

BOOK

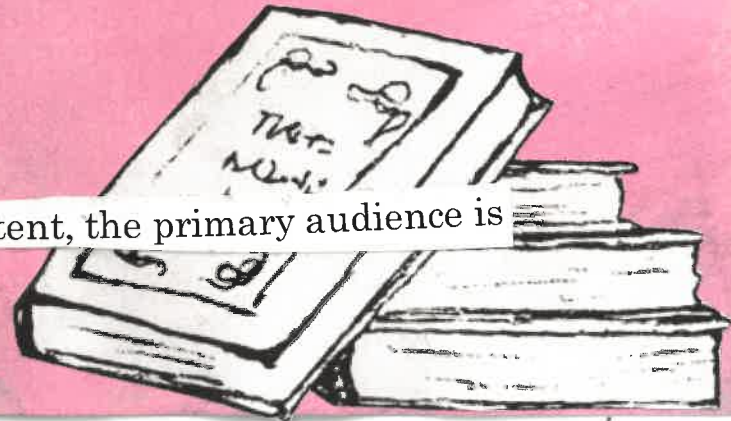
Written By: Emily Ramsden
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Booktok is a subcommunity that originated on TikTok as a way to share and recommend books to others. As of October 2024, #BookTok had over 52 million videos with over 309 billion views on TikTok (Wikipedia, n.d.).

WHAT IS BOOKTOK?

While people of all ages engage in this content, the primary audience is female teenagers and young adults.



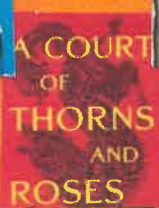
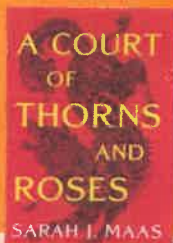
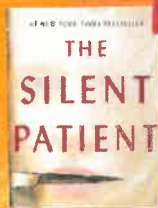
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Sales of popular books skyrocket when creators discuss them, even if it is in a joking context. Also, many authors are brought up in a positive way, especially if multiple of their books are popular.

Lots of the most commonly talked about books include those with LGBTQ+ characters or relationships or “badass” feminine characters who inspire younger girls.



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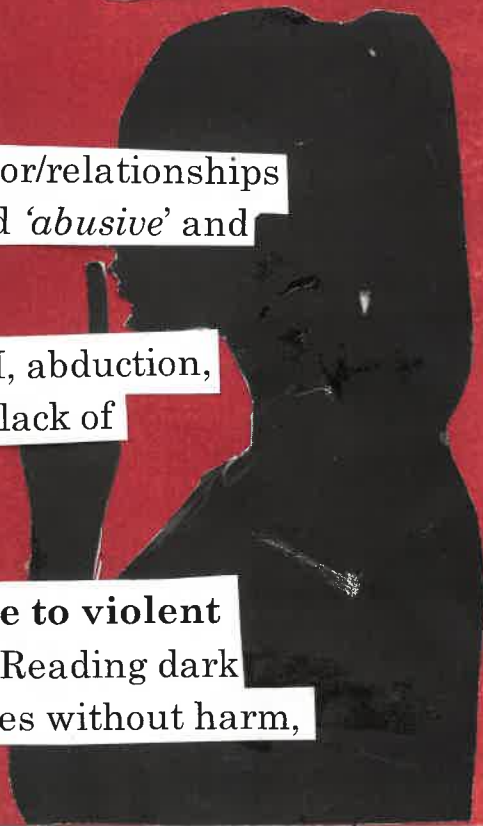
DARK ROMANCE



Writing books that include abusive behavior/relationships continues to be romanticized by removing the word '*abusive*' and replacing it with *Dark Romance*.

Some books contain darker themes such as exploring BDSM, abduction, kidnapping and captivity, role playing, rape, violence, and lack of consent.

Studies have shown though that **constant exposure to violent scenes can cause desensitization** (Tabrizi, 2025). Reading dark romance is fun, it's a way to engage in certain fantasies without harm, but what if there was more to it?



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sa

trope

Sexual Assault:

Like the issues with abuse, sexual assault and rape continues to be seen in 'dark romance' as something that should be romanticized. In *Haunting Adeline* by H.D Carlton, the main female character is raped by her stalker using a gun to penetrate her (Eesley, 2023).

Does she file a lawsuit?

Does she call the police?

Or does she fall in love with him, adding to this idea that it is something that should be desired.

