



## After David

**Catherine Texier**

Itna Press (May 12, 2024)

Softcover \$18.00 (252pp)

979-898828291-4

A divorcée empty-nester begins a consuming affair with a younger jazz musician in *After David*, Catherine Texier's novel about the potency of midlife longing.

Eve's life story can be compartmentalized into periods: her Parisian-adjacent youth with her socially defiant, unmarried mother; her New York years, in which she first indulged in free love and eighties culture before marrying David and beginning her writing career; the twenty years of sometimes tempestuous marital normalcy that followed; and the period after, where she's still somewhat stuck, desiring companionship but avoiding commitment. She's in a cycle of dating younger men—though she often cancels dates, once her initial excitement has settled into trepidation.

And then there's Jonah: sexy, half-available, and David-reminiscent with his curls, darting green eyes, and music career. Thirty-seven to Eve's sixty-two. Popping into her direct messages with regularity; popping over to her apartment with sex on the mind. Igniting her:

*I lived in a state of permanent arousal, of blissful desire, of heightened focus. Colors were brighter, sounds sharper, the sky a piercing blue. The snow glimmered.*

But Jonah is often gone as fast as he arrives. He promises Eve nothing. And in the increasingly long periods when he's absent, their affair draws her thoughts toward the past, whether she wants to dwell there or not. In as many ways that his sensuality is just what Eve wants, the magnetism of their affair, and the way it pulls her thoughts elsewhere, brings her back toward what made her and David's relationship untenable—back somewhere alarming: "I knew I was walking a dangerous edge, but how could I let that go?"

Both sexy and cerebral, *After David* is a novel in which an accomplished woman in a new life phase toys with the promise and perils of desire.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (May / June 2024)

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