

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

A Memoir of
Lying, Stealing,
Writing, and
Healing

THE

Lara Love Hardin

(AUTHOR)

The Many Lives of Mama Love

(BOOK TITLE)

| DATE | TIME |
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| JUN 4 2024 | 8:00PM ET |
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Oprah
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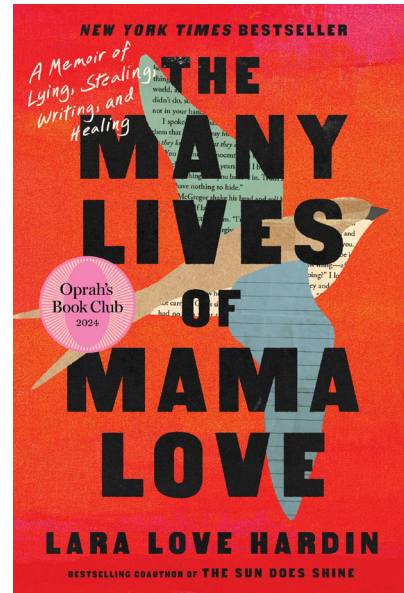
HOLLY FURTICK
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Book Club

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HOLLY FURTICK
BOOK CLUB



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lara Love Hardin is the President and Founder of True Literary - a full-service boutique literary agency.

She has an MFA in creative writing and is a 4-time New York Times bestselling writer, including the #1 New York Times bestseller *Designing Your Life* by Dave Evans and Bill Burnett, and 2018 Oprah Book Club pick, *The Sun Does Shine*, which she co-authored with Anthony Ray Hinton about his 30 years as an innocent man on Alabama's death row. There are well over a million copies sold of the many books she has written, and you can find her on the title page and in the acknowledgments of books by Nelson Mandela, John Gottman, Evy Poupouras, and other luminary authors on the Idea Architects roster.

Lara lives in La Selva Beach, California with her third husband, three dogs, three cats, and three teenagers. She also has 21 chickens, four ducks, and three adult sons who live at home on holidays and big laundry days.

BOOK OVERVIEW

No one expects the police to knock on the million-dollar, two-story home of the perfect cul-de-sac housewife. But soccer mom Lara Love Hardin has been hiding a shady secret: She is funding her heroin addiction by stealing her neighbors' credit cards.

Lara is convicted of thirty-two felonies and becomes inmate S32179. She learns jail is a class system with a power structure somewhere between an adolescent sleepover party and *Lord of the Flies*. Furniture is made from tampon boxes, and Snickers bars are currency. But Lara quickly finds the rules and brings love and healing to her fellow

inmates as she climbs the social ladder to become the “shot caller,” showing that jailhouse politics aren’t that different from the PTA meetings she used to attend.

When she’s released, she reinvents herself as a ghostwriter. Now, she’s legally co-opting other people’s identities and getting to meet Oprah, meditate with The Dalai Lama, and have dinner with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. But the shadow of her past follows her. Shame is a poison worse than heroin—there is no way to detox. She must learn to forgive herself and others, navigate life as a felon on probation, prove to herself that she is more good than bad, and much more.

SETTING/LOCATION

- Santa Cruz, California and Santa Cruz County
 - Living location
 - First Home on cul-de-sac - Where Laura was arrested
 - Apartment after incarceration - Small but hers
 - Rental Home - Doug’s former home that she and Sam rented
 - Purchased home at the end in La Selva Beach
 - Jails: G Block, Blaine Street

CHARACTERS

- Lara Love (Hardin), aka Mama Love
- DJ, current husband when arrested, father of Kaden
- Bryan, ex-husband, father of oldest 3 boys
- Darcy, Bryan’s wife
- Dylan, Cody, Ty, Kaden, Lara’s sons
- Sam, current husband
- Ladies in G Block: Daddy, Kiki, Nina, Spider Girl, Jolly Ranger Girl
- Gemma Project ladies: Cassandra, Cynthia,
- Attorney: Elizabeth (and Jonathan)
- Doug Abrams, boss of Idea Architects
- Sam, current husband
- Ray Hinton, co-author of Sun Does Shine, wrongfully incarcerated/on death row for 30 years

THINGS I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK

- What a story!
- This book made me feel. It gave me perspective and empathy.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- What characters did you fall in love with?
- What characters did you have a hard time understanding?