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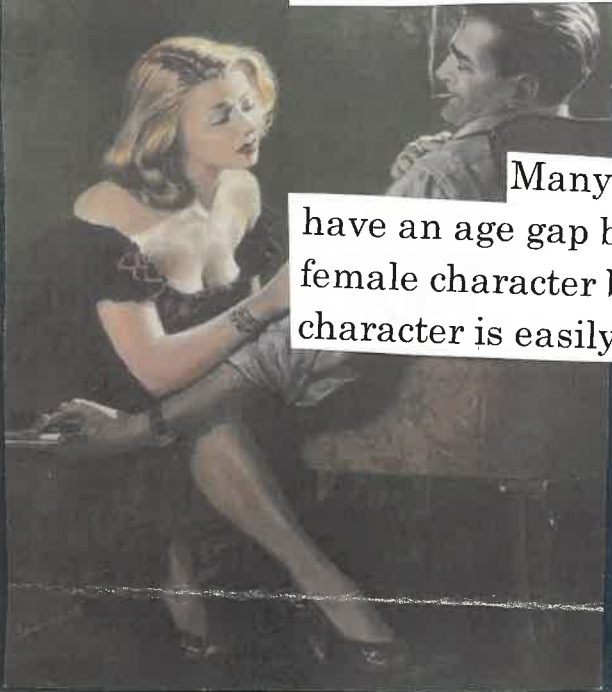
age

GAPS

This trope is seen in YA (Young Adult) books giving younger people the impression that this power imbalance, reinforcement of gender roles, and manipulation that can be seen is okay, or something to *desire*.

Age Gaps:

Many books, especially those in the 'dark romance' genre, have an age gap between the love interests. Almost always, it's the female character being barely legal or in her early 20's, while the male character is easily in their 30's or 40's.



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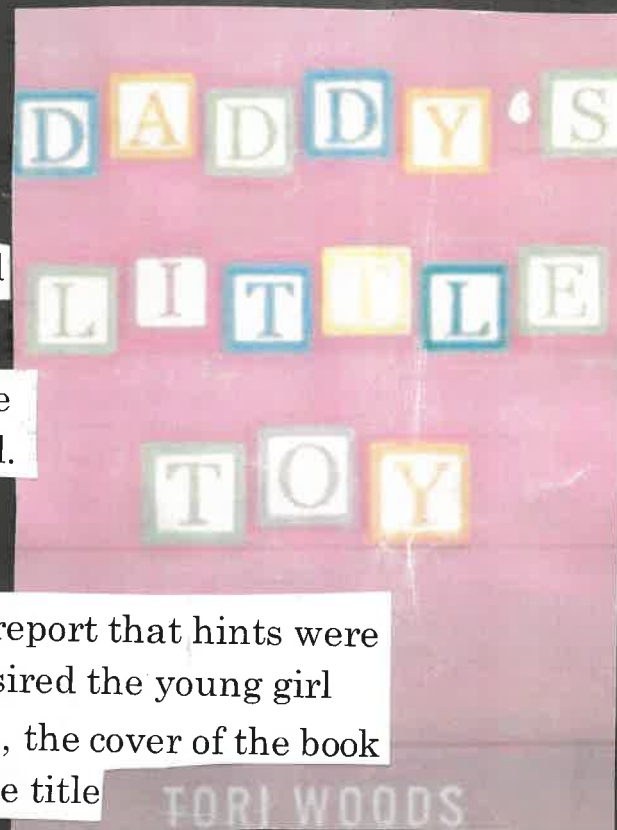
Daddy's Little Toy by Lauren T. Mastorsa, is a book that faced backlash due to its content. The book follows a barely legal 18-year-old girl falling in love with **her father's friend**.

D L T

On March 21, Lauren T. Mastorsa with possessing, disseminating, and

was charged by Australian police producing child abuse material.

Controversy sets in as people who read the book report that hints were dropped revealing that the father's friend has desired the young girl since she was 3 years old. To make matters worse, the cover of the book features children's building blocks spelling out the title



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Help

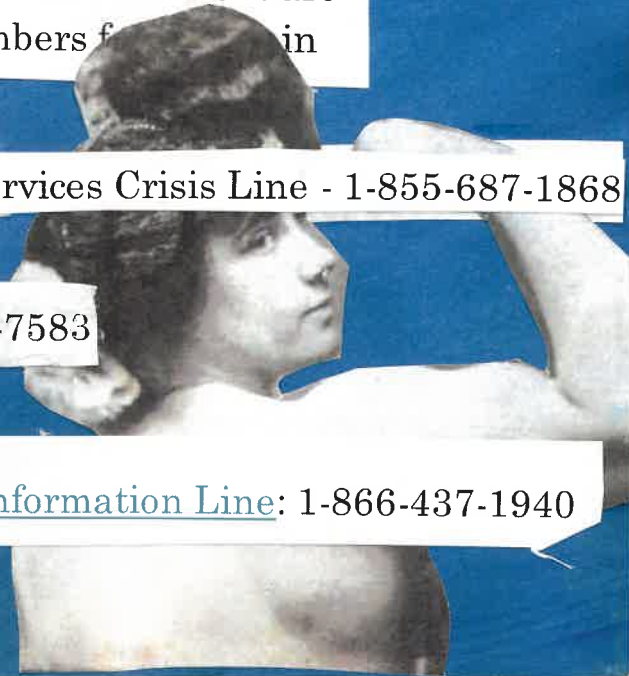
“The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim” (RAINN, n.d.).

Unwanted sexual touching, attempted, rape, forcing someone to preform sexual acts, penetration of someone’s body without consent are all types of sexual assault (RAINN). Important numbers for in British Columbia include:

Battered Women’s Support Services Crisis Line - 1-855-687-1868

Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre: 1-877-392-7583

Seniors Abuse and Information Line: 1-866-437-1940



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