



OUT

LAURA PREBLE

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In a society where “perpendiculars,” opposite-sex couples, are forbidden, persecuted, freakish...Chris Bryant, a preacher’s son, finds himself in love...with a girl.

Chris has always been faithful to his Anglicant religion – even though he’s never felt like everyone else, never felt...parallel. And then it happens: he meets her. Carmen. Daughter of one of the leading Perpendicular prosecutors...the girl he knows he can’t live without.

Carmen has always thought the treatment of Perps is barbaric – but to actually be one? To fall in love with Chris and openly admit to it is suicide.

Their only chance to be together is the Underground, a secret society Chris’s sister introduces him to that is determined to mount an attack against the social restrictions of the Anglicant church.

They want to make an example of Chris and Carmen, two Perps from high social families, to become the catalyst for an uprising that will threaten the traditions of their society’s families and church.

But the cost of involvement just might be death for them both.

Out Details

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From Reader Review Out for online ebook

Rose says

Initial reaction: Some of you might think you know what I'm going to say about this novel from the rating, but honestly, the words don't come that easily. I'm not going to start this review with comparisons to a certain other work that could be easily ascertained (one that I personally read and loathed with every fiber of my being). Instead I'm going to start with a bit of meditation. I have to wonder what makes a person write a work with such a sheer level of pure *ignorance* about a group and then tries to justify that it's supposed to help others, who may not be a part of that group, understand the experience.

There is no understanding here. Just complete demonization in a society that's too fabricated to feel real, characters that feel like marionettes dancing upon a stage with unseen strings leading them along, emotional ties that feel too forced and familiar to the majority that we know in our society to the point they're glorified while the minority is continuously ostracized, and too extreme to the point where it loses any kind of reach it's supposed to lend.

Ms. Preble, you dropped the ball hard with this book. And you fail to understand the struggles of GLBT people with your crass representation of their struggles, their love, their well-being, and the strive for togetherness in our society. I would **never** recommend this book for anyone, let alone a young adult.

Full review:

We need to sit down and have an open discussion on the thematic of reverse discrimination novels. You guys know I would never try to tell other writers how to write/what to write about, but when you're tackling tough subjects like prejudice and discrimination against any measure of a minority or group – whether it's a racial, gender, religious, sexual orientation or any grouping you could think about, you need to have an idea of the issues those groups face, the experiences they have, and an intimacy to the matter that allows readers a point of connection. In many reverse discrimination novels – it takes a majority group and puts that group in the position of the minority group, supposedly to place the reader, who may identify with the normal majority group in some way, in the “eyes” of the minority. Which means dealing with the kind of conflicts that minority group has to deal with in our regular society.

Yet writing this particular scenario in a way that comes across successfully is never so easily ascertained. In order to understand the experience of discrimination and understand the meaning behind deeply rooted prejudices, you have to have an understanding of the differences between BOTH groups and what the divisions between them are. That means examining the physical, mental, emotional, ideological among other designations that may go into that. It really isn't enough to simply “flip the script” and apply certain slurs or language or experiences attributed to one group to another group in order to have the reader see vicariously through these scenarios. There needs to be a level of responsibility and care in the presentation of the divisions between these groups and a coming of terms.

Laura Preble's “Out” is supposed to be a reverse discrimination novel about gender identity/sexual orientation. In the book, Chris is the son of a wealthy, powerful pastor who is betrothed to a man well above his age, and lives in a society where same-sex couples have predominance (there are no bisexual, transsexual, or other various groups in this novel, which further complicates the veracity of the claim that this is supposed to promote understanding of sexual orientation and identity).

Let's establish the divisions in this work: Perpendiculars (a.k.a. Perps) are straight couples, Parallels are same-sex couples. I'll admit these particular groups bothered me for implications on the level of the naming. When you think of a Perp, you think of a perpetrator - a bad guy, someone subject to the law for committing a crime. This is almost the exact opposite problem of Victoria Foyt's novel "Revealing Eden" where Foyt terms the minority group "Pearls" and notes the precious name to be a "slur". I promise that will be the only reference I make to Foyt's work from here on out in this review, because I don't want to draw too many links, even as the books have the same base level of problematic presentation. I question the naming of the groups also because it has underlying issues with the context of the book that I'll delve into later in this review. Parallel seems like it matches the same sex designation but it seemed fairly simpleton to me. I decided to go with it though, just to see where the novel would take it.

