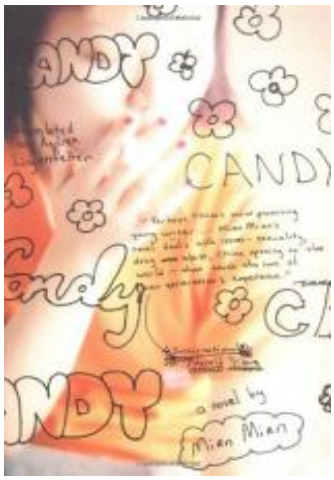
Candy

by Mian Mian



About the Book

I quit trusting anything that anyone told me.

My life was skidding into darkness at high speed, and I couldn't stop it.

I didn't think that there was a man anywhere in the world who could love me.

I was 22 years old and dead on the vine.

I want to see a thousand lonely strangers dancing happily at my party.

An international literary phenomenon - now available for the first time in English translation?**Candy** is a blast of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll that opens up to us a modern China we've never seen before. Hong, who narrates the novel, and whose life in many ways parallels the author's own, drops out of high school and runs away at age 17 to the frontier city of Shenzen. As Hong navigates the temptations of the city, she quickly falls in love with a young musician and together they dive into a cruel netherworld of alcohol, drugs, and excess, a life that fails to satisfy Hong's craving for an authentic self, and for a love that will define her.

Discussion Guide

1. The novel's narrator, Hong, idolizes figures like Jim Morrison and Kurt Cobain. Do you think Saining shares any of their characteristics? Does it help illuminate Hong's relationship with him or only further obscure it?

2. What is the biggest difference between Hong's and Saining's personalities? What are the largest sources of conflict between them?

3. Do you think that Hong would have gotten involved with heroin if she had not been in love with Saining or someone like him? Do you think that Hong will stay clean? What about Saining?

4. Do you think that Hong and Saining will stay together? Do you think Hong's happiness is dependent on Saining?

5. How does Hong's relationship with her own sexuality change over the course of the book? Do you think that sex plays a larger role in Hong's life than it does in most people's lives? Or is this novel just more open and honest about it?

6. What does the book's title, **Candy**, mean to you? How do you interpret the final sentence of the book?

7. What aspect of Bug's AIDS scare was the most surprising to you?

8. The Communist Party is still firmly in control of china's government. Judging from what you read in **Candy**, to what extent do politics affect daily life in China today? How?

9. Were you shocked by this story? Were your reactions in any way determined by the novel's setting? How might your response to the book have been different if Candy had taken place in New York or Los Angeles, for example?

10. Do you think Hong's life would have been different had she not moved to "the South"? To what extent do you think the relatively new freedoms found there influenced the course of her life?

11. Toward the end of the book Hong describes writing as a "prescription." Do you believe in the redemptive power of art and expression?

Author Bio

Mian Mian lives in Shanghai and works as a writer and nightlife promoter. **Candy**, her first novel, was banned in China-with Mian Mian decried as a "poster child for spiritual pollution"-and became an underground bestseller.

Critical Praise

"In this particular well-written, beautifully translated novel, the only weapon of mass destruction is Western popular culture."

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