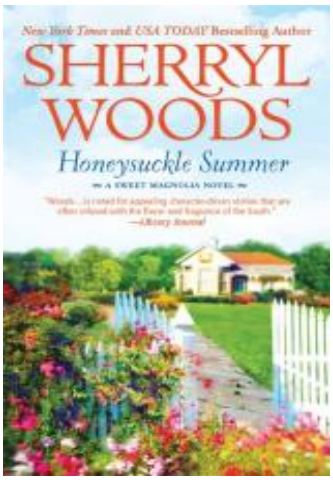
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Honeysuckle Summer

by Sherryl Woods



About the Book

Her devastating marriage behind her, Raylene Hammond finds solace and comfort with her best friends, the Sweet Magnolias. Then she meets sheriff?s deputy Carter Rollins. Carter understands why Raylene is trapped inside. But with two kid sisters to raise, just how much time can he devote to this woman who's stolen his heart? Raylene knows Carter is a man worth loving, but will she ever be strong enough to accept what he?s offering?

Discussion Guide

1. Raylene has been severely traumatized by domestic violence and willingly admits that she waited too long to leave her husband. Have you ever known anyone in an abusive situation? How did she, or he, handle it? If it was a friend or family member, did you encourage that person to seek help or offer a safe haven? Were you too quick to judge her or him for not getting out, or did you understand how difficult it might be?

2. What resources are available in your community for victims of domestic violence?

3. What did you think of the refusal by Raylene?s mother to acknowledge the abuse? Have you known family members who turned a blind eye to domestic violence? What were their reasons?

4. Raylene?s reaction to what she experienced is to hide from the world now that she?d found a safe haven in Sarah?s home. Have you ever known anyone who simply hunkers down and hides from the world after any kind of bad news or a trauma? Did it reach the level of agoraphobia, a diagnosed and paralyzing fear of leaving the house?

5. Though Sarah and Annie both encourage Raylene to seek help, neither of them insists on it. Do you think they?re being supportive or are they enabling what has become self-destructive behavior?

6. When Carter meets Raylene under less-than-ideal circumstances, he is quick to judge her. As he learns her story, he realizes that things are not always as they seem. Have you ever made a judgment of someone?s actions that you?ve come to regret? What were the circumstances?

7. As a police officer, Carter is trained to want to help people. How do you think this tendency plays into his attraction to Raylene? Have you ever known anyone with a knight-in-shining-armor complex who seeks out damsels in distress?

8. Carrie?s eating disorder is, in part, a reaction to the deaths of her parents. Have you ever suffered a great personal loss? How did you handle it? Did food play a role, either as a solace --- by eating too much --- or did you not eat at all? Was this temporary, or did it become a dangerous pattern?

9. When Raylene throws Walter and Rory Sue together, she?s well aware that he?s a traditional kind of guy and Rory Sue?s a flirtatious rebel. It?s an immediate case of opposites attracting. Do you think opposite personalities do well together? Or does the attraction burn out? What have your own experiences been like?

10. Throughout this book and the entire *Sweet Magnolias* series, friendships have been at the core of the stories. Do you have strong ties to your friends? Are they people you?ve known since childhood? Since college? From the time you settled in the community? Where you now live, or wher your children started school? How did the bonds form? Have they ever been tested? How did that turn out?

Author Bio

Sherryl Woods is the bestselling author of more than 100 mystery and romance books. With a degree in journalism from Ohio State University, Sherryl began her career as a writer by working in the newspaper business. The theme of enduring friendships and families is always central to Sherryl's books, including her latest *Chesapeake Shores* series ? THE INN AT EAGLE POINT, FLOWERS ON MAIN and HARBOR LIGHTS.

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