Things take a turn in Chris's life when he meets Carmen, a young woman who just so happens to be the daughter of the person who leads the Perp (Perpendicular) League, charged for punishing, even exterminating, Perps in the society that Preble has built. Reason? For going against the status quo, among other matters. He falls in love with her in the most arguably quick measure I could consider. (*starts singing* Ba-da-ba-ba "I'm an instalove machine, and I won't work for nobody but yo-ou...").

Considering this is an environment where being a "Perp" is dangerous to one's livelihood, the two have to keep their relationship under wraps amid a society controlled by the Church (i.e. Chris's father), which controls many other aspects of the society including the government and the media. One could think of this as a typically structured romantic dystopian novel (at first) that's supposed to take place in some futuristic imaging of the United States, under a society where same sex couple mating practices are controlled by the government and any aberration against that structure is a threat to its constitution. Chris and Carmen are aware of this, and the story comes to a head when efforts taken not only to solidify their "love" are noted, but also to overthrow the powers that be in the Church hierarchy, including Chris's betrothed and father.

To divert a touch from the work, I have to bring in some facet of the author's background, which she's mentioned in several conversations in defense of the novel written. Preble is a GSA advocate and PFLAG mother, and she claims it's a "love story" for straight couples to see how same sex couples are persecuted and discriminated against.

Regardless of Preble's background or intentions or intended audience for this respective work, it does not change the fact that the writing speaks for itself. And the writing here promotes a homophobic agenda that not only demonizes the relationships and differences between same sex and straight couples, but it also introduces a number of other disturbing assertions – like the portrayal of religion, sexual advances, rape, reproduction, among other measures.

Now that you know the basic structure of the story, I'm going to let loose on just about every criticism I could make of this novel, because it is among the worst that I've read in ANY spectrum of literature, whether young adult or not. I have two distinct categories I'm going to divide my critique by: the WRITING and the actual STORY itself. Let's begin with the writing.

This story is so mediocre in its particular structuring that I'm, frankly, very surprised and appalled that very few (at the time of this review) seem to point it out or willing to critique it. This is intended to be a YA novel, but the protagonist voice (a 17-18 year old) sounds much younger than he actually is – with a scattered thought process that makes it difficult to follow and connect with. He doesn't have a deep POV that makes it easy to feel what he feels, experience what he experiences in the heat of the moment. Much of Chris's narrative notes the wrongness of the persecution he faces for who he realizes he is, but it's very forced down the throat of the reader, in just about every chapter of this novel. Another thing is that the tone

of the overall work is a complete mismatch with the gravity of the world that the characters face. I felt like Chris's tone, especially in the early parts of the work, described the torment and persecution of Perps in a humored, offhand manner that quickly skirts through the more difficult aspects of the world, including the arranged relationships, the mating practices, the concentration camp-like measures that Perps are sent to ultimately to be "reformed", among other measures of the scant worldbuilding.

Then you have to consider that this particular work falls into so many structural YA dystopian clichés that it's difficult not to notice them – including the instalove relationship of the main couple, the lust the character feels for the MC (even the note that he makes of considering stalking her – how that's considered romantic, I have no idea). The name dropping of different brands of automobiles were very weird as well.

That leads me into a good branch point to consider the story. I told myself that I would quote few passages considering the respective length of this review, so I'm going to try to pick the ones that are most representative of the problems in this work. I have a hard time writing this particular portion of the review without feeling deeply rooted anger for the portrayals. Preble might think it's okay to feel angry at this work. Yet my sentiments are not on the part of the injustices in this work, like perhaps it was intended to evoke. I'm angry at the utter mishandling of the story, the issues, and the insinuations made here about GLBT and straight couples. It's messed up.

At its heart, "Out" is a dystopian novel taking place within a more extremist, controlled society compared to our own (it takes place in an alternate United States, apparently). The distinction of Parallels versus Perpendiculars and those designations in the scheme of this novel with no medium between somewhat baffle me. How are people supposed to find a point to identify with if Parallels are these tightly controlled, religiously diehard fanatics?

"We must fight the good fight, save those sinners or convert them, do whatever needs to be done, with love, of course." He stares up at heaven, as if waiting for a message. And then... a slight increase in tension and intensity: "We Parallels have a duty to uplift and support the misguided brothers and sisters, to save them from themselves. Perpendiculars are children of God also, simply children gone astray." He focuses on the floor, hands folded. And then... wait for it... he lifts his chin and, eyes blazing, points at some unlucky person in the third pew. "What have you done today to help God fix the situation?" he thunders. People squirm uncomfortably.

