

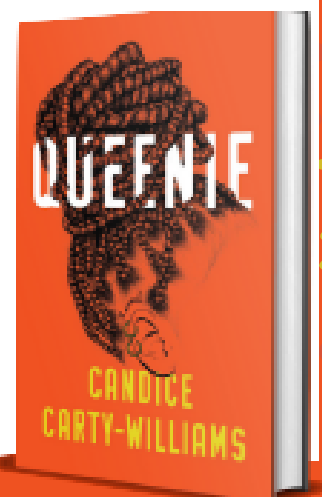
BOOK CLUB KIT



*EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR A BOOK CLUB MEETING
ON QUEENIE BY CANDICE CARTY-WILLIAMS*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>CONTENTS</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
Author Interview	3
Food & Drink Recipes	6
Meeting Playlist	9
Discussion Guide	10
Personality Quiz	12
Book Recs Based on Queenie	14
Support Resources	16
About the Author	17



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

What was the original inspiration for Queenie?

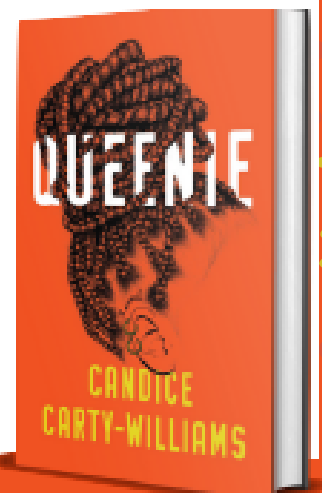
Candice Carty-Williams: Honestly, when I sat down to write, she is what poured out. Years and years of my own experiences, dealing with micro and macro aggressions, stories I've heard from friends and family; my poor brain seems to have retained it all, and I clearly needed an outlet for it. Mainly, Queenie a woman that so many of us can relate to because she's an amalgam of the versions of so many of us at our lowest, when we've kind of had enough but are about to learn that it really is darkest before the dawn. People often ask if Queenie is me, and while she's not me in any literal (or sexual, goodness no) sense, she's probably a version of me that lives inside my head. She's a lot funnier than me, too. And a lot more tolerant. None of the men in Queenie's life could ever come near me.

The “Corgis” are such a vibrant part of this novel. How did you go about shaping each friend's unique relationship with Queenie?

My starting point was thinking about the type of person Queenie was, who she would have picked up in her life, and where. Kyazike is her long-term friend, also black, and she's such a great character because, while being absolutely brilliant, and so confident in her own black skin, she shows that there really are different types of black women. Darcy, our well-meaning and well-intentioned white, middle-class liberal, is kind, and the most patient of Queenie's friends. Through their day-to-day interactions I wanted Queenie to have someone who would see the good and the bad, and wouldn't judge either way. It was really important to me that Queenie had a set of friends who were different from each other, and who gave Queenie various types of support. Darcy listens, Kyazike defends, and Cassandra commands. I'm very lucky myself to have a best friend tier of people who have helped me through the big problems and the small ones. I'm also fortunate enough to have spotted the frenemies, much like our dear Cassandra, and to have been able to distance myself from them.

If you could start a group text with three other writers, who would you pick? What would you name the group?

This is the hardest question. Okay I'm going to think solely about who would make me laugh the most, and who I admire so much that I'd just let them talk amongst themselves and watch each message flood through in wonder. I'm going to choose Samantha Irby, Roxane Gay, and Lindy West. I think we'd be named after Irby's second collection of essays, *We Are Never Meeting In Real Life*, because I'd be too intimidated to come face to face with any of them.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Queenie doesn't consider herself a victim of assault. Can you talk about your decision to have her struggle with recognizing the reality of the way she's being treated?

