Twitter Thread by Candle Himbo (derogatory) ■■■■



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@Legoshoes



So I finished reading The Velvet Rage today(I think it was Owen Jones who first put it on my radar) and it's been on my wishlist for a while, I had some extra cash thanks to some stocks I'd invested in so I decided to treat myself.
I have some thoughts™ (thread)

First off, the beginning chapters of this book are very good. They describe an experience growing up gay that I as a self identified queer man can vibe with. Even in a supportive household queer kids learn all too quickly what is and isn't acceptable parts of themselves to show

It stresses the book is writing very clearly about the gay male experience and acknowledges that the broad strokes it paints with could apply to lesbians too but are expressed in different ways. No acknowledgement is made however in highlighting the exp of non cis, non white gays

Topping that off, the book feels horribly upper middle class; talk of clients from executive backgrounds being ashamed of who they are. That may not be the experience of every gay. Theres also an assumption that most gays come from a home with a caring mother and distant father

It takes a certain view on non-monogamy and promiscuity, framing it as a symptom of trying to overcompensate for a lack of validation in teen years and while that's certainly probably the case for some, it doesn't frame anything other than monogamy as intrinsically rewarding.

Like the "bitter queens hanging on to the bar, pining for their lost youth and beauty whilst desperately trying to hook up with another 20 year old twink just to feel something" certainly do exist. It doesn't mean everyone who has lots of sex is one of them

The book was first published, far as I can tell, in 2006 so we don't get much discussion in the way the modern LGBTQ+ movement has affected overall attitudes. And again this is a very white, very affluent, middle class view on gayness.

I wonder too what would be said of social media had this book come out today. Since a lot of what is said about seeking extrinsic validation could apply to Instagram instead of just to people hosting lavish parties or selling art for tens of thousands of dollars.

No effort is made to understand how a working class gay with very little disposable income or social capital would have to cope with what's described in the opening chapters around the shame of growing up different to most of ones peers.

I see a chapter that starts like this and my eyes glaze over because nothing here is anything I, a working class, poor, queer millennial, can relate to in any way shape or form

That said, the opening chapters are definitely the strongest part of the book. Pinning how I'm sure a lot of queer people, not just gay cis men, will have come to understand the world and learned to cope by behaving certain ways or masking.

The final chapters, however, are mindfulness exercises I'm sure a lot of people would benefit from. Not terrible but learning that the author is now a life coach makes perfect sense to me. He's also a PhD psychologist so, like, I don't doubt this man's credentials

Overall it was a decent read. I feel this is more a book for a straight audience looking to understand the gay experience a little better, however it paints with both broad strokes about gay culture in general whilst only ever being a snapshot of a very particular group of gays

This was more of a self help book than I was looking for, I think. Again, not a bad book; the first third really resonated with me. It lost me near the end though.