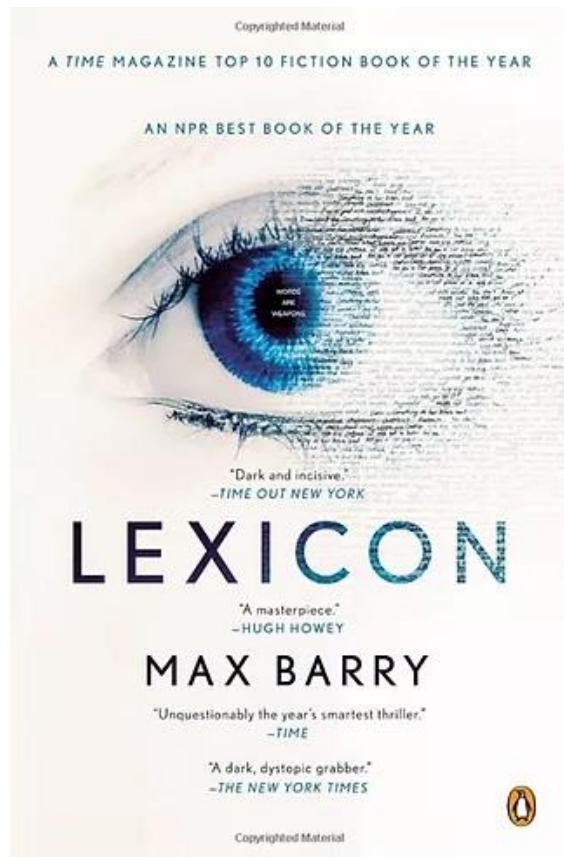



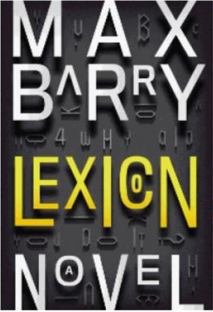
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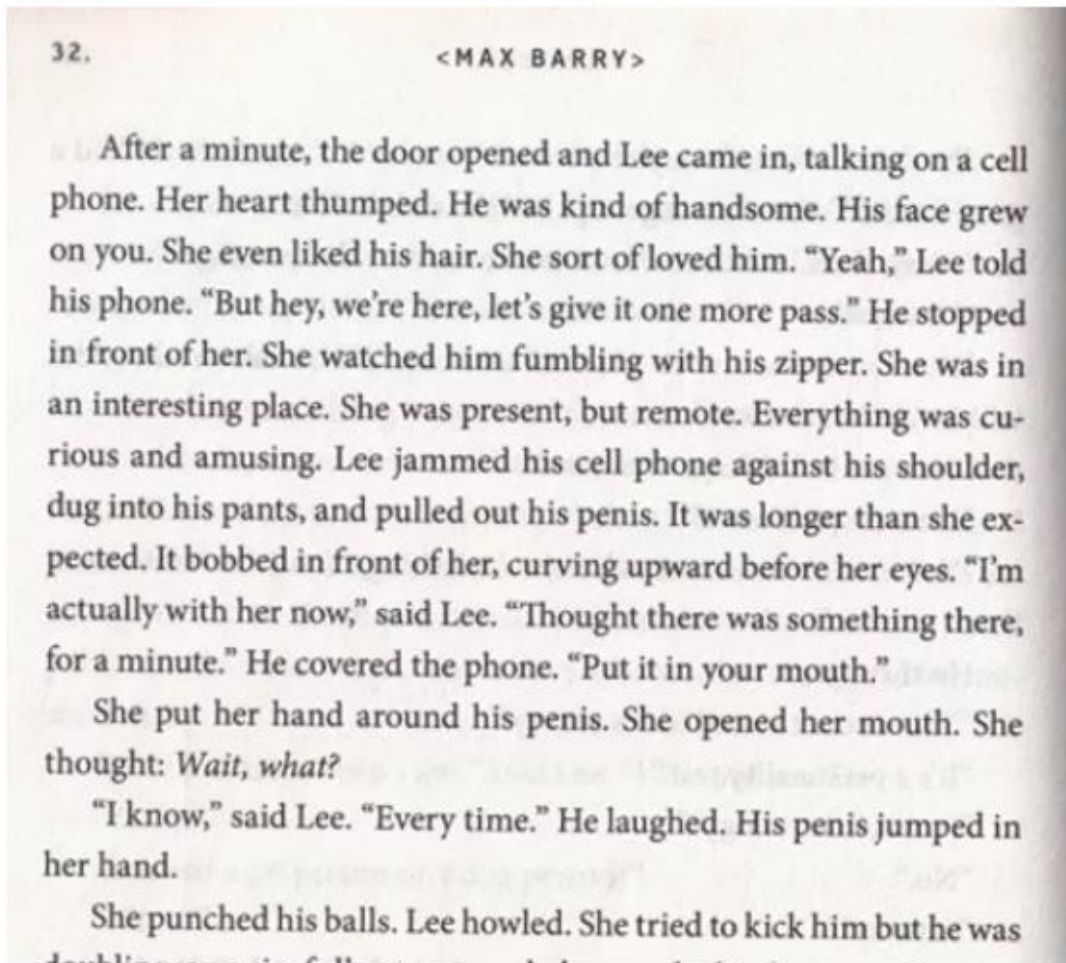
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Excerpt from pg 32