- Would you have taken the plea deal knowing you were admitting crimes you did not commit?
- What was a moment in the book that really touched you?
 - Lara goes to help Darcy
 - Doug finds out about Lara
 - The miracle of craigslist
 - Praying to Oprah

MEMORABLE SCENES

- The opening scene in the hotel with stolen credit card (pg 5)
- Lara and DJ's arrest at their home in front of their son (pg 21)
- Lara intending to kill herself but instead falling asleep (pg 50)
- In G Block, Kiki helping her with her makeup before going to court (pg 58)
- Lara changing the environment with the women in G Block, influencing on "Quiet Power" after reading "The Power of Now" by Eckhart Tolle (pg 98)
- Getting out on bail and DJ getting her high (pg 132)
- Bryan letting her see Kaden at the game after choosing to take care of Kaden while Lara was incarcerated (pg 138)
- At Blaine Street she started helping those incarcerated with her write letters (pg 167)
- Lara became involved in the Gemma Project (pg 175)
- Released from Blaine Street and realizes how complicated it is for her to reenter society and get her son back (pg 188)
- Lara kicks DJ out of the apartment when she sees him doing drugs (pg 205)
- Lara gets Kaden back - the balloon scene (pg 208)
- Gets the job with Doug at Idea Architects - he is very trusting and gives her access to his life which makes her nervous (pg 228-230)
- Doug gets an email and Googles Lara (pg 233)
- Lara being pulled over with her Chipotle takeout (pg 257)
- Lara opening up to Bryan (publisher) and Ray Hinton about her past (pg 278)
- Lara meets the Dalai Lama, Oprah, and TED talk (pg 269, 289, 300)
- Bought a house because of Kaden's anxiety, found it was freeing for all of them (pg 297)

MEMORABLE QUOTES

- The truth is I've only ever had one addiction. The white whale of addictions: escape. (pg 1)

- But trying to be the perfect mother makes it really hard to admit when you have a problem. (pg 21)
- I have been pretending I'm okay for so long that I don't even know what okay means. (pg 22)
- There's not a mother I know who hasn't been mom-shamed in one way or another—it goes with the territory. (pg 64)
- Power doesn't have anything to prove, I remind them. (pg 103)
- My whole life I had pretended to be a beautiful, happy, shiny person in the hopes that would somehow make me a beautiful, happy, shiny person. I fit in everywhere because people love beautiful, happy, shiny people. But the problem with me trying to fit in everywhere is that I have never actually felt like I belonged anywhere. Or with anyone. (pg 116)
- I wonder if showing up as a fake version of yourself is just as bad as not showing up at all? (pg 116)
- Pain pushes you until vision pulls you - pg 164 (and pg 173 - Pain pushes and vision pulls)
- In Cassandra's arms, I feel like I am good. (pg 177)
- Restorative justice was great in theory but we Gemma girls couldn't imagine forgiving ourselves, much less asking others to forgive us. (pg 178)
- A bad something is better than a great nothing. (pg 243)
- Telling the truth, witnessing the harm you've caused, and asking for forgiveness, even if it's not given, is the path to freedom. It's the only way to not be bitter. To not hate yourself so you can have a fighting chance to be something beyond the worst things you've done. (pg 247)

- it suddenly doesn't matter what people think of me. I am standing in the light, at a temple, in service to something bigger than my insecurities and flaws. Bigger than my past and my mistakes. (pg 273)
- My biggest secret, my greatest shame, has become a selling point. And that changes everything. (pg 281)
- They both suffered and they both let it ennoble them rather than embitter them. "I forgive," Ray says, "because I'm not giving the State of Alabama one more second of my life." (pg 282)
- I thought what I craved was approval and praise, but it's simpler than that. I craved acceptance. (pg 283)
- Real power is about using your power to shine a light on other people so they can find their own power. (pg 292)
- I thought I had to convince the whole world that I am more than the worst thing I have done, the worst person I have been, but really I just have to convince myself. (pg 293)
- The worst thing I've ever done is build an identity out of the worst thing I've ever done. (pg 302)