

# Wounded: A Love Story

by Claudia Mair Burney

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## About the Book

Poor in health but rich in faith, Gina Merritt --- a young, broke, African American single mother --- sits in a pew on Ash Wednesday and has a holy vision. When it fades, her palm is bleeding. Anthony Priest, the junkie sitting beside her, instinctively touches her when she cries out, but Gina flees in shock and pain.

A prize-winning journalist before drugs destroyed his career, Anthony is flooded with a sense of well-being and knows he is cured of his addiction. Without understanding why, Anthony follows Gina home to find some answers.

Together they search for the truth behind this miraculous event and along the way cross paths with a skeptical evangelical pastor, a gentle Catholic priest, a certifiable religious zealot, and an oversized transvestite drug dealer, all of whom lend their opinion. It's a quest for truth, sanity, and grace... and an unexpected love story.

## Discussion Guide

1. Stigmata is traditionally granted to those of extraordinary piety who identify with Christ's suffering. Does Gina seem to be someone who is extraordinarily pious? Why or why not?
2. Gina says: "I know things about Jesus just because I've suffered. Sometimes I wonder if suffering isn't a secret initiation into a special kind of intimacy with God." How does Gina's suffering bring her closer to God? Have you seen this in your own life?
3. When Ben goes to visit Gina he finds her "out of touch." In what ways is she actually more aware than Ben?
4. Veronica has a great deal of self-loathing. How do her feelings of self-hatred affect the way that she views others?

5. Gina views her condition as an opportunity to share in the sufferings of Christ, yet Veronica looks at her as a "victim soul." Do you think this label is more about how Veronica sees herself?
6. Do you know people, who, like Veronica, seem spiritually arrogant? How do you typically respond to these types of people? Did understanding Veronica's story give you compassion for her?
7. Gina asks Priest to help her find her story --- why this happened to her. In what way does Gina's search become Priest's?
8. Do you think Gina's condition is trivialized once it becomes a production? Can you draw any parallels to the church today?
9. In what way is Priest still judged within the church? Do you think there are times in your life where you see what you expect rather than what is? How can we guard against this?
10. Do you think that love inevitably leads to suffering? How has love caused you to suffer in your own life?

## Author Bio

Claudia Mair Burney is the author of the novel **Zora and Nicky: A Novel in Black and White**, as well as the Amanda Bell Brown Mysteries and the Exorsistah series for teens. She lives in Michigan with her husband, five of their seven children and a quirky dwarf rabbit.

## Critical Praise

"A daring subject, Technicolor characters, and rich, poetic language --- what's not to love about this book? **Wounded** is sure to evoke emotion and spark conversation."

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**Publication Date:** September 1, 2008

**Paperback:** 384 pages

**Publisher:** David C. Cook

**ISBN-10:** 1434799387

**ISBN-13:** 9781434799388