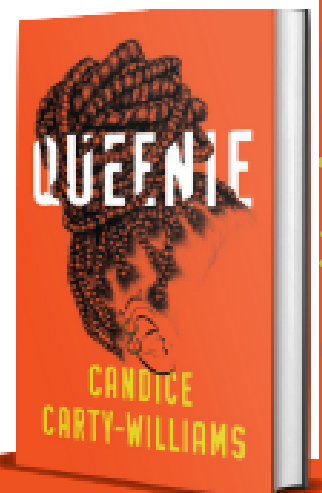
We all have to learn about ourselves, and that's what we're doing with her. So often, many of us are treated badly, and it might not be until later on that we realize the effects of that mistreatment. I always think of it this way; I am really, very good at giving out advice to my friends. I can dissect and solve whatever they're going through in a second. I'm a real Darcy. If a partner is treating them badly, if they're scared about asking for a pay raise, if they don't know how to put together a piece of IKEA furniture, I am there and I am on it. Problem solved, advice given, case closed. When it comes to myself and my own issues, I can't see the forest for the trees. So many of us are like that, and Queenie is such an example of that inability to see that you even have a problem. I also thought it might be refreshing to create a character who didn't spend all of her time navel-gazing and picking herself apart. Queenie is just doing what she's doing and hoping for the best. Like so many of us do!

Queenie isn't easily convinced that therapy might help her to feel better. Why was it important for you to show this struggle to readers?

I do not know any person who can say that they're trouble-free and that some facet of life doesn't weigh heavily on them at some point. We all have stuff, and everything, big or small, is relative (and important if it's getting us down). Things can hurt us, or things have hurt us in the past, and we should talk about them. Also, as the "strong friend" to a lot of people, I get a lot of angry, ranting phone calls and flurries of text messages and I just want to say "let me stop you there; have you tried therapy?" because these people are trained not just to listen, but to give us the tools to feel better. That's why as much as I wanted Queenie to be able to talk to her friends about the various tricky things that were happening to her, she also needed to go and get therapy to talk about the murkiness of her past that was keeping her from handling these things properly. And when she eventually goes, it's not about an instant fix, it's about getting the tools to soften the sharpness of her trauma.

Can you talk about the significance of having both the Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements represented in Queenie's story?

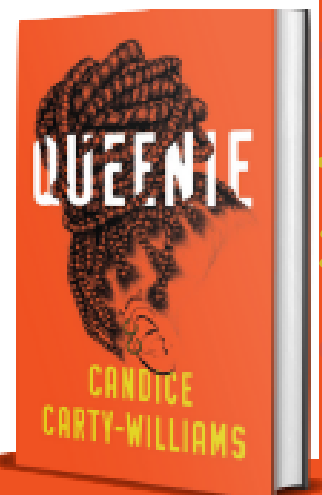
Queenie's story very much reflects the political climate of what's going on around us, even though she—and her story—are fictional. I really wanted to be able to use Queenie as a tool to talk about the society we're living in. Queenie is both black and a woman, meaning she needs both of these movements. Both Me Too and Black Lives Matter are crucial movements to me and the people around me. They're each incredibly vital, shine a light on injustice, and stop people from feeling alone. I almost can't believe there was a time when neither of them existed and so many of us were suffering in collective silence.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Throughout the book Queenie finds it difficult to come to terms with negative events in her life—everything from her relationship with her mom to her recent breakup. How do you see the trauma from her youth shaping the denial she finds herself in as an adult when things go wrong?

It all goes hand in hand, doesn't it? When I myself had therapy, I had to do a lot of learning and understanding around my inner child, and I was really reluctant to unlock any of that stuff because I just didn't think it mattered. But as I began to finally do the work, I realized that not seeing myself or my value as a child meant that as I grew into an adult, I lost touch with myself and who I was becoming. Queenie, who has had such a tumultuous and traumatic upbringing full of loneliness and mistreatment at the hands of a man in her childhood, has no idea how to act around men as an adult. Writing a lot of this book made me cry, actually, and one of the bits I find hard reading back over is when Queenie's therapist asks her to describe herself and Queenie doesn't really have an answer. That lack of awareness of self is what can happen when you haven't been able to properly grow up and into yourself.

