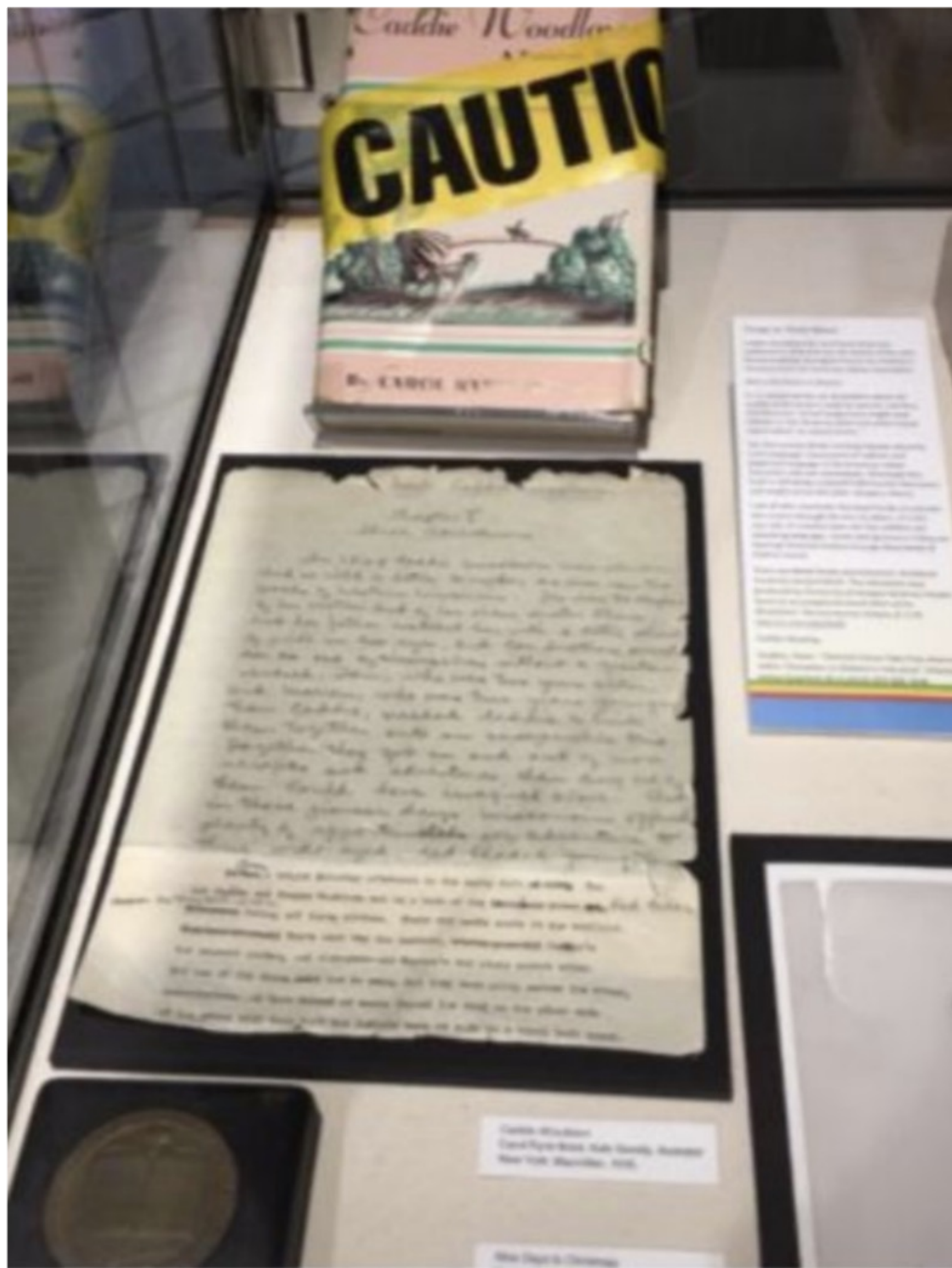
Smile for the camera . . .

SAY CHEESE AND DIE—AGAIN!

