



Queenie

Candice Carty-Williams

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NAMED ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED BOOKS OF 2019 BY WOMAN'S DAY, NEWSDAY, PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, BUSTLE, AND BOOK RIOT!

"[B]rilliant, timely, funny, heartbreaking." —Jojo Moyes, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Me Before You*

***Bridget Jones's Diary* meets *Americanah* in this disarmingly honest, boldly political, and truly inclusive novel that will speak to anyone who has gone looking for love and found something very different in its place.**

Queenie Jenkins is a 25-year-old Jamaican British woman living in London, straddling two cultures and slotting neatly into neither. She works at a national newspaper, where she's constantly forced to compare herself to her white middle class peers. After a messy break up from her long-term white boyfriend, Queenie seeks comfort in all the wrong places...including several hazardous men who do a good job of occupying brain space and a bad job of affirming self-worth.

As Queenie careens from one questionable decision to another, she finds herself wondering, "What are you doing? Why are you doing it? Who do you want to be?"—all of the questions today's woman must face in a world trying to answer them for her.

With "fresh and honest" (Jojo Moyes) prose, *Queenie* is a remarkably relatable exploration of what it means to be a modern woman searching for meaning in today's world.

Queenie Details

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Author : Candice Carty-Williams

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Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Adult, Adult Fiction

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From Reader Review Queenie for online ebook

Jenna Bookish says

My thanks to Orion Publishing and NetGalley for sending me an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own and are not influenced by the publisher.

When I first started reading Queenie, I wasn't sure I was going to like it, but boy did she grow on me. This novel follows her during a major downward spiral, (mostly) of her her own making. While there are some factors adding to it, such as childhood trauma and racism, for the most part, Queenie is the story of Queenie making a lot of Really Bad Decisions resulting from a mental health crisis.

I think the concept of agency is a big part of what made this a really interesting novel. Very little happens to Queenie that isn't a result of the choices she makes, but to what extent have her circumstances made those choices for her? The triggering event of the downward spiral is the dissolution of a long term relationship coming on the tail of a miscarriage. Her childhood has not set her up well to cope with these stressors; Queenie's neglectful mother is alluded to early in the story, the full extent of this becoming apparent only towards the end. Her sense of self worth at an all-time low, her performance at work begins to suffer and she goes on a spree of casual sex with various partners, none of whom are particularly concerned about anyone's pleasure but their own. Each poor decision kicks her mental health down a notch, leaving her less and less equipped to turn things around.

Structurally, this book mostly takes place in Queenie's present life, occasionally flashing back to her relationship with her ex boyfriend, Tom. There are also lots of passages made up of email or text message exchanges. I know these are kind of a pet peeve for some readers, but I thought it worked well in this particular novel. Queenie sets up a group text with some of her friends, some of whom do not know each other, hoping to compile all of her emotional support into one place. Watching her vastly different friends interact with one another as strangers was one of the highlights of the novel for me.

Queenie also gets political, which is another thing that can be really hit or miss when it comes to fiction, but Candice Carty-Williams ingrained it into Queenie's life and personality really effectively, and it doesn't feel forced into the story. The Black Lives Matter movement becomes important to the story, not because the author wants to make use of something culturally relevant, but because Queenie is a young black woman who works in journalism and encounters racism within her own life.

It's easy at times in this book to become frustrated with Queenie, as we are joining her in the midst of a breakdown. After a while, though, it became apparent that Queenie and her story are well worth a little patience.

You can read all of my reviews on my blog, Jenna Bookish!

Facebook | Instagram | Tumblr

Meredith B. (readingwithmere) says

4.5 Stars!

He paused and lifted his glasses to wipe his wet eyes. "You're full of fight Queenie. Full of Fight." He turned away and ambled back down the garden path, leaving me standing there unable to process anything he'd said.

This is marketed as "Bridget-Jones" but I want to tell you that this is so much more than that and I mean much more and much more important than that.

