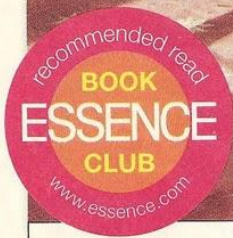
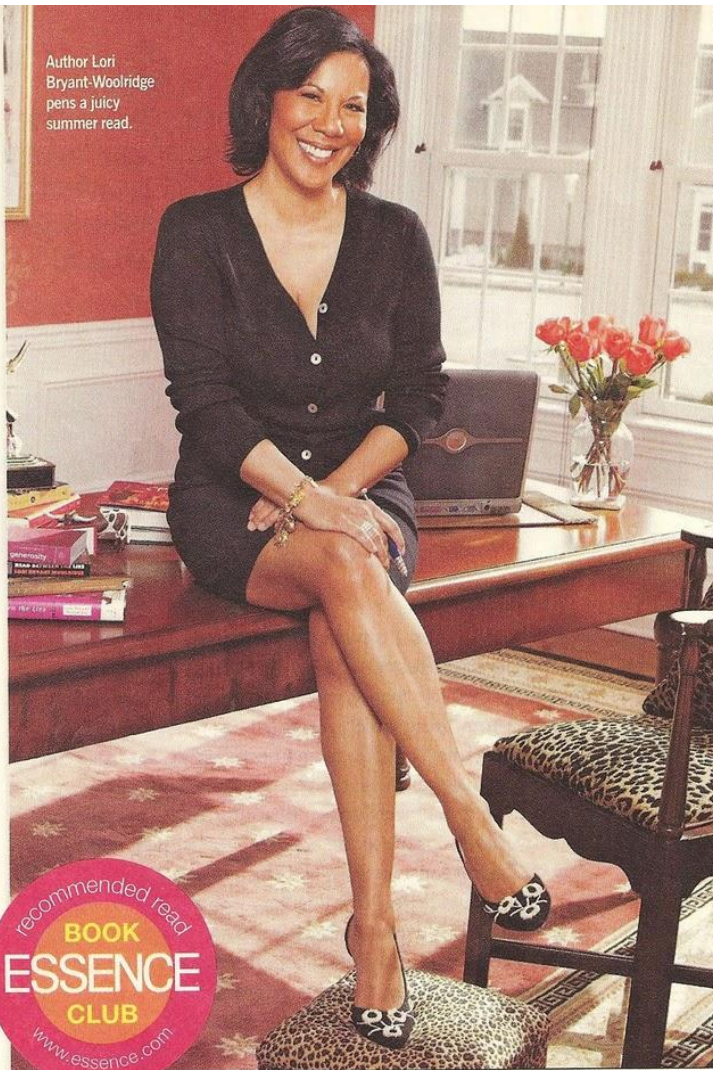


Author Lori Bryant-Woolridge pens a juicy summer read.



BRYANT-WOOLRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHY; PETER CHIN; HAIR AND MAKEUP: JACQUE SANCHEZ/MEN BARBOZA ASSOCIATES; STILLS: TIME INC. DIGITAL STUDIO.

books

Bringing Sexy Back

In *Weapons of Mass Seduction*, our eighth ESSENCE Book Club pick, the heroine drops a bombshell on the men in her life **BY PATRIK HENRY BASS**

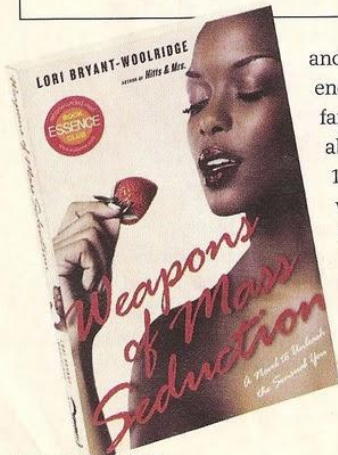
Lori Bryant-Woolridge doesn't mind being known as the sexy soccer mom who writes provocative novels. "It's important for women not to neglect our sensual selves, which is easy to do when you're taking care of everyone else's needs," she says. That's why she wrote her hot new novel, **Weapons of Mass Seduction** (Harlem Moon/Broadway Books, \$12.95).

No, the writer of exciting tales such as 2004's *Hitts & Mrs.* and *Read Between the Lies* (1999) hasn't crafted a geopolitical thriller about politicians leading us into a senseless war. *Weapons of Mass Seduction* is about a fictitious San Francisco

flirting workshop that has a profound impact on its attendees, especially heroine Pia Jamison. The intense, driven 41-year-old New York City music industry exec takes the WMS course by chance and soon after attracts two men. The first gives her the baby she's yearned for, and the other shows her the love she thought she would never find. If you enjoyed the combustible sexual tension in *Hitts*

30-SECOND BOOK EXCERPT

In this exclusive passage, reserved Pia Jamison learns a few tips to get her lover in the mood: "You lead him back to the designated area for his entrée. You invite him to recline among the pillows. He watches you pour his drink as you flirt with your eyes, and then you deliver a scorching kiss. Dinner is a slow, luxurious affair. He is no longer hungry, but his appetite is far from satiated."



and the grit and gloss in *Read Between the Lies*, you're likely to turn your ringer on mute this weekend to devour the author's new story because no one blends envelope-pushing topics with romantic fantasy quite like this best-selling storyteller. So just how does a carpooling mom know so much about flirting? "Soccer moms can still be sexy," says the 48-year-old married mother of two, ages 18 and 14. With that in mind, she has started a blog (loribryantwoolridge.com) that she hopes will become a space for her readers to talk candidly about sex in the city—and the 'burbs—and how to keep one's sensual self alive.

Reaching out to her readers is nothing new for this amiable author; it's one of the reasons so many of her standing-room-only book club signings have such a comfy, welcoming feel to them. "I love connecting with my readers," says Bryant-Woolridge, who just completed her next novel, *Mother and Other Strangers*. "I enjoy talking with women and helping them feel empowered. My mission is to have people feel comfortable in their own truth."

Join the ESSENCE Book Club! Visit essence.com for details.