SCHOLASTIC







Marcus

The ABC of It: Why Children's Books Matter

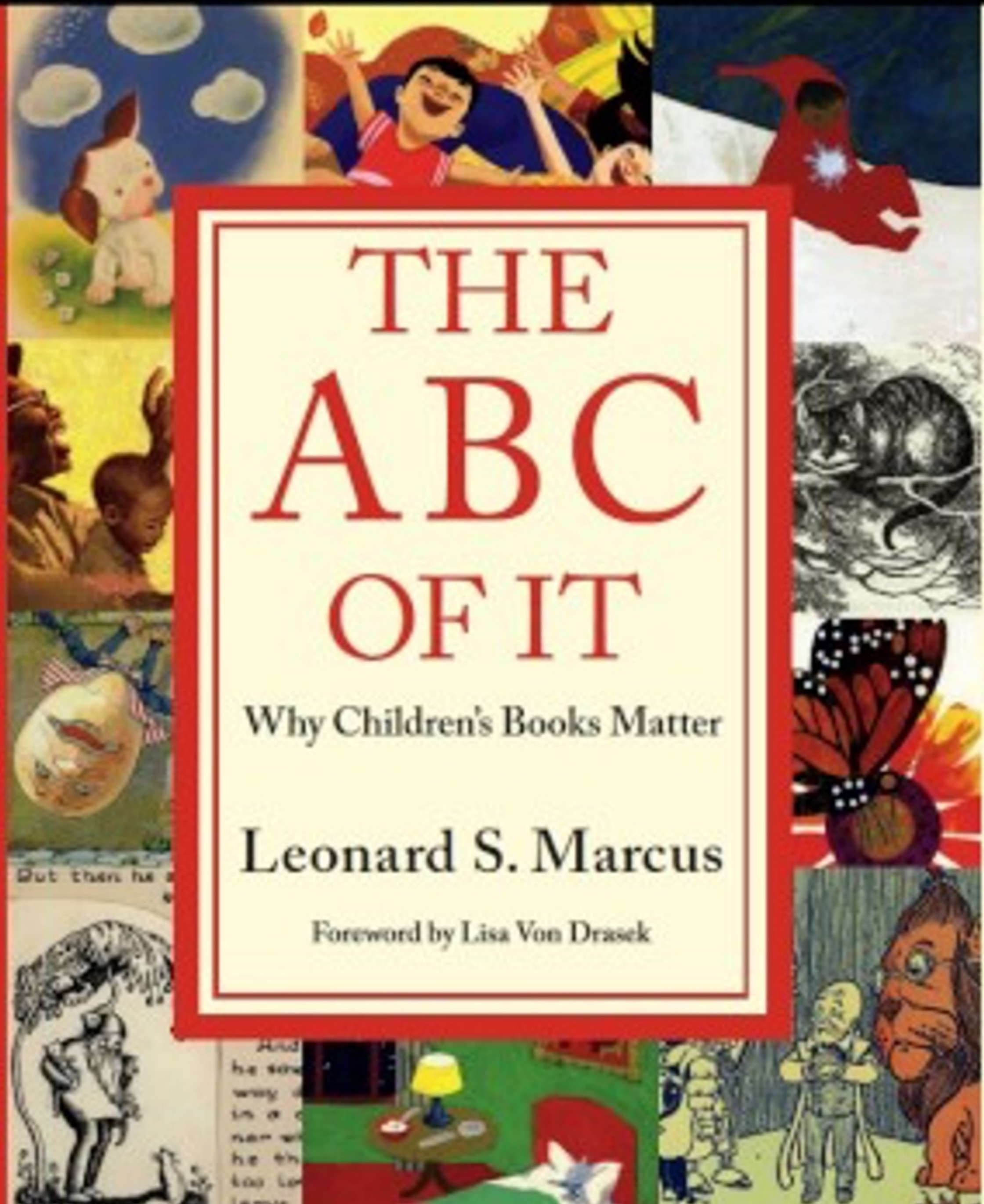
SEARS

THE ABC OF IT

Why Children's Books Matter

Leonard S. Marcus

Foreword by Lisa Von Drasek



Stanford lecturer explores the rise of book bans, from Nazi book burnings to school board races

Jennifer Wolf, a senior lecturer of education, discusses a renewed push to ban books from U.S. schools and libraries.

July 6, 2022 By Carrie Spector



Photo: Redd / Unsplash

“The types of books that the Nazis wanted removed and burned were largely political, with ideologies opposed to Nazism, including books on race and sexuality.”



Cub Scouts, in 1948, collected 2,000 objectionable comic books in a house-to-house canvass, burned them in the school yard.

The Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee
on Juvenile Delinquency

Comic Book 1954

hearings

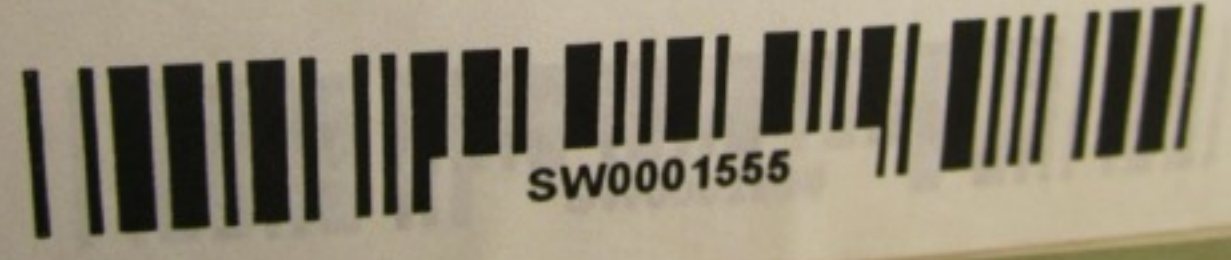
Dear Superman,
I listen to your program
every day. I heard about
Prof. Twiddle, Jimmy Olsen
and POCO being stuck on
the moon. I also heard
about the Moon Creatures
and I would like to
know...

...hat they
...t page.)

...ista Avenue
...ichigan



SW019 Social Welfare History Archives
Child Study Assoc. of America
Records
Box 15
Folders 137-143



SWD19 Child Study Association of America
395 Personal Papers, Josette Frank,
Scrapbook Material, 1930-1963.

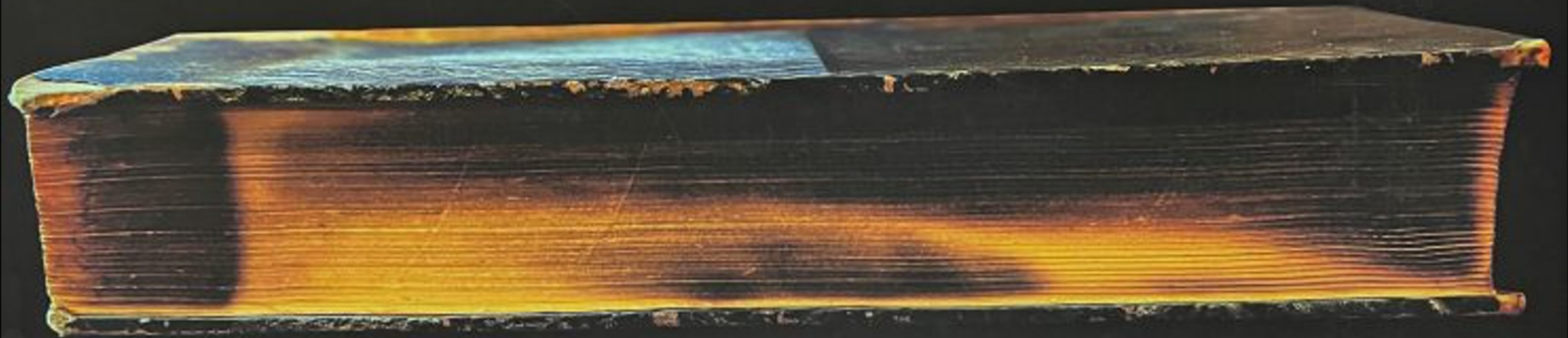
To Whom It May Concern

I have, for the past few months, been urged by the editors

abolish harmless literature. But just yesterday I read that E.C. comics is being forced to drop five (5) of its' publications because wholesalers and retailers throughout the country have been intimidated into refusing to handle crime and horror type comic books. That is the type of thing that goes on in Russia but not in America.

in Russia but not in America.





This scorched book, from the collection of gay physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, was burned by Nazis. Photo credit: Laura Migliorino.

Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies

How do the current book challenges compare with efforts from the past?

Education in the Nazi State



„Die Judenase ist an ihrer Spitze gebogen. Sie sieht aus wie ein Sechser...“

Education in the Third Reich served to indoctrinate students with the National Socialist world view. Nazi scholars and educators glorified Nordic and other “Aryan” races, while labeling Jews and other so-called inferior peoples as parasitic “bastard races” incapable of creating culture or civilization.

After 1933, the Nazi regime purged the public school system of teachers deemed to be Jews or to be “politically unreliable.” Most educators, however, remained in their posts and joined the National Socialist



TEACHING PROFESSION

With Their Licenses in Jeopardy, Florida Teachers Unsure How the ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Law Will Be Applied



By Ileana Najarro — October 27, 2022 ⌚ 4 min read



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Content provided



MOST POPULAR STORIES

LOCAL

Librarians facing more staffing challenges, threats and even violence amid book bans



By [Kirstin Garriss, CMG Washington News Bureau, KIRO7.com](#)

August 31, 2023 at 5:51 pm PDT



Many public librarians are being forced to quit over concerns about their safety.

