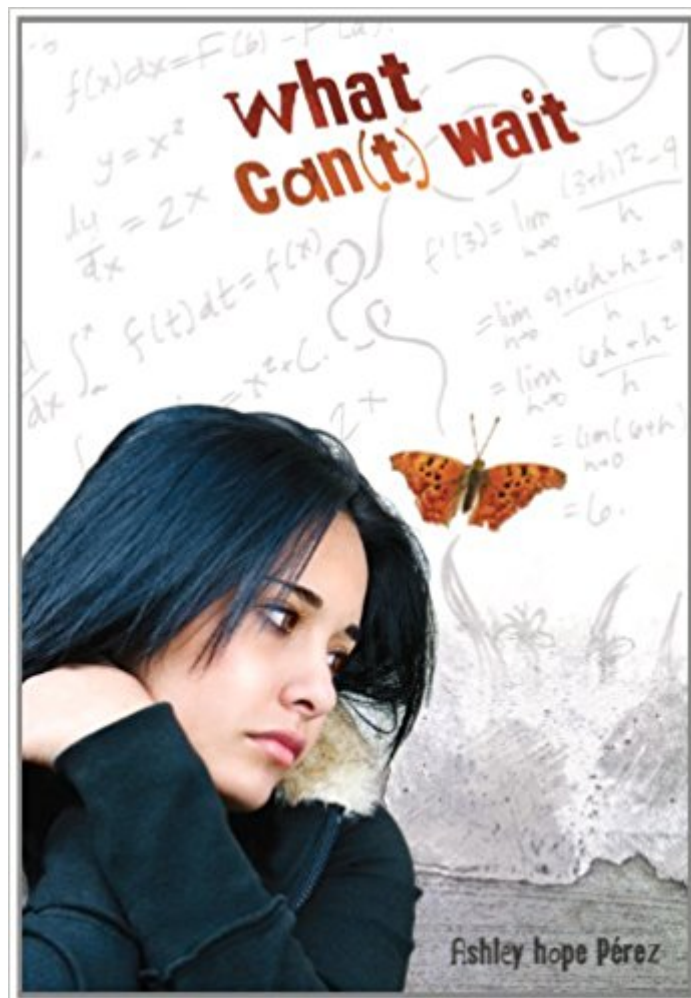


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# What Can't Wait (Carolrhoda Ya)



## Synopsis

Another day finished, gracias a Dios. Seventeen-year-old Marisa's mother has been saying this for as long as Marisa can remember. Her parents came to Houston from Mexico. They work hard, and they expect Marisa to help her familia. An ordinary life marrying a neighborhood guy, working, having babies ought to be good enough for her. Marisa hears something else from her calc teacher. She should study harder, ace the AP test, and get into engineering school in Austin. Some days, it all seems possible. On others, she's not even sure what she wants. When her life at home becomes unbearable, Marisa seeks comfort elsewhere and suddenly neither her best friend nor boyfriend can get through to her. Caught between the expectations of two different worlds, Marisa isn't sure what she wants other than a life where she doesn't end each day thanking God it's over. But some things just can't wait...

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ashley Hope Pérez grew up in Texas and served in the Teach for America Corps in a neighborhood similar to the one depicted in her debut novel, *What Can't Wait*. She has worked as a translator and is completing a PhD in comparative literature. She spends most of her time reading, writing, listening to audiobooks, and teaching college classes on vampire literature and Latin-American women writers. For fun, she bakes cookies and runs. She lives in Indiana with her husband, Arnulfo, and their son, Liam Miguel.

*What Can't Wait* by Ashley Hope Pérez was not an easy read. There were parts that broke my heart. Seventeen-year old Marisa is the daughter of Mexican immigrants living in Houston.

