



Book Club Kit

BY DENNY S. BRYCE

Wild Women and the Blues

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03.30.21

2021



About Me

Denny S. Bryce is a best-selling, award-winning author of historical fiction. A former dancer and public relations professional, Denny is an adjunct professor in the MFA program at Drexel University, a book critic for NPR, and a freelance writer whose work has appeared in USA Today and Harper's Bazaar. She is also a member of the Historical Novel Society, Women's Fiction Writers Association, and Tall Poppy Writers. Originally from Ohio, she likes to call Chicago her hometown but currently resides in Savannah, Georgia. You can find her online at DennySBryce.com.



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About The Book

In a stirring and impeccably researched novel of Jazz-age Chicago in all its vibrant life, two stories intertwine nearly a hundred years apart, as a chorus girl and a film student deal with loss, forgiveness, and love...in all its joy, sadness, and imperfections.

QUESTIONS



The novel alternates between two timelines, one set in the 1920s and the other in 2015. How did the parallel narratives enhance your understanding of the characters and themes? What do you think the author intended to achieve with this approach?

The story is deeply rooted in the jazz scene of 1920s Chicago. How does the portrayal of the era's music, culture, and social dynamics contribute to the story's atmosphere and character development? How does the historical backdrop affect the characters' decisions and experiences?

Both the past and present timelines feature strong female and male characters, who navigate their own challenges and ambitions. How do Honoree and Sawyer's struggles and aspirations mirror or contrast with each other? How about Honoree and Bessie?

The novel explores themes of race, identity, and the complexities of being an artist in an era where colorism was an integral part of the Negro entertainment industry. How does the story shed light on the racial dynamics of the 1920s entertainment scene, and how have those dynamics evolved (or not) in the present day?

Love, abandonment, and sacrifice are recurring themes in the novel, particularly in relation to the characters' personal and professional pursuits. How do the main characters' choices regarding love, career, and personal growth impact their lives?

Please note that these questions are meant to spark discussions among your book club members. Feel free to tailor them to your group's preferences and add any additional questions that arise from your reading and conversations.

HISTORICAL FIGURES

OSCAR MICHEAUX: The most prolific black--if not independent--filmmaker in American cinema, Oscar Micheaux wrote, produced and directed nearly forty feature-length films between 1919 and 1948. Despite his importance to black cinema, Micheaux remains an enigmatic and ignored figure; few of his films have survived. In addition, his controversial racial beliefs and technically inferior films make him difficult to interpolate within mainstream film history. (Excerpt from TCM. To read more click [HERE](#)).



LIL HARDEN ARMSTRONG: Lillian Hardin Armstrong was an American jazz pianist, composer, arranger, singer, and bandleader. She was the second wife of Louis Armstrong, with whom she collaborated on many recordings in the 1920s. (Excerpt from Wikipedia. To read more click [HERE](#)) (Photo below from Getty Images).





Here's an excerpt from an unpublished - lost scene!

Damn his black soul. The better choice would've been for him to walk away before he said something he regretted or she regretted hearing. But he'd already said enough to regret. He'd stomped all over that opportunity. Nothing left to do but get out. And she couldn't believe he was actually walking away from her. She shouldn't have expected it. But his running away surprised her. No matter how angry he'd been, there was no logic in him getting up and leaving without telling her something. Giving her some reason to rationalize why she still cared about him.

He snatched his overcoat off the barstool and stalked out of the saloon. He didn't look back at Honoré. She'd turned away from him, and there was no point pursuing a conversation with a woman who hated the sight of him breathing. Though with good reason, but getting pissed about her reaction to finding him alive would be best cooked in another pot. He had other matters on his mind.

Outside, on the sidewalk in front of the cafe, his younger brother was standing in the exact same spot where he'd left him an hour ago. It appeared he hadn't moved a limb. The only part of his body in motion was his Adam's apple bobbing with fear. But he wasn't backing down. His thin shoulders and narrow chest reminded Ezekiel of himself when he was a kid, and he would have laughed outright if he knew he had to if he didn't understand. He'd been there. Except the man coming at him always held a leather belt.

Ezekiel's brother reminded him of his father.

"What happened?"

"You ask me a question like that? I should've had to go in there in the first place."

"Dang, Zeke, I was trying to help."

