



## The Queen of Hearts

*Kimmery Martin*

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# The Queen of Hearts

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**The Queen of Hearts** Kimmery Martin

**A debut novel that pulses with humor and empathy and explores the heart's capacity for forgiveness...**

Zadie Anson and Emma Colley have been best friends since their early twenties, when they first began navigating serious romantic relationships amid the intensity of medical school. Now they're happily married wives and mothers with successful careers--Zadie as a pediatric cardiologist and Emma as a trauma surgeon. Their lives in Charlotte, North Carolina are chaotic but fulfilling, until the return of a former colleague unearths a secret one of them has been harboring for years.

As chief resident, Nick Xenokostas was the center of Zadie's life--both professionally and personally--throughout a tragic chain of events in her third year of medical school that she has long since put behind her. Nick's unexpected reappearance during a time of new professional crisis shocks both women into a deeper look at the difficult choices they made at the beginning of their careers. As it becomes evident that Emma must have known more than she revealed about circumstances that nearly derailed both their lives, Zadie starts to question everything she thought she knew about her closest friend.

## The Queen of Hearts Details

Date : Published February 13th 2018 by Berkley

ISBN : 9780399585050

Author : Kimmery Martin

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Adult, Adult Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Queen of Hearts for online ebook

### Lara Lillibridge says

Full disclosure: Kimmery and I are both part of TheDebutanteBall.com and I received a free copy from Net Galley in exchange for a review.

I absolutely loved Kimmery Martin's tone of voice. I was sucked in right from the beginning by her unexpected and endearing prose.

"Meanwhile, as a toddler, I'd aspired to be bulldozer, a career plan that received the enthusiastic support of my older brother...Unfortunately, it soon became evident I did not have what it took to be an actual bulldozer, what with being human and all."

"...I have to be poured out of bed each morning like human syrup, and I lurch around emitting miserable squeaks until I'm caffeinated."

"I smiled, running my fingers through my hair, which had responded to its release from the ER cap by springing out in all directions in a belligerent pale brown explosion."

The Queen of Hearts follows two female physicians from medical school to their married lives with children in an alternating POV. Martin does an excellent job of maintaining tension as she jumps back and forth in time from med school to the present day, as we try to fathom what dark secret will be revealed.

Humorous yet filled with real-world drama, Martin's characters deal with real life or death at work at the hospital, the family drama of raising strong-willed children where the stakes are different but often just as high, and the complications of maintaining a friendship when the past refuses to stay buried.

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### katwiththehat says

What I really loved about this book was the way the author brought her medical background into play and made scenes with the two main characters (both doctors) so vivid and realistic. The best part of the book! Emma and Zady were best friends in medical school in rural Kentucky, and now, a decade later, are still friends in North Carolina, having married men they love and started families. This is primarily a story of friendship.

The narrative meanders a bit at times. I liked the medical scenes, and found them fascinating. Eventually things pick up. (view spoiler)

Trigger Warnings: (view spoiler)

Please excuse typos/name misspellings. Entered on screen reader.

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### **Abby says**

This book has the medical drama, excitement, and steamy work romance of Gray's Anatomy, and the female bonds, motherhood struggles, secrets, heartbreak, and wit of Big Little Lies tied up in one delectable package. I LOVED it, and I couldn't get enough of it.

I think that this book is BETTER than Gray's Anatomy. I could practically hear the EKG monitors beeping in the background as I read the hospital scenes. Dr. X reminds me of Gray's Anatomy's McDreamy or McSteamy.

This book has the female bonds, motherhood struggles, secrets, heartbreak, and wit of Big Little Lies. I absolutely loved it. I have been looking for this type of writing, with its humor and depth ever since I finished Big Little Lies. This is the only book that I think is comparable.

I loved the humor. It made me laugh out loud so many times. The author's writing style is so warm, friendly, and funny. I really hope that Kimmery Martin writes a sequel of this book and that she is not done with Zadie and Emma's story. I want them to live on in another book. Highly recommend.

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### **Lindsay - Traveling Sister says**

3 stars

This was an entertaining medical suspense drama revolving around best friends and fellow doctors, Emma and Zadie. I enjoyed it for the most part, but found the medical detail to be quite heavy and overpowering. It had a Grey's Anatomy feel to it which I enjoyed (I used to love watching that show!)

I really liked Emma and Zadie's friendship. They had a bond strong enough to last decades – through medical school, marriage, children, busy careers – they still managed to find time to dedicate to their friendship. I felt in "awe" of them at several points being able to juggle life the way they did.

