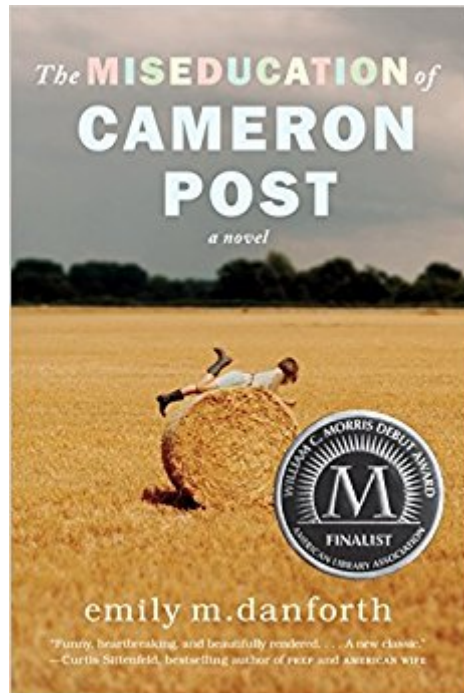


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# The Miseducation Of Cameron Post



## Synopsis

Set in rural Montana in the early 1990s, Emily M. Danforth's *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* is a powerful and widely acclaimed YA coming-of-age novel in the tradition of the classic *Annie on My Mind*. Cameron Post feels a mix of guilt and relief when her parents die in a car accident. Their deaths mean they will never learn the truth she eventually comes to—that she's gay. Orphaned, Cameron comes to live with her old-fashioned grandmother and ultraconservative aunt Ruth. There she falls in love with her best friend, a beautiful cowgirl. When she's eventually outed, her aunt sends her to God's Promise, a religious conversion camp that is supposed to "cure" her homosexuality. At the camp, Cameron comes face to face with the cost of denying her true identity. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* is a stunning and provocative literary debut that was a finalist for the YALSA Morris Award and was named to numerous "best" lists.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** It begins with a preadolescent kiss between protagonist Cameron and her friend, Irene. The very next day Cameron's parents die in an automobile accident, and the young girl is left riddled with guilt, feeling her forbidden kiss was somehow responsible for the accident. This is an old convention of GLBT literature, but freshly handled here and given sophisticated thematic weight. As Cameron grows into her teenage years, she recognizes that she is a lesbian. After several emotional misadventures, she meets and falls in love with the beautiful Coley, who

appears to be bisexual. Both girls attend the same fundamentalist church, and when Cameron's conservative Aunt Ruth discovers the affair, she remands Cameron to God's Promise, a church camp that promises to "cure" young people of their homosexuality. Such "religious conversion therapy" is rooted in reality, and Cameron's experiences at the camp are at the heart of this ambitious literary novel, a multidimensional coming-of-age reminiscent of Aidan Chambers' equally ambitious *This Is All* (2006). There is nothing superficial or simplistic here, and Danforth carefully and deliberately fleshes out Cameron's character and those of her family and friends. Even the eastern Montana setting is vividly realized and provides a wonderfully apposite background for the story of Cameron's miseducation and the challenges her stint in the church camp pose to her development as a mature teenager finding friendship and a plausible future. Grades 9-12. --Michael Cart --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Rich with detail and emotion, a sophisticated read for teens and adults alike." (Kirkus Reviews (starred review)) "[An] ambitious literary novel, a multidimensional coming-of-age." (Booklist (starred review)) "The story is riveting, beautiful, and full of the kind of detail that brings to life a place (rural Montana), a time (the early 1990s), and a questioning teenage girl." (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) "This finely crafted, sophisticated coming-of-age debut novel is multilayered, finessing such issues as loss, first love, and friendship. An excellent read for both teens and adults." (School Library Journal (starred review)) "Cameron is a memorable heroine with an unforgettable and important story to tell, and she does so with wit, emotion, and depth. (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books) "If Holden Caulfield had been a gay girl from Montana, this is the story he might have told." "It's funny, heartbreaking, and beautifully rendered. Emily Danforth remembers exactly what it's like to be a teenager, and she has written a new classic." (Curtis Sittenfeld, bestselling author of *PREP* and *AMERICAN WIFE*) "A beautifully told story that is at once engaging and thoughtful. *THE MISEDUCATION OF CAMERON POST* is an important book •one that can change lives." (Jacqueline Woodson, award-winning author of *AFTER TUPAC AND D FOSTER* and *HUSH*) "This novel is a joy •one of the best and most honest portraits of a young lesbian I've read in years. Cameron Post is a bright, brash, funny main character who leaps off the page and into your heart! This is a story that keeps you reading way into the night •an absorbing, suspenseful, and important book." (Nancy Garden, author of *ANNIE ON MY MIND*) "Danforth's narrative of a bruised

young woman finding her feet in a complicated world is a tremendous achievement: strikingly unsentimental, and full of characters who feel entirely rounded and real. A story of love, desire, pain, loss—and, above all, of survival. An inspiring read. (Sarah Waters, author of THE LITTLE STRANGER)

