



Blue Notes: A Book Club Recommendation!

Carrie Lofty

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*For fans of **Jamie McGuire** and **S.C. Stephens**, a sizzling new adult novel featuring the tumultuous relationship between a young piano prodigy and a reluctant billionaire playboy—set against the vibrant backdrop of a New Orleans college campus.*

After being bounced from foster family to foster family, Keeley, a talented pianist, is ready to start over as a junior at Tulane. But when she plays a small concert that attracts the attention of Jude, a brooding playboy and heir to an enormous fortune in the wake of his parents' tragic death, suddenly Keeley's life is thrown off balance once again.

Jude is the first person to confront her about the pain behind her music, and she struggles with whether or not to let him into her life, or to keep protecting herself from the hurt that relationships have caused her in the past. But Keeley's about to learn that the melancholy young billionaire who appears to have everything he wants can open her eyes to exactly what she needs...

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Author : Carrie Lofty

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Debra says

*ARC courtesy of Gallery, Treshold, Pocket Books via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review***

✿kawehi.reviews says

What initially caught my attraction to this book was the first line of its plot synopsis: "For fans of Jamie McGuire and S.C. Stephens". But after reading it, uhhhh..

NOT . EVEN. CLOSE.

Blue Notes sadly did not do it for me at all.

I struggled immensely throughout this read. From connecting to the book and its characters to the lack of chemistry and character development I just couldn't love it at all. Everything just seemed choppy, forced, "draggy", and simply directionless.

And what's with the use of the words: "Sugar", "Memorable", and "Seduction"? It kind of drove me nuts after a while of reading those words! It was random and didn't match the story at all.

sighs heavily

Gosh, I'm so sorry guys. I really mean no disrespect. This book had a lot of promise but it totally floundered and bored me to tears from start to finish.

I received an ARC via the publisher in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!!

Brigid says

Blue Notes by Carrie Lofty Review: DNF at page 200

Summary

Keeley Chambers wants to be memorable. She longs for a future where she gets to play piano professionally. She's trying to pursue her career at a University in New Orleans, where she's been tasked to help the beautiful, talented, and rich Adelaide. But Keeley becomes tied with the local rich douchebag, Jude. Their first encounter doesn't go well, not even a little bit. He insults her looks at every turn, to almost no actual reason that I can discern. To make things even worse, Keeley starts to have all the fuzzy feelings for the jerk. But on top of it all: she suspects he's Adelaide's boyfriend. Keeley's best friend Janissa became the only person in this nauseating book I liked. She's the single most rational person in this book, so at least there's that. I wish she had been the Main Character. It's a shame, really.

Why did I dislike Keeley?

At the start of the book, I thought I would enjoy her character. I thought a book about a piano prodigy would be really fun and interesting to read about. But I found it hard to like or even respect a character that starts to have feelings for a guy that does nothing but insult her:

you clench your teeth when you get angry," he adds casually. "It ruins the line of your lips."

Does he unnerve everyone like this?...

"So when you said I wasn't much to look at_"

"I meant you gave me a lot to work with. Your lips being the best of it"

1. I found it a fucking struggle to like her for her irrationality and inconsistency:

I don't think I hate Jude. He turned out to be just what I'd been so wary of, and just what Janissa warned against.

She would tell him off and then she would completely fall under his spell. Look that doesn't quite work that way in real life okay? When someone is a complete asshole, you don't just start to have feelings for them because they're generous once in a blue moon. I don't think I could ever respect someone like Keeley. Her actions are deplorable.

2. She assumes everything before she knows the facts:

You should've seen him with Adelaide. It's like they spoke a special code language of snark and subtext. They're totally an item. If not now, then in the way exes can be when they're not done with each other.

I really REALLY hate it when the characters in a novel assume something so ridiculous before even knowing that person's actions. I'm not trying to excuse Jude's actions because being an arrogant jerk doesn't make me like him at all. No, I don't like a character that judges someone before they really should, no matter how much of an asshole that person is. But Keeley presumes Adelaide and Jude are a couple based on how they talk? No, I don't except that. It's flimsy and has no fucking basis.

3. She slut shames random people at concerts:

The woman, wearing a camisole with a shelf bra that does little to conceal bi boobs and perky nipples, is

practically sitting in her date's lap. He's a total jock type, solid and tan. Why they're sitting in the front row baffles me. They don't fit with my idea of music aficionados. She slings her legs over the guy's lap and wraps her forearms around his neck. I'm equal parts annoyed and envious.