As much as I enjoyed the friendship part of this story, I had a hard time with the extreme medical detail. I felt it went overboard to the point that I skimmed a lot of it and it took away from the story.

This was a Traveling Sister Read and we had varying opinions. As always, it was a pleasure to discuss with my "sisters" along the way. To find this review, along with the other Traveling Sister Read reviews, please visit Brenda and Norma's fabulous blog at:

<https://twogirlslostinacouleereading....>

A big thank you to Edelweiss, Berkley and Kimmery Martin for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review!!

Publication Date: February 13, 2018.

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## **Suzanne Leopold says**

Zadie and Emma have a friendship that has stood the test of time. They went to medical school together, endured the highs and lows of dating, and are now juggling the demands of a family as neighbors in North Carolina. Their lives and careers were pretty uneventful until a colleague nicknamed, Dr. X joined their staff.

Neither Zadie or Emma are happy with Dr. X's arrival because each is keeping secrets from the past. Zadie had a romance with Dr. X but kept it discreet since he was the chief resident. Emma has her own misgivings because she has kept secrets from Zadie that may be unveiled. Dr. X's presence threatens to destroy their longstanding friendship.

This is a debut novel by Kimmery Martin, who was able to draw on her experience as a doctor. I enjoyed this book which explores the relationship between two women via their life experiences. From this book, I also learned a new expression for an Ace Wrap!

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## **Julie says**

The Queen of Hearts by Kimmery Martin is a 2018 Berkley publication.

A suspenseful and emotional medical drama

Zadie and Emma have been best friends since their medical school days. They come from completely different backgrounds, but the friendship has endured countless trials, marriages, children, and demanding careers. Their lives are hectic, and filled with family and career related challenges, triumphs, and tragedies. They share all of it with one another, asking and giving advice, sympathizing with, and supporting one another. But, the one thing they never, ever, never talk about is their third year in Med school...

Imagine all the angst, medical intensity, the emotion, heartbreak, tragedy and high drama of Grey's Anatomy, but with a darker, edgier, suspenseful tone running beneath the surface.

*Queen of Hearts* has this bipolar thing going on. On one hand, it's a chick-lit novel about besties who stick with each other through all of life's various valleys and peaks, but there's a 'dark side', a sinister feeling of foreboding, of impending doom. It's not just the emotional gut-punches, the graphic medical situations, or the appearance of Dr. X, who will most assuredly bring down all the carefully constructed walls built by Zadie and Emma when it comes to the past, and who also holds the power in the palm of his gifted hands, to once again, leave devastation in his wake.

It's like watching a train wreck. You know it's coming, but you are helpless to stop it, and you can't tear your eyes away from the impending impact, or the carnage left behind.

I finished reading this book over two weeks ago. It has taken me this long to formulate my feelings. When I turned that last page I experienced a fuzzy feeling of disorientation. I really had to take some time to process it.

Finally, I think I can attempt to explain my thoughts. I admit I had quite a few conflicting feelings about how everything played out. Wow. I mean- wow. Once I had begun to form an opinion that would stick, I realized

I couldn't really explain how I had come to that point without giving too much away.

This review is long, and contains a lot of introspection and retrospection on my part, but it's the mark of a good story when it prompts the reader to dig deeper and reflect on what they might do in a similar situation. It's a gritty medical drama, but it's also an ode to life, family, and above all friendship. So bear with me.

What a tangled web we weave....

Lies, betrayals, manipulations, and secrets- this book has them packed in so tight it can hardly contain them all. I still can't wrap my head around some of it, and my feelings are still unsettled, even now. This story is part cautionary tale, partly a tale of borderline obsession, with a river of deception, envy, insecurities and competition. But, rest assured- your sins will always find you out. You can bury them, ignore them, hide them, and run from them, but eventually the truth bubbles to the surface. There are always consequences for our actions, some that take no prisoners, who hurt the very people we love and respect. Everyone has a secret, everyone has made questionable decisions, let our morals sink below our own standards. Atonement is a must, redemption hoped for. But, it is forgiveness that is the hardest thing to accomplish, but it is also the most powerful, effective ability humans are capable of.

Now, I can't sit here and tell you my feelings are completely settled about this story, as I continue to struggle with ongoing conflicts. But, I think the story speaks to the powerful, but mysterious bonds of friendship. Friendship is a relationship like no other. It can be fraught with insecurities and jealousies, and is fragile in a way many other relationships are not, being devoid of familial bonds or the power of romantic love. Yet, it can create an unshakable bond, a special kind of love, a fierce loyalty and devotion, it brings out a certain kind of protectiveness and can often endure hardships that other relationships would never survive.