Queenie is a twenty-something who is living in London. She is Jamaican and is trying to fit in to both Jamaican and British culture. She was with her boyfriend, Tom, for awhile and they are currently going through a "break" period where they both try to take some time apart. Queenie realizes what she has lost but is also seeking worth from outside sources.

Queenie ends up hooking up with multiple people, going through fights with friends, navigating her family and just navigating her life in general. She goes through situations based on her race and ethnicity. She gets comments thrown at her, that are inappropriate. She is treated a certain way and she has to fight to stand up for what she believes in even when everyone else is knocking her down. Queenie truly goes through a growth journey in this book. In the end, she ends up asking herself "Who do you want to be in today's world?"

I read this book fairly quickly because it sucked me in. I knew within ~30 pages that I was going to love this book and it just kept getting better. I almost felt like I was Queenie's friend and I was going through life with her. I experienced happiness when she did and heartbreak when she did. There were times I wanted to shake Queenie and say what are you doing! And other times I just wanted to give her a hug and tell her it'll all be OK and I'm proud of you.

This book really gave me perspective. There are a lot of situations that Queenie experiences in the book that I will never experience. I think it's important to put myself in someone else's shoes and have a better understanding of the types of things they go through and situations they are put through. At the same time though, there were a few situations I felt that I could relate to Queenie just as a woman in the modern world as well as someone with anxiety/depression.

I highly recommend this book and think everyone should pick it up! The cover alone sold me on this one - it's GORGEOUS! Thank you to Gallery/Scout Press for my ARC of this book.

Kate Olson says

[free review copy] I inhaled this in one afternoon. Two things you need to know:

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- 1) don't go into it expecting it to meet that "Bridget Jones" description because it is WAY deeper and at times very emotionally dark. That comparison is deceptive and sets readers up for confusion.
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- 2) you'll either LOVE Queenie, or get frustrated with Queenie but if you are in the latter group, maybe quickly check yourself and make sure it's not age or privilege making you feel that way?
-

I may write more later or I may not, but for now I want it on record that we need more books like this one in the contemporary fiction market. I learned so much from Queenie ♥?

Esil says

3.75 stars

My enthusiasm for Queenie grew as I was reading. Queenie is 26 years old, living in London, of Jamaican background and her life is one hot mess. She and her boyfriend Tom are on a halt — or so she thinks. In the aftermath of the breakup, she has extraordinarily bad judgment when it comes to having sex with nasty men. Not to mention that work is going badly, her living arrangement sucks, and her family life is complicated. Thank goodness for strong female friendships and the almost unconditional love of grandparents. At first, Queenie seemed like a light read — a la Sophie Kinsella. But it grew more complicated, and my attachment to and empathy for Queenie grew too. We see Queenie's life spiral out of control, and then we see her slowly putting herself back together — with help from friends and family. There's a fair bit of humour, but I must admit that that I was quite teary more than a few times. Queenie reminded me of that friend we all have who's self-destructive life choices are exasperating, but who is nevertheless endearing — and who might be more complicated than apparent on the surface. Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy.

Jessica says

This book surprised the shit out of me, because the marketing copy led me to believe I was getting something other than what it turned out to be. I even wrote a blurb when I was halfway through this one, thinking that it would be perfect for readers of rom-coms like *The Wedding Date*.

The marketing copy pitches this as a cross of *Bridget Jones* and *Americanah* because it features a quirky, unlucky-in-love black woman who wants to be a journalist covering the Black Lives Matter movement from her British/Jamaican perspective while hilariously having bad luck with men.

(side note: my husband thought I meant Americana, as in the musical genre, and was massively and hilariously confused when I tried to describe how it wasn't like that at all.)

But, no, that's not really what this book was in the end. What it was was actually so much better than that. It's about Queenie, a black woman in London who, yes, is unlucky in love and wants to advance her journalism career by covering the Black Lives Matter movement. But it's ultimately about Queenie's journey of self-discovery as a woman outside of her identity as an object of men's attention. It's wildly empowering in a thoroughly unexpected way.

