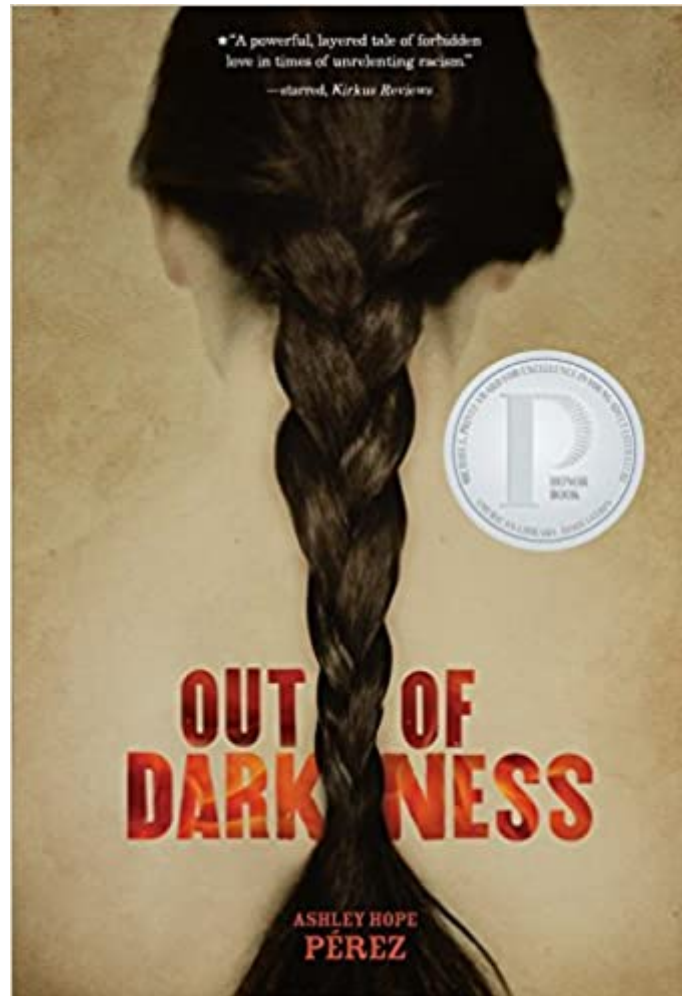




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Out Of Darkness (Fiction - Young Adult)



Synopsis

A 2016 Michael L. Printz Honor Book A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year 2016 Tomás Rivera Book Award Winner "[This] layered tale of color lines, love and struggle in an East Texas oil town is a pit-in-the-stomach family drama that goes down like it should, with pain and fascination, like a mix of sugary medicine and artisanal moonshine." The New York Times Book Review "This is East Texas, and there's lines. Lines you cross, lines you don't cross. That clear?" New London, Texas. 1937. Naomi Vargas and Wash Fuller know about the lines in East Texas as well as anyone. They know the signs that mark them. They know the people who enforce them. But sometimes the attraction between two people is so powerful it breaks through even the most entrenched color lines. And the consequences can be explosive. Ashley Hope Pérez takes the facts of the 1937 New London school explosion the worst school disaster in American history as a backdrop for a riveting novel about segregation, love, family, and the forces that destroy people.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up — The tale's layered plot begins with a prologue set hours after an actual deadly U.S. school disaster in New London, TX in March 1937. Readers are plunged into the grief and horror of the moment long enough to meet important protagonists and wonder at the event before being transported back to September 1936. From this point, the book focuses primarily on Naomi, a 15-year-old of Mexican heritage, and her younger biracial twin half-siblings. Recent arrivals from San Antonio, the children are all living with the twins' white father, and Naomi is forced to navigate

the racially divided oil-mining town, learn to run a household, and to face her increasing interest in an African American youth. This third person story, recounted in multiple perspectives, slowly discloses the origins of the teen's apprehension for the recent transition. The insertion of black-and-white photos and stark black pages interrupt the narrative much like the metaphoric explosions in the lives of the diverse protagonists. Additionally, an increased use of white space leading to the book's climax seems to slow, and almost stop time. This book presents a range of human nature, from kindness and love to acts of racial and sexual violence. The work resonates with fear, hope, love, and the importance of memory. The author's note and acknowledgements pages give more background on the disaster. VERDICT Set against the backdrop of an actual historical event, Pérez's young adult novel gives voice to many long-omitted facets of U.S. history. —Ruth Quiroa, National Louis University, IL

