



Black Out

Lisa Unger

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A Today Show Top Ten Pick, Florida Book Award Winner, Shortlisted for Prix Polar International Award for Best Book

On the surface, Annie Powers's life in a wealthy Florida beach neighborhood is happy and idyllic. Her husband, Gray, loves her fiercely; together, they dote on their beautiful young daughter, Victory. But the bubble surrounding Annie is pricked when she senses that the demons of her past have resurfaced and, to her horror, are now creeping up on her. These are demons she can't fully recall because of a highly dissociative state that allowed her to forget. Disturbing events trigger strange and confusing memories for Annie, who realizes she has to quickly piece them together before her past comes to claim her future . . . and her daughter.

Black Out Details

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Author : Lisa Unger

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From Reader Review Black Out for online ebook

Peter says

I wanted to like this, I really did. But I put it down about 150 pages in and just had no desire to pick it up again, even after renewing it at the library. There was so much potential for a good psychological suspense novel, but I never felt much suspense in the chapters that I read, and when I did, it turned out to be a dream or was written off in some other way.

I do admit that the author is a good writer, and there were some well-crafted passages. And as hesitant I was about the choice to use present throughout, I ended up not being as confused by the timeline as I was expecting. But, still, as curious as I was about the Annie/Ophelia question, the plot didn't grab me. I would have liked to have seen more of the scenes on the boat, but the rest of the story felt kind of pedestrian and unexciting to me.

hllf says

A lot of unfulfilled potential. Not recommended. Below is a breakdown of my rating:

Enjoyability: 3

Re-Readability: 1

Character Development: 2

Complexity: 3.5

Writing Style: 2

Believability: 2

Overall: 2.25

I picked this book up to read over vacation because I liked the description of the plot. The book started out rather slow; a lot of recounting of past events. In fact, after the first two chapters, I started over and re-read them to try to get a better handle of what was occurring when.

Once the novel picked up, it moved along well, and the suspense was built up, albeit a bit over-dramatic in parts. Throughout the book, it was a bit difficult to keep track of what was really happening and what was in the heroin's mind.

The book liked to build up suspense by making a page or two of events appear like they were real, then telling the reader it was just a dream. This is a very cheap way to try to build suspense that clearly otherwise is not present.

The character development was poor at best; it wasn't till at least the 16th or 17th chapter before we even found out how old the heroin is.

The writing style was also mediocre. The entire novel was told from the first person POV of the heroin, which wouldn't have been so odd, but even the scenes where she was never present were told from her perspective, as if she were a spectator and telling the reader a story.

Finally, the ending was extremely disappointing; I do not like books where you feel at the end that the time you spent reading it was wasted. I still have difficulty determining which parts of the book were real and which parts were just figments of the heroin's imagination, put in for no purpose other than to mislead the reader in a very silly way.

In conclusion, I was very disappointed, and I do not recommend this book. I may come back to Unger down the road and give her another try, but she has to make many improvements to get my vote for a good new author.

João Carlos says

“Black Out – A Cortina da Memória” é um excelente policial escrito pela norte-americana **Lisa Unger**, nascida em 1970, e editado originalmente em 2008, com publicação em Portugal em 2009.

A narrativa centra-se na Florida, Annie Powers tem uma família perfeita, ama o seu marido Gray e a sua filha Victory, vive numa casa luxuosa, mas...

Nem tudo o que parece é ou nem tudo o que reluz é ouro...

A vulnerabilidade interior de Annie é evidenciada quando as recordações do seu passado reaparecem; em consequência, os seus implacáveis demónios ressurgem, tudo porque o seu transtorno dissociativo de identidade começa a dominar a sua vida idílica, numa dualidade emocional implacável, alternando diferentes horizontes temporais; o presente, o passado recente e o passado remoto, em situações e acontecimentos que são verdadeiros ou apenas ilusórios, mas que nos mantêm permanentemente na expectativa e na dúvida.

Marlowe Geary, o serial killer, “renasce” para a atormentar...

Um verdadeiro “thriller” psicológico, com uma escrita perfeita, um ritmo e uma intensidade asfixiante.