When we first meet Queenie, she and her long-time boyfriend Tom are agreeing to try going on a break. He wants it more than she does, so she continues to reach out to him occasionally and is hurt when it's consistently met by radio silence. Despite the fact that she desperately wants to get back together, she responds to this rejection by sleeping with as many inappropriate men as she can find, no matter how terrible this makes her feel. the resulting lack of self-esteem bleeds over into other facets of her life, affecting her performance at work and her friendships (with a group she affectionately calls the Corgis because she is Queenie—a detail I frickin adored).

Yes, this does sound like the set-up of a stereotypical haphazard romantic comedy in the vein of *Bridget Jones*, but the thing about this book is, without getting too spoilery, that Queenie begins to recognize how problematic her behavior is and she **fucking does something about it**. When is the last time you read that in a book that gets marketed as "chick lit"?

Queenie is a phenomenal character because her journey feels so real. Her emotional baggage is not only relatable, but it's ultimately fleshed out in a way that feels authentic and not forced. While her personal growth feels a bit rushed at times, given how deep her pain goes, it's done in a way that is brutally honest. There's no sugar-coating here: Queenie has to acknowledge less-than-flattering aspects of herself and figure out how to deal with them.

There are some aspects of Queenie's life that felt a bit glossed over—the roommates that she moves in with are barely acknowledged and the extent of her problematic sexual exploits is covered in a few sentences that sort of minimize their magnitude—but I was able to forgive that one quibble because of how much I appreciated the frankness with which Candice Carty-Williams explored the hard work of battling mental health struggles. She doesn't just use depression or anxiety as a catch-all term to show that Queenie has some minor problems—she lays out exactly how Queenie experiences the real symptoms of these issues, how they're rooted in her family history, and the real techniques she learns to combat them.

And at the same time, the book doesn't feel too touchy-feely or didactic. The tone stays relatively light-hearted; Queenie's relationship with the Corgis is admirable and often hilarious. The book recognizes when Queenie's behavior is problematic even when she doesn't, but it treats her with empathy and understanding. Which is, honestly, something that we could all stand to learn to do a little better.

A great read, highly recommended. Just don't go in expecting it to be "the black *Bridget Jones*" like the publishers seem to want you to do,

Latanya (CraftyScribbles) says

In Candice Carty-Williams' debut, *Queenie*, she explores the life of a young black British Jamaican woman. The eponymous novel's main character faces choices where we see immediate consequences.

What can I say about this book? Every word hit home, even though I'm from a Generation Xer and the main character is clearly a younger millennial. I found common ground with a woman with issues, not unlike those I experienced in my younger years. While she lives in London (My favorite international city, by the way), her life could easily transport itself to New York or Los Angeles.

However, I wish to make my stance clear. One must not be a black woman to appreciate the slice of life Carty-Williams writes. One simply must be open-minded enough to see another woman's journey whose differences spices what would be seen as average to some readers.

She's dancing between two cultures (British and Jamaican with a strong American influence) while not neatly conforming or fitting into either of them. She's employed at a newspaper and appears to do everything right, according to her elders, but is she normal? What counts as normalcy, and do we want her to live it?

Consider the pros and cons I discovered below as I read this book.

Pros :

1. **Discussion of the Strong Black Woman Trope** . Queenie's trying to keep it together for her friends and family, but realizes that something's got to give. The trope hurts her and she knows it. Therapy plays a role in her life, even if family members don't approve, due to perceived cultural rejection of the practice.
2. **Hair and Body Positivity** . Queenie's curvy and she accepts it. She refuses to lose weight, despite her family's and associates' objections. Also, she loves her natural hair and discusses care and treatment without feeling the need to shoulder society's rejection.
3. **An Overall Good Friendship Circle** . With the exception of one "friend", Queenie has girlfriends she can trust. They reciprocate love and support whenever she needs it as well as how much she gives them.
4. **A Good Family Network** . Okay, while at times her grandmother and aunt can say things that would lead readers to cringe, they demonstrate that, despite problematic moments, she can rely on them to help.
5. **Mental and Physical Health** . Queenie faces these issues as the book progresses and they're discussed realistically, especially as a black woman.
6. **The Lives of Black Women** . The book does not refrain from presenting what black women encounter often daily. From being seen as sex objects to not attaining respect at work, Carty-Williams explores these notions with fluidity, openness, and respect.
7. **Cultural Connectivity** . What does it mean to be a black woman? Jamaican? How does Gentrification threaten both? I love seeing these topics mentioned with honesty.
Real Struggles Millennials Face. Nothing's sugarcoated or censored. From hunger to being broke to high rent, Carty-Williams lays out issues facing Millennials everywhere.