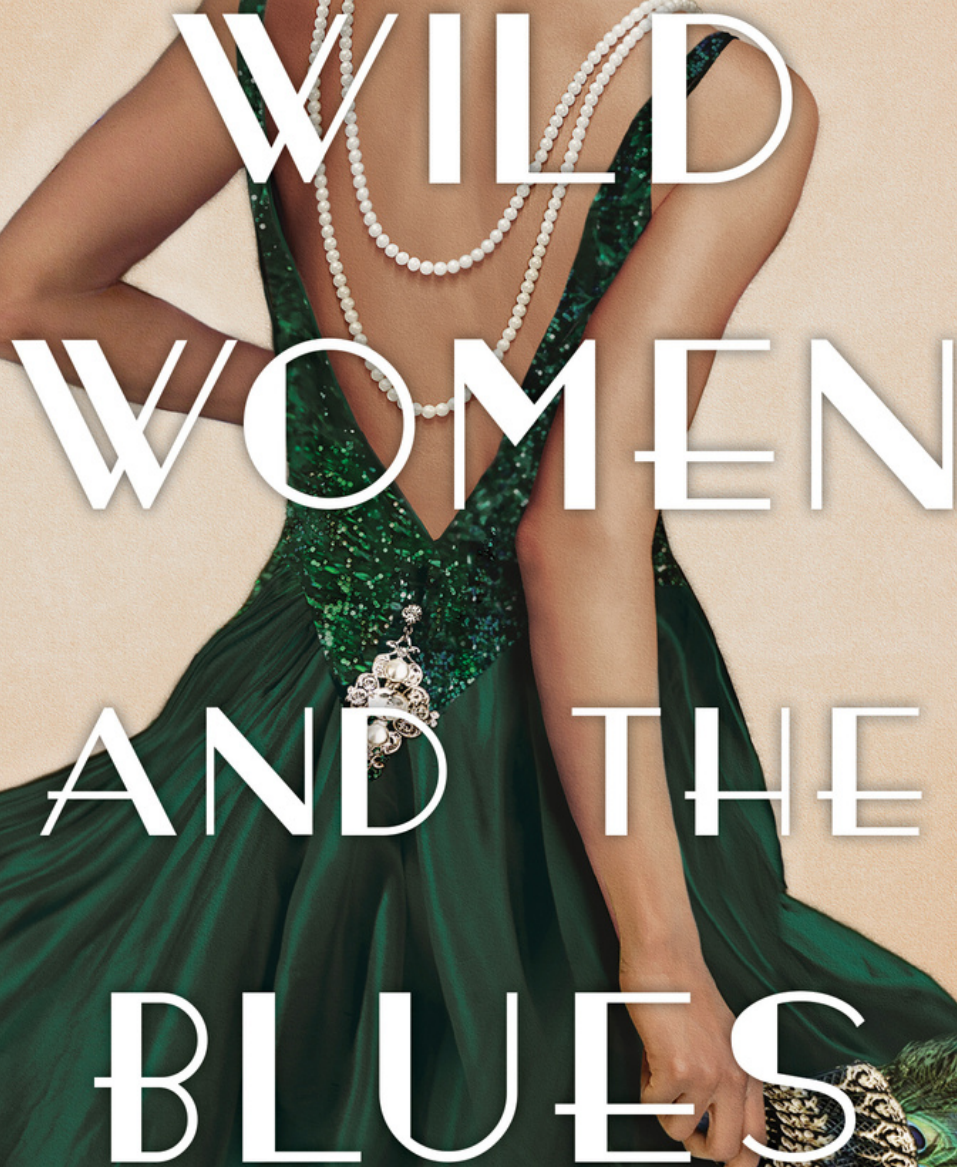
"Help? Trying to get yourself into more trouble than a little bit. Move your ass."

"Come on, you can't hide me. You haven't taken a belt to me in a long time."

They started walking down State Street, heading uptown toward bar. It was late, but the Stroll never shut down. The streets were choking from automobile exhausts, and the music poured from every building, storefront churches the sound of holy rollers praying for the sinners walking up and down State Street.

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✿
"An ambitious and
stunning debut novel."
—Stephanie Dray,
New York Times
bestselling author
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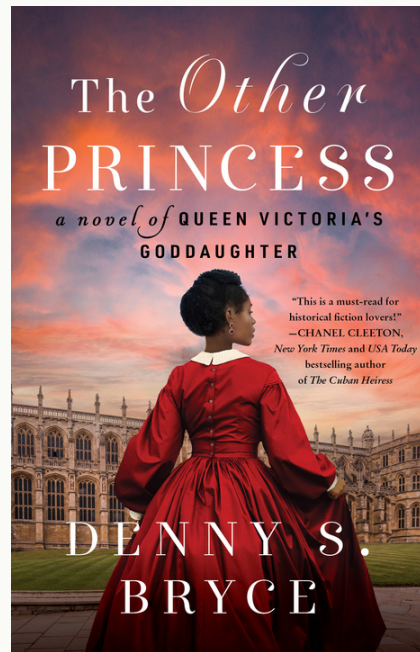
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AVAILABLE FOR
VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON
DISCUSSIONS

I love meeting with book clubs! If your group of ten or more members are interested in a Zoom Chat with Denny S. Bryce, please email me at denny@dennysbryce.com. These 30 to 45-minute conversations are complimentary and scheduled per my availability.

For in-person events, please email me denny@dennysbryce.com to discuss honorariums and travel and hotel accommodations if applicable.

Other novels by Denny S. Bryce



March 5, 2024

July 23, 2024