

## Books on Trial: *Feed*



Anderson, M.T. *Feed*.  
Cambridge, MA: Candlewick  
Press, 2004. 320pp.  
ISBN 0-763-62259-1

This book was recently challenged in an Iowa high school because the book featured “obscenity” and “adult situations.” It is also a National Book Awards finalist.

*Feed* is set in a futuristic world where the Internet is everywhere, people are plugged into it all of the time, literally. Titus and his friends are normal teens of the time, taking trips to the moon to hang out, partying during spring break and shopping at the mall. They also get all the consumer information they ever need through their implants that beam the Internet directly into their brains.

When Titus gets put into the hospital by a nasty virus sent through his feed he meets a girl who didn't get her implant at birth, Violet. Together they explore just what the feed is doing to people, and what it is hiding.

This book is meant to be a satire on teen life, with exaggerated ads sent through the feed, fashion and hair trends that change hourly and barely articulate teens. The book thrives on amplifying the stereotypical teen experience, so it is no surprise that drinking, doing drugs (electronically though), swearing and sex are present in the book. These situations help to create a picture of how dark, disordered, and vapid the world has become thanks to the feed, they are in no way meant to glorify these situations. Besides, it's not like teens haven't seen all this stuff before. This is a well-written book, with an interesting message and it would be a shame to see it taken away from readers because of this content.

## Books on Trial: *Push*



Sapphire. *Push*. London, UK:  
Vintage, 1997. 192pp.  
ISBN 0-749-39504-4

Hope. That's what you have to keep in mind when you read *Push* by Sapphire. Precious Jones has a hard life. Only sixteen years old, she is pregnant by her father a second time, abused by her mother, still sexually assaulted by her father, kicked out of school, her first child has Down's Syndrome, and she's basically illiterate.

Precious tells her story in her own words, swearing and all, which is one of the sources of controversy surrounding this book. Others include the graphic definitions of sexuality including being raped by her father and the verbal abuse she suffers from her mother. Yes, the language used is explicit. Yes, the accounts are very graphic, often disturbingly so. However, this is necessary to allow the reader to experience the world as Precious knows it.

Despite all her problems, Precious is determined to better herself. The reader is able to follow her as she enrolls in an alternative school, moves out of her mother's apartment, and begins to look after her child and herself.

It is understandable that readers may be distracted by all the swearing and the direness of Precious' situation, as expressed in great detail, may make the reader uncomfortable. However, it is important to move past this and see the whole picture. *Push* is about hope and the positive things that can happen when you decide to take control of your own life.