This comes amid a growing number of book bans nationwide with many of them in Texas, Florida and

The plot thickens the battle over books comes at a cost



"I had an actual death threat," says Livingston Parish school librarian Amanda Jones, her voice breaking as she recalls one particular post: "We know where you work + live....u have a LARGE target on ur back. Click... Click... See you soon."

<https://www.npr.org/2023/08/11/1192034923/the-plot-thickens-the-battle-over-books-comes-at-a-cost#:~:text=around%20the%20nation.-,No%20longer%20are%20just%20books%20under%20fire%2C%20but%20also%20the,many%20fearing%20for>

Am I over reacting?

- In Arkansas, a new law threatens school and community librarians, and teachers, with up to six years in prison and fines of up to \$10,000 if they distribute materials deemed obscene or harmful;
- Indiana, Oklahoma, and Tennessee have similar laws.
- More than 15 police reports were filed against library staff in Arkansas last year because of the books on their shelves.
- In Texas, local police have been called to libraries at least five times to investigate "obscene" content, according to the Houston Chronicle, and the Texas Education Agency has opened at least 20 criminal investigations of school districts accused of distributing obscene materials.

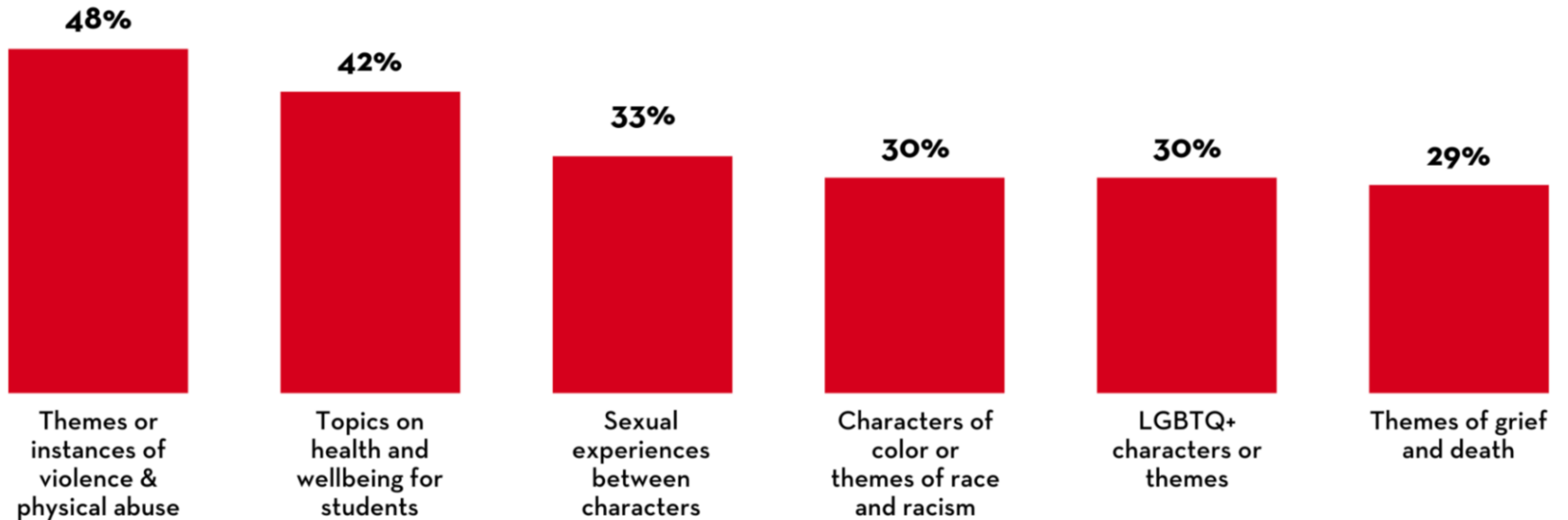


Subject matter of banned content

Of the 3,362 instances of book bans July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



Note: many titles contain more than one type of content.



Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans.

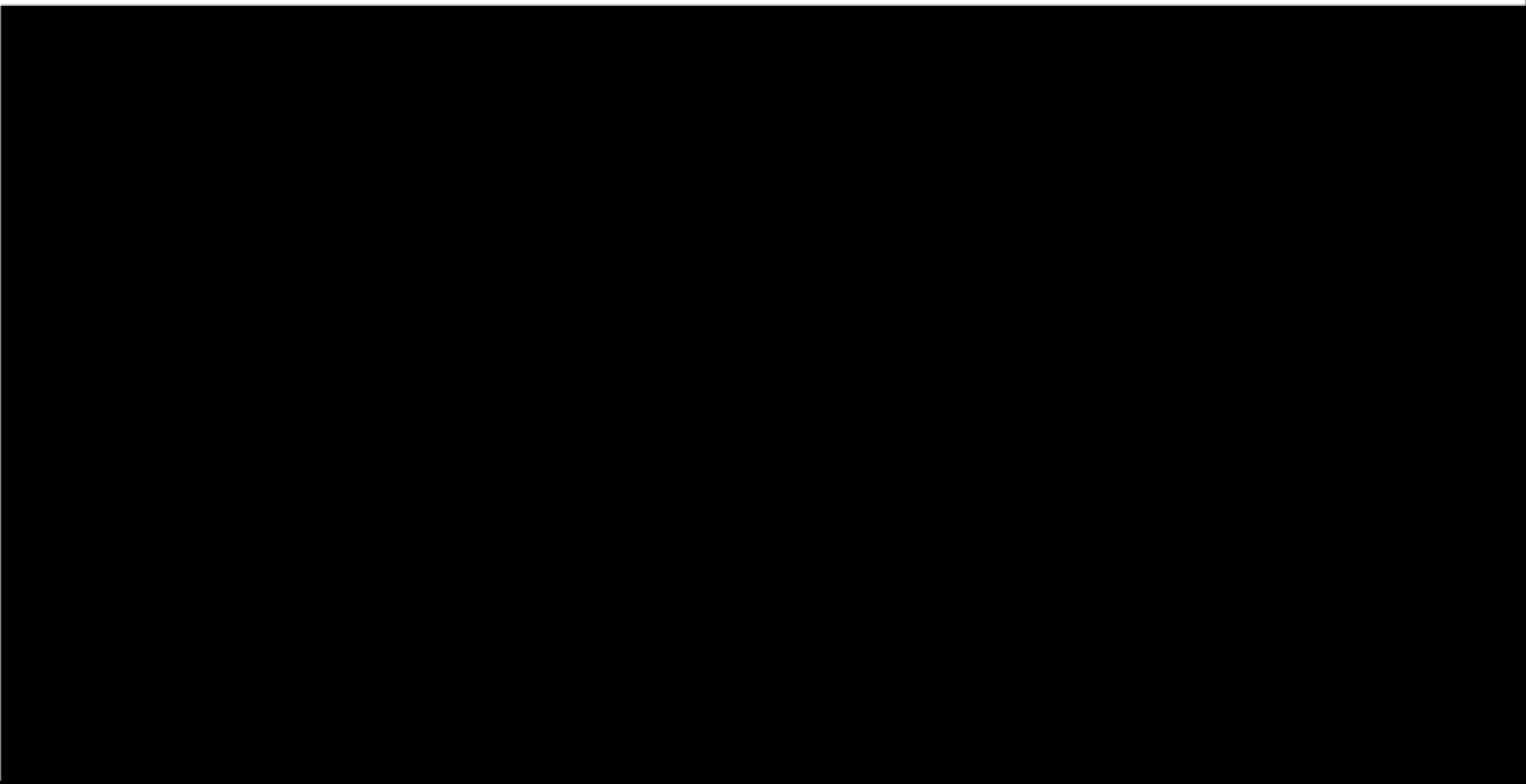
The Fight Over Maus Is Part of a Bigger Cultural Battle in Tennessee. *(NYTIMES)*





