

Looking for alaska: banned book project essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Miles Halter lives a very boring life. He is not depressed, but just lacks excitement in life. As a result, he will pretty much do anything for a hobby, but his favorite one is finding famous last words. Eventually he decides that he is missing a drive to live, what he calls his "Great Perhaps". So in order to fill this void he decides to go to boarding school in Alabama.

Upon arriving at the school, which has no air-conditioning, he meets his soon-to-be best friend Chip, and Chip gives him the nickname Pudge because he is actually very skinny. Chip is also known as the Colonel because of his reputation as the mastermind of most pranks. Pudge discovers that there are middle-class students and very wealthy students, known as Weekday Warriors, because they leave the campus on the weekends. The Weekday Warriors constantly get in fights and prank wars with the middle and lower-middle class students, and hate the Colonel because he constantly pranks them. His friendship with Colonel leads to meeting the most beautiful girl he has ever seen, named Alaska Young. Alaska seems to like Pudge, but she has a boyfriend, so Pudge temporarily dated Lara and engaged in unpassionate sexual activity with her.

Pudge and Alaska eventually hit it off and develop an intimate relationship. But when the worst possible thing happens, and Alaska dies, Miles must learn to cope with the several different emotions associated with love and loss. Looking for Alaska was temporarily banned from a Depew High School in Buffalo, New York in 2008, because it contains an oral sex scene, a pornographic movie, swearing, smoking, and drinking. The book was being used in an 11th grade Literature class. It was obvious that there was some material in the book that might not be considered appropriate for teenagers.

As a result, teachers sent a letter home to parents providing them with the option of reading an alternate book.

Nonetheless, parents were worried on behalf of the students who didn't select to read the alternate book, and had the book temporarily banned from the school. In September of 2009, it showed up on the list of 43 books challenged in Leesburg, Florida. Banning this book because of sexuality is unnecessary because most teens already know about oral sex, and if someone didn't, it is still better to find out this way than on the internet. Sexual content on the internet is much more inappropriate than that in books. The purpose of the sex was not to arouse anyone; it was just to investigate the concept of sex among teenagers. As far as the plot is concerned, the sex between Pudge and Lara is used to represent the difference between impassionate sexual actions and sexual actions between people where there is actually an intimate emotional connection.

Banning because of the pornographic movie in the book is even less necessary because the miniscule amount of material that are there, are actually used to shun pornography. Alaska actually states that the video isn't romantic and objectified women, and turns the video off. It is much more likely that teens will take this advice if it is from an attractive girl, telling a boy that this material objectified women, in an interesting book where there is no bias against sex. As a matter of fact, teens would probably believe anything an attractive girl, that liked them, told them to understand! On the other hand, parents are highly biased against sex, and as a result, teenagers will probably not take that advice. Some people could say that this book

encourages sex, drugs, and drinking as filling the void of excitement and popularity.

However, at the end of this book, Pudge loses the one he loves most-and death is a symbol, used as a strong indicator that none of these things should be used as a coping mechanism.