Clarion Review

General

Just Keep It Moving
J Rain
CreateSpace
978-1-4819-0227-4
Three Stars (out of Five)

This no-holds-barred debut novel overflows with lessons on self-empowerment for women.

J Rain's debut novel, *Just Keep It Moving*, focuses on a protagonist named China and her group of friends and family members as they deal with romance, heartbreak, and the definition of friendship. The women in this novel do not hold back on their thoughts about men, sex, or life.

The drama begins on the very first page when China's best friend, Dee, calls because she found a condom in her boyfriend's truck. In many ways, China is the Oprah of her circle. She is the one people turn to in times of need or when they just need honest advice.

But China is not untouchable—she discovers that her beloved has a secret, too. Instead of wallowing, she focuses on her friends, on dating, and on playful revenge. The women refuse to be cheated on, and the novel is full of lessons on self-empowerment. Despite the many relationship problems that pop up, sisterhood is always stressed.

The women in *Just Keep It Moving* have one another's backs. When China suffers disappointment, her friends and family make sure to get her out partying. Discussions about sex, love, and life are no holds barred, and Rain's prose style is raw and humorous. For example, the author writes about how China's cousin Mel "was like a dog catcher—waiting to catch a cat with his bait." Even older characters are open about their sexual needs. Conservative readers may feel shocked by explicit language.

Rain's novel moves very quickly, and many scenes are not fully fleshed out. For example, chapter ten is only six pages long and covers too much ground: the aftermath of a crazy night out with the girls, a tense phone conversation with an estranged friend, and a date and long conversation with a love interest. Chapters with too much summary mean that

important details are left out. For example, the reader does not get to witness a conversation between China and her neighbor Tony. Instead, Rain summarizes by saying that they “talked about family, friends, and finances.” More description about setting and even the characters’ appearances could be pulled into the novel.

The strong sense of sisterhood here is inspiring in a world where women are often taught to gossip about and compete against one another. No matter the heartbreak these women experience, J Rain shows how they “just keep it moving.”

Lisa Bower