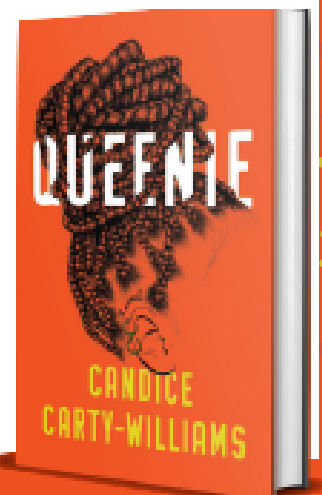


RECIPES FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB'S QUEENIE MEETING

Food plays an important role in *Queenie*. The book opens with a hunt for comfort food after Queenie receives some bad news, and it closes with a meal that is significant to Queenie's journey. As she struggles with her mental health, Queenie frequently loses her appetite. Still, she's reminded that food brings people together and offering to share a meal is often the first instinct for family members seeking to help her through tough times. Book clubs can't go wrong with wine and cheese pairings, but we find our favorite meetings are the ones where the food and drinks are directly inspired by the book.

Jamaican Bun

This is Queenie's favorite comfort food, and she goes to Brixton searching for it only to learn that the bakery she loves has been replaced by a new burger spot. Before your book club meeting, why not whip up this fruity baked good? For members who love a sweet and savory combo, you can serve this with hard cheese.



RECIPES:

JAMAICAN EASTER SPICE BUN

Ingredients

¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup honey
1 teaspoon browning
½ tablespoon Molasses
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 tablespoons melted butter
1 cup Guinness Stout
1 egg
1 cup dried fruits (cherries,
raisins)
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ tablespoon cinnamon
2 ½ teaspoon spice
combination (Nutmeg,
Cinnamon, all spice)
1 cup cherries (optional to
top bun)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a loaf pan with baking spray; set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the following ingredients: brown sugar, granulated sugar, honey, browning, Molasses, vanilla, melted butter, Guinness Stout, and egg.

In another bowl combine flour, baking powder, nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice, and salt, lightly mix. Then throw in the dried fruits.

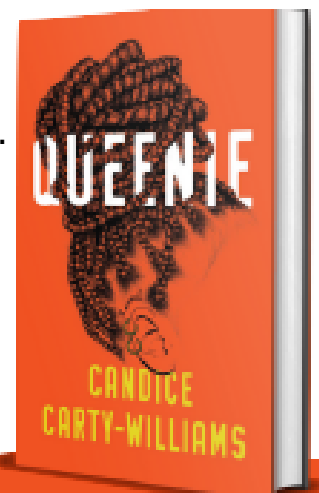
Then combine wet and dry ingredients until thoroughly mixed. Scrape down sides.

Pour mixture into prepared loaf pan, add cherries on top if desired.

Bake for about 60-75 minutes or until a tooth inserted comes out clean.

Let it cool
before slicing.

**This recipe comes from Immaculate Bites
africanbites.com/jamaican-easter-spice-bun/**



RECIPES:

POMEGRANATE ORANGE PROSECCO COCKTAIL

Whether they're watching fireworks or simply sitting down to dinner, Queenie and her friends often toast with a bubbly drink. We don't think you can go wrong with a glass of straight Prosecco, but it's also super easy to turn into a fun cocktail: all you need is a little orange juice (inspired by the gorgeous orange book cover) and pomegranate juice.

Ingredients

¼ cup pomegranate juice,
chilled

¼ cup fresh orange juice,
chilled

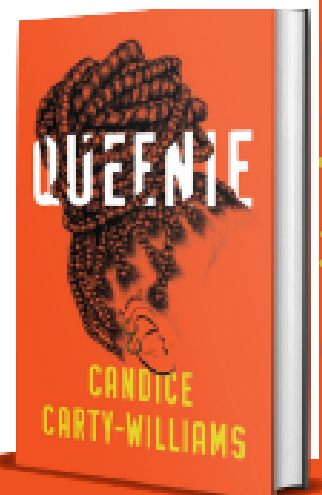
Voveti Prosecco, chilled

Directions

In a champagne flute or fun glass,
add the pomegranate juice
and orange juice.

Top the glass with the
Voveti Prosecco.

