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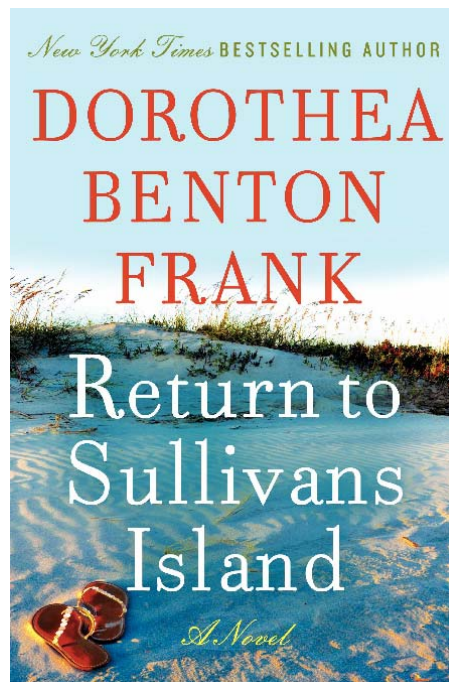
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***New York Times* bestselling author, Dorothea Benton Frank, returns to Sullivans Island in the South Carolina Lowcountry, for the sequel to her much beloved first novel**

“Dorothea Benton Frank and I share the exact same literary territory. . . .  
Her books are funny, sexy and usually damp with seawater.”

—Pat Conroy



“Tight storytelling, winsomely oddball characters and touches of Southern magic make this a winner.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Featuring her trademark down-home Southern wisdom and wit, Frank’s long-awaited sequel to *Sullivan’s Island*, her captivating debut bestseller, is sure to please devoted fans.”

—*Booklist*

**Dorothea Benton Frank** first began to enchant and delight readers with her tales of life in Lowcountry South Carolina with the publication of her first book, *Sullivan's Island*, in 1999—which now has over a million copies in print. And with **RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND** (*William Morrow; On Sale June 30, 2009; \$25.99; Hardcover; 2009*) ten years and ten *New York Times* Bestselling novels later, Frank has returned to Sullivans Island for the long awaited sequel. Now fans of all her previous books and fans still waiting to discover her work can read the story of the next generation of Hamiltons and Hayes and their beloved home on Sullivans Island, the Island Gamble.

With her mother, Susan, leaving for a year in Paris and her Aunt Maggie, Uncle Grant, and stepfather Simon moving to California, Beth Hayes, newly graduated from college, is chosen—without her consent—to keep watch over that great house on the shore while her mother finally gets to do something she's always wanted to do: live in Paris.

There is much about life and her sprawling Irish Catholic family's past that beth does not know; ignorance and naïveté that nearly causes her to lose both her inheritance and the house. But you can rest assured, just like in all of Frank's novels, there are friends both expected and unexpected—or even unexplained—to help her through the challenges she faces.

Over the course of one fast-paced year, Beth learns what it means to grow up, to fall in love, to suffer heartbreak, and to embrace responsibility for herself and those she loves. And readers are sure to fall in love with Beth and **RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND** just as much as they have with all of Frank's previous novels. This is Frank's most charming book to date.

###

**Dorothea Benton Frank** was born and raised on Sullivans Island, South Carolina and resided in the New York area with her husband. She is the author of the bestselling novels: *Sullivan's Island*, *Plantation*, *Isle of Palms*, *Shem Creek*, *Pawleys Island*, *Full of Grace*, *The Land of Mango Sunsets*, *The Christmas Pearl*, and *Bulls Island*.

###

**RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND**

by **Dorothea Benton Frank**

**William Morrow; On Sale June 30, 2009**

**Hardcover; ISBN: 978-0-06-143845-5; \$25.99**

**Contact: Ben Bruton, 212-207-7524, [ben.bruton@harpercollins.com](mailto:ben.bruton@harpercollins.com)**

*From the Author*

**RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND  
Why and Why Now?**

The world is blowing up around us. Retirement accounts have evaporated; people can't even afford their own divorce. Wall Street, the housing crisis, credit markets, Detroit, scams, unemployment and the accompanying terrors of it all! I have been so bombarded with bad news. I am certain my readers have been too. So, how can we make ourselves feel better? One answer is to escape through a book to revisit a funky little sandbar like Sullivans Island, a place steeped in history and populated with the kind of characters Tennessee Williams would have loved to have known.