She became promiscuous. It wasn't planned. It was because there was nothing else to do. She thought of herself as *promiscuous* rather than *easy* because she was in charge. If a boy came into the clothes store where she worked and had a look in his eye that meant he'd heard about her, she would play dumb and sell him new khaki pants. But if—and it didn't happen often, only sometimes—there was a boy with curly hair and dark eyes and he was genuinely shopping, then something inside her would yearn. She would walk over and say can I help you, and if the boy was orbited by a badly permed blonde, which he usually was, she would recommend shirts and eye him while his girlfriend fingered skirts. And he would look back and there would be something there. When the girl decided to try something on, Emily would walk directly to him and kiss him like a predator. And he kissed her back, every time, and if she reached down, he was hard as stone. "How's it going?" she would call, her eyes on the boy, and the girl would say something about fit around the shoulders and color and did they have it without the bows. She didn't always take it further than that: Twice the girl came out early and the boy walked out of the store on loose legs, throwing her glances. But twice she did. The last time, the boy had been accompanied by a black-eyed girl who didn't even answer when Emily came over and said hello, and she liked the look of

this was what she had been missing, she realized: All of her predatory behavior had included no reciprocity. And that was important. She had forgotten. She went after him again and this time he took her wrists in one hand and trapped them on the pillow above her head. "I want you," she said. "Let me touch you."

"No," he said, and she found this even more arousing, for some reason. She did enjoy a challenge. But his hands moved down her body and she lost the will to argue. "Yes," she said, "yes, yes." She saw glittering eyes in the darkness outside, his dog, watching them, but she didn't care. She was going someplace else. His touch was careful and she hadn't really known what it was like to be cared for. It was a night of newness. He held her and his fingers moved inside her and then her climax moved through her like a thunderclap, like a force of nature, something she could not control at all, and she had to lie still until she could find herself. He let go of her wrists. He was still wearing pants. She needed to address that. "Now," she said, and finally he nodded, and said, "Now," and she basically attacked him.

"I want you to *fuck me*." She whimpered and growled like an animal. He worried about the noise, said, "Quiet," and she began to hiss, a kind of noise he hadn't heard anyone make before. Goose bumps undulated across her skin. Waves followed the touch of his fingers. Her hips rose and fell, and when he touched her there she issued a high, barely audible keen, like escaping steam. He worried he'd broken her, and brought her up, and desperation flashed across her face and she begged him to take her down again. When he did, she gave a long sigh of satisfaction, a noise of complete unself-consciousness that signaled he was very close to the core of her. He moved his hand between her legs and into the wetness he found there. "In me," she said, the words becoming a chant, gasped into his ear over and over as her fingers clawed at his back, and he was unable to stop himself. He unbuttoned his pants. He entered her and the instant he did so, her body turned to iron, a thing made of hot steel. He climaxed within moments.