

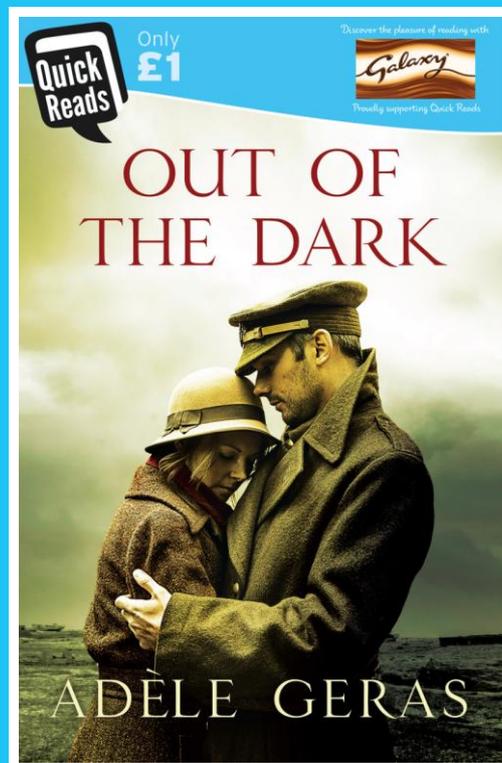


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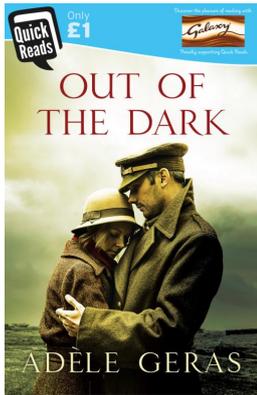
Out of the Dark



Adèle Geras

NIACE The National Voice
for Lifelong Learning

About the book



Rob Stone comes back from the horrors of the First World War with a ruined face and a broken heart. Lonely, unable to forget the things he has seen, and haunted by the ghost of his dead captain, all that Rob has left is a picture of the captain's family. Rob sets out to find them, hoping that by giving them the picture, he can bring peace to the captain's ghost – and to his own troubled heart.

About the author



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Adèle Geras was born in Jerusalem in 1944 and spent her early childhood in many different countries including Cyprus, Nigeria and Tanzania. She went to boarding school in England in 1955 and graduated from Oxford University in 1966. She worked as an actress, a singer and a teacher before becoming a full-time writer in 1976; since then she has published more than ninety books for children, young adults and adults. She lives in Cambridge.

Visit Adèle's website www.adelegeras.com. Follow her on Twitter [@adelegeras](https://twitter.com/adelegeras).

Key

	Reading		ICT
	Speaking, listening and communication		Maths
	Writing		Other

The speaking, listening and communication activities can be used in two ways. If you are working in a group, you can use these as prompts for discussions. However, if you are reading alone, these can be used for individual reflection.

Getting started...



This book is called '*Out of the Dark.*' What does this title make you think of? What do you think the book is about?



Write a poem or song with the title '*Out of the Dark.*'



Now have a good look at the book cover, front and back. Now what do you think the book is about? What makes you think so?



Open the book. Before we get to chapter one, we see a dedication, '*FOR HELEN, who liked reading LILY.*' Who do you think Helen is? And what is LILY?

Use the internet on a phone, tablet or computer to see what you can find out about LILY.

Does your library have a copy of LILY?



This book is set just after the First World War.

Share in your group what you already know about the First World War.

Then, make a list of things you want to find out about the First World War.

Divide up your list and individually, or in pairs, try to find the answers. You could use the internet, your local library and local museums, and you could ask people.

Present what you find to the rest of the group.

The First World War was talked about a lot in 2014, and many libraries had displays about it. Why was this?

Finally, what do you know about the Poppies that were flowing out of the Tower of London in 2014? What can you find out?

Chapters 1 - 2



Look at the opening sentence, 'My name is Rob Stone and I have no face.'

What does this sentence make you think about? How does it make you feel?

Read the rest of the page. Why doesn't Rob Stone have a face?



As you read chapters 1 and 2, take notes about each character we meet and what we know about them. Your notes could be sentences but they could also be in the form of words, arrows and drawings.

Share your notes with someone else. See if they can suggest anything to add.



What is a 'trench'? Find out as much as you can about 'the trenches' from these two chapters.

Use the internet, your local library (speak to the librarian) and/or local museums to find out more about the trenches in the First World War.