Whereas we have Keeley's best friend:

She's sweet, a year younger than me, short, with a ton of grace and a great figure. Like, D-cup hourglass great. Maybe guys don't swarm her because, pajama pants aside, she usually wears sweats and old T-shirts...

The author splits the portrayals of women by who wears what, instead of portraying them based on their personality and actions. It's more of the way the author decided to portray other women that bothers me rather than the character's thoughts about this couple. The author, unfortunately decided the best way to capture her readers was to portray most women in the books as mean sluts. One: women who decide to show cleavage aren't sluts. This is a problem that needs to be fixed, but I doubt it'll happen anytime soon.

4. Her repetitive loathing self-hatred becomes the most annoying thing in this damn book:

So wrong on so many levels, I don't know where to start. So I don't. But she's sweet to say I'm put together. That much is deeply ingrained. Always look pretty, Mom used to say.

If it had only been a couple times, I would've been fine with it. However, she mentioned her looks so many times that it became annoying. I prefer not be constantly reminded of something when the character's already mentioned it. I don't want to know how the character's waistline is scrawnier than her best friend's, when really she's probably just fit. I don't want to know how small her boobs are, and I definitely don't want to be thrown crap like this:

"You're graceful. You're natural and unpretentious. You're tall-I really like that. You have poise and this air of living in some other world. It sets you apart. And unlike most guys and all the stereotypes we're working against here, I happen to adore small breasts."

I personally don't like certain parts of my body, but that doesn't mean I'm repeated it in my head over and over. But I don't want to focus on the character's looks while I'm trying to enjoy a book.

Ironically, I did actually enjoy the writing of the book. It's nicely fast paced and if you can get around the

annoying habits of the characters, then you might actually enjoy this book. Unfortunately, I didn't enjoy the main character. More often than not if I don't even slightly like the main character, than I'll usually end up hating the book. This is one of those cases.

Sarah says

2.5 stars

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to author Carrie Lofty.)

21-year-old Keeley has had a difficult upbringing living with her vice-addicted parents, and then having to find her mother murdered. Now a 21-year-old music student, she's looking for love.

Is Jude the right guy for her though?

This was an okay story, but it wasn't really for me.

Keeley was an okay character, and I liked how strong she was in the face of adversity. She'd obviously been through a lot in her life, had had a difficult childhood, had had to testify against her own father at her mother's murder trial, and had still come out of it all a good person.

The storyline in this was okay, but I did lose interest. I'm not sure whether this was just me though, as there didn't seem to be anything obviously wrong, but I just didn't really enjoy it. I failed to really connect with the characters, and just couldn't get into the story. I think this is probably just a case of wrong person, wrong book though.

There was romance in this one, and some of the steamy scenes between the characters were okay, I just found it difficult to really enjoy them while I couldn't connect with the characters though.

The ending to this was okay, and we got a happy ending which I was pleased about. I just never got to the point where I could really enjoy this though.

Overall; wrong book, wrong person,
5 out of 10.

Tracey (Life and Literature) says

"Turn me on, sugar," he says, smoldering and daring. "Just you and that piano."

As soon as I saw this book on Goodreads, I had to have it. Did you read that synopsis? How perfect does it sound? It was on my mind all the time. Not always at the forefront, but tucked away in there somewhere desperately waiting for it to be released. I had built it up so much in my head, that I was almost scared to read it and have it disappoint me in any way. But when I finally had it in my hands, I jumped in feet first ready to fall in love. And boy, did I fall in love.

My music is ...private. It's a hole in me where anyone can look inside. It's a damn bathroom door that

won't lock. The keys aren't my friends when I'm so pent up. It's only afterward, when I write down what's flowed through me, that I feel in control again. The music doesn't own me then. I own it.

Keeley is an exceptionally gifted pianist, although she can't stand the spotlight. But she wants nothing more than to make music her career. So she enrolls as a junior at Tulane. After a run in with the wealthy Jude Villars, she has to admit that he rattles her. Even more so when he comes up with a proposition for her that sounds just too good to pass up.

He's a vortex, or a planet with it's own powerful orbit. He's gravity and the tide. There's no denying any force of nature that powerful. Jude is one of them.