Cons:

1. Carty-Williams' usage of black American slang jarred me a bit. Queenie's British Jamaican, not American. So, would she really use so much black American slang? I get the global desire to use cultural aspects of black Americans, but someone living in London, I expected more slang native to her location.
2. Windrush is a bit deal in London. It received a blip of a mention. Considering the author's and Queenie's heritage, I expected more discussion alongside Black Lives Matter (still an American phenomenon). The MC spoke much of losing her heritage to gentrification, but she only mentioned Windrush as a square and ship, not the movement and anti-immigration stance taken. Odd.
Despite those two cons, Queenie deserves a read and I highly recommend this 'coming of age' story about a young black woman in London trying to find her way via mistakes and revelations. She requires patience because the choices offered and decided upon require the same. Grant this character the same grace as you would characters with far less on their plate.

★★★★★★★★

Tava | tavalava says

Queenie is a young black woman whose childhood traumas play out in her adult relationships. This book is

being compared to Bridget Jones's Diary, and honestly that's a terrible comparison. The book touches on themes of blackness and black identity, the fetishization of black women's bodies, mental health and more specifically mental health within the Black community.

I would liken this book to a slice of life novel. You find out more about Queenie in the latter part of the book when she is seeking therapy. Otherwise, the character development is pretty minimal. Some things occur in the book, that honestly make no sense and could have been excluded.

This book is a 4 star book for me primarily because of the importance of the themes. As a black woman I was able to really relate to some of the dialogues and mental anguish that Queenie grapples with. Her struggles with on,one dating as a black woman are spot on. This is definitely an "Own Voices" read.

Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for providing this ARC for me to read and review.

Amaka says

Here's to hoping this book will turn into a movie

Queenie takes us on an emotional rollercoaster; we begin with a breakup from her long-term boyfriend Tom. Though it's clear that Tom wants to take the breakup seriously, Queenie sees it as a temporary break and gives him space but not too much, just in case he wants to reconcile sooner. Their break propels the story forward as Queenie faces challenges including microaggressions at work, conflicts within her quirky friend group (she was bold for throwing her friends into a group chat being that they barely knew one another lol), sketchy men and a tumultuous relationship with her family; sometimes beyond her control.

I can't praise this story enough. Queenie is hilarious, complex, raw and eyeopening all in the same breath. It was hard to back away from the characters and carry on with my daily activities. The character development was so honest and brutally realistic.

MissBecka says

I was really looking forward to this book.

I think that's what made it all the more disappointing when I started it.

I thought I was going to get a mid twenties woman struggling with everyday life and a group of close girlfriends that help her navigate through it.

It does have some of this (the Whatsapp chats were great), but Queenie is not a strong MC and a lot of the situations she gets herself into (more than once) just made me want to slap her.

It was like watching a horror movie where the "damsel in distress" runs up the stairs instead of out the door. Soooo much yelling at my kindle.

Thank you NetGalley and Simon & Schuster Canada for this ARC.

Book of the Month says

Why I love it
by Jojo Moyes

I have to confess I have a prior interest in *Queenie*'s author, Candice Carty-Williams. A few years ago, I created a competition offering up my cottage to an aspiring writer in need of time and space to complete their project. Candice was the first winner, chosen from more than 600 applicants. She had never driven outside London before, and it took her six hours to make a two hour journey (the kind of thing that would happen to her character, Queenie!), but when she arrived she declined a cup of tea and went straight to work—she was that determined to make the most out of the opportunity.