Search the internet for the website of the Imperial War Museum, London and try to find their online First World War Galleries. Explore.

Chapters 3 - 4



Write a *summary* (a short version) of everything you have read so far (chapters 1-4). Depending on how much you like writing, or how much time you have, your summary could be five sentences, it could be three *paragraphs* or even longer. The main thing is that you try to capture what you think are the most important bits of these chapters.

Read your summary to someone else and see what they think.



At the bottom of page 11, Rob tells us 'Then my face got shot off and he came to me.' Who is 'he'? And what does Rob mean when he says 'he came to me' and, later in this same paragraph, 'For weeks, he was with me.'

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On page 13 we learn that Rob came out of hospital in July 1920. If we imagine that he first went to hospital in July of 1918, how many months did Rob spend in hospital? How could you work this out?



On the same page, we learn that Rob and Millie ‘loved the Majestic.’ What was the Majestic? Do you have memories of similar places?

What happens between Rob and Millie while Rob is in hospital? Why do you think Millie felt this way?

Chapters 4 - 6



In the first line of chapter 4, Rob tells us ‘Captain Harry’s ghost followed me home.’

Do you believe in ghosts? Have you, or anyone you know, had any experiences with ghosts? And if you don’t believe in ghosts, what do you think is happening with Rob, why does he see Captain Harry’s ghost?

In chapter 5, Rob visits a photography studio with a photograph. What or who is he looking for, and why?

Do you think Rob’s search will be successful? Why or why not?

On the first page of chapter 6, a little girl sees Rob and cries, ‘there’s a horrid man.’ How does her father react? How does Rob react? Why is this incident important?



Imagine a possible conversation between the little girl and her father when they get home. Write out this conversation like a play. Share your play with others.

Chapters 7 - 9



In these chapters we meet two new characters: Netta and Mr. Brandywine. What do we know about them?

Talk about Rob’s relationship with Netta.

Talk about Rob’s relationship with Mr. Brandywine.

What adjectives would you use to describe Netta? Mr. Brandywine? And what about Rob?

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Can you find any words or phrases in these chapters which are useful in understanding Netta, Mr. Brandywine and Rob?

What does Netta mean, on page 43, when she says ‘Your ma would have fifty fits if you took me home?’ Is she right? Why or why not?

Why did Netta start earning money in this way? Reread page 44 and choose a sentence that tells us why.



What is Rob’s new job?

Do you know any projectionists?

Do you know whether this job still exists? Try to find out using the internet and asking in your local cinema. Report back to the group.

Chapter 10



In chapter 10 we find out a bit more about Rob’s new job. Talk about what this job involves. Would you like to do this job? Why or why not?

Why do you think Rob stops seeing Netta?

On page 50, Rob calls Netta ‘the kindest person I know.’ Who is the kindest person you know? Why?

Rob continues to see the Captain’s ghost. Look back through these chapters (and earlier if you like); when does the ghost appear and why?

Chapter 11



Talk about what happened in this chapter.

We meet some important new characters in this chapter. What are their names and what do we know about them?

On page 56, Rob says ‘It’s very hard to find your way in a pea-souper.’ What is a pea-souper? And what is pea-soup? Talk about what Rob’s expression means. You may need to ask an older person who grew up in London.

In the very last sentence of this chapter, Rob tells us ‘It was only when I’d turned into Lindon Grove that I noticed that the fog was lifting.’ Rob is telling us about the weather, but he could also be telling us about something else. This could also be a symbolic or metaphorical use of language. What else could he mean?

Chapters 12 - 14



In chapter 12, Rob brings two things to Mrs. Ashton. What are they? Why are they important? Why did Rob's mother ask him to cover the Bible in brown paper? And why was Mrs. Ashton surprised at how battered it was?

Does the Captain's ghost still visit Rob? Why or why not? Where is the Captain's ghost now? Why?

When they are talking in Kew Gardens (Chapter 14), why does Eliza want Rob to take off his mask?

What does the future hold for Rob? Eliza? Mrs. Ashton? Mr. Brandywine? Netta? Rob's mum? Talk about your ideas.



What does Eliza lend Rob?

Try to find a copy of the novel Jane Eyre in your library. There may also be shortened versions available.

Try to find a film of Jane Eyre and watch it. What does the story of Jane Eyre have in common with Rob's story?



What does the expression 'Cat got your tongue?' (page 72) mean? Try to guess the meaning from the context (from what is happening in the story at this time).



Write a short story (as short or long as you like) about what you think will happen next to Rob.