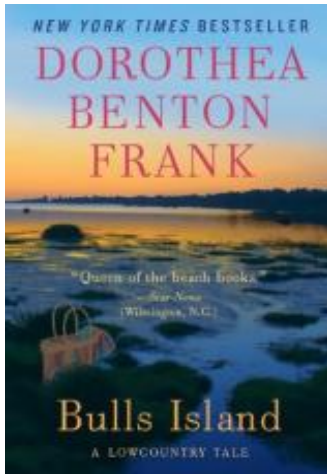


# Bulls Island: A Lowcountry Tale

by Dorothea Benton Frank

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## About the Book

Elizabeth "Betts" McGee loved those lazy afternoons on pristine Bulls Island in the Carolina Lowcountry. But everything came crashing down when tragic fate --- coupled with nasty rumor and innuendo --- ended her engagement to Charleston golden boy J.D. Langley of the fabulously wealthy (and fabulously snooty) Langley clan. Betts left soon after, and she hasn't been back in nearly 20 years.

Successfully reinventing herself in New York City, Betts is now a top banking executive and heading up the most important project of her career, but it'll transform the untouched island she loved in her youth into something unrecognizable. And it's forcing her to return to the bosom of her estranged family, where she may not be welcomed with open arms. Worse still, it's uniting her with ex-flame J.D., who's changed...but perhaps not enough.

And then there's that crazy alligator...

## Discussion Guide

1. Betts McGee is a modern woman with a high-pressure job at a mostly male-dominated private equity firm where ?You had to be twice as right, twice as qualified, and twice as anything else the assignment required.? How has working in this environment made her the woman she is when we first meet her?
2. What do you think of Betts' decision to keep Adrian's father and the rest of her family a secret? What would you have done in her shoes?

3. After the tragic accident that took her mother's life, Betts and her father and sister, Joanie, become estranged and she leaves South Carolina for New York. Why do you think her father didn't try harder to mend fences? Why do you think Joanie is so difficult with Betts?

4. Do you think J.D.'s parents have any culpability in the accident that rainy night? Louisa is a formidable Southern matriarch. Do you have anyone like her in your own family? Do you think she's more concerned with appearances than her son's happiness?

5. J.D. has a very dysfunctional marriage to Valerie. Why do you think he's stayed in it so long? Do you think he's overly harsh with his wife at times? Did you find yourself feeling sorry for her at any point? How did you feel about her at the end of the novel?

6. After being in Charleston and facing down her past, Betts reflects: "Because of three choices I had made almost twenty years ago during the worst trauma of my life --- to leave Charleston, to have my baby, and to keep that child a secret. It didn't seem fair. But life, the universe, fate --- call it what you want --- the Force did not seem to be particularly concerned with an equitable distribution of happiness." Before she left for Charleston, would you say Betts was happy with her life? Do you think not knowing his father had any adverse effects on Adrian?

7. Why do you think Betts decided to go out with Vinny despite the red flags? Do you think she was deliberately trying to go for the exact opposite of J.D.?

8. Were you surprised about the reveal of young Mickey's parentage? How would you react if you were J.D.? Could his father have handled the situation differently?

9. When she's summoned back to New York after the bad press over the Bulls Island development project, her boss Ben tries to counsel Betts with the sage words: "Life's complicated? Try and keep it simple." What do you think of his advice?

10. Were you shocked about the events at the opening ceremony? Did you think Vinny and/or Valerie had something to do with the horrible incident?

11. After the secrets of Adrian's father and Betts' family are revealed, what do you think of everyone's reactions to the news?

12. Have you ever visited Bulls Island or any of the Lowcountry locales featured in this story? If you've never been, does reading BULLS ISLAND make you want to do so?

## Author Bio

Dorothea Benton Frank was the author of 20 bestselling novels set in the Low Country of South Carolina. She passed away on September 2, 2019 at the age of 67 following a brief struggle with leukemia.

Photo Credit: Debbie Zammit

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