



## **The Atlas of Reds and Blues**

*Devi S. Laskar*

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# **The Atlas of Reds and Blues**

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## **The Atlas of Reds and Blues** Devi S. Laskar

An arresting debut novel which bears witness to American racism and abuse of power, tracing one woman's shift from acquiescence to resistance.

When an unnamed narrator moves her family from the city of Atlanta to its wealthy suburbs, she discovers that neither the times nor the people have changed since her childhood in a small southern town. Despite the intervening decades, the woman, known only as The Mother, is met with the same questions: Where are you from? No, where are you really from? The American-born daughter of Bengali immigrant parents, her truthful answer, here, is never enough. She finds herself navigating a climate of lingering racism with three daughters in tow and a husband who spends more time in business class than at home.

The Mother's simmering anger breaks through one morning, when, during a baseless and prejudice-driven police raid on her house, she finally refuses to be calm, complacent, polite—and is ultimately shot. As she lies bleeding on her driveway, The Mother struggles to make sense of her past and decipher her present—how did she end up here?

Devi S. Laskar has written a brilliant debut novel that grapples with the complexities of the second-generation American experience, what it means to be a woman of color in the workplace, a sister, a wife, a mother to daughters in today's America. Drawing inspiration from the author's own terrifying experience of a raid on her home, *The Atlas of Reds and Blues* explores, in exquisite, lyrical prose, an alternate reality that might have been.

## **The Atlas of Reds and Blues Details**

Date : Expected publication: February 5th 2019 by Counterpoint

ISBN : 9781640091535

Author : Devi S. Laskar

Format : Hardcover 224 pages

Genre : Fiction, Adult Fiction, Race

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## From Reader Review The Atlas of Reds and Blues for online ebook

### **alex says**

r.o. kwon wrote about this book in electric lit:

Kiese Laymon says about The Atlas of Reds and Blues that he's "never read a novel that does nearly as much in so few pages," and that the book is "as narratively beautiful as it is brutal." This debut is about a woman, the American-born daughter of Bengali immigrants, who has been shot by the police and lies bleeding in her driveway.

and it immediately struck me so poignantly that i almost cried. i can't wait to read it.

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### **Jennifer Joukhadar says**

In THE ATLAS OF REDS AND BLUES, Devi S. Laskar explores the silences and the righteous anger of women of color in the face of white supremacy with deft tenderness and clean, shimmering prose. I recognized so much of my own experiences with white supremacy in the ways that the character of Mother navigates her silences in order to maintain safety and sanity under the constant drone of microaggressions as well as violent racism and misogyny--until silence and safety are no longer possible for her, and she is moved to a final act that changes her own (and the reader's) perception of everything that came before it.

This entire book is poetry, and Laskar, an accomplished poet, doesn't disappoint with the lyrical, luminous tone of this brilliantly crafted novel. ATLAS is a must read.

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### **Hereibe says**

I gave it 3 starts. the writing style is very poetic so that took a little bit of time to get used to. The story was good, talked about the racism that people still face in American, nothing ground breaking (and if it is then people need to open their eyes). I needed more details regarding to story to give it more stars....I had a lot of questions when I was done reading this

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### **Martine Watson says**

Where to begin? I was so fortunate to receive an advance copy of this book, and I have to say it's an absolutely stunning debut. This thoughtful, incisive prose, which often leans toward poetry, will haunt me for a long time, as will the message. But there is nothing didactic in Laskar's exploration of the many faces of racism in America today. Her book is political, but it is also deeply personal. An incredibly moving read. I really can't say enough good things about it, but just this—be sure to read it!!

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### **Anne says**

I received an advanced reader copy from Counterpoint Press via The Book Club Cookbook. While I don't usually like poetic prose, I enjoyed reading this book. The story format is unique - the main character, Mother, tells the story through memories. The timeline is nonlinear, which can be frustrating at times. However, the more I reflect on the story, the more I like it.

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The book explores racism in America from the perspective of an Indian who was born in America. The story made me reflect on the racism I have faced throughout my life, especially after September 11. I recommend this book to everyone, but especially to those who think racism doesn't exist anymore.

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### **Rose Schmitt says**

This could have been a very good book but missed on so many levels. For me, the juxtaposition of past and present was clumsy and extremely difficult to wade through. The writing was, at times, simplistic, elementary, and uninspired. There were too many one or two sentence chapters that made no sense and made the rest of the story hard to follow. I was totally confused by the sentence fragments, and the limited continuity made it difficult to follow the characters. Overall, the book is disconnected and disjointed. I also found some of the scenes totally implausible, especially in today's politically correct climate, and thought she must have been writing about the early to mid 1900s.

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### **Katy says**

Devi S. Laskar is an American poet, and this is her first novel. Written in short fragments, *The Atlas of Red and Blues* reads like poetry in many places, evocative and arresting. The main character is an American woman of Bengali descent who is only referred to as "Mother." Her attempts to raise her children in safety in the American South are met with resistance and hostility. Like any nonwhite person from the South can relate to, she is always hit with the same refrain of "where are you really from?"

Throughout the novel, Mother fights to keep her emotions in check in spite of the blatant racism she and her children encounter, and finally during a police raid on her home, she can no longer remain silent. I didn't know this when I was reading the book, but *The Atlas of Reds and Blues* is partially based on the author's own experiences of having her home raided by the police. Her writing is vivid and her observations as unfortunately relevant as ever.

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### **Kari says**

The more I reflect on this book, the more I like it. Mother and her family live in Atlanta suburbia, and even though she is an American-born woman of Indian descent, she and her three girls are bullied and made to feel set apart in their neighborhood. Mother has married Her Hero, but he away on business and traveling the world so much that he is not aware of the issues his family faces, and quite honestly, it appears that if he did

know, he still might not care.

Told in short chapters and snippets, the story jumps back and forth from present (policeman shoots Mother in her own driveway) to her past, to her children's pasts, to her hopes for her future in her own country. This would make a good bookclub discussion book.

Based on Advanced Reader Copy received from the publisher.

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