This enchanted island is a place where what you have is enough, where shiny things don't matter and your grandmother's wooden spoon is a treasure to hold. Like Oz, the greens are greener, edges are sharper and the water and sky are impossible shades of blue. Flip flops and sandals are the only shoes you need and the fragrance of homegrown tomatoes and jasmine in bloom takes your breath away. You can eat fish that was swimming that morning. Watch a sunset so spectacular you'll be brought to tears. Walk the beach at night pondering the Milky Way overhead. Sit on the dark porch of the Island Gamble and sort out your life with old friends. These are just a few of the things RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND offers to save us from the dreary outside world.

And then there's family. In RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND I plucked the daughter of the protagonist, Susan Hamilton Hayes from the original story and dropped her front and center in the sequel. Watch and see what happens when Beth's whole family averts their eyes to pursue their own dreams and she is left to come of age in a hurricane of her own making. Fortunes are at risk, hearts are broken, disaster strikes. But the magic of the island and the spirits of their ancestral home bring them all back together as the power of their love for one another finds forgiveness and healing.

Why would I write a sequel to SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, perhaps my most popular book, knowing sequels can be the kiss of death? I wrote RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND because I adore the place, I have missed those characters and I believe with all my heart they still have lessons to teach us. And because, in these challenging times, I wanted to give my readers a story I hope they will all love because success is not always measured in money. You'll be the judge of that.

###

*Q & A*  
*with Dorothea Benton Frank*

- 1. Back when you were writing *Sullivan's Island*, did you plan on doing a sequel at some point?**

I think that a first novel is like a first child in many ways. The entire experience is one surprise after another. Somehow it's your sentimental favorite because you have brought something to life for the first time and you never get over it. So, ten years and thousands of emails later, I have had so many people ask for a sequel it began to seem like a good idea. It *was* a good idea but it was also a crazy idea for many good reasons.

- 2. *Return to Sullivans Island* focuses on the next generation—Susan Hayes's daughter Beth, and Cecily Singleton, the granddaughter of the wonderful Livvie Singleton. Were there any challenges in writing from the perspective of two young women, one barely in her twenties?**

Nope. I have one of my own and a constant stream of her friends, male and female, coming and going. Twenty-three year old young men and women are adults only lacking in experience and judgment, not values or raw intelligence.

- 3. Did Beth and Cecily's characters "speak" to you, or were you clear about who they would be and how the events in the story would unfold?**

Livvie in SULLIVAN'S ISLAND was an idealized character and Cecily in RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND is idealized to some extent but has some flaws, making her more authentic. I knew that I wanted her relationship with Beth to somehow mirror Livvie's with Susan but by bringing them into the twenty-first century, it gave me the opportunity to make them closer in age and to make them genuine friends.

Beth needed a savior the same way her mother did but the differences in their generation made it easier to make all the characters of RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND more empowered to take control of their lives and less reticent to be honest with each other.

- 4. You were born and raised on Sullivans Island. Tell us about the place you knew growing up. What's most special to you about Sullivans Island and the Carolina Lowcountry?**

The island families all knew each other. All the children played together. No one had a dog with a pedigree or seatbelts in their cars. Hollywood was on another planet for daydreamers and baseball was king.

Manners, ethics and morals mattered a great deal. I don't think we had much money but then I don't think it mattered because we always seemed to acquire the things that mattered most – bicycles being the most highly coveted items at

Christmas. How we lived our lives was dictated by the tide clock and the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church.

What's most special about the Carolina Lowcountry is that it is the blood soaked land of my ancestors and every inch of it is excruciating in its natural beauty.

**5. Gullah culture is infused in your novels. What draws you to Gullah? What can we learn from it?**

Everything of value.

**6. One of the charms of the Hamilton-Hayes family spread, the Island Gamble, is that it is haunted. Do you believe in ghosts? Have you had any interesting experiences with the supernatural?**

As a true daughter of the Lowcountry I believe in spirits. There is no such thing as an uninteresting experience with the supernatural.

**7. Is there a real house like the Island Gamble you drew on for the novels?**

The Island Gamble is drawn on the house where I grew up which was actually called The Vagabond Villa. But for the sake of the story I moved it down the island and expanded it.

**8. You touch on the subject of race with grace and compassion. As Beth enjoys her close friendship with Cecily she thinks of the strictures placed upon the relationship between her mother and Livvie. Why did you choose to include this?**

Because it's important to remind people that prejudice is just plain dead wrong – whether it is gender based, racial, religious – pick a category – it's all so wrong.

**9. You've previously mentioned that you "grew up in a Southern gothic novel." What does that mean—and how has it shaped your work?**

My mother and her mother before her were unapologetic Camilles when it suited them and Steel Magnolias too. They loved us with all the ferocity of a couple of lionesses enjoying a good julep but they also knew the value of a swoon. You learn a lot from women like them.