While there is a lot of emotional turmoil in this story, many heart rending situations and high drama, there is also the 'light' side of the story. The side where people rise to the occasion and do the right thing, where something good comes from something bad, and where the good side wins out in the end!

This story turned out to be much more than I had anticipated. I was on pins and needles from start to finish, swallowed a painful lump or two, cursed, fretted, and fumed. But, when all was said and done, I think this was a very well -constructed novel, filled with human foibles, realistic family challenges, and amazing depictions of human beings at their very worst, but also at their finest. Not only that, I love medical dramas- oh- and southern fiction- so there's that, too! ?

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### **Elizabeth says**

This book is a beautifully written, compelling read that is full of delicious treats: laugh-out-loud humor; an equally riveting view of the home front as from the hospital; and an unflinching yet tender acknowledgment of doctors as flawed human beings who struggle to reconcile their biggest mistakes and regrets with a professional pedestal that demands perfection.

Undoubtedly, Martin's insider perspective of the medical profession is one of the coolest things about this novel. She nails the camaraderie, energy, humor, pressure, heartbreak, and connection that experiencing the human condition in all its base and most miraculous forms yields. THE QUEEN OF HEARTS opens up a fascinating world and makes it both accessible and riveting.

The friendship between main characters Zadie and Emma feels familiar and essential, and underscores emotional stakes that resonated easily with me.

And Kimmery Martin's writing is a true pleasure to read. Every page is exquisitely wrought, without seeming dense, difficult, or heavy handed. Her story-telling stayed with me long after I turned the last page. **THE QUEEN OF HEARTS** is absolutely one of my all-time favorites.

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### **Melissa says**

Let my curious blues land on a cover as gorgeous as this beauty queen and I'm instantly charmed. I know, sounds silly and superficial, right? They say you should *never* judge a book by its cover, but what do *they* know anyway? It just so happens, things worked in my favor this time—The Queen of Hearts is more than just a pretty face—the storyline itself is actually quite lovely, despite the twisted lies and jealousy at the heart of it all.

*Something* major happened during Emma and Zadie's third year of medical school and they've vowed to leave in the past—to *never* speak of it again. Unfortunately, the appearance of Doctor Nick Xenokostas stirs up everything. Once Zadie's guy and chief resident, he's relocated to North Carolina and adamant about seeing her. After all of this time, you have to wonder *why*? Both Emma and Zadie are successful doctors with husbands and kids; they've moved on. Or wait, have they?

***"I wish you weren't so lovely."***

For this lover of love, it was uncovering what could have torn a magnetic couple like Dr. X and Zadie apart that fueled my page turning frenzy. Kimmery Martin alternates between Zadie and Emma's perspective—from both the past and the present—as the story builds to the climax and I've gotta say, the truth is pretty harsh. She juxtaposes the personalities of these two women, while also managing to convey to the reader just how close of a friendship they've always maintained. These two come off as relatable women—overextended, but likable and genuine, on some levels—which made the reader/character connection effortless, on my part. Something I truly appreciate as a reader.

***"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."***

There's no hiding the fact that Kimmery Martin is a doctor (*no way a non-medical professional could have pulled this off*) or that she's passionate about her work—it certainly shines through in her writing. There is a *ton* of medical jargon and procedures threaded throughout the storyline, which could have gone one of two ways. Thankfully, I found most of it to be quite interesting. I will say, there were a few spots in the beginning of the story where the adjectives felt a little overused and clunky, but maybe that's because I had to take the time to look a few of them up. Who knows though, maybe I'm better for it in the long run—reading is supposed to make you smarter, right?

In a story riddled with tension and intrigue, the author manages to inject some comedic relief; especially when 3-year-old Delaney is on the scene—talk about witty and endearing. I laughed every time she was around. Her funny little monikers—“*Hi, beloved dear!*” or “*Fank you, honey dears!*”—and silly antics were the **BEST**.

If you're a reader that enjoys women's fiction with a slight edge of suspense, you should definitely consider

picking up this author's debut. Zadie and Emma's story is surprising. Angsty. Heartbreaking. Thought-provoking. What-might-have-been inducing. Similar to this reader, you might find yourself questioning, how well do ever really know someone?

