

Out of the Easy

Ruta Sepetys

Reviewed by: Rachel Johnson, 41

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

www.bethestaryouare.org

Set in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1950 Josie Moraine is a 17-year-old girl whose mother is a prostitute and works in a local brothel in the French Quarters. Josie's mother is cruel and doesn't care much for her. Josie wants nothing but to put New Orleans behind her and relocate to Massachusetts to attend Smith College. She works at a bookstore and cleans the brothel in the mornings after the night parties to save for school. Since the age of ten, she's been living alone in a room above the bookstore.

Josie is smart and dedicated but because of her background and her lack of money she doesn't know how she will get into the college of her choice. Although life is tough Josie has a lot of support from the people in her life. Willie Woodley, the madam of the brothel, treats her like family, so do all the girls that work for Willie and the driver Cokie. She is adored by the bookstore owner and his son Patrick and also Jessie, a boy from the French Quarters. The murder of a well-to-do tourist in the French Quarters starts an investigation and Josie is thrown right in the middle.

Beautiful!!! Realistic, Well Written, and Edgy - Out of the Easy is a beautiful story of a young girl's struggle to better herself. I love that through Josie's journey the story emphasizes self-respect, believing in one's self, and never giving up on one's dreams. It's an easy read but parents should be aware that much of the story revolves around a brothel. There is no explicit content but some strong language used to describe the sex-workers and men who visit them. Taking that into account I would recommend this story to high school age and older. The characters are well thought out and believable, they will stick with you well after the story ends. Josie will grab your attention and you will root for her to the end. This historical fiction is a buy.

Recommended Titles

Sky in the Deep, by Adrienne Young

Here Lies Arthur, Philip Reeve

Hell and High Water, by Tanya Landman