**10. Are there more stories about the Hamilton and Hayes waiting to be told? AND/OR what can fans look forward to next from Dorothy Benton Frank?**

You mean Dorothea? Honey, Dorothy is from Kansas . . .

Well, my brother Mike said I should take all the characters from all my books, send them on a cruise together, shipwreck them on an uncharted island in the Caribbean and see what happens. I'm thinking *no* to that.

Right now I am playing around with a sequel to PLANTATION, glutton for punishment that I seem to be! Maybe at some point we'll have to have a wedding for Beth. A good wedding story is always fun.

I don't know . . . what would the readers like to read? Maybe something about a naughty vampire talking dog from the Lowcountry with a fondness for howling at the moon in Gullah? We could call him Harley and have him ride one with his mistress named Lee – call it Harley and Lee? Nah. I think I'm sticking with what I do . . . spinning yarns about Lowcountry magic and how important everyone's heart is.

###



**AWAY**

## Writing Her Way Home

By CHRIS DIXON

**B**ACK in 1993, Dorothea Benton Frank had never written a book and didn't really imagine that she ever would. She was a million-dollar fund-raiser for a number of charities, the contented mother of two young children and the wife of a successful New York investment banker. Then her mother, a lifelong resident of Sullivan's Island, S.C., near Charleston, received a cancer diagnosis and died six months afterward. Ms. Frank's comfortable life — spent between Montclair, N.J., and the Sullivan's Island house — was turned upside down.

"I have three brothers and a sister," she said. "They wanted to sell Vagabond Villa, my mother's house — the house we grew up in. It had been in our family for about a hundred years. I was already having a nervous breakdown because of my mother, and now I wouldn't be able to come down to her house again with my own children? A big fight breaks out."

"I went to my husband and said, 'I want to buy Momma's house and keep it in the family,'" Peter said. "How much is it?" I said \$180,000. I only needed \$149,000 and he said no. I asked him why and he said, "If you think

LOWLAND Dorothea Benton Frank at Rave-Inne, on Sullivan's Island, S.C.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN THOMPSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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## Writing Her Way Back Home

From First Escapes Page

I'm going to spend the rest of my life sitting on a front porch listening to all your relatives tell the same stories over and over till they fall off the porch, I'm not going to do it."

Ms. Frank was livid. "I said: 'O.K. Well, I've got news for you, Bubba. I'm going to write a book and I'm going to sell a million copies and I'm going to buy Momma's house back. And you can't come in. He said, 'Let's see you do it.'"

And she did. Or something very much like it. She turned her grief and anger into a loosely autobiographical novel, "Sullivan's Island," which sold more than a million copies and started her on a lucrative career; she's now at work on her 10th novel. And she does a good bit of her writing in a large, comfortable second house on Sullivan's Island.

There are a couple of notable differences, however, from the vision she originally outlined. The house is not her mother's, which had been sold by the time the novel was written. And Mr. Frank is allowed inside.



**SIMPLE THINGS** Dorothea Benton and Peter Frank's living room. She said she wanted a home that was nice enough for relatives, but not "highfalutin'."

**B**UILT in the World War II era, the house follows a standard pattern of many old island getaways, with four bedrooms upstairs and kitchen and gathering spaces down. It has long been known as the Rave-Inne (although it apparently never was actually an inn), a nod to Edgar Allan Poe, who set "The Gold Bug" on Sullivan's Island; he was stationed there at Fort Moultrie, now a National Park Service site. The Poe connection is a matter of local pride, though the current scene of graceful old houses, new mini-mansions and quaint restaurants bears little resemblance to Poe's picture of "some miserable frame buildings, tenanted, during summer, by the fugitives from Charleston dust and fever" and "dense undergrowth of the sweet myrtle."

Ms. Frank, who said he eventually learned to appreciate the value of a bunch of rocking-chair-bound relatives sharing beers, creek-caught boiled shrimp and tall tales on a broad front porch, bought Rave-Inne for \$1.1 million in 2003, with the understanding that Ms. Frank — by then an established author — would pay for its remodeling and maintenance.

She asked her sister, Lynn Bagnal, who owns an interior design business on nearby Edisto Island, and a cousin, Connor Blanchard, to get the house in shape within 90 days, ready for a huge gathering of her family at Easter. "She said, 'I want to spend \$100,000,'" Mr. Blanchard recalled. "She said, 'I want this bathroom to go, this wall has to go, that has to go. Can we do it in 90 days?'" I said, "Um, I think so." They met the deadline.