Oh, yes. Perpendiculars. I know, it's wrong, and if Perpendicular couples lived freely, society would go to hell, there'd be chaos and unplanned babies; God wants Parallels to be parents because they choose the experience. With Perps, it's all lust and gratification, no thought to the future. Lust is one of the seven deadly sins, right? Parallel relationships are clean, safe, sanctioned by the church. (Chapter 1)

This is coming from the very uncertain perspective of Chris, the protagonist. But Chris contradicts himself in a number of different points throughout the narrative (I would argue the narrative as a whole contradicts itself in many points.) He falls in love with Carmen, and when he's dealing with these respective (and by his terms, "sinful") feelings, there are people coming out of the woodwork supporting his identity as a Perpendicular, even when it's charged as a morally wrong construct in the society, punishable by torment or eradication. Sense this does not make in the worldbuilding, nor does it make sense in the realm of identification.

There's also the matter that Chris is betrothed to Jim McFarland, a powerful political figure in the realm of the church in this society. Let's list a few considerations (in no particular order) with this respective relationship:

1. Jim is at least twice Chris's age. So imagine an 17-18 year old being forced to marry a guy who's closer to his father's age than not.

2. Chris DOES NOT LOVE Jim, he NEVER does. The relationship is NOT consensual. Matter in point, Chris makes this clear to his father in Chapter 1 of the novel, and Chris's father says love has nothing to do with it, that it's a political/religious tie. That's an unhealthy mentality and measure in a novel that's supposed to illustrate the importance and equivalence of love. It also portrays religion and political measures in a negative, irrational light. I was appalled personally when one scene shows Jim making an unwanted sexual advance toward Chris. Even when Chris is touched by Jim in a bathroom encounter, it's an unwanted measure:

He follows me. "What is wrong with you?" He sounds angry. "Are you that pure and virginal that you can't even stand a man touching your hand?" I say nothing. (Chapter 12)

What does purity and virginity have to do with anything here? Chris does NOT love Jim, and that should clear regardless of the same-sex/straight couple variations in this work. Jim should not be touching him, period.

Carmen's introduction is equally infuriating because, being the daughter of a League designed to get rid of Perps, she seems to easily dismiss her ties with it and call it "bullshit." I kept asking why and the narrative gives contradicting viewpoints that don't really make any kind of sense.

As I read through the work, I became more angry at some of the insinuations made. The underlying subtext of the narrative seem to suggest that the straight couple alliance between Chris and Carmen is the essential pairing because of the mechanics and religious ties of the relationship, not because of the affection (which is very loosely drawn up until this point) between the two.

This isn't wrong. My body can't lie. God made me this way. This is right; we fit. For the first time in my life, I feel like I'm telling the truth. (Chris, Chapter 8)

The second sensual encounter (in the next quoting) seems to have more of a romantic leaning, but I couldn't help but have an awful sense of discomfort for the whole "fitting" tie:

Silence sits between us. Sounds of the forest fill in... night birds, gust of wind, creaking of tree limbs, and far away, the sluggish rush of a nearly frozen brook. I cup her head in my hand, my fingers threaded through the silk of her hair, and pull her to me. We fit together so well, two puzzle pieces— arms entwined, legs curling around each other, her face fitting into the hollow of my neck. All my world is her scent, her curve, her line of jaw, the contour of her hips as they rise to meet me. (Chapter 10)

I understand in terms of a romantic tie in its many dimensions – physical, mental, emotional, sensual, etc. - that people feel like they share a very rooted connection, but why emphasize the word "fit" here when there are other implications (i.e. biological) behind that term, particularly if Preble meant to show their romantic connection by its lonesome? Romantic connections are more than just a physical spectrum, and this is never established in Preble's work. The sex even feels mechanical and inappropriately noted because the main character didn't want to "die a virgin" (Chapter 8) and there was even the mention of Chris's physical response to his visual arousal in one part of the book. How do the main characters even know the mechanics of Perpendicular sex and this physical enactments of it coming from a same-sex society that seems to be rooted tightly around them and something they, supposedly, knew all their lives? I didn't understand that in the novel at all. It isn't explained. Not to mention there's very little uncertainty, which often comes with

respect to first time sexual encounters, on either Chris or Carmen's part. It didn't feel realistic to me.

