

Laurel's Diary

by Gina DiMarco

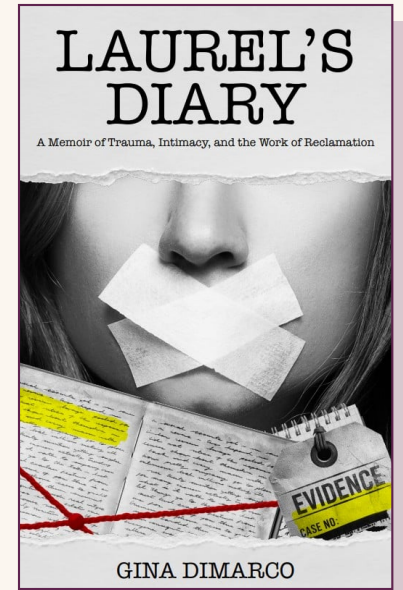
BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

About the Book

This memoir explores the psychological, relational, and emotional aftermath of sexual violence through diary entries, correspondence, and narrative reflection. Rather than presenting a linear recovery arc, the book documents healing as it unfolds — uneven, complex, and deeply human.

Content Note

This book contains descriptions of sexual assault, trauma responses, intimacy challenges, and mental health themes. Readers may choose to pace themselves and step away when needed.



Discussion Questions

- 01 The memoir preserves fragmentation rather than imposing a tidy narrative. How did the structure affect your reading experience?
- 02 Laurel often prioritizes logic over emotion. Where did you see that tension most clearly?
- 03 How does the relationship with Chris complicate traditional recovery narratives?
- 04 What moments felt like turning points — even small ones?
- 05 The book explores trust in multiple forms (self, partner, institutions). Which felt most fragile?
- 06 How does the diary format change how you interpret vulnerability?
- 07 What does the memoir suggest about the difference between endurance and strength?
- 08 Where did you see progress that the narrator herself struggled to recognize?
- 09 How does the book portray the impact of trauma on identity as a parent? A lover? A friend?
- 10 What conversations did this book open for you personally?

Facilitator Tips

- Begin with a content check-in
- Allow space for silence
- Avoid pressure to disclose personal experiences
- Focus on the text when discussion becomes emotionally heavy
- Close with grounding — what felt hopeful, meaningful, or clarifying?

Optional Activities

- Share a passage that stayed with you
- Discuss how the book challenged assumptions about recovery
- Write a short reflection about a moment of unexpected resilience
- Look into and discuss local resources for assault and recovery

Themes to Explore

- Nonlinear healing
- Intimacy after trauma
- Control vs uncertainty
- Shame and self-perception
- The role of witnesses in recovery
- Language as a survival tool

Further Conversation

- How should memoirs about trauma balance honesty and reader care?
- What responsibilities do partners or communities have in recovery?
- How does documentation (journals, messages) shape memory?
- Who defines victimhood, survivorship, or healing? Who supports these definitions? Who benefits or is harmed by them?

Continue the conversation

Invite Gina DiMarco to your book club, campus, or community for an author Q&A, keynote, or presentation exploring the themes of Laurel's Diary.

Learn more or inquire: www.gina-dimarco.com