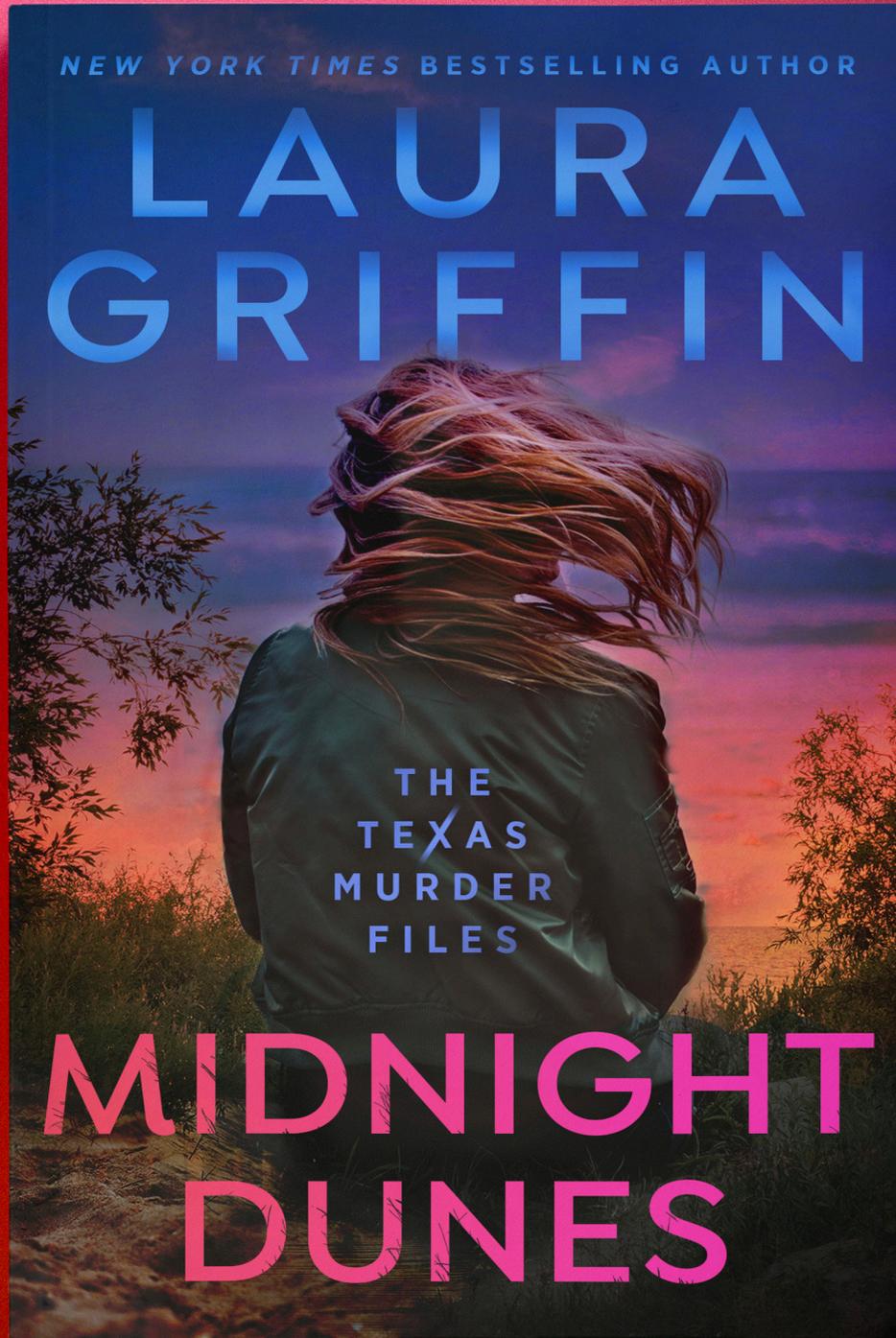


# BOOK CLUB KIT



Hello!

