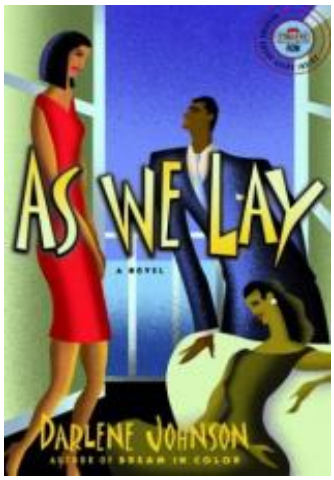
As We Lay: A Novel

by Darlene Johnson



About the Book

Indianapolis architect Breck Lawson has just received the call of her career: Eric Warren, a prominent property manager, has said that he is considering her to design a multicultural center in Boston. A contract with his firm would immediately put Breck in the who's who of the architectural world. It's just the break she's been waiting for. But it soon seems as though Eric Warren offers more than just a lucky business deal.

From the moment they first speak on the phone, Breck and Eric feel a connection. Breck learns all about Eric's devotion to his wife and son, as well as to his community. And she is able to open up to him about her personal life and romantic problems in a way she would normally never dare to in her competitive, male-dominated professional world. A friendship develops, and eventually turns into something deeper. Believing that her independence is intact, Breck is content to remain "the other woman," but she still moves to Boston to be closer to Eric. There they form a parallel family, and Breck secretly has his child.

A tragic accident abruptly cuts Breck off from Eric, and she soon learns that the survival of his first child, Darius, and the well-being of Eric's wife, Gaby, depend entirely on her?and her willingness to reveal the secrets of the life she shares with him. But the truth could destroy her reputation, her business, and the lives of the two families. Breck must decide if she has what it takes to put it all on the line.

Discussion Guide

1. Breck never really pushes Eric to leave his wife. Why? Is there a reason she is willing to settle for a part time relationship? Does this change over time?

2. Eric maintains that his relationships with his wife and with Breck are not incompatible. Is this true? Is it possible for a man to love two women equally? Is it possible to maintain two families?

3. From the start, Eric and Breck's relationship is unconventional. Despite this, they manage to create a life together. Although not traditional, are Breck, Eric and Jordan truly a family?

4. The love Breck and Eric have together is something neither really expected; had the two met earlier in life perhaps things could have been different. Is Breck wrong for choosing to accept her arrangement with Eric or is she getting the best out a situation where the only alternative is giving each other up?

5. Eric is torn between a life in Mansfield and a life in cosmopolitan Boston. Why can't he decide what he wants out of life? Can he really leave his wife? Had he not died, would they have eventually parted?

6. Breck is focused on her work, often to the detriment of her relationships. How much does her ambition have to do with her choices in life? What are the differences between the men in her life, Quentin, Eric and Brian?

7. Breck doesn't like men telling her what to do, she dumps Quentin in part because he infringes on her independence. What price does she pay for her independence? Does she keep her independence in her relationship with Eric?

8. Breck immerses herself in Eric's life, she not only moves to Boston, she lives and works in Mansfield, his hometown. Is this her way of making up for the temporary nature of their relationship?

9. What is the cost of the affair on the couple's friends and family? What cost will their son bear as he grows older?

10. Chi and Gena also have an unconventional relationship, how is theirs different than Eric and Breck's?

11. Brian is the kind of man that Breck could love. Is his fate just bad timing?

Author Bio

Darlene Johnson lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her two sons and her nephew. In addition to writing, she works full-time in information technology.

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