

Dear Ms. Fechtel,

As Director of the Library, I have been advised of the concerns you shared with the City Commissioners and others about the books your daughter recently borrowed from our library. The two books in question, Bermudez Triangle and Only in Your Dreams, are part of the Young Adult collection. The Young Adult area of the library was established to serve those between the ages of 12 - 18. Your daughter, at age 13, is at the beginning of that range. I commend you, as a parent, for keeping aware of what your child is reading. We wish this was true for all of our children and parents since we cannot act in loco parentis.

I thought it would be helpful for you to know our selection process for the purchase of materials for the library. We cannot read, nor even get, review copies of all of the books we chose for the library. We depend upon well-respected book review materials for libraries such as: Library Journal, School Library Journal, Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, VOYA (specifically for Young Adult materials), and Kirkus. In addition, we consider patron requests. In the case of The Gossip Girls Series, there were many requests, including from parents, for books in this series. The book Bermudez Triangle had several good reviews. Both of these books were identified as books for young adults in grades 10 - 12 which is within the range of materials we choose for the Young Adult collection.

Our Young Adult Librarian, Natalie Houston, has assisted at least one other parent who has expressed concern that her child not read books that are written for older teens. That parent has been very pleased with the materials that Ms. Houston has recommended to her child and she seeks the librarian each time she comes in for more age-appropriate books. Natalie has developed reading lists for certain genres including one for Teen Christian Fiction that you too might find valuable. This booklist is printed in a handy bookmark format and is available in the Young Adult room. Also, there are a number of very good books in the Youth Room (Imagination Cove).

I am sorry that your experience was shocking and I commend you for your concern. If you would like to see the reviews for the books in question, I have gathered them together. Ms. Houston will be happy to share them with you and to assist you and your daughter in the selection of some excellent young adult literature we have available.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Morse, Director
Leesburg Public Library
100 E. Main St.
Leesburg, FL 34748

(352) 728-9790

(note – sent as an e-mail (8/14/08 at 12:28 p.m.) to Ms Fechtel who corresponded via e-mail to group referred to in the first paragraph.)