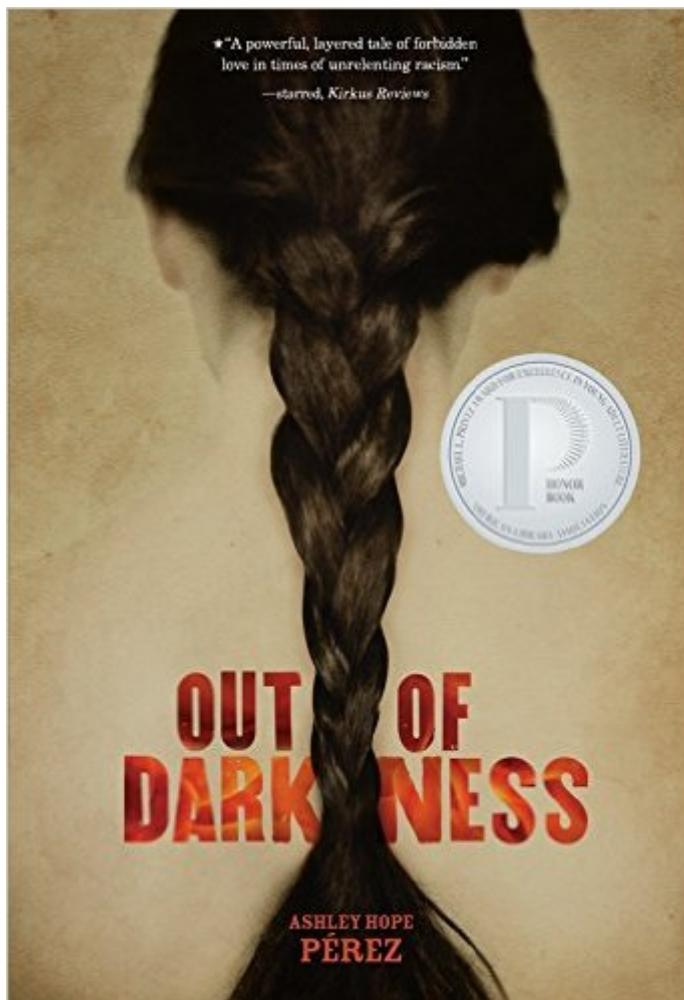


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# Out Of Darkness (Fiction - Young Adult)



## Synopsis

"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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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (72 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #21,401 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 20th Century #9 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism

## Customer Reviews

As soon as I finished this novel, I wanted to reread it. I want to pull it apart and study it because it's that good. One of the things I appreciate most was the slow burn of the narrative. The novel opens with the explosion, and then flashes back to show how the characters' lives intersect before the event. The fuse lit in that opening scene coils through the narrative, gaining in intensity as the story leads back to the explosion and then its aftermath. The tension in Naomi's home, school, and community is palpable throughout the story and increases slowly as we're lead into the heartbreakingly climactic. The author masterfully balances the big picture and the smallest details. Her writing made me think of a photographer who could both go wide and capture a panoramic view and then zoom in for a close up and not lose anything in this process. She also beautifully balances the swoony magic of falling deeply in love for the first time and the absolutely brutal realities faced by African-Americans and Mexicans at this time in history. She tells a story set in the American past

and makes it feel of the moment. It holds all the markers of a historical novel, starting with the cataclysmic explosion of 1937 that looms with ominous eventuality over the characters we readers come to care about. Threaded with lively detail, the historical richness comes through in social customs, daily activities, and the speech patterns and cultural attitudes typical of 1930s east Texas. No easy feat. I detect a massive amount of research behind it all. This devotion to authenticity translates into contemporary meaning through the story's characters and the complicated problems they face. Naomi's most serious problem is a predatory stepfather whose capacity for evil keeps her in a constant state of vigilance.

I don't get book hangovers very often but when I finished reading OUT OF DARKNESS I swore, I took the names of various deities in vain, and I stared off into space for a few minutes. I was physically exhausted by the time I read the last line. This book will just tear you apart from the inside out and spit you out on the back end. OUT OF DARKNESS is a dark book that deals with some really rough things like blatant and violent racism and statutory rape. At times it's a difficult book to read but it's so damn compelling I dare you to willingly put it down. If life didn't get in the way I have no doubt I would have just plowed through this in a (very long) sitting. The story itself focuses on a real event that happened in East Texas where leaking gas caused a white school to explode back in 1937. The majority of the events that happen around that particular moment are fictional but they're not outside the realm of reason. Some of the things are outlandish and grotesque and as a human being you'll have a hard time fathoming how people can think in such ways and act in even worse ways. But when you sit down and you really let that darkness in you'll know that while these specific events may be fictional what they're based on is not. This country went through some dark times and that kind of thinking runs deep, even today, and hopefully dragging it out into the light in such a way gives people a reminder that this wasn't that long ago, racism isn't dead, and if we allow this ignorance to come back into the light this is the kind of fear that everyone would be living in.

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