Thanks so much for choosing *Midnight Dunes* for your next read! Book clubs have a special place in my heart. Whether yours meets in person or virtually, it is such a fun way to come together to laugh, share ideas, and sip wine. Cheers to y'all!

*Midnight Dunes* is the story of Macey Burns, who has just been through a scandal that derailed her career as a television reporter. She comes to the seaside town of Lost Beach, Texas, looking for a change and ready to focus on her first passion—filmmaking. Macey's new project is shooting commercials for the island's tourism board, but her plans for a relaxing rebound are dashed when she realizes the cottage she's renting belonged to the woman whose body was just found in the sand dunes. Together with Detective Owen Breda, Macey digs into the victim's past, hoping to help solve the murder. But with every clue Macey uncovers, she attracts the attention of a vicious killer.

Readers may remember Owen from my last book, *Flight*, which also is set in Lost Beach. I have had Owen's story in mind for a while now, and I'm excited to get to share it with you. *Midnight Dunes* is book three in the Texas Murder Files series. Each book focuses on a different lead couple, so each story can be read as a standalone.

I love to hear from readers! Please drop me a line if you would like me to send you a batch of *Midnight Dunes* bookmarks for your next gathering. You can reach me at [laura@lauragriffin.com](mailto:laura@lauragriffin.com).

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Laura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

# A Conversation

WITH LAURA GRIFFIN

**Tell us about *Midnight Dunes*! What inspired you to write this story?**

The spark of the idea happened when I moved into a house built in the 1940s, which we bought from the estate of an elderly lady who had passed away. My first project was painting a spare bedroom, so I climbed up on a ladder in the closet and discovered all these old postcards from a road trip she had taken in the 1960s. I was fascinated by the idea of all the stories a house holds—from people and their lives and their love affairs. As a suspense writer, I took that idea and gave it a creepy twist—what if you moved into a house and discovered something that made you think a murder had happened there?

**What do you feel are the main themes or issues that are addressed in *Midnight Dunes*?**

One of the main themes is about buried truths. From the opening scene when the body is found buried in the sand dune, Macey and Owen are literally digging up people's secrets. The setting of Lost Beach is an idyllic tourist destination with sparkling water and white sand beaches, but the truth about what's going on there is much more sinister. There is definitely a theme of older men preying on young, vulnerable women.

**We met Owen briefly in the previous book, *Flight*. What made you want to write his story?**

I was interested in Owen from his very first scene with his brother Joel (in *Flight*) when he shows up to the police station late and hungover and immediately pushes his brother's buttons. The two have a complicated relationship. They love each other, but there is an undercurrent of rivalry and resentment as Owen struggles to find his purpose in a police department where he feels overshadowed.

**Did the book require any special research?**

Macey is a filmmaker, and I had so much fun learning all about that! I've always loved photography, but film is an entirely different specialty, and it was so interesting to learn about the considerations that go into choosing a location and setting up a shot.

**What do you hope readers will take away from this story?**

The heart of the story is really about trust. Various events in Macey's past make her struggle to trust Owen. And Owen has to dig deep within himself to realize he is worthy of her trust and ready for a commitment. He comes to understand that anything worth having—from his career to his relationships—involves commitment and sacrifice.



*About Laura Griffin*

Laura Griffin is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of more than twenty-five books and novellas. She is a two-time RITA® Award winner as well as the recipient of the Daphne du Maurier Award.

LauraGriffin.com



LauraGriffinAuthor



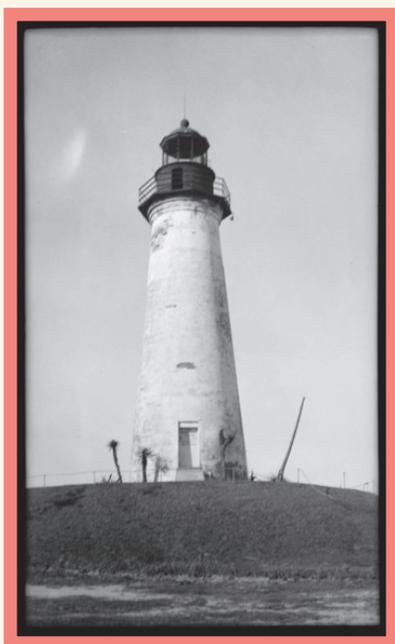
Laura\_Griff

# Welcome to **LOST BEACH**

The fictional town of Lost Beach, Texas, is loosely based on South Padre Island, a barrier island at the southernmost tip of the Texas coast. Here are some ideas for things to see and do if you visit the area!

