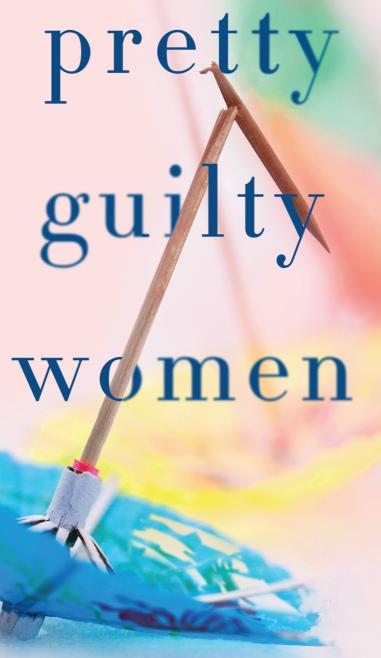
"Four college friends reunite, each with baggage old and new. Sparkling with wine, humor, and a drop of blood. A must-read!"

-SUSAN CRAWFORD, bestselling author of The Pocket Wife and The Other Widow



GINA LAMANNA
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

reading group guide

- 1. Lulu, Ginger, Kate, and Emily all have their different situations and secrets. Which woman did you enjoy reading the most? Who do you think you're the most like? Why?
- 2. What do the four women—Lulu, Ginger, Kate, and Emily—all have in common? What are some of their core differences?
- 3. Do you think Ginger handles the situation with Elsie and the condoms well? If you were in her shoes, what would you have done differently? Why do you think Elsie reacts the way she does?
- 4. Lulu begins to wonder if her marriage to Pierce is about to fall apart, so she calls on her ex-husband Anderson to ask why her relationships fail. Imagine being in Lulu's situation. Would you ever call an ex for this? Have you remained close to an ex before? What was that relationship like?
- 5. Describe the events that led to Ginger and Emily's feud. Do you think Ginger's reaction to seeing Emily after all these years was warranted? If you were Emily, how would you have responded in that situation?
- 6. What are some of the triggers Emily faces at the resort? Why does she begin to break down?

- 7. Why does Kate feel the need to help Sydney? What are some of the parallels between the two? What about between Emily and Sydney?
- 8. Describe the relationship each woman has with children and parenthood. How is that theme woven throughout the story?
- 9. Why do you think Elsie is able to open up to Kate? Did you ever have an adult or older confidant when you were that age?
- 10. How do all the women end up on the patio the night of the rehearsal dinner? Why do you think they all claim to be guilty? Who is actually guilty?
- 11. What happens to the women after the wedding ends? Why do you think Kate tracks down Sydney one last time? If you were Kate, would you believe Sydney's story?

a conversation with the author

What inspired you to write Pretty Guilty Women?

Pretty Guilty Women started with one big question: Why would four very different women all confess to the same crime? The idea simmered in the back of my mind for months as I wondered what sort of women might be involved in such a bizarre scenario. How did they meet? What brought them together? Who was truly guilty? Eventually, I put pen to paper and wrote Pretty Guilty Women in search of the answers.

Which of the four—Lulu, Ginger, Kate, and Emily—did you enjoy writing the most? Which was most challenging?

For me, each character was both a joy and a challenge to write. I'm positive there are tiny parts of myself in each of the women—some more than others. Lulu was fun to write because she has such charisma. I love that she knows exactly who she is, and I admire the way she has aged with grace and confidence and a good bit of humor!

At times, Emily was challenging to write because her story is so raw. She grapples with huge, dark issues, and while I haven't experienced everything she's gone through personally, I truly tried to put myself in her shoes and imagine what she was experiencing. She believes she is weak and vulnerable, but despite her flaws, there is a strength inside of her that she is struggling to recover. I hated that she'd been through such hardships, but I was hopeful she would find the light at the end of the tunnel.

How did you map out all the twists and turns that happen throughout the story?

Lots and lots of editing!

While the bit about editing is true, I also focused on the four women as individuals first. I spent a lot of time thinking about who they were—their secrets, desires, and dirty little truths. Then I wove each story together until all four narratives overlapped as one.

Finally, I worked with my brilliant team of editors and agents to truly dig deep into the women's relationships, teasing out their individual motivations and exploring their strengths and weaknesses.

What does your writing process look like?

There's rarely a "regular" day for me when it comes to writing. My process morphs and changes all the time—some days I stay up late, working until four o'clock in the morning. Other times, I'm at my computer by 6:00 a.m. As for my actual writing process, I prefer to plot and brainstorm by hand, so when I'm starting a book, I will go to a coffee shop, put on some headphones, and write in a notebook for hours. When I get stuck on a scene, I take a long walk outside to clear my head. I don't write every day, but once I begin a project, I try to work on it until I reach *The End*!

If you had one piece of advice for prospective suspense writers, what would it be?

Write! Sitting down and writing is the absolute best way to practice the craft (in addition to reading a wide variety of books). I have always wanted to write suspense, and it took me more than thirty books before I felt confident enough to pen *Pretty Guilty Women*. My college degree is in mathematics and actuarial science, and I have no formal training in writing; however, I have always had a deep love of reading and a passion for telling stories. In my early twenties, I figured out that writing novels was my dream career. It

took many years to make that dream a reality, but it has all been worth it a million times over.

The bond between mother and child is a central theme throughout the story. Are you a mother yourself?

I am! Or, I will be by the time *Pretty Guilty Women* hits bookshelves. At the moment, Baby LaManna is due any day, and my husband and I are thrilled to be welcoming a new member into our family. While I don't have as much experience (yet) in mother-hood as Ginger, I'm looking forward to the journey!

At the same time, I'm very close with my own parents, which made the mother/daughter dynamic between Elsie and Ginger especially fun to explore. Teenage years can be a roller coaster, but if you can make it out the other side, that bond can be something very special.

Why did you decide to set a fast-paced suspense story at a beautiful wedding resort?

In a way, I think the beautiful wedding resort fits the theme of *Pretty Guilty Women* perfectly. The idea that things aren't always what they seem is prevalent throughout the story. Kate in particular spends a significant amount of time wondering if this glitzy, glamorous wedding is really going to make Whitney and Arthur's marriage last. Are looks everything they're cracked up to be? Sometimes, it seems, the most beautiful people and the most beautiful places house the darkest secrets.

If you had to be best friends with one of the women in the novel, which would you choose, and why?

Lulu! She's got wisdom to spare (along with ex-husbands), and I'd love to spend a day at her place in South Carolina sipping sweet tea and hearing her stories. She's lived a most unique life, and I would love to be able to pick up the phone and call her for advice.

When you're not writing, what can you often be found doing?

If it's summer, you will definitely find me outside! My family lives in Minnesota, so we try to take advantage of every day that's above freezing. I love to garden and go for long walks in the sun, head to my parents' house for a barbecue, or hit the lakes on a windsurfer or a kayak. I'm also a coffee fanatic and adore sampling local diners and coffee shops with my husband. This summer, we've got a baby arriving, so I'll be adding a stroller to my walks outside!

Are you working on anything new?

I'm always working on something new! I have another suspense book in progress. More news to come on this soon. It is in the same vein as *Pretty Guilty Women* and tackles complicated themes, along with a hefty dose of suspense. Taking place within the darker realms of Hollywood, this project explores the concept of reaching for the stars—and how sometimes our greatest dreams can be our greatest downfall.

To see more of my books, please visit ginalamanna.com, where you can find a complete reading guide. Register for my newsletter to stay up-to-date on new releases, special sales, and other big announcements. You can also connect with me on Facebook or Instagram, where I post frequently and love to chat with readers!