Then we come to the measure of reproduction and rape, and I'm going to let one particularly telling quote stand by its lonesome illustrate one of the points where I felt the most fury.

"Well, Perpendiculars did one thing real well that Parallels did not. Can you guess what it was?"

"No," I say desperately.

"Reproduce." She nods as if she's just said something profound. "Perpendiculars can just reproduce at will. And they can rape, and there can be offspring from that rape. They can accidentally make a baby in the heat of passion. These are all things that a can make society... a little bit unmanageable." (Chapter 9)

I'm going to be blunt about what this particular passage insinuates.

1. It's saying by nature – straight couples (Perpendiculars) can rape and somehow that's "the heat of passion" if a baby is "accidentally" made.

2. It insinuates that same-sex (Parallel) couples cannot be raped.

If Preble meant something entirely different with respect to this passage, she did NOT say it in the context of the book. She didn't even knock the idea down. How the HELL that right? It's not only a crass portrayal of the horrible experience of rape in any dimension (ironically I'm reading a non-fiction book about rape around the time of reading this), but it demonizes both groups with its particular assertion. I simply cannot believe that this is in a YA book meant to promote understanding of love and consensual relationships among different sexual orientations. I really cannot believe the level of ignorance in this inclusion, among others in this book.

The novel then goes on to have Chris and Carmen stage a coup of sorts against the Parallel society and the power of the Church, but ultimately go through some difficult measures (including stints in a concentration-like camp where their heads are shaved and their identities are attempted to be wiped) and torments to do so. I won't spoil those experiences nor the ending, but so much of it felt incredibly generic for a dystopian work, and I had a hard time feeling sympathy for any of the lackluster-drawn characters. If there's one loose tie I can put about the ending that might be an insinuation of how ridiculous this book is: when the nightmarish society becomes too much to bear - move to Canada.

Seriously, it went there.

For the love of anything, if you don't have to read this book, please don't bother. If you're morbidly curious, proceed with caution at your own risk. It's an abomination to its respective themes and attempt to promote understanding of gender equality and sexual orientation, not to mention it presents a scenario that's so farfetched that it's difficult to identify with anything within it. I would never recommend this to a YA audience or anyone on the measure of perusing GLBT literature, because it seems to confirm many prejudices rather than knocking them down, and also offend on multiple scales with its respective language and assertions on other matters.

Overall: 0.5/5

Sean Kennedy says

No. Just no. Burn it to the ground and salt the earth afterwards so it can never rise again.

Fangs for the Fantasy says

I was extremely wary about picking up this book. I have yet to read a discrimiflip novel that worked and didn't end up being really appropriative and offensive. I find it doubtful they can work due to the inherent nature of making minorities the evil perpetrators of the very crimes committed against them. Still, I'm told it is possible, people assured me it was possible, so I picked up this book when it was released to see if it actually managed it.

So we have the story of Chris. A straight boy living in a world where, it seems, just about everyone is gay. Being straight is considered sick and wrong, condemned by both the church and the state (which are closely entwined). He tries to navigate this discrimination, as the son of a minister, and try to find freedom with the woman he loves.

And no, this discrimiflip did not manage it. Not even close. In fact, I'm sorely tempted to put a trigger warning for homophobia simply for having to discuss the contents of this book.

The author has appropriated every aspect of homophobic oppression imaginable. We have child bullying, we have demeaning dehumanisation from the pulpit, we have a horrific description of conversion therapy, we have chemical castration; we even have concentration camps, actual concentration camps.

All of these are extreme examples of oppression that have constantly been used to persecute and destroy gay people and they're all used in this book – often graphically – but flipped. The victims of this torture and even this genocide are now made the villains. Those who inflicted them are now the victims. It is unbelievably offensive and enraging to see these despicable crimes that were – and continue to be – inflicted on gay people depicted with gay people as the perpetrators and straight people as the innocent victims. Even some of the basic language of anti-gay oppression have been callously appropriated by this straight author: we even have straight people being called “queer”. The book's even called “Out”! There really is no limits to the appropriation in this book and the extent to which gay people are presented as inflicting exactly the same cruel persecutions that, in reality, gay people have endured and died from.