3

“It’s part of a continuum, and just a harbinger of things to come... The control of people’s thoughts is essential to all of this.”
— SPIEGELMAN to Cavanaugh
(Jan. 2022)



850 BOOKS TEXAS LAWMAKER MATT KRAUSE WANTS TO BAN: AN ANALYSIS

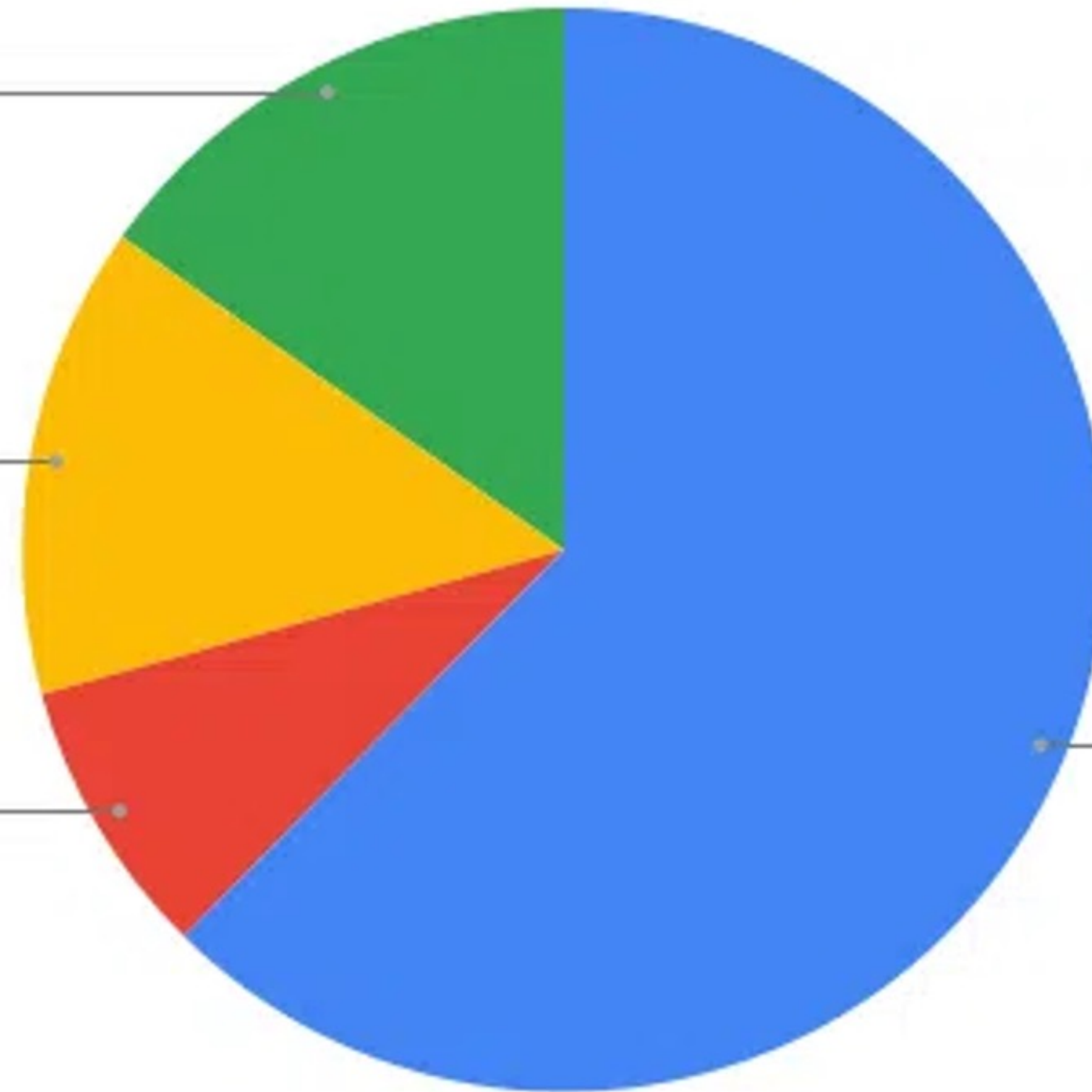
Presumed Reason for Book Challenge

Misc:
15.2%

Sex Education:
14.1%

Race and Racism:
8.3%

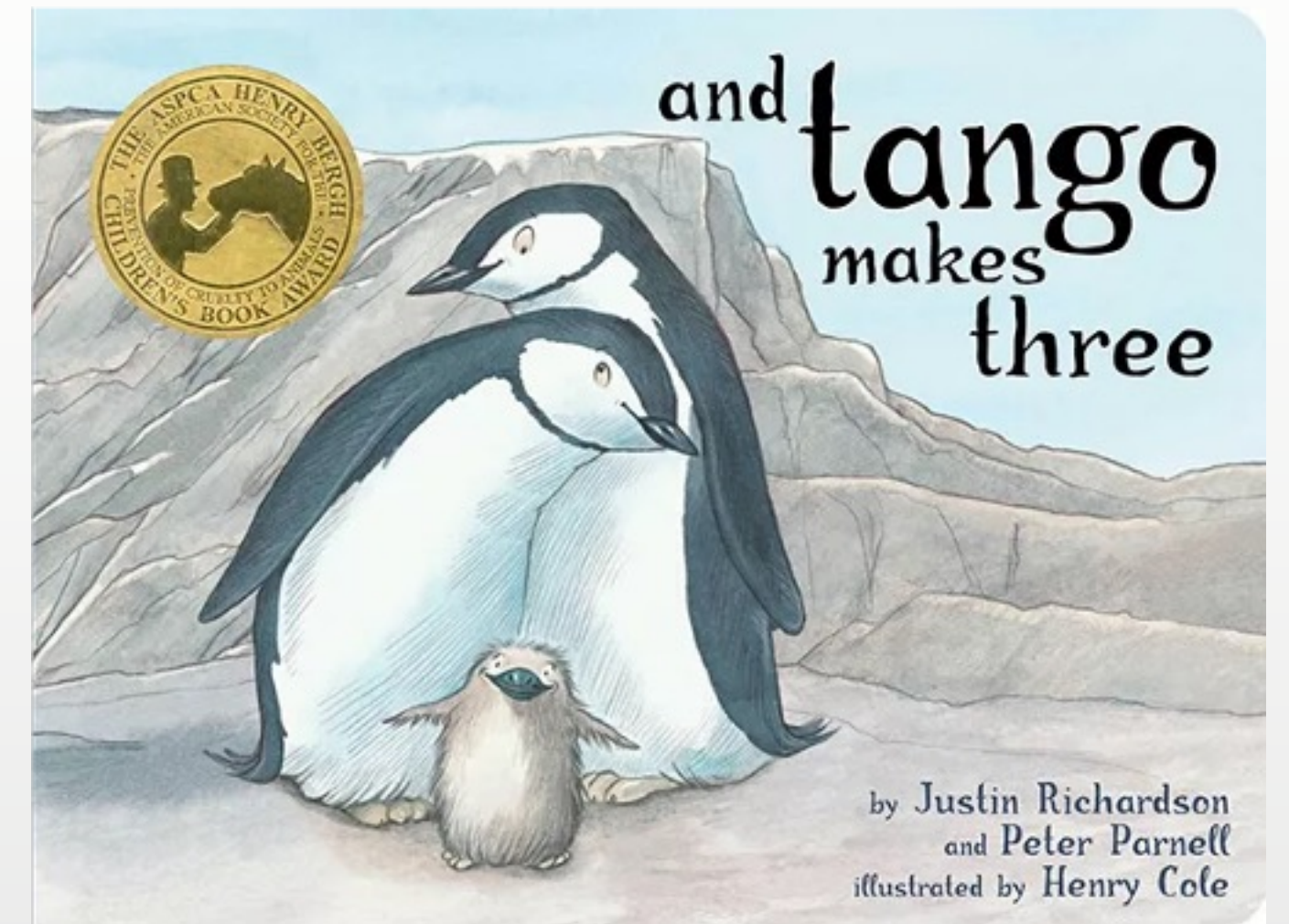
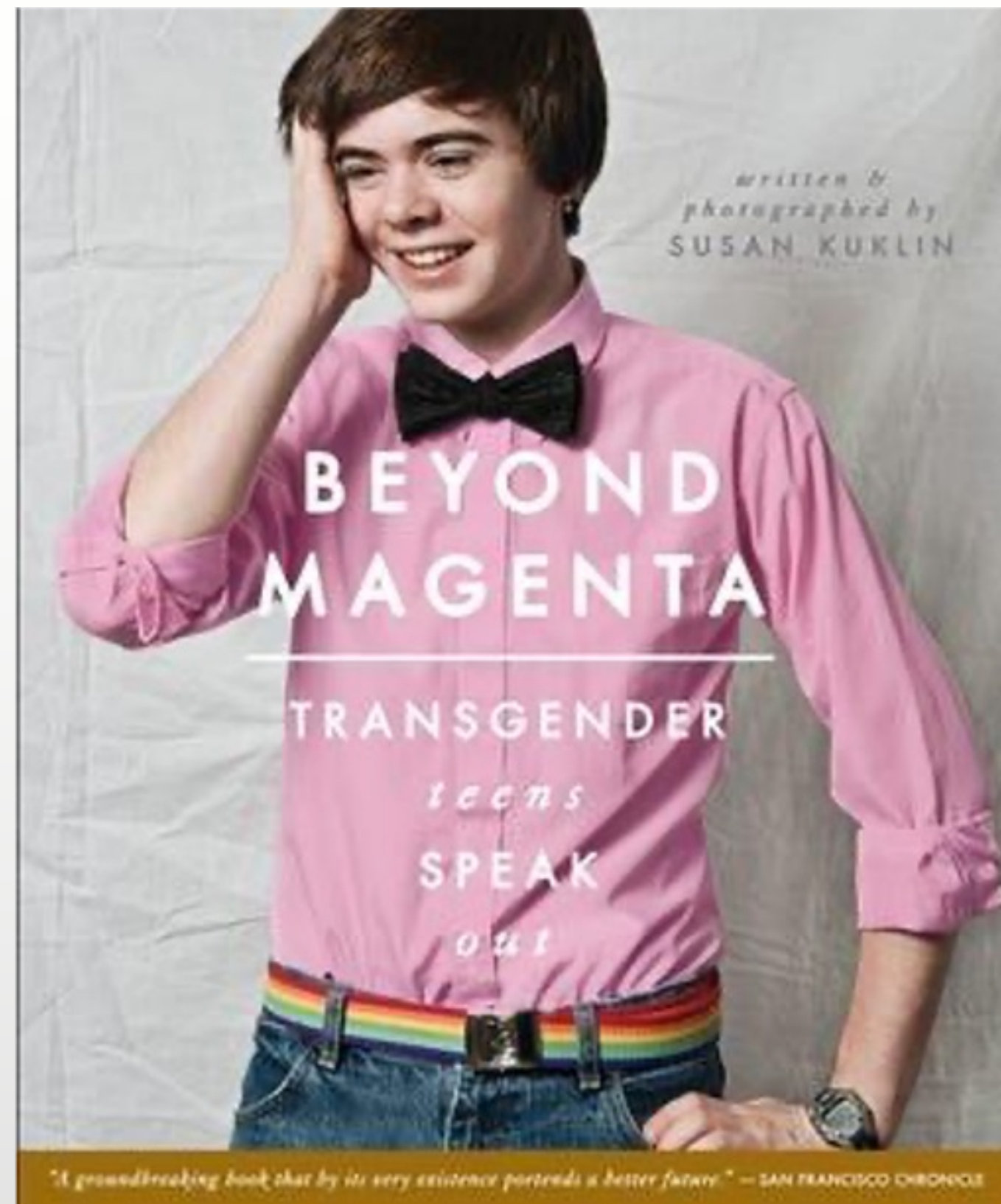
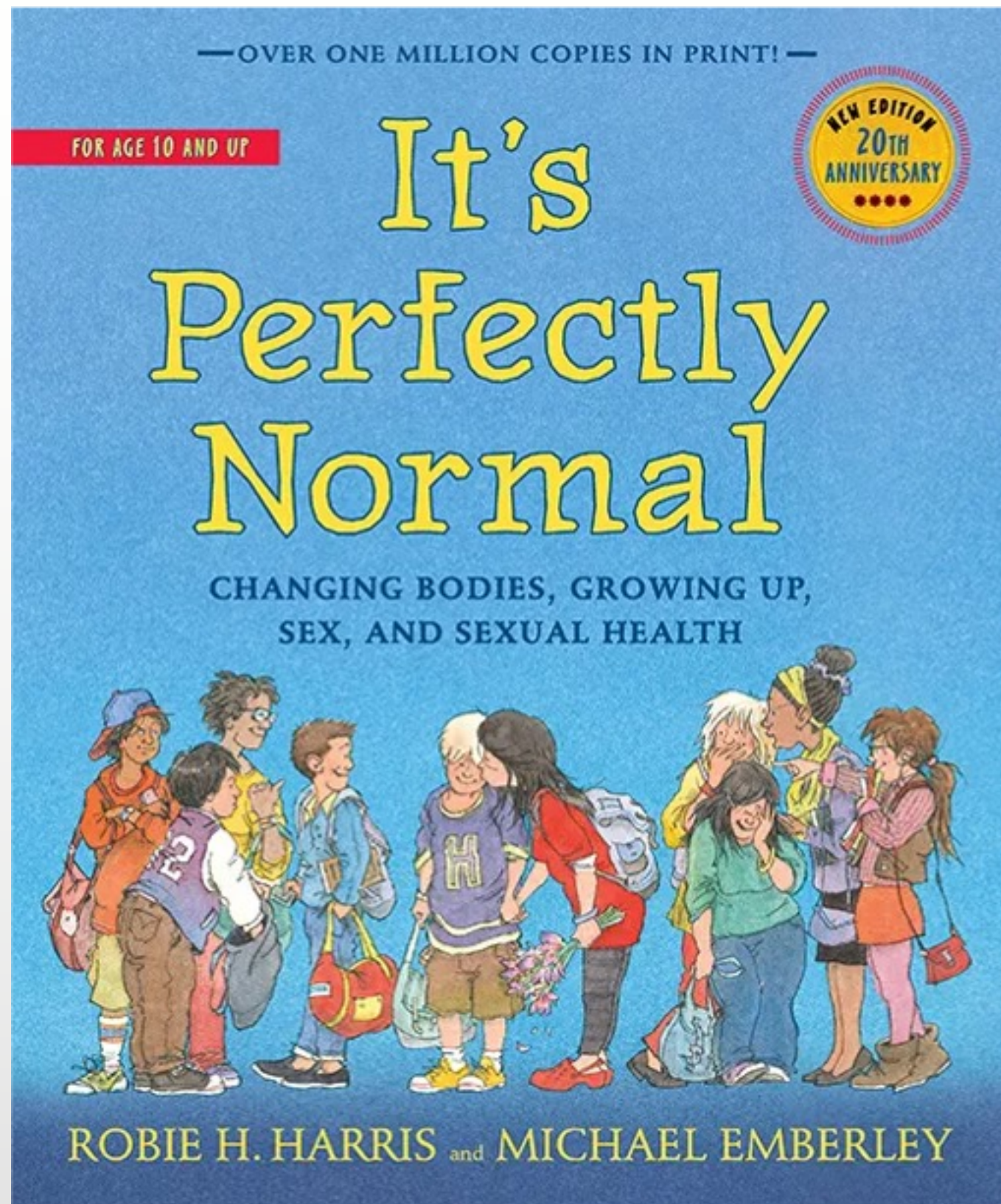
LGBTQ:
62.4%