Fast forward two and a half years; *Queenie* is one of the most anticipated books of the year. It grabbed me from the opening chapter because it did something that happens far too seldom—it took me into a world I didn't know: that of a 25 year-old black woman living in London, straddling two cultures and slotting neatly into neither. Queenie is fresh and flawed and she made me wince and made me laugh and made me think.

Candice is a unique writer. Even that 500-word contest entry told me there was something special about her. After re-reading the finished work I knew I had been right. I'm excited to see *Queenie* meet a wider audience, and to see Candice's star really shine. We need more voices like hers.

Read more at: <https://bookofthemonth.com/queenie-442>

Nilufer Yenidogan Ozmekik says

5 shiny, rebellious, beautiful stars!

As soon as I started this book, I thought I was having a light reading. Because the book is advertised as modern version of Bridget Jones. But after a few pages later, I realized this is deeper, more heart wrenching, darker and twisted story of a young woman who is looking for a tree branch to not fall down from a cliff! Queenie has really a bad year but it's not about her broken heart after her breakup or time out with her longtime boyfriend Tom. This is such a beginning of domino falling!

After her breakup, she realizes that she just blocks everything about her past and as seems like she has a job she's been dreaming for so long and boyfriend who's ready for longtime commitment do not bring her happiness.

But the breakup is the first wake up call which pushes her make so many wrong decisions about meaningless one night stands.

Then she loses one of her best friends' trust(it isn't her fault actually, only wrong things about the situation are choosing wrong besties and wrong f*ckbuddies), she gets rejected by all three men she's hooked up, she loses her job. Finally she understands that she was already lost from the beginning. She doesn't feel like she belongs to someone or somewhere.

She never thinks she deserves to be loved or she deserves good things in life. Now when she sees her own rock bottom, it's time to discover her strengths and weaknesses, learn how to love and forgive herself and achieve to face her past demons!

This book is not only a typical love life story of a Jamaican English woman's in mid-twenties. It's about

discovery of your own potential, learning what you want from the life, respecting yourself! It's about friendship! It's about forgiveness! It's about family!

Sometimes you hate Queenie, sometimes you feel sorry for her but mostly you understand her ! She's flawed, she's broken, she's confused but she's strong enough to find her way and embrace her loved ones tightly to not fall from a cliff, again!

I really enjoyed her story and this is a great debut ! I love to read the upcoming book of this writer!

Emily May says

He put a hand on my thigh and moved it higher, digging his nails into my skin. That'll be a pair of tights gone.

This book is a bit deceiving. Queenie is such a funny and lovable character, with what I think of as a very British sense of humour. The book opens with multiple scenes that made me laugh and the author quickly builds up a warm and hilarious dynamic between Queenie and her girlfriends ("the Corgis"), and between Queenie and her Jamaican grandparents. This is everything I would have expected from a book being compared to Bridget Jones's Diary.

Which is why I feel like I need to issue a warning: **this book goes to some really dark places**. Bridget Jones is klutzy and embarrassing; Queenie is a far more complex and real character. She is dealing with mental health issues and a post-relationship breakdown. The decisions she makes - like having unprotected sex with lots of different men - are clearly not healthy.

I know some readers will feel frustrated with her behaviour at times, but I also think the author never portrays it as a good thing, and instead honestly portrays a young woman dealing with severe anxiety in the only way she feels she can. I think it's a good example of some very serious issues being wrapped up in a book that is full of humour to balance out the sadness.

Queenie has just broken up with her long-term boyfriend Tom, who is white. Through flashbacks, we soon learn that their relationship was pretty messed up from the start, with Tom refusing to defend her against his family's casual racism. Queenie doesn't see it that way, though. This break-up has hit her hard. She responds to it by hooking up with guys and having various dating/sexual encounters that are a mixture of hilarious and cringy.

Carty-Williams explores dating, anxiety and racism through the eyes of a modern-day Jamaican Brit, and she does it all with a sense of humour and no aversion to cringe factor. Oversharing at inappropriate moments, dating disasters, and witty badass girlfriends are just some of the sources of hilarity in this book. I think the serious issues are actually more impactful because of their juxtaposition with the humour and friendship.

