



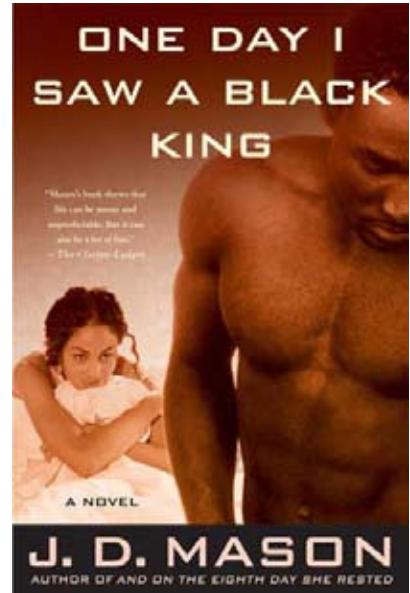
Reading Group Gold

One Day I Saw a Black King

by J.D. Mason

Introduction to *One Day I Saw a Black King*

“He stared at himself in the mirror, wondering how he’d managed to lose track of time. Complacency had managed to set in again. . . A decent job, warm home, food on the table, and a body to curl up next to at night; he’d made the mistake of getting comfortable. Comfort fooled him into thinking it was all good when it wasn’t. Damn nightmares had a way of reminding him of that.”



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Ever since he was fifteen, John King has been on the run from the ghosts of his past, always drifting, never settling down in one place or with one woman, though more than one has certainly made the offer of forever-after. But every time his memories of life back in Texas start to haunt him too deeply into the night, John realizes that it’s time to move on. That is, until he rolls into Denver, Colorado, grooving to Marvin Gaye’s “Let’s Get It on,” and meets Connie Rodgers, a woman who grew up on the mean streets and has the pain and the battle scars to prove it. And yet, she inspires him to think “If indeed there were a home for the perfect kiss, it would be on her lips.” John is reluctant to admit that here is a woman who just may understand his very soul, even if she does have some baggage of her own. But both must face their pasts if they ever hope to be free to live and love.

Filled with completely unforgettable characters, *One Day I Saw a Black King* is a stunningly powerful story that explores the power of the past over the present, the search for love and belonging and the healing gift of an extraordinary love.

Reading Group Guide Questions

1. John and Connie share similar backgrounds stemming from their childhoods. Both grew up in homes where they were denied love and both were driven into the streets because of this. Do you feel either of them can move beyond their histories, to form lasting relationships and trust with each other? With anyone?
2. On the subject of sexually transmitted diseases, the author feels that the African American community still seems reluctant to openly discuss or deal with these issues. Do you feel this is the case? Why or why not? And if you agree, why do you feel our community (generally speaking) shares this attitude? What can we, as a society, do to change our way of thinking?



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3. Do you feel Connie's sister; Reesy is justified in her reaction when Connie shows interest in getting custody of Jade? And do you feel Connie's reasons for wanting custody are valid?
4. John is constantly haunted by nightmarish images of women alternating between his mother and his grandmother. What do you feel is the driving force behind John's nightmares—his conscious, or a higher, spiritual calling that he needed to answer to?
5. Of the events that occurred after John returned to Bueller (resolving his issues with both Agnes and meeting his father for the first time), which, do you feel had the most impact on him? What kinds of changes in him/his life, do you think either of these occurrences will have in the future?
6. For years, Pauline's insecurities were prevailing enough for her to allow her husband to get away with molesting foster children placed in their care. Do you think Connie's encounter with Pauline was the confrontation she needed to close the book on that portion of her life?

Author Biography

J.D. Mason is the author of *And on the Eighth Day She Rested*. She lives in Denver, Colorado with her two children.