Muito bom...

Só não entendo porque é que não são editados em Portugal mais livros da **Lisa Unger**.

Kathy says

What was real? What was imaginary? I feel like I need to check into a mental hospital after reading this book. Black Out really messes with your mind and not in a good way. It is very doubtful that I will read any other Lisa Unger books. I was left to wonder....what happened?

Wendi Lee says

4.75 stars

Annie Powers has a lovely, peaceful life with her husband and young daughter. No one would ever guess that she was once Ophelia March, stepdaughter to a serial killer, in love with his equally sadistic son. Those events were solidly in her past. But soon strange events happen that make Annie think she isn't safe after all, and she must figure out how to protect herself and her daughter from her horrific past.

Lisa Unger knows how to tell a story! This one was riveting from the very beginning. After learning just the barest details of Annie's old life, I actually put the book down for a few weeks because I was terrified for her

and her daughter, Victory.

There are some great red herrings in this book, and the wrap up at the end was satisfying, with a few unanswered questions.

I did keep wondering about Annie/Ophelia and her mother. All this began because Ophelia's mother started dating an incarcerated serial killer. What makes a woman, or in this case, women, fall for serial killers? There is something terribly sad hiding out beneath the plot of this book, a commentary about broken women, damaged girls. Ophelia's mother was convinced Frank was innocent. Ophelia loves Marlowe despite the violence. Remarkably, Ophelia's daughter, while young, seems to be incredibly strong.

Is it motherhood that changes Ophelia/Annie? It propels her through most of this book, so I would like to think so.

Anyhoo, I will stop rambling. Read this book. It's breathtaking.

Shannon says

Unger is a master. I wish I had more time to read everything she's written. She's sort of dark, but can really weave a good one.

Phryynne says

Oh that was good! That was SO good! It was so tense that I could not stop reading and finished the whole book in one day. This was my second book by this author and I shall certainly seek out more of her work. I enjoyed the way the story moved from past to present and I felt an attachment to the main characters and wanted them to survive to the end. And there was always doubt whether this would happen! A real page turner and recommended reading for anyone who enjoys a good thriller.

Krissy says

More of a 3.5 stars. I enjoyed it. The last 1/3 or so was really intense and I couldn't put it down. But it's one of those books that you have to pay really close attention because there is A LOT of stuff going on. Especially at the end.

Lewis Weinstein says

This is the ultimate book of unreliable narrators. Whoever says anything is not to be believed. Evidence is not to be believed. The very existence of some of the characters is not to be believed. Yet, instead of spinning out of control, Lisa Unger keeps firm command of a dazzling sequence of twists, surprises, time jumps, and venue changes. We have faith in the author to get us to the end of the journey. No more to be said without revealing something you should experience for yourself.

Λ?να Θωμ?ρεη says

Καλ? αλλ? ?χι τ?σο ?σο το ?ρωτας μ?χρι θαν?του!

Jordan Price says

I think, initially, I wanted to be persnickety about some things like character voice (a trailer trash girl with a GED who uses whom/whomever in speech, for instance -- and how convenient it was they had so much money that they could hire planes, boats, etc.), but then the story sucked me in, and I didn't give a rat's ass if it was written the way I would have, and I gave myself over to the story.

The mystery is like a set of Russian nesting dolls. Every time you think you know what's going on, it opens up and there's something else (perfectly logical, with all the groundwork laid for it) waiting inside.

Stylistically, I thought it was cool that the novel was nonlinear, and then that the first person narrative shifted to a sort of modified omniscient narrator for scenes in which the protagonist wasn't present. Maybe I'll try that someday, although I'm certain I won't carry it off as well as Ms. Unger...because when that nesting dolls cracked open, it came clear that the stylistic choice was also deeply interwoven in the plot.

What a rollercoaster ride!