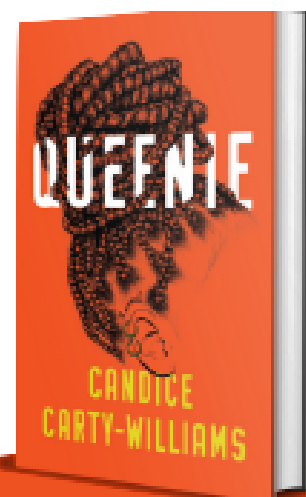
**This recipe comes from Thyme & Love
[thymeandlove.com/
pomegranate-orange-prosecco-cocktail/](http://thymeandlove.com/pomegranate-orange-prosecco-cocktail/)**



***A PLAYLIST FIT FOR A QUEEN:
SONGS TO LISTEN TO WHILE DISCUSSING QUEENIE***

Looking for some tunes to play during your meeting? We're here with the perfect playlist. Check out this mix of songs: Some are directly from the book and others are our team's picks.

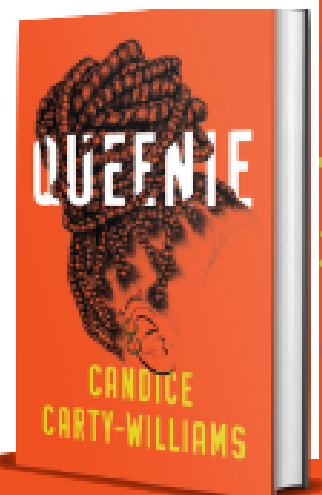
New Rules by Dua Lipa
When You Were Mine by Prince
No Scrubs by TLC
Cold War by Janelle Monáe
24/7 by Kehlani
Brand New Me by Alicia Keys
U.N.I.T.Y. by Queen Latifah
Keep Ya Head Up by Tupac
Grown Woman by Beyoncé
Love Lies by Khalid and Normani
Let You Love Me by Rita Ora
Pray For Me by The Weeknd and Kendrick Lamar
Sunflower by Post Malone and Swae Lee
Thank U, Next by Ariana Grande
Bad at Love by Halsey
Losing You by Solange
Touch Me in the Morning by John Holt



BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR QUEENIE

- 1) *Queenie* opens with our protagonist sending a text from her gynecologist appointment. Were you hooked from the first line, or did it make you uncomfortable?
- 2) What were your first impressions of Queenie, and did they change as the novel went on?
- 3) Queenie spends a good portion of the novel in denial about her breakup, how violent her sexual encounters are becoming, and more. Why do you think the author chose to have her react this way? Does her denial make her an unreliable narrator?
- 4) Queenie's friends and family love to offer advice. What did you think of the support they gave Queenie throughout the novel? Was Queenie ready to accept help? What advice would you have given Queenie?
- 5) Queenie pitches articles to her editor about the Black Lives Matter movement and attends a BLM march in the book. She's passionate about standing up for others, but doesn't always stand up for herself. Why do you think that is?
- 6) How do you see Queenie's experiences reflecting the importance of both the Black Lives Matter and the Me Too movements? Discuss Queenie's experiences at the intersection of both race and gender, and how they impact her connection to these movements.
- 7) Queenie's grandfather encourages her to attend therapy and tells his wife they need to learn from the next generation. How do you see Queenie's growth throughout the novel impacting other characters' development?
- 8) Queenie's past trauma isn't revealed until the end of the novel. How did that structure influence your understanding of Queenie as a character?

Find more questions on the next page!



BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR QUEENIE

9) At the end of the book, Queenie has a conversation with her younger cousin about how being a black woman will shape her daily experiences and interactions. How does her relationship with Diana evolve throughout the novel? How do Queenie's own experiences shape her growing relationship with Diana?

10) Queenie's relationship with her mother Sylvie is complicated. How do you think their relationship shaped Queenie's other friendships and relationships?

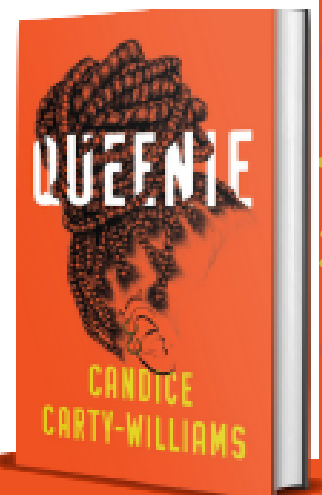
11) The story of how Queenie received her name wasn't revealed until near the end of the book. How did it change the way you thought about the book's title?