To take the history of gay persecution, to take all of these horrendous things that have been used to victimise gay people and then mangle them to make gay people the villains makes me choke with rage. I have no words to describe how offensive this is. I had to stop reading several times because the book was so painfully offensive to read I couldn't keep going

The actual depiction of someone living with a closeted sexuality is also ridiculously shallow, especially for a young person. Chris finds out he likes a girl (note: A girl. Not girls. Just the one twu luv that follows the endlessly dull love at first sight meme that I'd complain more about if it weren't such a tiny problem compared to the gross offensiveness of this book), it's a shocking discovery. Within the hour he seeks out his friend to tell her. No, really.

In this society where being straight is illegal and demonised universally from birth, he couldn't even keep it a

secret for an hour. In fact, he goes home and his sister – in this ultra gay-normative society – already knows he's straight! She even has some subversive literature for him! Yes, within a day of realising he's straight, he already has a support net in this overwhelmingly gay world where heterosexuality is constantly demonised from the highest echelons of government. As an extra bonus, he meets Carmen, his love interest and she tells him she is straight in their first ever conversation, in a public café no less. They're complete strangers, straight people are tortured and killed with the full blessing of the theocratic government but she's going to spill her secret. I boggle how it can even be called a secret if 5 minutes acquaintance are sufficient for the big reveal.

To go with all these suddenly revealed straight people (including his sister, his sister's boyfriend, his sister's friends – seriously there seems to be more named straight people than gay people in this gay majority world!) Chris deals very quickly with any elements of self-loathing, low self-esteem etc he has from spending his entire life being told he's diseased, wrong, mentally ill, a plague on society, bringing about the end of civilisation, hated by god and going to hell. Within the first three days we seem to be totally past such questioning and the focus quickly changes to the terrible forces that are keeping him and his beloved apart and the utter cruelty of living without her. There is a brief attempt to have him doubt himself in the very beginning but it takes less than a week for it to fade as a distant memory and him to be sure that the persecution of straight people is wrong. He's actually openly challenging and arguing against persecution of straight people on his first day realising he's straight- and it's used as an excuse to clumsily shoe-horn in many of the arguments the gay rights movement uses in the real world (and I have to say how unpleasant it is to see straight people taking our words and arguments for our survival and putting them in the mouth of a straight boy being attack by the evil evil gay folk).

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Jackie says

So many emotions!!!!

And stuff happened way to quickly, such a rushed ending.

Anti-Homosexual or something...

Might review this when my thoughts are more coherent. But dear God what a mess of a book.

Kyle says

Even though this isn't out, I think an anecdote is appropriate for this little pre-review. I may not be a very religious person, but two Sundays ago I found myself in a church, when suddenly the pastor goes all quiet when talking about the greatest evil in our world. I thought he would go into some tangent on how racism and inequality would destroy our world, but nope.

I heard one of the most disgusting things I ever thought I'd hear in a church.

"Homosexuality is leading the world off the path."

Me: What the fuck?

"They are an *abomination* ! God created a man and woman to be together, not a man and a man, or a woman and a woman."

Me: What the fuck?

"Churches are actually preaching that this alternative lifestyle choice is okay - normal even! Well, I know for a fact that won't be happening at *this* church, and nobody at this church will choose that lifestyle!"

Now I finally spoke out loud for the first time (more of a whisper really to my dad):

"This is disgusting. I'm going to be sick."

Meanwhile people around me were shouting "Amen!" to this bullshit. I was a couple seconds away from standing up and shouting at the pastor and these people around me.

I may not be gay, but this kind of bigotry is not okay. I don't hate people who aren't supportive of the LGBT community like some people do. I may not agree with them, but as long as they aren't making comments such as these, I really couldn't care less whether you support it or not, same as how I don't care if you're into guys or girls.

The most ironic part about that was that a couple weeks before on one of those rare trips to that *same church* I'd heard that *same pastor* say that church was an inclusive community, and anybody who wanted to hear the Word was welcome. Well, apparently as long as you aren't gay.

Should be interesting at least and may promote some kind of tolerance. I actually did an experiment at my school in May called "The Day of Silence" where people who wanted to participate wouldn't speak for the entire day unless a teacher called on you, to show how people that are gay felt as if they couldn't speak out.

So, I'll give this book a try.

Alicia (is beyond tired of your *ish) says

1/27/12: Nope. Just, nope. Molestation! Lesbians and gays are evil! Trans-individuals don't exist! Lesbians and gays don't rape! Men can't be raped! Nonsensical/nonexistent world-building! Underage sex scenes! Every one of those damn things makes me want to burn this book instead of read it, even to make a point. Thankfully, someone took that bullet for us: Rose's Review (and status updates) paints a grim, enraging picture that proves that all of the concerns I wrote about below were not only dead on but the least of what's problematic about this novel.

