

## **INTERVIEWS**

INTERVIEW: Jasmine Daya aka Leia London on her Novel, Law Girl's Bump in the Road



Jasmine Daya wrote about her own personal experience as a woman pursuing a career while she was pregnant. In today's society, sometimes motherhood is seen as a "road block" to women who want to work. Under her pen name, Leia London, Daya shares her own adventures and challenges in a realistic but lighthearted story.

Learn more about this powerhouse of a woman and what she has to say to other women who are juggling their own life and dreams.

Thank you for talking with Defective Geeks about your book, Jasmine. Can you give our readers a summary of 'Law Girl's Bump in the Road'?

Law Girl's Bump in the Road is a chicklit novel based on my life but slightly fictionalized for entertainment value. I learned that I was pregnant in my last semester of law school and the baby was due at the same time that I was supposed to start working at a law firm. After years of school, a baby at that point in my life was not part of the plan. In addition, I was dealing with cultural issues and ridiculous pregnancy advice. My background is Indian. Although I was extremely concerned, the pregnancy itself resulted in an entertaining adventure that is chronicled in the book.

Since this book started as a personal journal for you, how did you decide what to include in the book? Is there anything specific from your own personal experience that you didn't even change for the story?

The journal started off by documenting events, my feelings towards these events and my perception of how others were reacting to the news of my pregnancy. Almost everything in the novel is based on reality. The fiction was added during the editing stage when I needed to fill parts in to connect the dots. As years had elapsed since I originally wrote the journal, I could not recall exactly what happened which meant that my imagination played a role.

What was it like tackling family and cultural situations for Selena's story? Did you face your own challenges with your family while you were pregnant?

Selena's issues with family and cultural situations are based on my own. My mother was deeply disappointed that I was pregnant at that time in my life. She was extremely concerned that I would not pass the Bar exam during my pregnancy which meant that I would never be able to practice law. I assured my father that I would continue, and he believed me. My mother was more skeptical. I was already concerned about my future and my mother's obvious disappointment was painful. I attended my law school graduation pregnant and I believe that when my mother saw me walk across the stage, she was filled with pride. She realized that yes, I would accomplish my goals. Despite her attitude during my pregnancy, my mother is the most amazing grandmother to my three children.

The cultural issues arose with my Indian in-laws. There were expectations of an Indian daughter-in-law that did not coincide with my upbringing. Selena's issues are far more pronounced than mine were because some of the fictionalization occurs with the culture clashes. I recall giggling when I wrote the scene of Selena approaching her inlaws' house to share the pregnancy news, when suddenly the double doors swing open with numerous Indian relatives spilling out and Indian music blaring to celebrate the exiting news. That part was definitely exaggerated.

What do you hope people would take away from Selena's story about pregnancy while still trying to pursue her dreams?

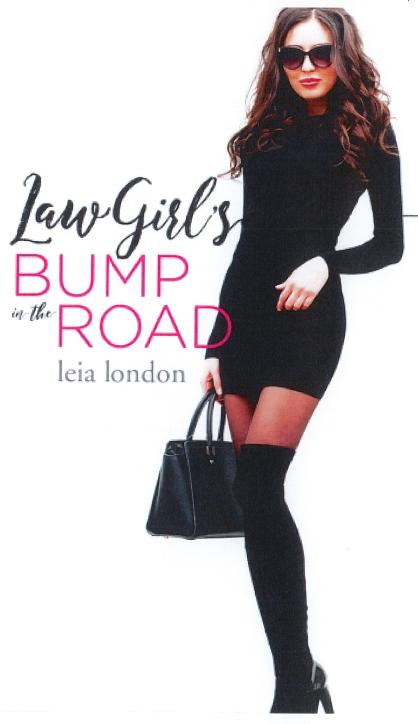
I sincerely hope that young people, in particular, young women, will realize that obstacles in life will come your way and its how you overcome those obstacles that will enable you to accomplish your goals. It's been said that change is the only constant in life. Your roadmap will need to be altered from time to time and that's okay. Alternate routes to get to the final destination may actually result in a better outcome than you could have ever predicted.

For you personally, what was the most challenging aspect of being pregnant while pursuing your career? What advice would you give people in similar situations?

Fatigue was the most challenging aspect of being pregnant in each of my three pregnancies. There was so much that I wanted to accomplish to get ready for the baby, both at home and at work. Unfortunately, I was physically and mentally exhausted during pregnancy. I was unable to cross things off my to-do list as fast as I would have liked to which resulted in immense frustration.

It's important to realize that if you are doing the best you can do, that needs to be enough for the time being. Acceptance of your abilities at that point will give you piece of mind. At the end of the day, you are bringing a new life into this world. You will experience love like you have never felt when that baby is born...and the work will still be waiting for you when you are able to get back to it.

If you could have coffee with your character, Selena, what do you think you two would talk about? What would you want to tell her,



## and what do you think she'll want to tell you?

I would hold Selena's hand and tell her "It's going to be okay." I think Selena's response would be tears streaming down her cheeks as she whispered, "Thank you." Selena is young and trying to cope with everything on her own. She does not want to disappoint and especially does not want pity. She cannot unload on anyone because she feels that these are her problems to deal with and thus she suffers internally.

Over the years, I have learned that my family, friends and coworkers are what give me the strength and guidance to pursue my passion. True friends lift you when you are down and support you when you are up. You don't need to live a life in solitude, internalizing your thoughts and feelings. There are people around you that can fuel you to do more and do better if you open up to them. It's truly incredible what you can achieve with a solid support system filled with positive energy.

Even though you are already a real life superwoman, if you could pick an out-of-this-world superpower, which would it be and why?

My superpower would most definitely be to not require sleep! I could spend hours talking to anyone that would listen about all my dreams, thoughts and desires for ambitious projects in life that I want to pursue. Unfortunately, there aren't enough hours in a day to tackle all my goals fast enough. My father continues to remind me that "Rome wasn't built in a day!"

Law Girl's Bump in the Road is available on paperback and Kindle on Amazon.com.

Check out more information at her website, www.firemanlawyers.com.

Follow Jasmine on Instagram and Twitter.

Jasmine also has a food and lifestyle blog at www.jdinthekitchen.com.