12) The final scene takes place in a restaurant where Queenie is surrounded by her friends and family. She's in therapy, but still unsure about her future. Were you satisfied with the ending? Why do you think the author chose to end the book while Queenie is still healing?

As an added bonus, here are two questions suggested by the author:

13) Do you think that the men Queenie encounters had a responsibility to see that she was vulnerable and act accordingly by leaving her alone?

14) Was it necessary for Queenie to go through a self destructive phase and come out on the other side, stronger and more aware of how she should be treated?



BOOK CLUB QUIZ:

QUEENIE BY CANDICE CARTY-WILLIAMS

WHICH MEMBER OF THE "CORGI" GROUP CHAT ARE YOU?

What do you do when something goes wrong?

- A) Deal with it head on
- B) Take a deep breath and consider the best course of action
- C) Ignore the issue and pretend it doesn't exist
- D) Turn to your friends for advice
- E) Put on the puppy dog eyes until the problem disappears

A friend is texting you about their bad day. What do you do?

- A) Remind them I've got their back
- B) Provide sympathy and a digital hug
- C) Offer them my advice, whether they want to hear it or not
- D) Commiserate with them by sharing my own bad day
- E) Listen silently

How up-to-date are you on new slang?

- A) I am the Shakespeare of slang
- B) Always behind! Help me Urban Dictionary
- C) I speak the Queen's English
- D) My cousin keeps me young
- E) You're barking up the wrong tree

What ended your last relationship?

- A) I did. I know I deserve better
- B) The age difference
- C) They cheated
- D) We're just on a break, it isn't really over
- E) Nothing! Single forever, baby

You're out for a night with the girls!

What are you drinking?

- A) Coke... no wait, Sprite
- B) Prosecco—champagne's Italian cousin
- C) Champagne
- D) Red wine
- E) Water

Pick something to snack on.

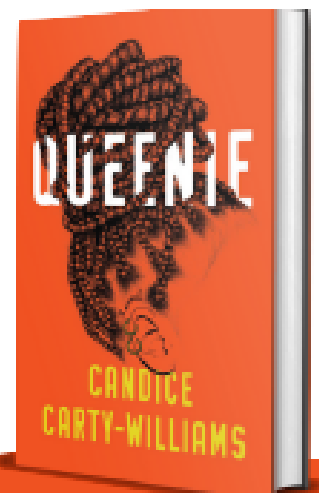
- A) Flaming Hot Cheetos
- B) A burger and chips
- C) No snacks, just a coffee
- D) I rarely snack lately
- E) Literally anything I can get my paws on

What are you passionate about?

- A) Fashion and makeup
- B) Working hard
- C) Voicing my opinions
- D) Reporting on injustice
- E) Going for walks

What's your motto?

- A) Do no harm, but take no shit
- B) Cultivate kindness
- C) My way or the highway
- D) If I can make it through this, I can make it through anything
- E) Be the person your dog thinks you are



BOOK CLUB QUIZ:

QUEENIE BY CANDICE CARTY-WILLIAMS

WHICH MEMBER OF THE "CORGI" GROUP CHAT ARE YOU?

RESULTS

Mostly As: You are... Kyazike!

Kyazike is one of Queenie's oldest and dearest friends. She's fiercely independent, knows her worth, and won't settle for anything less.

Mostly Bs: You are... Darcy!

Darcy is Queenie's coworker and close friend. She isn't always in touch with the latest trends, but she more than makes up for it with her enthusiasm. Darcy is supportive and always wants the best for her friends.

Mostly Cs: You are... Cassandra!