## **EXPLORE THE DUNES**

The book's title, *Midnight Dunes*, was inspired by the windswept sand dunes of Padre Island National Seashore. The park has 66 miles of protected coastline and is home to an array of wildlife, including Kemp's ridley sea turtles and more than 380 species of birds. Check with the park for info on turtle hatchling releases from mid-June through August.



## **CHECK OUT THE LIGHTHOUSE**

A pivotal setting in both the books *Flight* and *Midnight Dunes*, the Lost Beach Lighthouse was inspired by the Port Isabel Lighthouse, one of the oldest lighthouses on the Texas Gulf Coast. Built in 1852, the lighthouse stands 72 feet tall and was constructed to help ships through the Brazos Santiago Pass to Port Isabel. Climb the 75 stairs to the top for a panoramic view of Laguna Madre and South Padre Island.

## WATCH BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES

The nature center featured in *Flight* was inspired by the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, located on the shores of Laguna Madre. The center includes an alligator sanctuary, a butterfly garden, a boardwalk through the wetlands, and

a five-story viewing tower for bird watching.



## STOP FOR A BREAK

The Island Beanery in *Midnight Dunes* is entirely fictional, but the town of South Padre has eateries up and down Padre Boulevard where tourists can get seafood, Tex-Mex, and coffee beverages. Try one of the bars along the bay side if you're looking for

a sunset cocktail.

# Macey's Favorite

CAPE COD  
(VODKA CRANBERRY COCKTAIL)



- 2 oz. Tito's vodka
- 3 oz. cranberry juice
- Lime

Fill a highball glass with ice cubes. Pour vodka and cranberry juice. Stir. Garnish with a lime wedge. Enjoy!

# Discussion Questions

1. Macey moves to Lost Beach after leaving her job as a television reporter. How do you think her experience working in front of a camera has influenced her feelings about her appearance? Do you think she has a healthy self-image?
2. How would you describe Macey's attitude toward men? Do you see any parallels between Macey's past experiences with men and the murder victim in the story, Julia Murphy?
3. Do you think a "sugar daddy" relationship can ever be a positive arrangement for a woman?
4. Owen is attracted to Macey from the moment he meets her, but he has to work hard to get her to give him a chance. Just when he is making headway, they have a confrontation. Do you think Owen is justified in questioning Macey about the leaked news story? Do you think Macey overreacted by being so offended?
5. Owen has a complicated relationship with his siblings in the story. How would you describe the dynamic between Owen and Joel? Between Owen and Leyla?
6. Owen initially doesn't tell Macey the backstory regarding her rental house. Do you think he should have told her right away? Would you be comfortable living in a house if you knew something horrible had happened to the previous occupant?
7. Do you think a house can be haunted?

- 8.** How does the author use various settings to create suspense? What moments in the story had you on edge? Were there any suspenseful moments that took you by surprise?
  
- 9.** We first meet Josh when he comes to Macey's aid during the rainstorm. What did you think of Josh throughout the book? Did your view of him shift as the story unfolded?
  
- 10.** When Macey is talking about her motives for moving to Lost Beach, she says: "From the moment I moved here, I've been running on a hamster wheel. Now I finally have a chance to step off, and it feels good. Gives me a chance to get perspective." Have you ever tried to "jump off the hamster wheel" in your own life by making a major change? Do you think people can truly change their lifestyle by changing their location or their job, or do you think lifestyle is a reflection of someone's core personality?