Jude was imperfectly perfect. He was brash and he had a touch of arrogance about him. But there was something about him right from the very start that I loved. Even when he was being cocky and a little bit of an arse. There were times he was infuriating Keeley with his words and even then, I loved him. And didn't I swoon every time that he called her sugar!! But under all of that, he is carrying a whole load of pain and responsibility. He was flawed perfection.

My gasps make his smile even wider. Yes. Just like he said. He's learning me. I'm a gasping, writhing road map, and the man does love to explore.

The chemistry and heat between Jude and Keeley was amazing. Somewhere along the way the lines become blurred. Jude begins opening up to Keeley and letting her into his past. Sadly, she doesn't do the same. She keeps her secrets very closely guarded. Secrets have a way of coming out. Will Jude be able to overlook everything that Keeley has kept from him, and will the feelings that they've developed be enough to overcome it all?

I really loved the growth of the characters and the development of the beautiful friendships throughout the story. Keeley and Jude both have such amazing strength which is such a stand out by the end of the book.

Carrie Lofty needs to write more New Adult, because she does it so awesomely well. I loved Blue Notes from the first page to the last. Her writing is beautifully descriptive and her characters were likeable as well as being relatable. The pacing of the story was fantastic. So much so that I was so engrossed, I was at the end of the book before I knew it.

***"Touch me there. At my nape."
I'm a melty puddle of guh before I take my next breath.***

Yep, a complete puddle.

5/5 Amazing Jude Stars

Jess says

I think I'm just really disappointed, which is sad for me because I've been looking forward to this book since it was announced. I was willing to pay the exorbitant original price for it, that's how much I was looking forward to it. But in the end, it just did not live up to my expectations at all and the major ways it let me down are related to two things.

1) I was expecting to get a Carrie Lofty New Adult novel, not a New Adult novel. And maybe that was a wrong expectation to have, but I REALLY like Carrie Lofty's writing. I have for years. But this didn't feel like her writing, this felt like any other new adult novel that I could get off amazon for free or ninety nine cents and that would have been fine, but that's not what I wanted. I wanted a new adult novel by someone that I trust to tell compelling stories. I didn't get that.

2) What a waste of New Orleans. Now, I grant you that I may be a harsher critic on this than most since my sister spent nine years of her life attending Tulane, but if not for the occasional mention of the garden district or the french quarter (or walking down bourbon street which is IN the french quarter, putting those things together was really redundant, okay?), there was really no sign that this book was taking place in an incredibly vibrant city. Hell, the neighborhood that Tulane's campus was in (Uptown, for the record) didn't even get a mention, while other neighborhoods did. And the book mentioned people taking shelter from Katrina in the Astrodome, which I'm sorry, is in Houston.

And as for the romance itself, I probably would have been more okay with it if the language surrounding it had been less florid. I don't have anything against the story of a girl deciding to let a dude seduce her into losing her virginity and them both being completely aware that's what's going on. I think that's great, actually. But I lost that somewhere in the writing and well, that's another thing that made me sad.

I'm glad I got this on sale, because if I'd paid \$11 for it? I'd be returning it without a single shred of guilt.

Mandy says

I enjoyed this book. The story was interesting and I liked most of the characters. I struggled a little bit with how the story flowed and a little bit with the relationship development between the characters. Also, I would've really liked an epilogue - it felt like some of the story was left unfinished when the book ended. I enjoyed this book and would read more if the author turned this into a series (to tell Adeline's story.)

Cait says

This book is very very lucky I am giving it 2 stars - and I'm only doing that because I can't bear to give a Carrie Lofty book 1 star

This was not at all what I expected from the cover, or from what I've come to expect from the author.

So much of the plot never connected with me - Jude (OH MY GOD THIS DUDE WHAT THE WHAT) and the romance most of all. Normally in the case of a book like this I can be like oh well the sex was good. I can't even say that here because I felt so detached from it.

I ended up skipping much of the second half of the book because just none of it worked. If this hadn't been Carrie Lofty, it would have been a DNF in all likelihood.

Christine says

I am not sure how I felt about this book when I finished it. The characters are likable, but somewhere at the half way point, I lost whatever connection I had with them.

I loved that Keeley truly loved her foster parents. The scenes when Keeley calls them when she has a bad dream or something in her life happens showed the great relationship she had with them.

