

A photograph of several pink tulips with green leaves on the left side of the page. On the right side, there are two small, round, pink candles in clear containers. The background is white.

bloom where you're planted

READER'S GUIDE

*The following reading group guide for **Bloom Where You're Planted** includes an introduction and discussion questions for enhancing your book club. The suggested questions are intended to help your book club with prompts for discussion, however, they may contain spoilers. I recommend reading the questions only after you have read the book, but I hope they serve to enrich your conversation and increase your enjoyment of it.*

INTRODUCTION

Bloom Where You're Planted tells the steamy but introspective story of Jennifer Pritchett, 29, a young Black woman who lives in Washington, DC, loves her boyfriend, '90s R & B, and her friends—but lately, not much else. In the beginning of the book, Jennifer finds herself in a situation likely familiar to a lot of people heading into 30. It's not that anything in her life is truly awful—she's got a steady job, a sweet enough boyfriend, a great circle of friends, etc.—but when she compares her life to that of the people around her, she just feels like every part of it is lacking. The job that she has is secure, but she wants more from it; her relationship is three-years in but has seemingly lost all fire; and her friends are leading exciting lives with grandiose stories while she's often stuck in a classroom cleaning up crayons or on the sofa next to her boyfriend who has fallen asleep on the latest TV show they were supposed to be watching. It's not at all what she expected, and because of that, she feels increasingly invisible and left behind.

Readers will get an intimate viewpoint of what one woman goes through as she figures out how to bloom in her own right, and through trial and error, learns how to express her desires to her partner while still affirming his place in her life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

While a romance novel, *Bloom Where You're Planted* starts the reader in an interesting place—with the couple already three years into a relationship. How did you feel about this twist on romance storytelling? Did you miss not witnessing their original meet cute or were you still able to feel their connection and chemistry in their initial interactions?

Two major themes throughout the book are how damaging comparisons can be and how lack of communication can destroy even the most beautiful of relationships. Have you ever found yourself in either position: beating yourself up because you're not where others may be or frustrated in a relationship because you know the love is there but honest communication isn't? If so, what did you do about it? Did Jennifer's journey through both of these experiences feel realistic and/or inspire you to do anything different in the future?

Bloom Where You're Planted is the 2nd book in The Friendship Chronicles miniseries. And early on, readers meet (or if they read *The Shoe Diaries*, are reacquainted with) Jennifer's best friends. Throughout the series, these friends provide the comfort and foundation each woman needs as she navigates the ups and downs of her life, career, and relationships, figuring out along the way what truly makes her happy—something I firmly believe [heroines should have in romance novels](#). For Jennifer, they are even the first people with whom she admits to feeling left behind. Did you connect with the friendship storyline? And do you believe her friends helped or hurt her progress toward happiness?

What did you think of Jennifer's struggles with her career? Have you ever experienced something like this? And do you believe she ultimately succeeded in finding a job she'll want to stay in for a while?

Halfway through the book, Jennifer and Nick's relationship seems to be on the mend, at least in Jennifer's eyes, until they get into a huge argument that reveals many of their insecurities and problems were still very much present. Did you agree with Nick that she was comparing their relationship to that of her friends? How did Nick contribute to their issues by holding in his feelings until he exploded? And what do you think could have prevented them from faltering in their progress?

While in therapy, Jennifer realizes what she has been missing from Nick is a level of intimacy she feels they once had. But for months, she went about trying to reclaim that intimacy by simply seducing him, often conflating sex with his love for her. Once they both finally opened up to each other, she gets more than she even bargained for—better sex, more intimacy, and a ring! What do you think prevented them from getting to this place earlier on?

Bloom Where You're Planted is the steamy follow up to *The Shoe Diaries*, but is also its own separate story. Did you read the first book prior to reading this one? If yes, how did you feel about the change in spice level? Do you feel that the stories complement each other, and did you learn anything more about some of the other characters? If you haven't read *The Shoe Diaries* yet, are you now interested in going back to read it?