No, this isn't another Bridget Jones's Diary, but then we're not living in the 90s anymore either. Queenie is bolder, more complicated, more diverse and - ultimately - more feminist. And I see nothing to complain about in that.

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Read In Colour says

More like a 2 1/2 but I couldn't bring myself to round it up to a 3. Good premise but it falls short.

Jazmen says

I don't think I've been this disappointed in a book in quite some time.

I'm disgusted.

Queenie with all of its rave reviews never hints at the alarming and problematic content.

Queenie is a twenty-something-year-old Jamaican woman—who is just about at her wit's end. She's messing up at work, and her boyfriend of two to three years just dumped her. Her white boyfriend of two or three years—this is significant.

I want to be as clear as possible, but I don't want to be completely spoiler-y. However, some things I will bring up have to be mentioned to back up my distaste for this novel.

I have so many issues with this book, that we don't have enough time to cover them all, but I'll discuss the most glaring ones.

While I was proud that this novel featured what appeared to be a plus-sized Jamaican woman, she did nothing to deserve my pride.

Queenie is a hot mess. While the author places the blame on her mental state, it felt like a lackluster excuse.

Queenie mourns the loss of her Caucasian boyfriend for about 60-70% of the book, and we get to see it through text-begging and whining on Queenie's behalf. While she struggles to maneuver the breakup—we're provided with flashbacks to mostly less than flattering moments between Queenie, her boyfriend and sometimes his parents.

One of the most startling situations come in the form of a game of clue. While playing clue with her boyfriend and his uncle, the uncle blurts out, "There's a nigger in the closet." Queenie was offended and rightfully so. She looks to her then boyfriend, Tom to defend her—which resulted in an argument between the pair. Their relationship was a mess. Yes, we get to see the good parts, but it's glaringly obvious that they didn't need to be together.

I won't dwell on that. I'm more concerned about the after. The after that included multiple "white" sex partners who praised her for her black features and treated her as an exotic place to rest their loins. Even more frustrating was that she didn't use protection. With. Any. Of. Them. This resulted in her having to visit the "racist" sex clinic far too many times. She not only faced the prospect of contracting some sexually transmitted disease but also the ridicule of white doctors who felt her behavior expectant of a young black woman. It was disgusting; not unrealistic, but disgusting.

What was most bothersome is Queenie's incessant and unstoppable need to work her way through white men sexually, who showed her zero respect? They talked down on her, worked their way through her and discarded her like trash.

The author blamed this on her upbringing and her anxiety-riddled mind. While that's not unbelievable, I truly wished she would have gone about it differently.

Queenie is also a budding journalist. She's been interning at the Daily Read for a few years and has had no significant or meaningful work. The author sort of implies it's because she's looked over because she's black—and while that's a part of it; it's mostly because she sucks at her job.

Throughout the book you see Queenie fighting to get through her day; struggling with the devastation of a broken heart—and her anxiety; as explained in the latter half of the book.

She fights to write about black people at the paper—only to face dismissal by her editor, who is white. That whole part of the book was hardly convincing and felt as if it were added on at the last minute.

Queenie seemed faux angry about black issues and I could have done without that entire idea altogether. She seemed angry and riled up out of obligation.

But, let's not dwell on that.

She has a group of best friends that do their best and their worst to help her cope through her breakup and deal with whatever's been lurking in the background.

She has two white best friends, and one Ugandan dark-skinned best friend, that says things like bruh, and fam repeatedly.

Though, her "black friend" had the most sense. I won't get into the fact that her character was very stereotyped. I want to wrap this thing up.

I thought by the time we got to the healing portion of the book that all of what I had to endure would have been worth it. It wasn't.

I'm still wholly disappointed.

As someone who has struggled with anxiety, not clinically diagnosed, but self-diagnosed—I can totally understand not recognizing the anxiety for what it is.

I can also understand how someone might deal with their anxiety; in whatever way, they feel comfortable. Queenie dealt with everything by having a lot of sex. If I felt convinced by it I'd be able to excuse it. I can't seem to get over her being used and abused by white men so steadily, easily and repeatedly.