The negative: There were many times in the story where Keeley's POV was too wordy. There was too much information that I found myself skimming. I love how Keeley and Jude meet and initially how they interacted with each other. However, Keeley's behavior later in the story seemed very immature for a 21 year old. Some of the dialogue between Keeley and Jude felt awkward. There were brief occasions where I felt the characters' actions felt out of place.

I think the author did a great job with setting up the story with Keeley. I liked the premise of the story, but I felt like it was not executed properly.

A copy was provided by the author/publisher in exchange for an honest review.

-y.a says

Dnf at 51%.

Whether you like Beautiful Disaster/Thoughtless or not, I just want to say Blue Notes has very little common with both novels. Granted. Keeley is a more interesting character than Kiera. I single out Kiera character cuz she is probably the least likable heroine in all my NA read.

I have a soft spot for any book character with back stories like Keeley and Jude. It is just a matter of rooting for them that I held on to the pages for as long as I could. But the sexual tension between LCs made no sense to me. Jude character didn't stand out and I don't even get why he was attractive to Keeley in the first place.

In many instances, I had to reread the phrases and figure out who said what. It was hard for me to follow a storyline with fragmented events and stilted dialogues.

Sorry. I didn't enjoy it.

Emily Bradley-dorman says

It's not perfect, very few books are, but all in all I really quite enjoyed Blue Notes! It gripped hold of my curiosity from page one and didn't let me go until the very last sentence. It was intense at times and made me smile at others, and it was always 100% sexy.

Usually the thing I love most about a book is the characters - or at least one in particular - however, with this it was the story. Admittedly there were some predictable moments and parts that made me cringe - although I

think they were meant to - but in general it flowed really well and kept me turning the page. The story follows Keeley as she starts University at Tulane, and how she copes with the attention from one dangerously attractive asshole named Jude. As well as following Keeley as she tries to find the ability to let go of her past, or at least, move on from it.

There was the odd moment where I felt that Keeley's decisions were out of character (like getting into Jude's car) but she has this strength that I really admired. Even when her world felt like it was being torn apart at the seams she picked herself up, brushed herself down and kept moving forward. She never gave up!

Keeley's back story is woven into the book in singular threads, with each chapter giving you more information into her horrific past. More than once I wanted to jump into the book and steal her away from her monstrous parents. I have a real soft spot for this girl!

Now... Jude Villars. Where to start? I mean, there were times when I want to punch that guy in the face and then there were times when I was like, damn he's sexy! In my opinion Keeley's obsession with Jude is completely understandable, he's intoxicating! He has a kind of dirty Christian Grey feel too him, although Mr Grey would never have called Anna 'sugar'. I really didn't like that nickname...

One thing I did notice throughout this book is that almost every male character was built up of fatal flaws. Other than Keeley's adoptive father, they're all kind of dicks. Even the nice ones. Which is a complete 180 from most NA/YA books I read.

Overall, I really liked this book! I would have liked a bit more information about her father though. I would have liked to have known more about what happened in California. If anything I would just have liked more! More Jude. More Keeley. More Janey. More Addie... just, more.

Rose says

Initial reaction: "Blue Notes" actually surprised me in a few ways for the strength of the narrative, but I'll admit that it fell into a number of clichés and the pacing felt uneven through certain turns of the work. But I have to say that the overarching story did draw me in and felt realistic for the genre, probably even more than the narratives it cited in comparison to. I'll explain more in the full review.

Full review:

Yeah, color me surprised, because I don't often rate New Adult books above 2.5 stars often, but this read clicked more with me than I was expecting it to for the subject matter.

I'm going to start this review by naming the caveats right off the bat, because I think these made it difficult in the overarching read for me to rate this higher. This book, for the New Adult genre, is quite formulaic and it never really sheds its stereotypical coats. You have a virgin heroine with a tragic past who instalusts over a bad boy billionaire hero who seems to be rude and self-absorbed. There is some slut shaming, some bravado on the part of the hero that makes him a jerk, and times when the narrative pacing is far more slow than it should've been.

