



Queen Sugar: A Novel

By Natalie Baszile

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The inspiration for the acclaimed OWN TV series produced by Oprah Winfrey, directed by Ava DuVernay (*Selma*), and starring Rutina Wesley (*True Blood*) and Greg Vaughan.

“Smart and heartfelt and highly recommended.” —Karen Joy Fowler, author of The Jane Austen Book Club

Readers, booksellers, and critics alike are embracing Queen Sugar and cheering for its heroine, Charley Bordelon, an African American woman and single mother struggling to build a new life amid the complexities of the contemporary South.

When Charley unexpectedly inherits eight hundred acres of sugarcane land, she and her eleven-year-old daughter say goodbye to smoggy Los Angeles and head to Louisiana. She soon learns, however, that cane farming is always going to be a white man's business. As the sweltering summer unfolds, Charley struggles to balance the overwhelming challenges of a farm in decline with the demands of family and the startling desires of her own heart.

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Queen Sugar: A Novel By Natalie Baszile Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Already a widow raising an 11-year-old daughter, Charley Bordelon is further disoriented by the death of her adoring father. He has left her an 800-acre sugarcane field in their native Louisiana, attaching clear restrictions that she must revive the farm or give it to charity, with no option to sell the farm or share it with her estranged half brother, Ralph Angel. So Charley and her reluctant daughter, Micah, relocate from L.A. to rural Louisiana, welcomed into the bosom of the family by her grandmother, Miss Honey. But they walk into old family tensions when Ralph Angel and his 6-year-old son, Blue, come for an extended stay. Charley arrives just in time for the growing season, facing dilapidated fields desperately in need of care. As a citified black woman with no experience in farming, can she make a go of it as a sugarcane farmer in an area that clings to privileges afforded to whites, males, and the wealthy? In alternating chapters, Baszile shows the separate paths that lead Charley and Ralph Angel back home in this exploration of family ties and disconnections. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"In *Queen Sugar*, two bulwarks of American literature—Southern fiction and the transformational journey—are given a fresh take by talented first time novelist Natalie Baszile . . . [the novel] is a sensory experience, a tableau vivant that Baszile skillfully paints in a palette simultaneously subtle and bold. *Queen Sugar* is a bright and enticing reminder that, sometimes, you can go home."

—*O Magazine*

"A nuanced evocation of contemporary black life."—*San Francisco Chronicle*

"Reading this book is inhabiting, briefly, the backbreaking and brutal yet rewarding life that is sugarcane farming.... *Queen Sugar* is an impressive debut from a talented writer and a fascinating look into the world of the contemporary South."—*Washington Independent Review of Books*

"Baszile infuses her novel with flickers of poetic detail and spot-on observations... *Queen Sugar* gets props for its charming characters and enthralling, fully realized setting."—*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"In her heartfelt and beautiful debut novel, Natalie Baszile tells a tale of the South that is as deeply rooted in time and place as it is universal. How do we make sense of family? Loss? The legacies passed down to us? These are the questions that Charley, a young widowed mother, grapples with, as she tries to save the sugarcane plantation that is her inheritance and which, unbeknownst to her, holds the answers to both her past and her future."

—**Ruth Ozeki**, author of *A Tale for the Time Being*

"Natalie Baszile debuts with an irresistible tale of family, community, personal obligation, and personal reinvention. The world is full of things that keep you down and things that lift you up—*Queen Sugar* is about both and in approximately equal measure. Smart and heart-felt and highly recommended."

—**Karen Joy Fowler**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*

"*Queen Sugar* is a gorgeous, moving story about what grounds us as brothers and sisters, as mothers and daughters, and all the ways we fight to save each other. Natalie Baszile's characters put brave roots into inhospitable ground, looking for a place, a person, a community to call home. I alternately laughed and wept as they failed each other, forgave each other, lost each other, found themselves. It's a wise, strong book, and

I loved it. You will, too."

—**Joshilyn Jackson**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Someone Else's Love Story*

"After turning the last page of *Queen Sugar*, I already miss the gutsy, contemporary African American woman who ditches California and migrates to Louisiana to run her inherited cane farm. Natalie Baszile is a fresh, new voice that resists all Southern stereotypes, and delivers an authentic knock-out read."

—**Lalita Tademy**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Cane River* and *Red River*

"Raw with hardship and tender with hope, *Queen Sugar* digs deep to the core of a courageous young widow's life as she struggles to keep her farm in Louisiana's sugarcane country. Natalie Baszile writes with a bold and steady hand."

—**Beth Hoffman**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Looking for Me* and *Saving CeeCee Honeycutt*

"Queen Sugar is a page-turning, heart-breaking novel of the new south, where the past is never truly past, but the future is a hot, bright promise. This is a story of family and the healing power of our connections—to each other, and to the rich land beneath our feet."

—**Tayari Jones**, author of *Silver Sparrow*

"Natalie Baszile's *Queen Sugar* is a sweeping, beautifully wrought, and uniquely American story that brings to vibrant life the little known world of Louisiana's sugarcane country. I fell in love with Charley Bordelon—her huge heart, her kindness, her courage, and her resilience. A lyrical and page-turning meditation on second chances, reinvention, family, and race, *Queen Sugar* casts quite a spell."

—**Melanie Gideon**, author of *The Slippery Year* and *Wife 22*

"*Queen Sugar* is an accomplished, confident narrative that announces the arrival of a writer to watch."

—**Krys Lee**, author of *Drifting House*

"Gorgeous . . . an exquisitely written book about the joys and sorrows of family, love, endurance, and hard work."

—**Peter Orner**, author of *Last Car Over the Sagamore Bridge*

"Baszile, whose father arrived in California from Louisiana in 1954, knows the region well, and "Queen Sugar" yields a moving tale of contemporary Southern life." —**San Jose Mercury News**

"The confidence and intimacy of *Queen Sugar* come from its parallels with the author's life story.... Details gleaned through those experiences help create a story where readers can feel the aching muscles and sweat-drenched shirts... With such a captivating first novel, Baszile has established herself as a bright new author worth keeping an eye on." —**Minneapolis Star Tribune**

"Baszile's writing style flows easily, and there are beautiful passages around every corner.... a welcome addition to the fellowship of American authors"—**The Missourian**

"Baszile is an eloquent and descriptive writer. Her prose on the Southern landscape and sugarcane farms are worth reading alone.... This is a unique and heartbreaking tale of family members who come from entirely different worlds and reunite to provide for one another. It artfully captures the timelessness of the struggle to survive, the virtues of perseverance, and the undying bonds of blood." —**Alexandra Chang, Bust Magazine**

"Baszile has a great story to tell, and she does it with equal parts charm, perception, and suspense."—**Country Roads Magazine**

About the Author

Natalie Baszile has a master's degree in Afro-American Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MFA from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers where she was a Holden Minority Scholar. *Queen Sugar* has been made into a dramatic television series, produced for OWN by Warner Horizon Television. Baszile lives in San Francisco with her family.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Owen Ray:

In this 21st centuries, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these people survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a guide your ability to survive enhance then having chance to remain than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading a new book, we give you this kind of Queen Sugar: A Novel book as basic and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

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Michael Jones:

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