She was also mindful of pleasing the smaller family of Mr. Frank, who grew up in Detroit. "I wanted it to be nice enough that my husband and his family would like to come here and feel like they were visiting someone nice," said Ms. Frank, who admitted that the sum has since gone much higher. "But I didn't want it to be so highfalutin that I would have to worry if a hurricane came through."

The home was given new windows and new fixtures, and the living room was expanded. A room off the kitchen was transformed from a children's study into a red-ceilinged, slot-pine-walled parlor that has three striking features. The first is a Matthew Gerber "dual rotational" ceiling fan — sort of a

combination 1930s desktop GE hybridized with an antique Casablanca. "Isn't that neat?" she said. The second is a large painting by Scott Gordley, a professor of fine arts at Montclair State University, of two bouffant-haired women heading to the beach in gaudy swimsuits. "I saw it in a little gallery in Montclair and I thought, that was my sister and me going to the beach in our Catalina bathing suits when we were 19 years old," Ms. Frank said. "I bought it and invited Lynn over for a glass of Champagne and an unveiling. She said, 'Oh my God, that's us!'" Third, in a glass case, is an eight-foot-long model of a mid-20th-century P.&O. Line cruise ship, the Himalaya. It's the largest of several gorgoons, one-of-a-kind ship's models scattered around the house.

"I was having dinner at the New York Yacht Club on 44th Street," Mr. Frank said. "They have an impressive collection of model ships and I said, 'I've got to get one of those. A couple of months later, Christ's was running a nautical collection auction. I walked over and put several bids on the low end

expecting to maybe win one, but I won them all."

Upstairs, Ms. Frank stopped at the model J. Pierpont Morgan approved for final construction of his yacht Corsair. "When Peter first said he'd bought a boat, I literally thought that was what he meant," she said. "I didn't know he was going to bring home stuff like this. They're fabulous."

In the master bedroom, with a sunset view of palmettos, teeming marshland and the Intracoastal Waterway, the most arresting feature is an Eric Zener painting of a swimmer diver that Ms. Frank found at the Hancock Gallery in New York. "I just thought it was a neat painting to hang over your bed," she said. "Dive right in."

Ms. Frank dedicated a downstairs bathroom to Poe, displaying a tiny sculpture of Poe she calls Little Edgar, a plastic Poe action figure and cartoon from The New Yorker including one that shows Poe returning the Christmas gift of a caged raven, explaining, "He only knows one word."

When she's on Sullivan's Island, Ms. Frank writes with her laptop at a desk in an upstairs bedroom or at the dining room table. For editing and rereading, she likes a rocker on the large back porch, which has a slot pine ceiling painted sky blue and a railing of carved cedar posts. "I like to sit out there and be very quiet," she said. "Watching the night sky and hearing the ocean roll in on the other side of the island. The night breeze is my drug of choice."

During the daytime, things aren't always so placid on the porch, which altogether holds 12 wooden rockers. They are frequently filled with chattering friends and members of her extended family. So are the swimming pool and hot tub.

"We have big parties," Ms. Frank said. "We have a four-burner stove and a rotisserie, and I make a hundred burgers on the Fourth of July and the pool looks like a bowl of wonton soup — everyone's just bobbing around."

Mr. Blanchard, the cousin who worked on the renovation and now sometimes helps out as a caretaker, re-

called coming upon a pool party one day when he went to the house to check on things during the Franks' absence, expecting no one would be there. "I saw a guy and said, 'Are y'all supposed to be here?'" Mr. Blanchard said. "He turned around and it was Stephen Colbert."

A Charleston native, Mr. Colbert is a neighbor of the Franks both on Sullivan's Island and in Montclair, and they had invited him to use the pool. "He's a darling," Ms. Frank said. "His wife's darling and his kids are darling. Just a really nice family."

Eventually, the Franks will retire — given the current global financial situation, Mr. Frank said that date might come even sooner than he had hoped. Will they settle full-time on Sullivan's Island?

"Mr. Frank and I are in negotiations over that at the moment," Ms. Frank said.

A sticking point, both agreed, is the smotheringly hot summers. "There's a joke that the only thing that separates Charleston from the bottom floor of hell in the summertime is a screen door," Ms. Frank said.

The couple may keep an apartment in Manhattan. But Mr. Frank said the Rave-Inne is looking better every day. He has become increasingly smitten with Charleston cuisine, the couple's wide circle of local friends and fishing excursions with Ms. Frank's family. "I came from a small family," he said, "but her family is like shrimp — there are thousands of them."