When her friend suggests she date black men—which doesn't fix the root problem. Queenie has an almost physical reaction to the idea. She mentions something about being afraid or uncomfortable with black men and then it was my turn to recoil. The author does not allow the character to explain this, and she definitely needed to. You don't drop a bomb like that and leave the room.

I really wish I thought to highlight that portion.

Even after everything she still chose another white man; with whom she wound up arguing about black lives matter with, on the way to sleep with him.

It was a mess.

While I believe black readers will relate to Queenie's "black" struggles, the rest is just frustrating and offensive.

Queenie digs into deep issues: discussing micro-aggressions in the workplace, the treatment and mistreatment of the black body by doctors; and the overall fear of mental work by psychologists and psychiatrists by the black family.

I thought it was relatable, no doubt about it, but it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough to convince me that Queenie was the character we needed. It didn't convince me that black lives mattered.

It amplified mental health issues in the black community and how it's dealt with, but it was all surface; not digging deep enough to have any kind of real effect.

This book was disappointing and unenjoyable, at least it was for me. I don't recommend it. But to each his own.

BookOfCinz says

I could not wait to get my hands on a copy of Queenie by Candice Carty-Williams mainly because the main character is a Jamaican. I was also drawn to this book because it is being dubbed as "*Bridget Jones meets Americanah*" and while I see why that is the case, in some (most) instances I don't- we will get to that soon.

We meet Queenie Jenkins a 25-year-old living in London who is from Jamaica. Queenie's had a lot going for her, especially for a millennial living in one of the most expensive cities in the world. She works at national newspaper, a job she actually likes, she lives with her long-time white boyfriend and still manages to have a solid group of friends around her. Things begin to fall apart and fast, for Queenie when Tom, her long-term boyfriend tells her they need to go on a break... a long one. We see our main character begin to spiral in more ways than one, she messes up constantly at work, her personal relationships are falling apart and her toxic behaviour starts taking a mental toll on herself and those around her.

I have a lot of things I want to say, so I will break them up into two parts- what worked and what didn't work for me.

What Worked:

The whatsapp group chat with the friends I found worked really well in how it moved the plot along and got us to know more about Queenie and her friends. I think this was my favorite part of the book if I am being honest. I love how real those chat felt, how hilarious they were at times and as a millennial, that part of the book really resonated with me.

I particularly loved two themes that the author discussed one being mental health and how it is viewed in a

Caribbean and Black community setting. I felt it was addressed in a very real way. Being from the Caribbean, we can still be very archaic in how we address mental health and those who decide to go to therapy for help are sometimes shunned or seen as bringing embarrassment to the family. The author did an amazing job of addressing this issue. I also liked that the author explored how black women's bodies are often fetishized. This is a topic I don't read a lot about and how we were able to experience that through Queenie felt very real and often times infuriating.

What Didn't Work

While I liked that the author tried explored racial tensions and discrimination, I felt like it wasn't deep enough. Maybe I am nit-picking because how deep can one go when the main character's life is falling apart and she is engaging in self-destructive behaviour. However, the race theme felt very "by the way" because this is current and it would be good to add to the discussion. This also applies to Queenie's heritage, I hoped to read more about how her Jamaican heritage impacted her overall. Aside from her Grandparents and Auntie that were Jamaican it wasn't addressed much.

I feel the comparison to Bridget Jones Diary is a long stretch. The only thing Queenie and Bridget have in common is that they live in London and are bad at love. The writing at times did lend to a Bridget Jones-esq feel but that's where the comparison ends. Queenie is a way more complex character and while the book started out very shallow, things got deeper in the end.

Overall this book will be open to a lot of reader interpretation. I do see a lot of people either loving it or being underwhelmed- it is too hard to not like a character like Queenie. I am here for Williams' next book because I did enjoy reading this book. Queenie will be available for purchase in March 2019. Thanks Orion Publishers for this ARC.

Full review is on blog- <http://bookofcinz.com/queenie-by-cand...>
