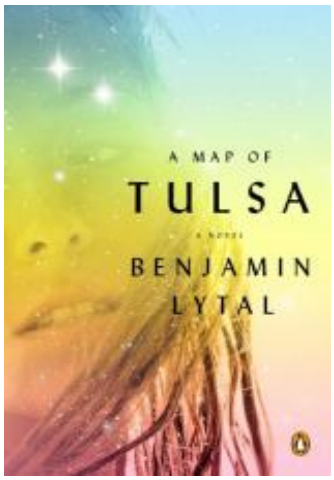
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A Map of Tulsa

by Benjamin Lytal



About the Book

The first days of summer: Jim Praley is home from college, ready to unlock Tulsa's secrets. He drives the highways. He forces himself to get out of his car and walk into a bar. He's invited to a party. And there he meets Adrienne Booker; Adrienne rules Tulsa, in her way. A high-school dropout with a penthouse apartment, she takes a curious interest in Jim. Through her eyes, he will rediscover his hometown: its wasted sprawl, the beauty of its late nights and, at the city's center, the unsleeping light of its skyscrapers.

In the tradition of Michael Chabon's THE MYSTERIES OF PITTSBURGH, A MAP OF TULSA is elegiac, graceful, and as much a story about young love as it is a love letter to a classic American city.

Discussion Guide

1. Describe Jim in three words. What does Adrienne find most attractive in him? Do you believe that Adrienne loves Jim as much as he loves her?

2. Is there a city or town that is as meaningful to you as Tulsa is to Jim?

3. Why does Jim consider moving back to Tulsa after Adrienne?s accident? Why does he change his mind?

4. Reread the second to last paragraph of the novel. Why does Jim feel that the years he and Adrienne spent apart ?had the most potential? (p.256)?

5. Adrienne says, ?You could find a better girl than me, Jim . . . I know myself. I?m *old*? (p.46). Explain what she means. Is this the comment of a world-weary soul or of a young woman putting on a jaded façade?

6. Is Adrienne?s aunt Lydie a kind person? Does she have good intentions?

7. On pages 97?98, Albert offers a cynical premonition of Jim?s life after his summer with Adrienne. Do you believe he was right?

8. More than one character describes Adrienne as crazy. Is she? Why would people describe her in that way?

9. While visiting Jim in New York, Edith tells his roommate that she?s worried about Jim and that he used to be much nicer. What prompts her to say this?

10. Does Adrienne recognize Jim in the hospital?

11. Adrienne relates a childhood anecdote to Jim about setting her aunt?s garage on fire. Why does she share this story? What is she trying to convey to Jim?

12. We meet Jim after his freshman year in college and then again at age twenty-four. Think back to your own experiences at those ages. How have you changed? What have you learned about life that you didn?t know then?

Author Bio

Benjamin Lytal has written for the *Wall Street Journal*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Bookforum*, the *Believer*, *McSweeney?s*, *Fence*, the *Daily Beast*, and the *Nation*. For four years he wrote the *New York Sun's* "Recent Fiction" column. Originally from Tulsa, Lytal currently lives in Chicago.

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Publication Date: March 26, 2013
Genres: Fiction, Romance
Paperback: 272 pages
Publisher: Penguin Books
ISBN-10: 0142422592
ISBN-13: 9780142422595