

Dear Reader,

This is a book about first love. Who we pick, how we show what we feel, and how we can learn to love better.

Strangely enough, given those themes, over the course of writing *The Darkness Outside Us* I wound up talking to a NASA scientist, a physicist, and mathematicians (one of whom was my husband!). I think love and science fiction are perfect companions. Knowing, really knowing, that we're living out our brief existences on a hunk of rock careening through a broad universe can only make us be more gentle, more forgiving. As Carl Sagan wrote: "There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than [a] distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

As for how I came up with this book's concept, I don't want to go too deep into it and give away anything of what you're about to read. But I will say that many years ago, when I was barely out of my teen years myself, I watched a somewhat cheesy romantic thriller in which a wife convinces herself that her husband has a lurid secret. Before the movie was ten minutes in, I'd hatched a bonkers theory about what that secret was. It turns out I was totally wrong. I liked my plot more, though,

so years later I finally wrote it, only in space and about two boys in love.

Thanks for reading. It would be great to hear from you.

Eliot