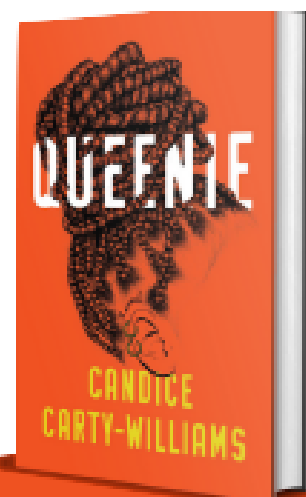
Cassandra and Queenie met at university, where they quickly bonded. When Queenie finds herself in financial trouble, Cassandra supports her without question. That said, Cassandra often believes that her opinion is the most important and could work on her listening skills.

Mostly Ds: You are... Queenie!

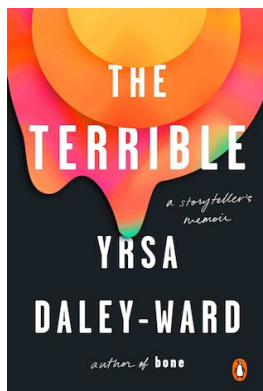
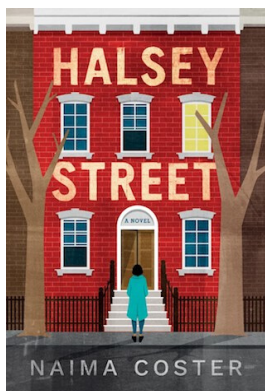
Turns out, you're not a corgi, you're the queen herself. When Queenie finds herself in trouble, she knows she needs the full support of her friends. No matter what, they're always there for her and Queenie appreciates that more than ever by the book's end.

Mostly Es: You are... an actual corgi?!

How'd you get your puppy paws on this quiz little dog? We're very impressed with your quiz taking abilities. Go give yourself a treat for being such a good pup!



LOVE THIS, READ THAT: WHAT TO READ AFTER YOU FINISH QUEENIE



If you connected with Queenie's complicated relationship with her mother...

***Halsey Street* by Naima Coster**

Like Queenie, the protagonist of *Halsey Street* finds her old neighborhood gentrifying rapidly. Penelope returns to Brooklyn after struggling to make a career as an artist, and her world is turned upside down when she receives a letter from her estranged mother asking to reconnect. If the complex family relationships in *Queenie* had you captivated, you'll want to pick up this novel ASAP.

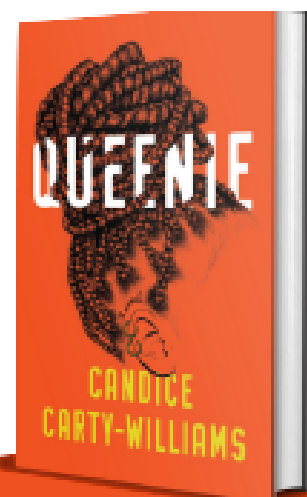
If you loved Queenie herself... *The Terrible* by Yrsa Daley-Ward

Queenie, is that you? This memoir by poet Yrsa Daley-Ward shares many similarities with Queenie's story. Daley-Ward grew up in the U.K. as the daughter of a Jamaican immigrant and was mostly raised by her religious grandparents. The book explores her relationships, her experiences with men, and her mental health. There are plenty of differences between Queenie's story and Daley-Ward's, but if Queenie captured your heart we know you'll love this memoir.

If you wanted to read Queenie's Black Lives Matter articles...

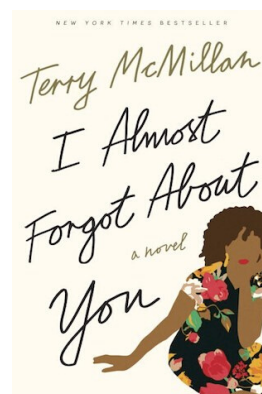
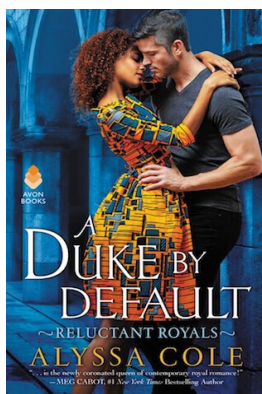
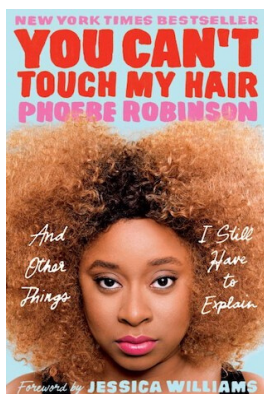
***The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas**

If your book club hasn't yet read this modern classic, now is the time. Angie Thomas' YA novel introduces readers to Starr, a girl who finds herself at the center of a movement after her friend is killed by a police officer. Like Queenie, Starr also grapples with forming her own identity and the way she's treated based on her race and gender. If you cheered every time Queenie spoke out against injustice, you won't be able to put *The Hate U Give* down.