"The beauty of Perez's prose and her surefooted navigation through the dangerous landscape of the East Texas oil field in the late 1930s redeem the fact that anyone who dares read this agonizing star-crossed love story will end up in about six billion numb and tiny pieces. Absolutely stunning." --Elizabeth Wein, author of Code Name Verity and Michael L. Printz Award Honoree "Pérez deftly weaves [an] unflinchingly intense narrative....A powerful, layered tale of forbidden love in times of unrelenting racism." --starred, Kirkus Reviews "Pérez deftly weaves [an] unflinchingly intense narrative....A powerful, layered tale of forbidden love in times of unrelenting racism." --starred, School Library Journal

This author is one of a kind. I have enjoyed all three of her books and this one was no exception. The fact that I live in East Texas makes the setting personal. My family has similar stories of people just as bad and just as good as these characters. As always, I was riveted and never expected it to end like it did. Mrs. Perez knows how to make the characters come to life and knows how to keep you invested in the story. She always shocks and surprises you. She deserves the award she won for this book and deserves more recognition than she is getting.

This was a raw and graphic novel, filled with as much abuse and hatred as there was love and hope. It was beautifully written, with lyrical descriptions, and the characters were fleshed out and realistic. There was sexual content, both consensual and forced, though not described in gratuitous detail. There was also an abundance of racial slurs and violence, again central to the story. Overall, very well-written and heartbreakingly realistic. I would not recommend this to younger teens.

This story is absolutely stunning. The prologue sets you up with a sense of dread that pervades the novel. However, the incredible tenderness of the protagonists also gives you hope that somehow some goodness can be salvaged. The tragedy of this story is of Shakespearean proportion. Honestly. There is potent violence and racism depicted here, along with sexuality, but an extraordinary read for mature teen readers and adults.

I'm still raw from reading this book. A young Mexican girl who lost her mother due to childbirth is sent with her brother and sister (twins) from her grandparents' home to East Texas to live with her stepfather (the Twins' father). He is not a great guy to Naomi, but the twins like him. The siblings all meet Wash, an African American who is awesome and caring, and they all make a strange, happy family. But this is the 1930's, and the relationship is not accepted. At all. And then bad happens. The story is set around the New London elementary school explosion, which I knew nothing about. But apparently it is the deadliest school disaster in America. And it was gruesome. This is not a light read, and there are some very adult situations, but it is a book that exposes more of the country's racial cruelty to anyone who is not white. This book definitely goes in the We Need Diverse Books shelf.

The feeeeeeeelz. The first half of this book was a little slow moving for me and not all that extraordinary BUT THEN the last one hundred pages or so were some of the most gripping, heart wrenching, jaw dropping moments of literature I've experienced in a long time. At times it made me sick to my stomach with anxiety and anticipation, you know in the best of ways, definitely a hard thing to read. One of those books that is a reminder that literature exists to open minds to all of the grief and glory and goodness of the world outside of ones own experiences. A+, gold stars all around, wow.

Had to read this for a class studying children's literature-a heartbreaking story that confronts race relations before the American Civil Rights movement and also the issues of familial violence, corrupt justice systems, and others. A tough read but a good one.

An utterly beautiful, haunting book. Viscerally real characters and a rich, detailed setting . The story is an unflinching look at a tragedy wrought by racism and misogyny, and yet it still shows how love can provide light and meaning in the very darkest of times. This is one that will stay with you long

after you've read the last page.

This was brutal in so many ways. Well done, but definitely not an easy book to read or recover from. The New London school explosion is a key event in the book, but that's not really what it's about. I liked the structure of shifting among the different characters in short sections. Sometimes the pacing was a little odd, but it worked overall.

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