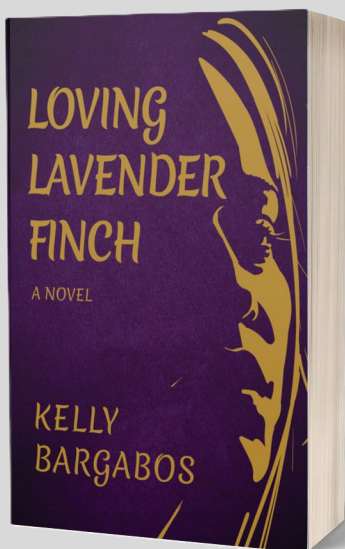


The Official
Book Club
Guide
for

LOVING LAVENDER FINCH

A Novel By Kelly Bargabos



Includes signature
cocktails,
conversation
starters, trivia, and a
playlist!

Secrets Shame Love



kbargabos



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KELLY BARGABOS won a Nautilus book award and was a finalist in the National Indie Excellence Awards for her memoir, *Chasing the Merry-Go-Round: Holding on to Hope & Home When the World Moves Too Fast*. She is also the author of *Here to Lead: Mastering the Art of Leadership in Order to Execute Strategy, Advance Change, and Drive Results*. She lives in Syracuse, New York with her husband, Craig Anderson. Find out more at kellybargabos.com.

It isn't the trauma that almost ruins Lavender,
it is the shame she swallows when she
keeps it a secret that threatens to choke
the life out of her.



LAVENDER FINCH NEVER THOUGHT OF HERSELF AS A LIAR. To her former fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Gordon, she's the reliable babysitter; to her devoted tribe of extended family, she's the beloved daughter, niece, and cousin; and to her best friend Jana, the muse for fashion advice and gossip. But when trauma shows up by the name of Travis, she begins keeping secrets and telling lies so that no one finds out what happened to her. What she *let* happen to her.

The truth is, Lavender is terrified of being truly seen, and known, so she hides behind a wall of secrets and lies that she's convinced will protect her but instead locks her in a lonely place surrounded by shame. As she pushes away all those closest to her, she unexpectedly falls in love with a boy in Cuba she's never met and a grandmother who doesn't remember who Lavender is, most of the time.

When her lies begin unraveling in a very public way, will trusting people with her truth confirm her fears or make room for the love she always longed for?

*"The best stories feel familiar because we see ourselves and those we love in the events that unfold...Kelly's willingness to show Lavender in a not-always-so-lovable light makes this **coming-of-age** story a **page-turning, realistic, and honest read.**"*

—LINDA LOWEN Author, *Secret Syracuse*,
Book Reviewer, *BlueInk Review* and *Publishers Weekly*

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Set the Mood



For a ready-made cocktail, serve

LAVENDER FRENCH 75

Buy Blind Tiger Lavender French 75 in 4 oz cans and mix with 2 oz of Gin. Serve over ice.

Signature Cocktails

I'll Be Seeing You

(just like the song—this drink is romantic, wistful, and nostalgic)

2 oz Gin

½ oz Pisa Liqueur

½ oz Amarena Cherry Syrup

Stir in pitcher with ice, strain and serve with Amarena cherry garnish.

Snow Globe

(a crowd pleaser and easy to make in batches—this drink warms you from the inside out)

Kahlua

Vodka

Milk

Mix equal parts of each in a pitcher and chill ahead of time in refrigerator. I like to use coffee-flavored Vodka. May also substitute Almond or Oat Milk.

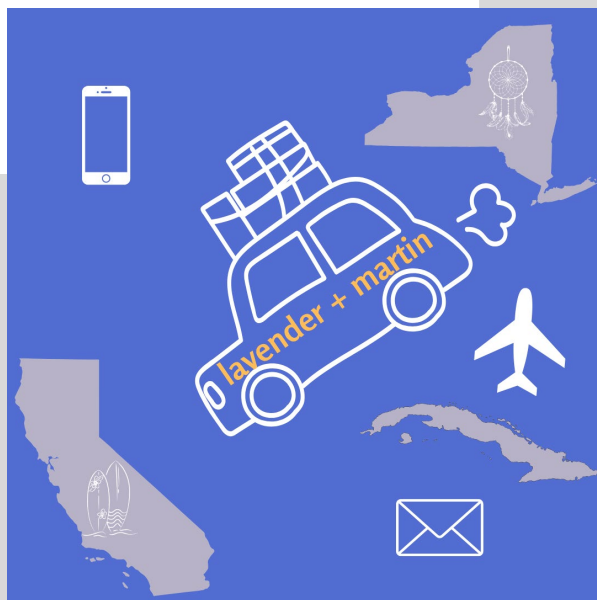
Set the Mood

Listen to the Playlist on Spotify

LAVENDER + MARTIN

In preparation for their road trip, Lavender creates a playlist that includes all the songs they shared while they fell in love, songs they grew up listening to with their parents, tunes that are best shouted at the top of your voice while cruising a highway and contemporary music of their generation.

What songs would you add to the playlist?



Start the Conversation

How would you describe the book in one word or perhaps one short sentence?

What were the themes that you connected with?

Which character did you find the most complex or intriguing or challenging, and why?
How did the secondary characters impact

How did the secondary characters impact or influence the main character(s) or story?

What did you like most about Lavender? Did you feel connected to her? How/Why?

How did the author keep you interested or surprised throughout the story?