1/23/12: Okay, this *is* free right now. I'm debating on whether or not to go ahead and finish reading. I mean, look how long my review of the first chapter is. And I'm still nervous.

08/29/12: The initial reaction to this is that is another Revealing Eden, this time exploring what would

happen if, in society and religion, homosexuality is the norm and heterosexuality were outlawed. It doesn't parallel our society exactly as heterosexuality is punishable by imprisonment and the government appears to be inextricably tied to the church.

I was going to give this a fair chance because it doesn't seem to be as inherently problematic as *Revealing Eden*. I'm not sure what turning the oppressed minority into the villains in speculative fiction accomplishes, but it's possible that, with a deft hand, a valuable lesson could be taught in this type of story. After reading the first chapter I'm left to wonder if it doesn't suffer from similar pitfalls as Victoria Foyt's novel.

The first few paragraphs are slightly confusing and should probably be separated into a prologue. They also paint the gay majority as rather horrific. Again, I don't understand what is gained by writing them this way.

This story is told in first person, present tense and yet I have no feeling for Chris at all. It's almost like it picks up in the middle of a story. I had trouble even remembering his name. All we really know about him by the end of the chapter is that he doesn't like his family and he thinks he's going to hell (even before the unthinkable happens), and he's never been attracted to anyone before.

The world building is already questionable. Perpendiculars are heterosexual and Parallels are homosexual. I don't really get that, but at least it's not out-of-the-gate offensive like "Coals".

"I think my surrogate mother must have had some faulty genes or something. Maybe she was secretly reading banned literature while I was in utero. Listening to pirate radio. Dabbling in deviant art.

Would have had to have been secret; no way David and Warren would have chosen a less-than-perfect-model-Parallel citizen surrogate for their family. Conscious survival of the species and all that."

"I know, it's wrong, and if Perpendicular couples lived freely, society would go to hell, there'd be chaos and unplanned babies; God wants Parallels to be parents because they choose the experience."

I include these quotes as I saw someone ask about procreation. It's...odd, but okay it's a part of this society. I think if I think about it too much I'll end up with a headache. But here's where it becomes confusing:

"Parallel relationships are clean, safe, sanctioned by the church, and you have to plan to have a child, you have to apply for a license, and any lust there might be is not going to produce some random baby. It's progressive evolution, and all that stuff they teach you in school."

"It's not just against the law, Andrea. It's not natural, and it's a sin. I committed a sin. God knows about it. "

How is heterosexual mating part of the evolution of humans in this story but also "not natural"? So far this is reading like the 'homonormative' society in this book was a conscious choice and not something that actually did evolve naturally. I also fear that this ignores the existence of the transgendered. I hope it's addressed in some way and other than "it's a sin!" If you're going to explore this alternate reality, do it thoroughly. Speaking of, I think so far the religious influence in society is already a bit heavy handed. For instance,

"I don't know if you were paying attention in government class, but the person who runs the Anglicant church also becomes the leader of the U.S. Senate, and that's fully half the functioning government. If the president is pro-Anglicant, the House of Representatives becomes irrelevant, and then...well, then, the Senate leader is pretty much running the country."

Again, not something that makes sense to me but I can accept it as being a part of this world. I'll try not to think about it too much.

For the plot of this book to work I think the love between Chris and the girl is going to have to be a real, all abiding love worth fighting society/God, and risking imprisonment and possibly death.

"I want to touch her again, to talk to her, dammit, dammit, why does it feel like I stuck my finger in an electrical outlet?"

"I went up to light a candle, and bumped into this person, and then I got these weird chills and hot stabs and just felt like...like I was going to pounce on him and lick him all over. But it wasn't a him. It was a her."

This is not giving me hope that this won't be insta-love. Attraction is a fine jumping off point. It's different and "wrong" and something for him to freak out about as the story begins. But I won't be able to buy all the suffering and pain they go through later if electrical touch attraction is the only basis for their love.

At this point I was still willing to continue reading to really give this a chance but I think I've hit the point at which Laura Preble did not think her premise through to see how it would be perceived by readers. I'm not sold on continuing this story anymore.