*\*Thank you to Berkley and Edelweiss for a copy in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Lane says**

I am perpetually in awe of people who can write. In this book Dr. Martin shows us the crazy world of medical training, weaving medicine, motherhood, and friendship through these beautifully written pages. I did not want to put this book down and was literally sad when it ended. I cannot wait to see what comes next from this unbelievably talented author!

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### **Esil says**

How could I resist a book with such a gorgeous cover? Unfortunately, for me the cover probably ended up being my favourite part of *The Queen of Hearts*.

I used to be drawn to medical dramas. In high school, I watched my fair share of episodes of *General Hospital*. In later years, I was an avid watcher of *ER* and more recently I binge watched of few seasons of *Greys Anatomy*. And these melodramatic hospital based shows are what I was reminded of as I read *The Queen of Hearts*. But I think I'm not so into hospital soaps anymore...

*The Queen of Hearts* focuses on Zaidie and Emma, who are both surgeons living in Charlotte, North Carolina. The story moves back and forth in time between when they were medical students working together in a hospital and over ten years later when they continue to be close friends working as surgeons in Charlotte. But it turns out that there's a deep secret between them which comes to life when Dr. X comes to town (I kid you not – Dr. X!)...

Before I become too negative, I have two caveats. First, Martin is a talented writer. She gives Zaidie a great voice and quirky personality, and I would have probably loved this book if it focused on Zaidie and a different storyline. And she has created a truly distinct and funny three year old character in the form of Zaidie's daughter – her three year old logic provided genuine comic relief.

But, unfortunately, for me Emma and the unraveling of the deep dark secret did not work as well. There was too much breathless foreshadowing of something terrible which was ultimately revealed as something odd that did not ring true. And there was also too much attention to physical appearance for my taste. As I say, this was pretty close to hospital based soaps...

This one comes completely down to a question of taste. I like a light book every now and then, but this one was not the right fit. Thank you to Edelweiss and the publisher for giving me access to an advance copy.

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## **Heather 'Bookables' says**

3.75

Ok any Grey's Anatomy fans out there? I admit I used to be obsessed with the show...I no longer watch it because it has 1029 seasons & you can only watch so many love triangles and tons of medical conditions so much.

My point is, if you love the show I think you will love this book! The Queen of Hearts is a chick lit medical drama book all about a female friendship and how the appearance of someone from both of their past shakes things up.

???? ?

I devoured this book in a few days. I really enjoyed the medical drama aspect of it and there was a mystery element behind it which had me turning the pages quickly.

We follow both main characters POV in the book and we also get flashbacks to when they were 3rd year interns..remember the good ole days on Greys, just like that!

?

♥?

Overall the mystery element was easily figured out which I didn't hate but I wanted more from it. I enjoyed the friendship between Zadie and Emma and loved reading about their careers and family.

Overall if your a fan of chick lit books, I think you would like it.

If your a fan of medical dramas, I'd say definitely read this.

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## **\*The Angry Reader\* says**

\*\*\*ARC received for an honest review\*\*\*

I took a gamble, and it paid off. This is a debut novel so when I agreed to read the ARC I had no idea what lay ahead. But I read the blurb four times and stared at that gorgeous cover while my internal debate raged. And finally I thought "what the heck. If I hate it it'll be just another in my slew of hateful reviews." It turns out I needn't have worried.

First things first - Kimmery Martin is brilliant. Trying to avoid jumping to conclusions - but she must have a medical background. This is a realistic, educated, humorous, sweet and difficult novel about women - juggling their careers and their relationships and being just a little bit weird.

**"In theory, that didn't sound difficult, but in reality, each child added an exponential level of complexity, so that we'd had to plaster an entire wall of the playroom at home with a whiteboard covered in Venn diagrams and annotations about the logistics of everyone's soccer, ballet, field hockey and guitar lessons."**

Zadie and Emma meet at Brain Camp and click. We travel from the present to the past in revolving POVs exploring med school, motherhood, the pressures of being a surgeon, first love and, ultimately, the very core of Zadie and Emma's beautiful and complicated friendship. There's a perfect combination of realism (lots of medical vocabulary) without it becoming cumbersome. I felt Ms Martin struck a precarious balance and maintained it throughout the book. Erudite and clever without being dispassionate or smug - she found that

place that pulls a reader in without smothering them.

All of that said - that ending. Guys, I need you to read this book when it's published and comment about the ending. I finished the book 12 hours ago, and I still don't know how I feel. Was it the right thing? I'd love to hear your thoughts!