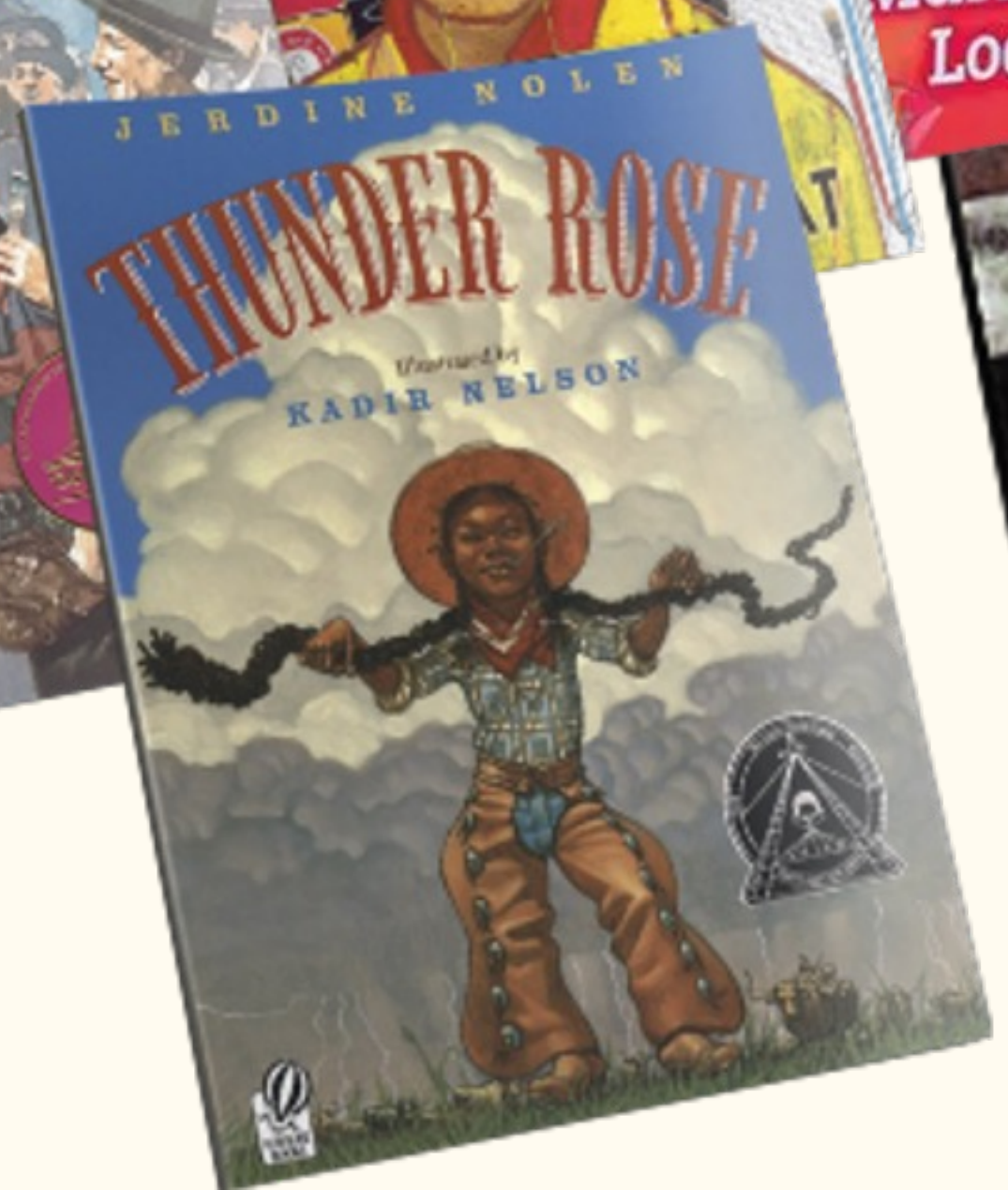
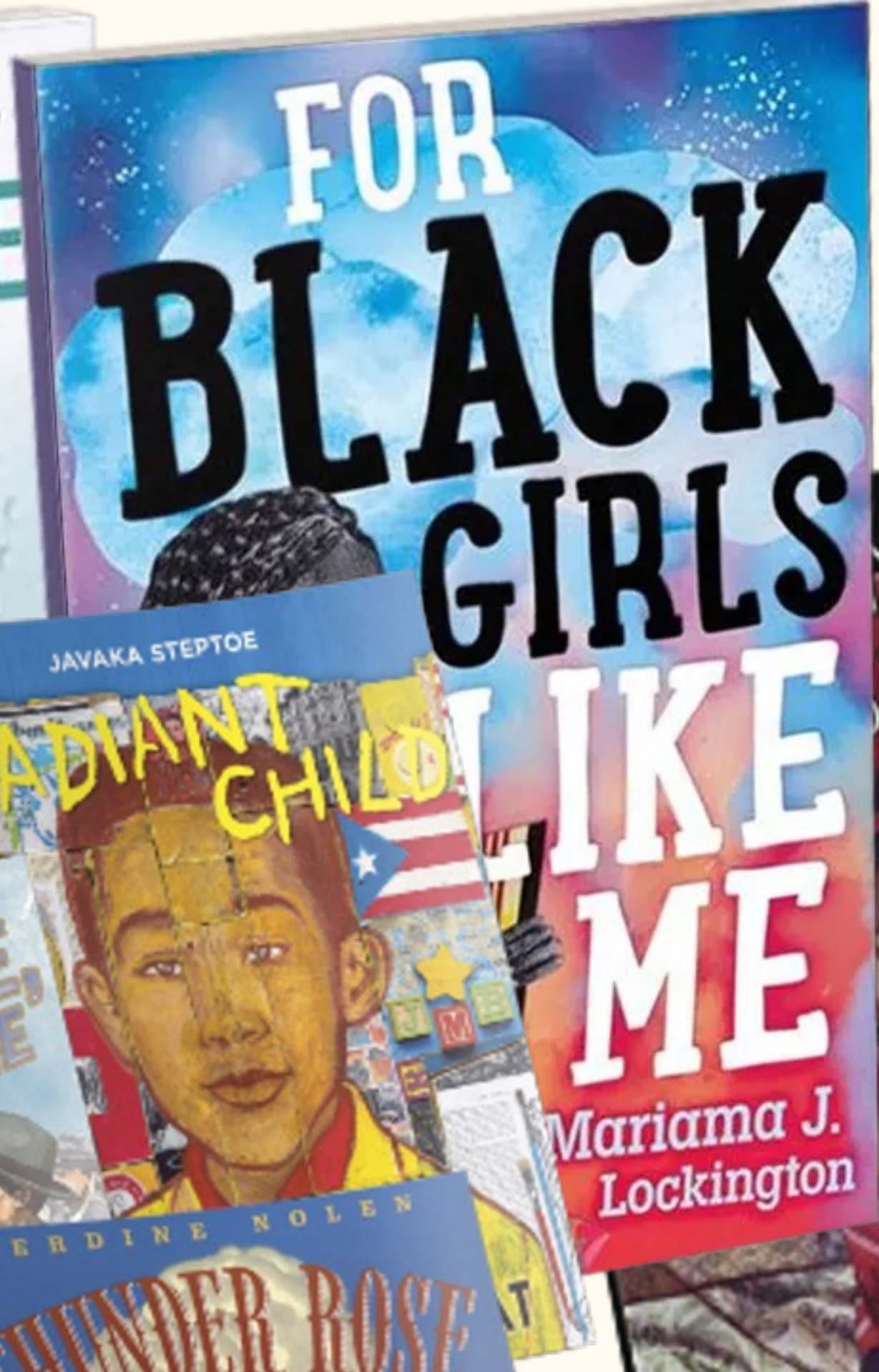
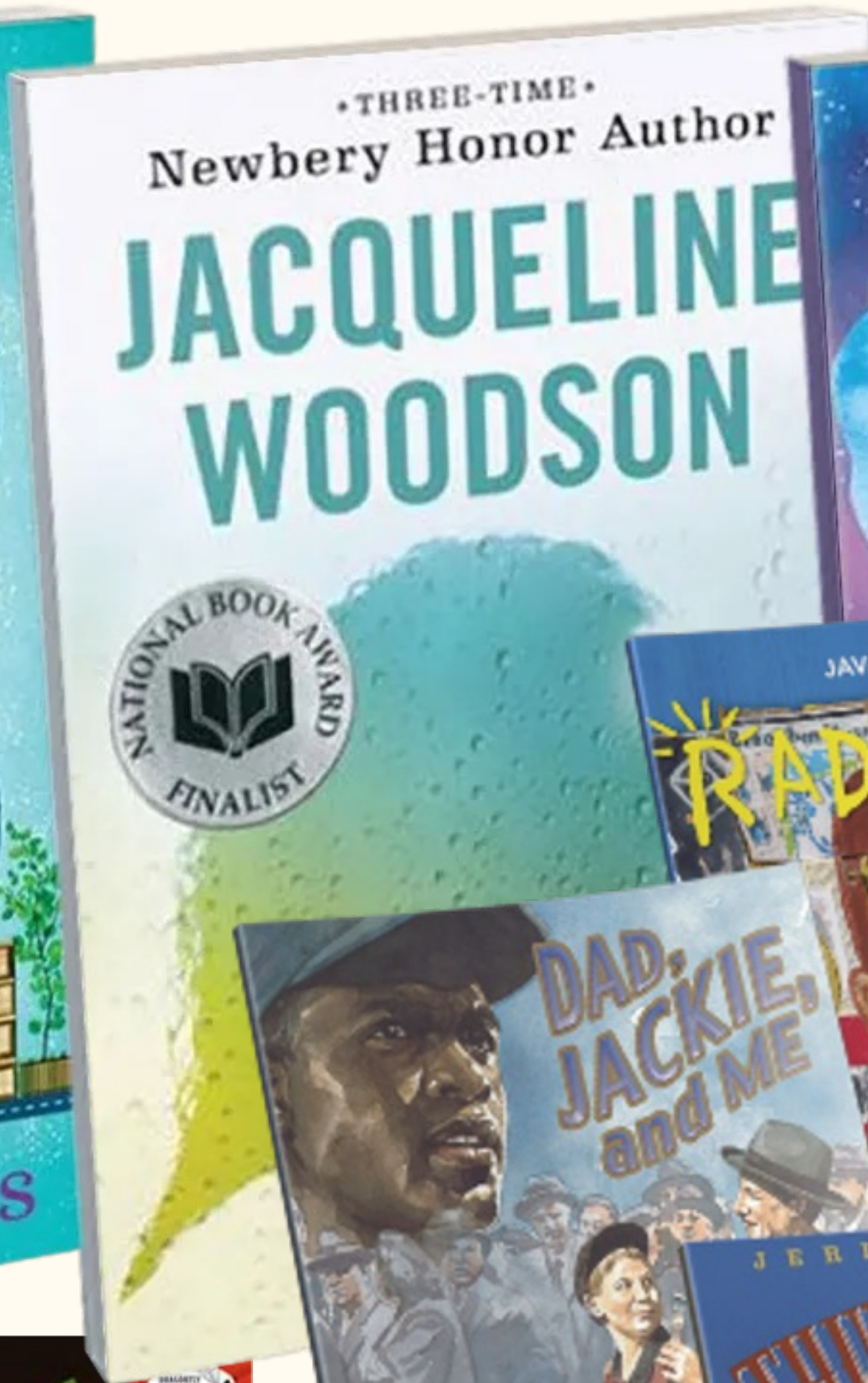
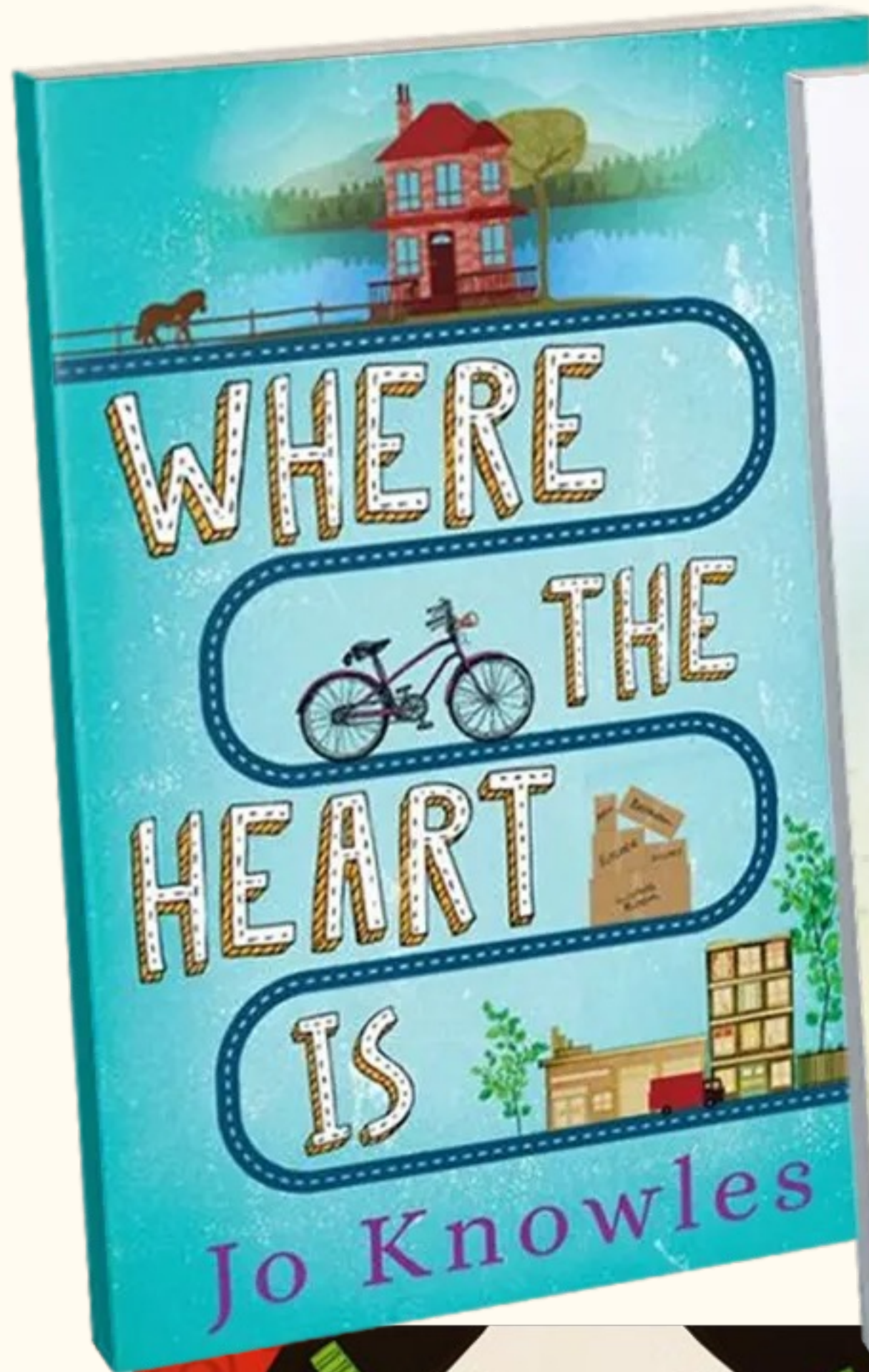


The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Washington Post analyzed 986 complaints against specific books filed during the 2021-2022 school year, it found that the majority were issued by the same 11 people.





What Can I do?

Get involved in the education democracy.

Do you know who's on your local school board?

Do you know who's running?

Who is on the library board?

Do you understand it is your responsibility to participate?

And now we have whole swaths of people showing up to school board meetings, running for the school board, saying, 'I don't want my child reading this book. '

That is fine. What they don't have the right to do is take that book off the shelves and deny the rights of other parents and children to read that book.

 Anderson

 Boguszewski

 Chu

QUESTIONS?

KIMBERLY EDSON
KEDSON@RPLMN.ORG
507-328-2325