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This is the author’s preprint version of this article.
American Jodi Picoult has become something of an institution. *The Tenth Circle* is her thirteenth novel dealing with topical themes and families in crisis.

Daniel Stone is a graphic artist married to Laura, a university lecturer specialising in Dante, who is conducting a guilty affair with one of her students. Daniel is drawing (writing?) a graphic novel (included in the book) based on Dante’s *Inferno*. Meanwhile, his daughter, Trixie is suffering the agonies of adolescent love. When she accuses her ex-boyfriend of rape it seems for a while that this is going to be a black and white melodrama devoid of all subtlety. However, despite Picoult’s take-no-prisoners style – ‘The thing that most people didn’t understand … was that a rape victim and a victim of a fatal accident were both gone, forever’ – there is in the end some nuance in this portrait of a family under stress. And despite not particularly liking the style, and finding the graphic novel totally unappealing, I found myself gripped by the narrative through all its tortuous twists, including a dash through an Alaskan blizzard. Dante and the wisdom of the Inuit provide little more than added colour, but the wintry setting – in Maine and then Alaska – is chillingly real.