This is a novel of figuring out how to balance the expectations that others have for you against the expectations and hopes that you have for yourself. This was definitely a windows book for me. I grew up in an environment that prioritized education. I now teach in an environment that, while incredibly diverse, is also incredibly privileged. Marisa has choices to make that are outside of any of my experiences. Even now as an adult I know that I would struggle if I was put in her position. It is important that I see girls like Marisa in YA because it reminds me that my experience isn't the only one. And it is even important for someone who is living a life like Marisa to read this because we all need to see ourselves reflected in order to truly understand who we are. We all need mirrors. I really liked Marisa. She is smart, hard working, loyal, and more than a little rough around the edges. I was pulling for her. I think that she would be a positive reflection. Marisa has a lot of pressure put on her from her family. To them loyalty, staying together, and supporting one another are the most important things in life. Her interest in school and desire to become an engineer puzzled and frustrated them. "How can you spend time studying/go away to college when we need your help here." So Marisa gives them money from her after school job, watches her niece, studies for her calculus class, all the while she tries to have something left over for herself. Let's take a moment here to hear it for the girls of math. So often in YA math (if it is even acknowledged) is the bogymen that will take down our plucky heroine when least expected. Or it is something that comes so effortlessly to her that she never has to study. Marisa has to study calculus in order to learn it (this is a step that is often forgotten). She has to work hard. Sometimes she has to prioritize. Ms. Ford reminded me of why I became a teacher. She has incredibly high expectations for Marisa but she is also compassionate. She isn't a miracle worker. She can't change Marisa's life. But she gives her the support that she can. Marisa doesn't make magical progress. It is uneven. Sometimes she loses hope or focus. Sometimes she reevaluates what is important to her. Sometimes, she has to compromise. This is realistic fiction at its best. I like that her friends and family have lives outside of her. I like that even when I was angry at her family I feel as if I have met Marisa. Like she is a real person who lives in Texas that I know and that I am Facebook friends with. Actually, I would really like to be Facebook friends with her because I REALLY want life updates from her. I want to know how things turn out. I want to know that she is okay. I may be more invested in her than is healthy. Don't judge. Ultimately, this book left me with a feeling of hope. Read it. You definitely won't regret it. This review was also published at[...]

This was an amazing book, especially from a first time author. It deals with the very real world of the

hispanic adolescent girl in a traditional mexican family... life at school, work and home and the assorted problems at each setting. The author has the ability to draw the reader into the story and make you care about the characters. This is a book that all ages would enjoy. I am certainly hoping that Ms. Perez will write a follow-up book to complete the story.

I read this book with my daughter, as it was assigned by her teacher. I had no idea how close it would hit to home. I am a Houstonian, and a former HISD teacher from the inner city, working with these same kids. It is eerie how accurate the author portrays Marisa's life. Congrats on an excellent debut.

Completely in touch with many Hispanic teens today, struggling with their families expectations and making their own way in the world. I related to this novel since my daughter's high school is 76% Hispanic. Pregnant teens are commonplace and graduation from high school a stretch with college rarely being considered as the family needs them in the workforce to help. Moving and insightful. An excellent read.

It was a good book I recommend it to anyone who wants to read it! 5 stars! Love her writing.

Thoroughly enjoyed this book about adolescent angst. Engaging and has a nice life message. More realistic than other teen-targeted novels I've read.

Marisa is the daughter of Mexican immigrants, ones who have many expectations for their daughter. She must work and contribute half the money to the family, do all the cooking and all the dishes in the house, and be available to watch her niece at all times. And anything else that might need to be done in the name of doing good by the family. What they don't expect is for her to go to school. And take AP classes and get good grades. And want to go to college to become an engineer. When an accident at her brother-in-laws's job puts Marisa's family in a tailspin, she finds herself caught between her expected family life and the life she wants to create for herself. With well developed characters (even the secondary ones), Perez does a great job showing the expectations and struggles that some teens face. The ending was a bit expected and swift; but it didn't really detract from Marisa's overall journey.

For the first 50 pages or so, I had a lot of trouble connecting with the novel. But then, about the time

Marisa finally gives in and talks to Alan, I started to get her. Her father is in the novel more, she starts to share her feelings more, and from then on I couldn't put down the book. I wanted her to succeed. She seemed so real with the challenges that many of our students are going through. I also loved the themes of education being the key to changing your situation and how much her teacher plays a role in her future- Ms. Ford makes an impact like we all hope we will. By the end of the novel, I was so glad that I read it.

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