The Vagabond Villa recently went on the market again and sold for \$550,000. "I told Peter, 'See, you should have bought Momma's house,'" Ms. Frank said. "Then I'd be home making you a pot roast instead of standing here with you like a big shot."

Mr. Frank has no regrets. "I'm glad I didn't loan her the money," he said. "Writing 'Sullivan's Island' helped her to get through the grief with her mother. This outcome has been way better than the other options."



**AT EASE** A view of Rave-Inne, above, and Ms. Frank in one of the dozen rocking chairs on the front porch.

## RETURN TO SULLIVANS ISLAND 2009 TOUR

Tuesday, June 30, 2009

12:00 PM Signing

**College of Charleston Student Bookstore**

160 Calhoun Street  
Charleston, SC 29401  
843-953-5518

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

12:00 PM Luncheon

**University of South Carolina- Beaufort Continuing  
Education**

Sea Pines Country Club  
30 Governors Road  
Hilton Head Island, SC 29928  
843-671-2345  
(ticketed event)

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

7:00 PM Signing

**Barnes & Noble**

7620 Rivers Avenue  
North Charleston, SC 29406  
843-572-2322

Thursday, July 2, 2009

7:00 PM Cocktail Reception

**Charleston Library Society**

164 King Street  
Charleston, SC 29401  
843-723-9912  
(ticketed event)

Friday, July 3, 2009

6:00 PM Cocktail Reception

**Waldenbooks**

Charleston Place Hotel  
205 Meeting Street  
Charleston, SC 29401

Monday, July 6, 2009

4:00 PM Discussion & Signing

**Litchfield Books**

Pawleys Island Community Church  
10304 Ocean Highway  
Pawleys Island SC 29585  
843-237-4449  
(ticketed event)

Tuesday, July 7, 2009

12:00 PM Luncheon

**Burry Bookstore**

Black Creek Arts Center  
116 West College Avenue  
Hartsville, SC 29550  
(ticketed event)

Tuesday, July 7, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing

**Concord Friends of the Library**

Charles A. Cannon  
Memorial Library-Concord  
27 Union Street North  
Concord, NC 28025  
704-920-2050

Wednesday, July 8, 2009

10:30 AM Luncheon

**High Point Literary League**

High Point University  
833 Montlieu Avenue  
High Point, NC 27262  
(ticketed event)

Wednesday, July 8, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing

**Public Library of Charlotte  
& Mecklenburg County**

ImaginOn  
300 East 7th Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
704-973-2780  
(ticketed event)

(continued ...)



Thursday, July 9, 2009

6:00 PM Signing  
**Books-A-Million**  
2441 Whiskey Road  
**Aiken, SC 29803**  
803-642-0135

Friday, July 10, 2009

6:30 PM Discussion & Signing  
**Friends of the Richland County Library**  
1431 Assembly Street  
**Columbia, SC 29201**  
803-799-9084  
(ticketed event)

Saturday, July 11, 2009

3:00 PM Signing  
**Barnes & Noble**  
1716 Towne Center Way  
**Mount Pleasant, SC 29464**  
843-216-9756

Sunday, July 12, 2009

1:00 PM Signing  
**Bay Street Trading**  
808 Bay Street  
**Beaufort, SC 29902**  
843-524-2000

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing  
**The Book Mark**  
299 Atlantic Boulevard  
**Atlantic Beach, FL 32233**  
904-241-9026

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

11:30 AM Luncheon  
**Amelia Island Book Festival**  
The Ritz Carlton  
4750 Amelia Island Parkway  
**Amelia Island, FL 32034**  
904-277-1100

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing  
**Savannah Book Festival**  
Trinity United Methodist Church  
225 West President Street  
**Savannah, GA 31401**  
(ticketed event)

Thursday, July 16, 2009

11:30 AM Discussion & Signing  
**Harbour Club**  
35 Prioleau Street  
**Charleston, SC 29401**  
843-723-9680  
(ticketed event)

Monday, July 20, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing  
**St. Louis County Library**  
1640 South Lindbergh Blvd.  
**St. Louis, MO 63131**  
314-994-3300

Wednesday, July 22, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing  
**Barnes & Noble**  
150 East 86<sup>th</sup> Street  
**New York, NY 10028**

Thursday, July 23, 2009

7:00 PM Discussion & Signing  
**Watchung Booksellers**  
54 Fairfield Street  
**Montclair, NJ 07042**  
973-744-7177

Friday, July 24, 2009

6:30 PM Discussion & Signing  
**Clinton Bookshop**  
33 Main Street  
**Clinton, NJ 08809**  
908-735-8811