Chris is 17 years old and his father is trying to marry him off to a 30-year-old for political gain. He tried to do the same with his older sister, Jana, when she was his age. Jana also hints at the Anglicant Senate being involved in other deviant activities.

There are people out there who still equate homosexuality with pedophilia. Others believe homosexuality immediately means sexual deviants who engage in all types of aberrant behavior. With those dangerous and hurtful stereotypes still a part of our society why, why, why would you write about the gay majority being involved in basically selling off underage kids? Again, what purpose does that serve? How could Preble not see how this would be perceived?

"What about love?"

"Love?" He snorts. "Well, you sound like what you are, a teenager. Love is great for ordinary people, Chris, but for people like us...it's just not practical. You're part of something larger than yourself. A church. A government. You're my son, and if I can find you a place, you can be part of what makes this country great. We can be part of that. That means something." I sit silently, fumbling with my seatbelt. He hits the steering wheel, which makes me jump. "I just wish you'd wake up and stop being so...."

This doesn't bode well. At all.

Melissa says

Thank you, Ms. Preble, for providing me a copy in exchange for a review.

First off, I thought the idea was interesting but I didn't realize that ***Out*** could be a little controversial. I did not look at previous reviews about the book, but when I started reading a few pages and had come to a conclusion then did I read those reviews. I agree that the book *is* controversial, but I have no idea where I stand with it.

I am aware of same-sex marriages, but for someone my age I can be a little ignorant to it. So, I cannot read ***Out*** without having some background information or my opinion. I basically went into this book blind and I really didn't feel comfortable with what I was reading.

JennOM says

Love should never be the world's greatest evil.

Stefani says

Well it seems this is out on Kindle now. Still morbidly curious, but not holding out much hope it'll be better than *Revealing Eden*. I suspect, based on what I've seen of reactions to the first chapter, it is going to be just as ill thought out, offensive, and ultimately fail at what it was trying to accomplish. Dunno, I'm considering.

ETA: My fears have been confirmed, I have no wish to read another RE but with it being sexuality reversal rather than race reversal. Nope not doing it.

Panda Hiroshima says

Hello everyone....

Clearly all of you who denied this book are doing a big mistake. However, its obvious you don't understand the purpose. I dislike to argue and believe that there's a reason for everything. The purpose of this book, although being very controversial, is not what you believe it to be. The book "*Out*" by Laura Preble isn't to offend others it's so that EVERYONE can get an idea of what it FEELS like to be on the other side. It's NOT easy. I congratulate Ms.Preble for having the courage for writing this book. Even though all of you believe it to be such a "horrible book" , "never to read", "it's off my reading list". It seems like none of you understand the true meaning of this book. Chris (the main character) is living a life as how homosexuals live it now, where we all need to hide and suffer, where we are not allowed to be ourselves. I don't understand how many of you can be so rude, everyone has their opinion. But I would rather you keep it to yourself until you realize that this book is not to offend but to see from a different perspective as someone "normal" like you. Sometimes, people disagree, even hold grudges against things or people because they're scared that

something so "different" is so normal. We close our minds to accepting something that has been here all along.

Samantha Boyette says

So I've been dreading writing this review because I kinda get both sides of this whole thing. I get what the author was going for, and I get why it really pissed a lot of people off.

The thing is, I think if this book was reversed with the ultra religious majority being straight and Chris being gay, people wouldn't have thought twice. They woulda gone "Yeah, evil religious straight people! They are awful!" And maybe they would have thought that isn't true about everyone but they wouldn't have been as upset as they are.

As far as trying to turn discrimination on its head and make people know what it's like to be gay, I don't think this works because it's TOO extreme. This tried to be a dystopian and address discrimination and it just didn't do it well. Everything was rushed. Chris meets girl and falls in love, feels bad about it but then thinks for five minutes and feels better, tells girl he loves her, OMG she loves him too! Preble spent valuable time explaining just how a society of all homosexual people works instead of focusing on Chris having legit emotions. Also, there were just a ridiculous amount of straight people. If his sister was gay but still tried to help him, that would have made it more believable to me.

So I'm going to spitball a more relateable, less extreme version that to me would have put straight people more in the shoes of gay people, okay? Ya with me?