Gun Bach says

An amazing, thrilling, soulsearching book that I couldn't put down. Lisa writes in a profound way, with sentences and choices of words that make me re-read paragraphs without it jarring me one little bit. I cared for the protagonist, the "I" in the story, from the first page, even if I normally shy away from stories written in the first person. This is the only way, IMHO, that Lisa could've written this story, because we needed to be in Annie/Ophelia's head to understand what she was going through.

I am in awe over this author's development from Beautiful Lies, A Sliver of Truth, and now this one. I'm waiting for her fourth book to be available as paperback (not because I'm cheap, but because the hardbacks are too heavy for my arms) it's called "Die For You" and the blurb I read for it make it sound just as good. Thank goodness someone recommended Lisa Unger's books. I love them!

Melanie says

There was something unsatisfying about the end of this. I like the detective character, I liked his wife and the side story about them - and then, boom, they're not real. I felt weird about that, unsettled, and like it was a little bit of a cop-out. The story was fast-paced and interesting, I liked the main character, but I ended up feeling like the solution, the whole organization to help victims, the in-laws conspiring to save Annie/Ophelia from herself... it felt more contrived and elaborate than it needed to be. I wanted it to turn out differently, I guess, I wanted a more believable resolution, and I was also annoyed that the detective wasn't

"real" and that colored my perception of the rest of the book, for some reason that felt really important to me. There were some beautiful passages - the part about the ghost orchid was breathtakingly gorgeous, the writing was spectacular there - and I liked the jumping from past to present, from one character to another, I felt it added to the suspenseful, tense feeling. Basically, a very good book with one real flaw that I think might be just in my own mind, because why should it matter so much?

Mackey says

Lisa Unger is such an interesting author to read - each time I do I feel as though it is a completely different experience from any of her other books. I also find myself learning a lot about a topic that I totally didn't expect.

In "Blackout" the primary character, Annie Powers, is a beautiful socialite but who has had a horrific trauma in her past. That past has caught up with her - or did it ever leave - and now her mind is unable to cope with all of the realities and the lies that have been part of her world for so long.

Part thriller, part mystery and a dab of paranormal mixed with a lot of psychological torture and you have the perfect recipe for this really good book! So why only 3 stars? The characters are great, well developed and I totally loved Annie's character. As much as I want to say the storyline is unbelievable, anyone who follows politics knows better. No, the reason is that in this instance the back and forth timeline was incredibly confusing. It should have worked and often did work but too often I had no idea what was happening and would have to read entire pages before figuring it out. I'm not that slow, it was that confusing. Yet despite that it still was a good read and I do recommend it.

Kelly says

This is the first time I've read anything by Unger, but she has now earned a place on my list of "newly-discovered-and-now-in-complete-awe-of" authors! I can't wait to read all of her other works.

For the past three days, I have been completely immersed in this book, only putting it down when it was necessary to deal with certain real-life issues and get some sleep. It grabbed hold of me and refused to let go until I'd finished the very last page. The main character is Annie, who used to be Ophelia before she broke free of her past and started a new life in a fancy house on the beach, with a husband who makes her feel safe and a little girl she loves dearly. Her younger life was filled with massive amounts of trauma from which she yearns to escape, complete with an absent dad and a mother who is so desperate for a man to love her that she marries an inmate sitting on death row. This book is not simply about family issues, though. It is a psychological thriller, very suspenseful, with some truly creepy moments that will send chills down your spine.

I will say that this book is very very dark, and may not appeal to everyone. Scrolling through other reviews, I see that a lot of people were turned off by certain elements. Interestingly, I've noticed this same type of polarization with several other books that are along the same lines as *Black Out* (Craig Larsen's *Mania* and Lehane's *Shutter Island* come immediately to mind). The story moves back and forth between past and present, which might have a tendency to frustrate some readers. I read the book in 3 large chunks of time, so I was able to follow it pretty well and never felt lost; if I had read a few pages here and a few there, it might

have been more difficult. In addition, you find yourself questioning the reality of what is happening vs. the sanity of the main character, which seems to turn some people off. I personally enjoy all the twists and turns and wondering what is true and what is not. I felt that the epilogue tied up all lingering questions quite nicely, and I closed the book feeling nothing but satisfied.