However, I really liked the environment and character insight/motivations established by this book. Those two aspects are things I'm really big on when it comes to contemporary college focused fiction. It felt quite

realistic and I was able to follow the tough subject matter in this book far more easily (and actually believe it!) than many other reads in this respective genre. I feel it's a bit of a false comparison when the blurb depicts this as being similar to Jamie McGuire and S.C. Stephens. Having read both of the authors aforementioned - the comparison is false because "Blue Notes" lacks the constant melodrama and silly character actions/reaction being flung at you every which way but loose in McGuire and Stephens' narratives. Lofty's narrative really isn't like that at all, and I was glad to see that it wasn't. It's more realistic and grounded for the situations it sets forward (though I would say there are some points where I think taking out the obvious cliches and improving the pacing could've helped it be much stronger than what it comes across).

Keeley is a junior in college with an identity she's trying to forge after a childhood with rough considerations. Her father killed her mother, she had to testify at her father's trial at 15, ended up with a foster family who adopted her permanently, with a new identity in tow. She seeks to move on with her life from that. Attending college at Tulane in New Orleans, she engages with her music and mentors another younger student in the process.

But in the meantime, she happens to meet the mysterious Jude - a guy who radiates sexual tension with her at almost every encounter that they have. He's a jerk from point one, probably not so much in their first meeting as much as their second (he rudely makes another couple move from their seats during a performance). But Keeley can't stop lusting after this dude. He's not completely over the top or unrealistic for reaction though, which is probably why I tolerated him far more than some other NA heroes (unfortunately, I couldn't really see myself swooning over Jude's character, for reasons I'll get into in a minute.)

Part of me thought this was very annoying at how *long* Keeley seemed to lust after him without really knowing who he was. And while there may be some relationships that start with an intense physical attraction/gravitational pull to a respective admirer, I had a hard time for how long this was focused upon until the narrative got to a point where it started revealing some of Jude's backstory and associations. It was too drawn out and could've been pared down a little quicker to establish the grounding of the characters more, not to mention really help understand the attraction between the characters for more than just the physical.

Turns out that not only is Jude from a wealthy family, but he's also an orphan who takes care of his little sister and had to take over his family company at a young age after graduating from business school.

There is an age gap between hero and heroine (Keeley's 21, while Jude's 26, his younger sister is 18). The two had some very nice moments of exploring their intimacy with each other, though it does play into some stereotypes associated with virginity. But at least the two seem to talk to each other and their conflicts are palpable. There are multiple conflicts within the novel occurring in the interludes, and I have to admit that Lofty did a nice job with providing character insight into each of these measures. I was even convinced by Keeley's uneasiness to reveal her respective past and how that provided some conflict points within the novel, though there was still a part of me that thought the pacing could've been improved to delve into these even more, rather than spending so much time in Keeley's eye to her attractions. (In other words, I'm fine with the narrative highlighting what draws her to the guys in here in rationale, but it should've taken way less time in the overarching narrative).

I did like this work more as it went on and as the character relationships and interactions built upon themselves. Keeley's foster parents were cool and I liked that the narrative called out specific incidents that seemed like B.S. for the treatment of the MC. The college environment and interactions were authentic to me on the whole and well done for Keeley's experience, as well as how she eventually steps up to the plate to

deal with parts of her past and present. So taking it into consideration on the whole, I liked the novel, but I do wish that it'd not fallen so heavily in reliance on its cliches and improved its respective pacing. I think those who liked Leah Raeder's "Unteachable" would probably find something to like in this, give or take its caveats.

Overall score: 2.5/5 stars

Note: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley, from the publisher Gallery Books.

Booknut says

In the place of a review, I just wanted to share a truly beautiful quote from *Blue Notes* instead:

'What is a relationship if not questions?

They're the blue notes that hover between yes and no, maybe and definitely, the present and the future. So many doubts. It took missing Jude so badly and facing the man who'd warped my life to realise I possess the power to answer those questions. I possess the power to shape my own life, and to inflict hurt on others. That's pretty hard to admit.

*I've said I'm sorry to the people I love. I give them another apology, this time using the instrument that was once my only voice. Now the piano is **part** of my voice. It's part of me too, but it's not all I am or all I have to offer.*

The last note fades into silence.

(...) I've done enough apologising. It's time to start living an laughing again.'

Anna Banana says

2.5 stars

It was okay. I disliked pretty much everything. The only thing this book had going for it was the sexual tension. Review to come.

Glass says

DNF, 25%

I expected so much more from this book. Story doesn't make any sense, characters are annoying, writing is confusing... I don't like it at all. Also, it doesn't have anything in common with Thoughtless series and Kellan Kyle. That part should be deleted from book description - it's misleading.

