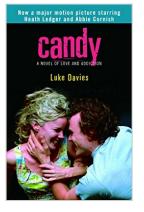
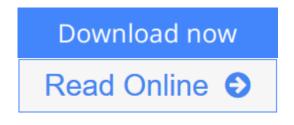
Candy: A Novel of Love and Addiction



By Luke Davies



Candy: A Novel of Love and Addiction By Luke Davies

"Candy is beside me, drenched in sweat. She's breathing gently, long slow breaths. I imagine her soul going in and out: wanting to leave, wanting to come back, wanting to leave, wanting to come back. The day will soon harden into what we need to do. But for now we have each other...."

He met Candy amid a lush Sydney summer. Gorgeous, sexy, free-spirited Candy. They fell in love fast, lots of laughter and lust, the days melting warmly into each other. He never planned to give her a habit. But she wanted a taste. And wasn't love, after all, about sharing lives? Candy had a bit of money and in the beginning, everything was beautiful. Heady, heroin-hazed days, the world open and inviting. But when the money ran out, the craving remained, and the days ceased their luxurious stretch.

But there was still love. Only now, it was a threesome. Heroin had its own demands, its own timetable, and thoughts of nabbing the next fix hurled them into each day. Then, when desperation sets in, Candy will stop at nothing to secure a blast, as she and her lover become hostage to the nightmarish world of addiction.

Painful, sexy, tender, and charged with dark humor, **Candy** provocatively charts the daily rituals of two lovers maintaining a long-term junk habit. Told in stunningly vivid prose and set against the backdrop of suburban and urban Australia, **Candy** is both an electrifying and frightening glimpse of contemporary life and love.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Candy: A Novel of Love and Addiction By Luke Davies Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #555866 in eBooks
- Published on: 2010-11-17
- Released on: 2010-11-17
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Since Trainspotting, heroin chic has certainly put down literary roots?sometimes it seems that you can't be a hip writer unless you know your way around a needle. Perhaps none has chronicled the mechanics of addiction in such mind-numbing detail as Australian poet Davies (Absolute Event Horizon) does in this strong if unimaginative first novel: Davies concentrates as much on preferred syringes as on the adventure of getting the smack, which makes the novel seem, sometimes, like Consumer Reports for junkies. The Candy of the title is both the woman that the narrator falls in love with and, of course, the stuff that he takes. Candy's degradation, from beautiful actress to call girl to streetwalker to madwoman, mirrors the narrator's own passage from a sort of smart-aleck cuteness to the monster whose main concern is finding a viable vein to prick. Starting out in Sydney, the couple moves to Melbourne to go straight but, of course, relapse. They engage in a tedious round of finding money and finding smack, in which all other attachments become peripheral. The narrator's habit of viewing these events from a distance strikes the right chord, but it's a monotone, insights notwithstanding: "Veins are a kind of map, and maps are the best way to chart the way things change. What I am really charting here is a kind of decay." The result is a more harrowing than the usual return to a familiar landscape of admonishment and self-negation. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From **Booklist**

Like *Trainspotting*, *Candy* depicts heroin addicts in a British subculture, but it is set in Australia, not Scotland. "Candy" is the slang name of the unnamed narrator's two great loves: his girlfriend and heroin. He introduces her to the drug, and they descend from being high on life, love, and drugs, to being shamed through prostitution, crime, addiction, and recovery. With no character background, the book reads as a string of scams to score money and heroin: some hilarious, some desperate, and some both at once. One scam starts when they answer a ringing public phone that the caller mistakenly believes is a suicide prevention line. Candy and the narrator are ruthless but human; their likableness and the immediacy of their dramas make them sympathetic even when pathetic. The writing is lean and strong but offers no resolution. Although that reflects junkies' reality, sometimes the pacing is jarring as the characters take action long after the audience is ready. Still, the good writing, realistic portrayal, and affable characters plunge readers into the junkies' world, safely returning them with veins intact. *Kevin Grandfield*

From Kirkus Reviews

Debut fiction (subtitled A Novel of Love and Addiction) that triggers the same voyeuristic curiosity as a car wreck on the highway. This depressing tale of two Australian heroin junkies is hard to put down, even though it serves up enough bouts of blood, dingy needles, and heaving bowels to turn the hardiest stomach. Heroin is the first love, after all, of the aloof-guy narrator, who willingly shares some of his stash with his new girlfriend, Candy, a party-girl personality of little depth until books end. The honeymoon stage of this relationship is brief. Focused on feeding their ravenous habits, the couple runs out of money and loses one apartment after another until Candy is forced into prostitution so they can afford to buy more drugs. Her guy pulls his own weight in less tangible ways, arranging deals and pick-up times, swiping food from convenience stores, stealing the occasional wallet, and racking up bills on stolen credit cards. Earnest resolutions to quit are repeatedly scuttled as late-night TV gets tedious or a two-day hiatus from drugs tempts the addicts to treat themselves to just one more hit, and then another. When their veins cower so deep that it takes seven hours to find one suitable to inject, the narrator and his bride finally try weaning themselves from heroin with methadone. Painstaking withdrawal, though, coupled with relocation to a ramshackle farmhouse, fatally strains the relationship, and while the narrator has a fling with an 18-year-old, Candy suffers a

nervous breakdown. When they finally manage to get off drugs, each does it separately. And their horrific dysfunctional marriage, fittingly, sputters to an end. Given the subject matter, its no surprise this Australian poets first novelwhatever its outr demonsproves addictive. -- *Copyright* ©1998, *Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bobbi Gonzales:

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Tracy Laflamme:

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Brooke Gafford:

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