So Chris lives in a future where for some reason most people have evolved to be gay. Perhaps this was a natural evolution to combat over population? Chris is a normal kid in high school whose been on some dates but never really fallen for a guy. All his life he's felt a little different than anyone else but has pushed the feelings away. This all changes when new girl Carmen comes to school. Day after day he can't help watching her in school and when they're paired together for a school project the attraction only grows until Chris has to admit that he's a 'regressive'. Luckily, Carmen is too.

They carry on a relationship in secret until one of them decides they want to force the issue and come out. Some kids in school are probably pretty awful, but some are cool with it. Some kids have an uncle or a cousin who is 'regressive'. Probably one of their parents freak out over it, the other is as loving and supportive as ever. They probably join a 'regressive-progressive' alliance and find more friends that way.

In the end, they learn to accept their love and all the trials that come with it. They appear to live happily ever after even though they know they may never be able to get married. Oh, and they don't have sex like one day after meeting each other.

There, look at that. A realistic switch on the whole thing where the straight people are not all evil and the situations are much more what your average gay person goes through when they come out.

In the end, I just didn't think this book was very well written. It had a lot of big ideas, but nothing ever really happened to make me care too much about the characters and things just went from one convenient occurrence to another.

Avidreader says

I find it interesting, and sad, to see so many people condemning this book without having even read it. "Out" is a book that opens minds (many of those Amazon reviews mention this). In a moment in our history where the majority of this country is finally opening our minds to LGBT civil rights, it's disappointing to see so many in this thread who have closed their's.

Ami says

Beware of spoilers beyond this point...

I don't know. I had such high hopes for this. I'll still finish reading it but I'm not too fond of the beginning. The whole love at first sight thing in books and movies has always rubbed me the wrong way and in this story it just feels...gimmicky. Like there was no other reason for the character to exist other than as a love interest for the MC and to bring drama to the story. It would have been so much better had their love story been drawn out; they met, got to know each other, began having "unnatural" feelings for each other and then the story could have progressed to the hiding and secret-keeping and their secret relationship could have been in the background of a political upheaval of Perpendicular rights, etc and all the other stuff that make books of this type so exciting. And, I'm only thirty percent through the book so for all I know, it will still happen like that and be a great book. I really hope so.

I thought Chris seemed less than an intelligent character and I had a big problem with the two of them, he and Carmen, just running away with no regrets about leaving people, family, behind. We may disagree with our family members but they are still our family. I didn't buy the end where he ripped up the letter from his other father and seemed to be saying that he was okay with removing himself from his father's life and I also didn't care for his sister calling their father the devil. They may not agree with him and he may be a dick sometimes but your dad is still your dad. You don't just stop loving your family for no good reason. And he wasn't abusing them or anything, he just had a differing view on a subject. Yeah, the whole arranged marriage thing was bad but he never forced either of them. Anyway it really could have been much better.

Rachel Eliason says

Out is a role reversal dystopian novel in the vein of Thomas Pynchon's Regiment of Women. In this novel same sex couples (called parallels) are the norm and opposite sex couples (perpendiculars) are outcast and mistreated. The story follows Chris, the son of an "Anglican" priest and someone high up in the church's hierarchy. When Chris meets a girl and discovers he has feelings for her, his world is plunged into a nightmare of persecution and violent resistance.

Any role reversal/discrimination flip novel is bound to be controversial and difficult to read. Out certainly fits the bill on both counts. There is a lot of controversy surrounding this book. Reading is bound to be emotional at times. I had a hard time reading this book at times.

As far as the discrim/flip and controversy, I think the book fell short of the mark on a number of counts. I

had trouble seeing the "Parallels" as being gay. The one adult couple in the book seem to be a loveless couple. In light of the controversy its probably just as well.

I also struggled to see how the extreme political and criminal persecution of "Perpendiculars" parallels the real world persecution of LGBT people. Real persecution is less extreme but more pervasive and soul crushing. I don't understand what straight people getting sent to rehabilitation camps is supposed to teach us about a gay man being denied the right to visit a dying lover or a transgender youth feeling like they are the only person in the world that has ever felt like they do.

I think the author had the best intentions when she started this project but I doubt she knew how difficult it would be to pull off or how controversial the attempt would be.

Brandon Shire says

Very difficult read and not one I would recommend for younger YA readers.

Controversy aside, the book was well written with a few problem areas which I felt could have been delved into a bit deeper, particularly the relationships. At times they felt too shallow and didn't reflect the complexity they could have to round out the story.

I also believe the book would have been better received without the reversal but do NOT find that the author meant either harm or antagonism to the LGBT community.