I have never been compelled to write a review before, but: this novel was such a gift, a treasure and an experience for me that I need to. For a few days, I had the pleasure of ingesting this novel, growing to know and care for its main character, Cameron, whose life and complexity captured my heart. After spending nearly 500 pages together, I think of Cameron as someone I know, who struggles through the challenges of growing up, coming out, and developing the values that will guide her through her own unique life journey. I love her: she's beautiful and authentic and has the power to make a difference in a young reader's life, while reminding us adult readers of just how complicated and challenging adolescence is. "The Miseducation of Cameron Post" is truly a work of literary art, and I hope there's more of Cameron's story to come.

The Miseducation of Cameron Post is one of the truest books I've read in a long time. What I mean by that is everything about the story, the writing, and Cameron's voice is full of authenticity to the point where as a reader you are immersed so deeply in the book it is almost impossible to pull yourself away. The first sentence is incredible, short and powerful: "The afternoon my parents died, I was out shoplifting with Irene Klauson." As you continue reading, you keep waiting for the ball to drop, but Cameron's story draws you in so much that you just let all preconceived notions of what the book will be go. Emily B. Danforth does a fantastic job of placing the reader in Cameron's mind; Cameron's voice is strong and youthful and a wonderful mix of naivety and maturity that only a teenager can have. This book is a perfect example of why YA books matter: writers have the ability to influence readers who are at a fundamental transitional point in their lives. And you don't have to be a teenager to enjoy The Miseducation of Cameron Post, frankly, it's a book almost everyone would benefit from reading. The topics it covers are particularly poignant considering recent legislature, but the book is truly timeless.

This is a well-written, accessible but thoughtful novel. In spite of the subject matter, Danforth creates three-dimensional, relatable characters with the exception of one, Lydia.

Otherwise there are no real villains in this book. Nearly everyone behaves as they think best. Even when they don't behave well, it is usually their fear, rather than malice, driving them. It's easy to despise the fundamentalist Christian attitudes that help bigots to latch on to biblical justifications for their homophobia through selective reading. It seems obvious to an outsider reading Leviticus that it condemns the eating of fish without scales (11:10) in the same terms that it condemns men lying with men (20:13) as an abomination. Admittedly though, in this case only the men lying with men are to be put to death for their transgression. Homosexuality is therefore obviously on a par with sacrificing your children to Molech (20:2) or cursing your parents (20:9) transgressions which also call for capital punishment. Danforth, though, has compassion for the people who are motivated by fear that their children will burn in hell if they don't stop being gay. That's not to say that she denies the damage that is done by these people though. She demonstrates what happens if you teach people to hate themselves and they believe it. Cameron Post is a likeable character, flawed and human, but strong. She ultimately has a strong enough ego to reject the judgement of others, even if she likes and respects them. Rick and Ruth are genuinely kind people, trying to help. I felt sad for Rick and kept hoping that he would be able to stop his self-hatred and his denial of who he is. I didn't dislike Ruth either, even though I despised her hypocrisy a hypocrisy gently pointed out by Cameron at one point. In summary, this story is well told, well written and is able to see multiple points of view. It's accessible to all ages.

This was an unbelievably good book. Engaging me as few others have in years, I have a new title to add to my list of most influential YA books. Intersectional, nuanced, realistic, poetic, crisp, and beautifully written, this book has it all. I have too many feelings to criticise it right now, though a hint of Cameron's future would have been nice. I guess maybe the author could have been harsher on the evangelicals, but the book has a focus on compassion. Wise and pure and wonderful, this is perfect for anyone trying to understand queer people or teenagers, or even just find something good in life or themselves. It also beats the daylight out of John Green's work. There are no cheap jokes or held punches here: just art, truth, and beauty.

The first half of the book was very good, but it was just starting to feel a bit long when...the second half begins, and it explodes like a bomb (in a good way). So, if anything, I wish the 1st half had been trimmed, and the 2nd half extended, especially since the ending, although satisfying, is also a cliff-hanger. I just hope that, as with most cliff-hangers, it leads to a sequel. In any event, if you read

this and start feeling like it is getting a bit long...please keep reading, it is worth it.

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