**"At some point, the theoretical becomes the inevitable. You either cross the river or you don't. I'd known what I was doing, even if I buried the knowledge under a toxic mountain of denial."**

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### **Susanne Strong says**

2 Stars.

Zadie and Emma are best friends. They have been since medical school. Now both are successful doctors with beautiful families. Their lives should be perfect right? Yet both have secrets they want to keep hidden, some of which they have even kept from each other. Now, with the arrival of someone they used to know, their secrets are threatening to come out and nothing is as it appears.

"Queen of Hearts" is a book about family, friendship and secrets that threaten to destroy their very existence. Unfortunately, I found the premise of the novel to be somewhat far-fetched and also felt that it was filled with a lot of medical jargon which overtook a good portion of the story. The bright spot in this novel however, is Zadie's daughter, three year-old Delaney, who would breakout with statements like "Hi, Beloved Dear" and "Hello big kids." Her antics never ceased to make me laugh. I would love to see the author, Kimmery Martin, write a novel about her. Delaney is a rock star!

Thank you to Edelweiss, Berkeley and Kimmery Martin for a courtesy copy of this novel in exchange for this honest review.

Published on Edelweiss and Goodreads on 2.18.18.

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### **Norma \* Traveling Sister says**

Cover Love!

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS by KIMMERY MARTIN is an intriguing, thought-provoking, and richly written medical drama that explores the relationship between two medical doctors with themes of friendship, betrayal and the act of forgiveness. Some of us found it quite heavy on the medical aspect and the drama within the storyline and this ultimately affected what coulee we ended up in.

KIMMERY MARTIN delivers a well-written, interesting and a compelling story here with some comedic relief interspersed within to lighten the mood of the tension and drama to this story. We all absolutely loved cute and adorable Delaney and wanted a bit more of her involved in the storyline. She was the most adorable and witty character of this story with the most cutest lines ever! She had us laughing out loud with some of

her witty banter with sayings like, “Hi, beloved dear!”, “I’m sorry, darling honey. I’m sorry!” or “Mommy? Are we still in love?”.

This was a Traveling Sisters Group Read, and this book had so many different reactions from all of us. With a few of the sisters leaving the coulee around the halfway mark of reading this or before, a few of us that stuck with it to the end but maybe wished that they would have left the coulee, and a couple of us that quite enjoyed this story, including myself.

So with the high amount of medical jargon and procedures weaved into the storyline this is where it separated us as readers. A few of us thought it was quite interesting and were intrigued while the rest were bored and uninterested.

To sum it all up it was a steady-paced, heartfelt, interesting, and a medically rich story that was quite entertaining and enjoyable for me to read. Would recommend if you are looking for something different and highly recommend if you love those very popular medical TV dramas.

Published: February 13, 2018 by Berkley

Thank you so much to Edelweiss, Berkley & Kimmery Martin for the opportunity to read an advanced copy of this book in exchange for a review!

Review written and posted on our themed book blog Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading.  
<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

Coulee: a term applied rather loosely to different landforms, all of which refer to a kind of valley.

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### **Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says**

#### **3.75 stars to the medical drama, The Queen of Hearts! ? ? ?75**

I had been highly anticipating reading The Queen of Hearts for months now, ever since I saw *that cover*. While it did not quite live up to my very high expectations, I found a considerable amount of enjoyment within these pages!

What I loved:

Three-year-old Delaney, Zadie’s daughter! Her witty and adorable comments were the highlight of the book for me. The supportive friendship between Zadie and Emma (at least in the beginning). Graduate school would have been much harder for me personally without friendships to anchor me, and that part was relatable. The sheer entertainment. This book was more dramatic than my typical choice of reads, but I found many things that transpired to be exciting and enthralling.

What did not work as well for me:

While the medical jargon added to the authenticity, it crossed over into too-much-land. I felt like I might need to study for an upcoming test trying to remember it all! ? There were some choices made by the

characters that I did not like, which I recognize is entirely personal preference; but those choices added to the drama factor, which took away some from my believability in the story and resulting enjoyment.

Overall, this was a well-written and engaging debut from Kimmery Martin! If you were a fan of Grey's Anatomy and ER, you should definitely check out this charming medical drama.

I read this with my Traveling Sisters, and we were all over the map with our opinions, which led to great discussion, as always. Please check out Brenda and Norma's blog: <https://twogirlslostinacouleereading....>

Thank you to Kimmery Martin, Berkley, and Edelweiss for the complimentary copy to review.

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