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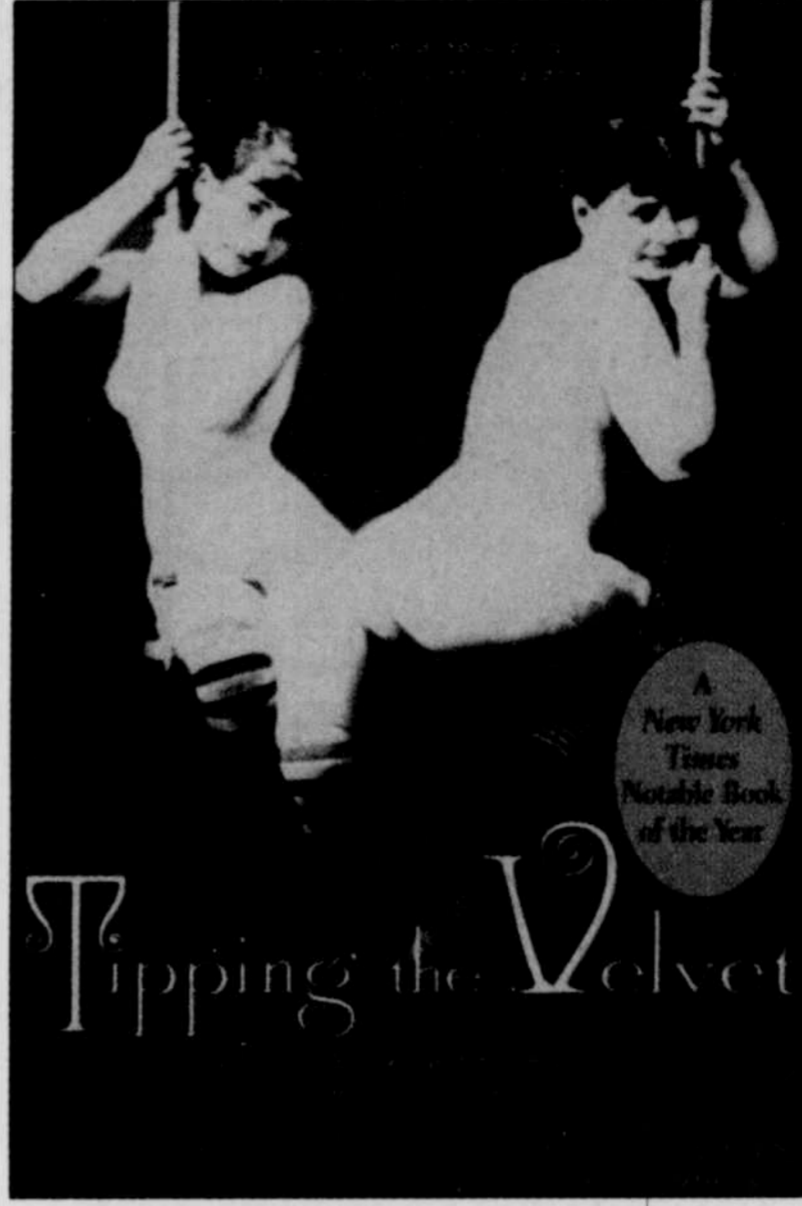
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**WORLD news**



**UNITED KINGDOM**

The British Broadcasting Corp. is turning Sarah Waters' lesbian-themed novel *Tipping the Velvet* into a major television series. Set in the 19th century, the book "pulsates with highly charged and explicitly presented erotic heat," according to a jacket blurb.

The man who is adapting the novel, Andrew Davies, told the *Daily Express*: "There are several explicit sexual scenes in the script which I will urge the BBC to keep in. It's unlikely this will be going out at teatime. There's not been anything quite like this on TV. It will be...very controversial."

According to Ananova.com, the book "tells the story of the daughter of an oyster parlor owner who falls in love with a female music hall performer and ends up on stage herself. When the relationship ends, she becomes involved with an older aristocratic woman."

At least 24 men have been beaten severely by a masked man during recent months in the cruisey Alkington Woods of Manchester, England. Police believe other victims have not come forward.

"These attacks are looking distinctly homophobic," said Bob Ashton, Middleton police detective inspector. "We want to catch this man before someone is more seriously hurt."

**EGYPT**

Parliament Speaker Ahmed Fathi Surur denounced the European Parliament on Dec. 1 for its criticism of Egypt's treatment of gays. The European Parliament approved the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement on Nov. 29 but added language committing Egypt to respect human rights, gay rights and democracy.

"The Egyptian Constitution stipulates respect for the fundamental rights of citizens, and the Egyptian government respects their rights in practice," Surur said. "Only the Egyptian Parliament has the right to monitor the respect of the government [for human rights]."

Cairo's Emergency State Security Court handed down verdicts Nov. 14 in the cases of 52

men detained since May because of alleged homosexual activity. A total of 23 were sentenced to between one and five years of hard labor, and 29 were acquitted.

**COLOMBIA**

The same-sex union bill that passed out of a Colombian Senate committee Nov. 21 was altered substantially in the process, activists report.

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission said: "The bill had originally addressed a wide range of discrimination issues, with provisions criminalizing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and others requiring that homophobic content be eliminated from school curricula. However, those provisions were eliminated."

As passed, by a 9-1 vote, the measure allows one member of a registered same-sex couple to inherit half of the assets accrued by the other partner during the relationship and extends spousal health, pension and alimony benefits to same-sex couples.

The bill now moves to the full Senate. If it passes there, it will go to a Chamber of Deputies committee, then to the full Chamber and finally to the president.

"Despite the narrowing of the scope of the law, activists are satisfied that the proposal is moving forward and that an open and positive discussion is taking place in the halls of Congress and in Colombian society as a whole," the commission said.

**ISRAEL**

Israel President Moshe Katsav met with gays Nov. 27—and disappointed them. At the conclusion of his chat with members of the Political Council for Gay Rights, he said, "I thought it was important to meet you and hear what you have to say—though I don't see how I can help you."

The *Jerusalem Post* commented: "If they [gay activists] thought that they had found an ever open door at the pinnacle of the establishment, they were mistaken.... There was a clear implication that he did not want to be bothered by a bevy of gay groups or individuals."



Israel President Moshe Katsav disappointed gay activists when he told them, "I don't see how I can help you"

**INDIA**

The Naz Foundation has filed suit in the Delhi High Court against India's ban on gay sex, Penal Code Section 377. The gay group says it violates constitutional rights to life, liber-