LOVE THIS, READ THAT

WHAT TO READ AFTER YOU FINISH QUEENIE



If you share Queenie's "don't touch my hair" mantra...

You Can't Touch My Hair: And Other Things I Still Have to Explain
by Phoebe Robinson

Over the course of the novel, Queenie has to tell multiple men to leave her hair alone. Phoebe Robinson has also had to tell people to keep their hands to themselves, and writes about this experience and more in her collection of essays. Your book club will love reading these thoughtful and humorous pieces that tackle some of the same subjects dealt with in *Queenie*.

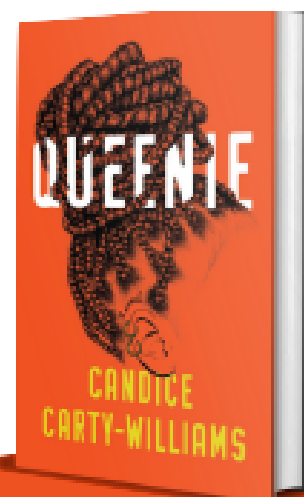
If you loved the Corgi thread... *A Duke by Default* by Alyssa Cole

Alyssa Cole's romance novel features a heroine at a crossroads. Like Queenie, Portia's not entirely proud of her past actions and is hoping to make a change moving forward. She also frequently turns to her friends in their shared group chat when in need of support. If you perked up every time the Corgi chat appeared on the page, you'll love this book.

If you were inspired by Queenie's journey to self-discovery...

***I Almost Forgot About You* by Terry McMillan**

Queenie learns a lot about herself and makes some significant changes to her life over the course of the novel. We think readers who rooted for Queenie every step of the way will enjoy *I Almost Forgot About You*. Terry McMillan introduces readers to Dr. Georgia Young, an optometrist who has a full and happy life but still feels like something is amiss. Georgia decides to start over, and in doing so, learns a lot about herself and her own happiness.



**BEYOND THE BOOK:
SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR READERS LIKE QUEENIE**

Fiction can serve as a mirror for our lives, and some of the themes in *Queenie* might affect readers in a very real way. Below we've rounded up resources for readers who want to follow in *Queenie*'s footsteps and seek support for the issues they're facing. All of the below resources are free, available 24/7, and offer options for both chatting online or speaking on the phone. Survivors of sexual violence can also find resources and support through Me Too (metoomvmt.org).

The National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org

800-950-6264

Mental Health America

www.mentalhealthamerica.net

1-800-273-8255

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.thehotline.org

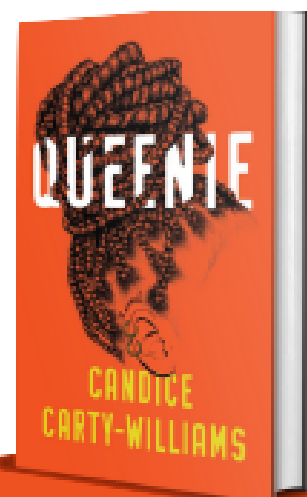
1-800-799-7233

RAINN

(Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

www.rainn.org

800-656-4673



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
CANDICE CARTY-WILLIAMS

Candice Carty-Williams is a senior marketing executive at Vintage. In 2016, she created and launched the *Guardian* and 4th Estate BAME Short Story Prize, which aims to find, champion, and celebrate underrepresented writers. She contributes regularly to *i-D*, Refinery29, *BEAT Magazine*, and more, and her pieces, especially those about blackness, sex, and identity, have been shared globally. *Queenie* is her first novel.

candicecartywilliams.com



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