If you could insert yourself into one scene from the book, which one would you choose, and what would you do?

What do you think will happen to Lavender in the years to come? Will her and Martin stay together? Do you think Mrs. Gordon ever forgives Lavender and gives her a second chance? Does she ever learn to surf?

What was the most memorable or shocking scene or twist in the story and why?

Who is your pick to play Lavender and Martin in a movie?

Who would you recommend this book to and why?

Things We Don't Talk About

With thoughts from the Author

IS THE SEXUAL ASSAULT SCENE REALISTIC? RELATABLE?

Consent is black & white, yes or no, I want to, or I don't. However, the way it is lived out in our lives is messy. We don't talk about it, but I believe that many people can relate to having sex when they don't want to. Whether it is with their partner (spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend) or someone they just met at a bar or a party. Women have sex for many reasons. The best version is when a woman feels safe, seen, heard and has the authentic desire to engage in sexual intimacy and therefore gives it freely to the other person. The other reasons a woman has sex can range from it's expected, she doesn't feel safe enough to say no, she is trying to go along to get along, she is impaired (drunk or high) and unable to resist or just say no, someone has power over her, either financially, physically, mentally...so many reasons. In any of those situations, sexual intimacy is taken instead of given. To me, that is the question. **Did I give it or was it taken?** It isn't always as violent and sinister as rape. Either way, it is something women don't talk much about, even amongst themselves.

The important takeaway, for me, was that Lavender was violated, something was taken from her without her permission. She kept it a secret for so many reasons—she was in shock, she blamed herself, she was terrified that the people who loved her couldn't handle it, and she was ashamed. That was the point. Trauma + Secrets = Shame.

WHY ISN'T TRAVIS HELD ACCOUNTABLE?

I didn't want Travis to take over the story. LLF is about Lavender's journey or coming of age, not his. And I think it is more common that these things happen, and we carry the secret which means we carry the shame, instead of the perpetrator. I assume, and hope the readers do to, that Karma is a bitch and Travis will pay, one way or another. Stay tuned for the second book.

WHAT ELSE RESONATED WITH YOU AS SOMETHING THAT IS COMMON BUT WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT?

LOVING LAVENDER FINCH, a novel by Kelly Bargabos



Play Trivia

What was the mascot at BSU?

What movie did Martin and Lavender see on their first date?

What was the name of the class project that Ms. Clarke assigned?

What superlative category did Hillary Charles win?

How many Finch siblings are there?

What was the name of Lavender's bear and how old was she when she got it?

?

What were the names of Mrs. Gordon's kids?

What did Louise do after she graduated from High School?

Name one of the Christmas presents Lavender received from Martin.

?

What job does Martin's father have in the military?

What was the book Lavender was reading as part of her class assignment?

Engage

Use the tags

#IAmLavenderFinch
#LovingLavenderFinch

TRAUMA + SECRETS = _____

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Lies
- ☒ Bad Decisions
- ☒ Loneliness
- ☒ Shame

#LovingLavenderFinch

Join the Campaign
#IAmLavenderFinch

Post a video, selfie or graphic using the script:

“I know what it feels like to _____. I am Lavender Finch.”

I know what it feels like to be surrounded by people who love me and not feel loved. I am Lavender Finch. #IAmLavenderFinch #LovingLavenderFinch

Leave reviews! They help readers find stories. They help authors gain traction.

TRUST + TRUTH = _____

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Dreams
- ☒ Seen/Known
- ☒ Connection
- ☒ Love

#LovingLavenderFinch

Share your favorite quote or scene.

Stay Tuned for Book 2

FINDING LAVENDER FINCH (*working title*)

A story about searching for your past, planning your future and finding yourself along the way. Lavender and Martin begin their year together in Ojai, CA excited for their new relationship, their assignment and all the possibility the future holds. But when the unexpected pulls them apart, will their relationship survive? Will Lavender?

Lavender is finally out of Siena, away from Travis and all those memories. She is ready to figure out who she is and what she wants from this world, and also what she can give it. What can she contribute? Her relationship with Martin, living in Ojai, learning to surf, heals her heart. But she misses her grandmother and is worried Louise will die before she returns home. As Lavender experiences her own healing, she realizes that her grandmother never got the chance repair her wounds. Would finding Miguel, and maybe Roy, allow her grandmother to heal before she dies?



LOVING LAVENDER FINCH, a novel by Kelly Bargabos

A Note From the Author

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking a chance that picking up this book would be worthy of your time. I write for you. It is so easy in the business of writing to get caught up in gaining the attention and approval of the publishers, the award givers, the various parties who've given themselves gatekeeper status, **but I write what moves me for one reason, and that is the hope that it moves you, too.**

I woke up out of a sound sleep one morning with three words. *Loving Lavender Finch*. I knew right away that this was the title of a story. Later that morning, this full paragraph came to me:

Loving Lavender Finch was easy. Or so it seemed. At least for the people around her who threw the phrase, *love you*, around like a simple game of catch. For Lavender, it was more like monkey in the middle. They said *I love you*, but the ball was always just out of reach. She never quite believed them. It was too easy. It seemed effortless for them to blurt the words out on a regular basis. She knew loving her wasn't that easy. Or at least it shouldn't be.

I was hooked, so I set about the work of discovering who this Lavender Finch was, what she wanted from this world and how I could help her get it.

Thank you for sharing this human experience with me and reading the words I've put down on paper. It means everything.

Kelly