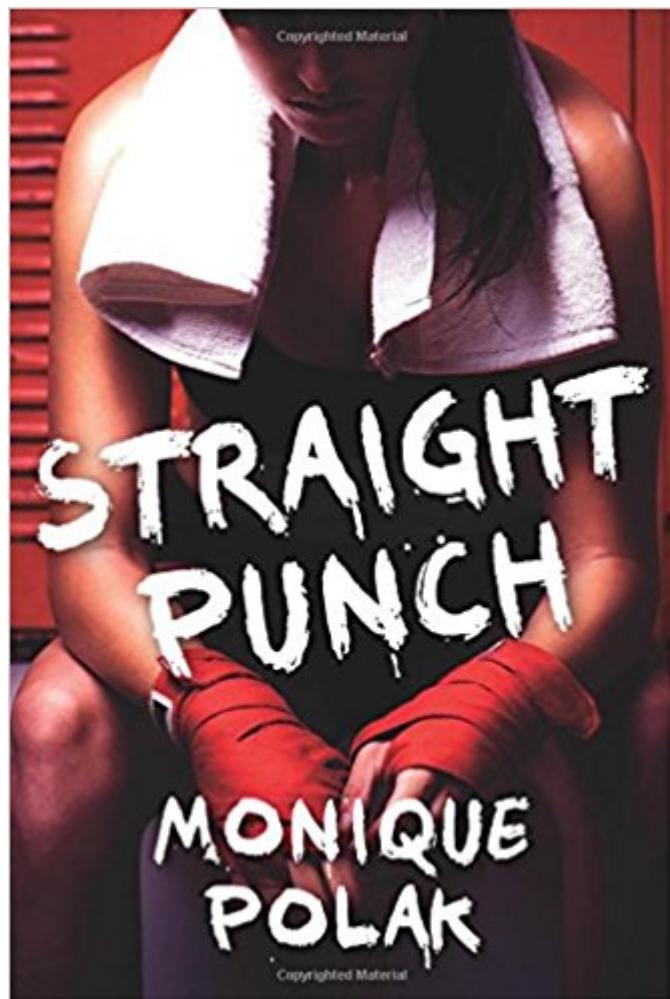


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# Straight Punch



## Synopsis

Tessa McPhail has a bad habit—tagging—that lands her at New Directions, an alternative school in Montreal’s toughest neighborhood. The school is far from Tessa’s home and full of troubled kids. To make matters worse, half of every school day is devoted to boxing. The other students think boxing is cool. Not Tessa, who cannot handle violence of any kind. But when a neighbor starts a petition to have New Directions closed down, Tessa discovers something worth fighting for, both in and out of the ring.

## Book Information

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Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #2,436,521 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #85 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Martial Arts #1590 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance

## Customer Reviews

After Tessa’s tagging habit gets her expelled, she finds herself the newest student at New Directions, an alternative school for troubled teens, where half the day is spent boxing. Not aggressive or rebellious by nature, Tessa enters her new school—and the ring—with trepidation. But before long she begins to shed some of her fears and assumptions, discovering new sides to her personality and a true sense of community among her classmates. Trouble rears its head, however, when the neighbors begin petitioning to relocate the school, afraid of its delinquent students and their violent boxing regime. Polak tackles many tough issues here—teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol use, theft, and prejudice—but yet communicates a positive message about facing one’s fears and taking control of one’s life. There are few surprises in terms of plot, yet the solid writing and theme of empowerment make this worth noticing, particularly for teen girls looking for an extra round of self-confidence. Grades 7-10. --Julia Smith

"Polak keeps her prose simple and straightforward, providing her readers with a suspenseful, insightful story that ticks off some hot buttons. The high-interest graffiti/boxing combo is supported by real affection for throwaway teens, resulting in a story that should have broad appeal. Though simple, the story provides both insight and entertainment." (Kirkus Reviews 2014-01-01)"A unique story...It was well written and I loved how Tessa grew as a person throughout her rough experiences." (Bethesda Teen Reads 2014-02-13)"Polak excels at portraying her characters...[She] also provides a behind-the-scenes look at boxing and some of the dynamics involved when two people must be trained to fight each other. Issues of teen pregnancy and homosexuality are handled with care...Fans of Playing with the Boys...will enjoy this book, as will anyone looking for strong relationships without romance." (VOYA 2014-04-01)"Tessa's backstory is fully fleshed out and explains her aversion to violence following an out-of-control hockey brawl that left her scarred. Tessa's character represents how many feel about violent sports and as she grows to the sport and embraces it, readers will too." (Southwestern Ohio Young Adult Materials Review Group 2014-07-11)

My daughter loves these books! They are "gritty" enough to keep her attention, but not so much that they make me uncomfortable!

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