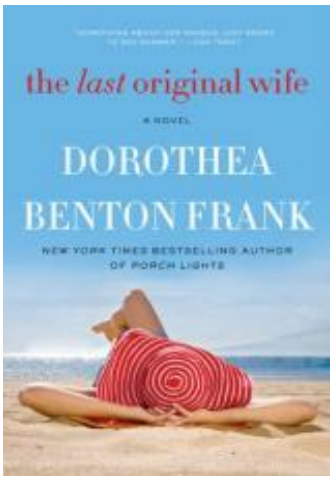
ReadingGroupGuides
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The Last Original Wife

by Dorothea Benton Frank



About the Book

Leslie Anne Greene Carter is The Last Original Wife among her husband Wesley?s wildly successful Atlanta social set. His cronies have all traded in the mothers of their children they promised to love and cherish --- ?til death did them part --- for tanned and toned young Barbie brides.

If losing the social life and close friends she adored wasn?t painful enough, a series of setbacks shake Les?s world and push her to the edge. She?s had enough of playing the good wife to a husband who thinks he?s doing her a favor by keeping her around. She?s not going to waste another minute on people she doesn?t care to know. Now, she?s going to take some time for herself --- in the familiar comforts and stunning beauty of Charleston, her beloved hometown. In her brother?s stately historic home, she?s going to reclaim the carefree girl who spent lazy summers sharing steamy kisses with her first love on Sullivans Island. Along Charleston?s live oak- and palmetto-lined cobblestone streets, under the Lowcountry?s dazzling blue sky, Les will indulge herself with icy cocktails, warm laughter, divine temptation and bittersweet memories. Daring to listen to her inner voice, she will realize what she wants?and find the life of which she?s always dreamed.

Told in the alternating voices of Les and Wes, THE LAST ORIGINAL WIFE is classic Dorothea Benton Frank: an intoxicating tale of family, friendship, self-discovery, and love, that is as salty as a Lowcountry breeze and as invigorating as a dip in Carolina waters on a sizzling summer day.

Discussion Guide

1. Describe Leslie and Wesley. Who are they as people? Do they see each other for who they truly are? Do they like each other as people?

2. Why does Leslie call herself ?the last original wife?? Is she proud of this designation? Does it propel her to continue

her situation? What impact does her friends? divorces have on her own life and outlook?

3. Leslie tells the psychiatrist, Dr. Katz, ?Wes?s friends were married to girls who are young enough to be their daughters. I didn?t *want* to spend every holiday and weekend for the rest of my life with a bunch of Barbies?These insipid young women would *never* be my friends. Moreover, I didn?t *want* them to be my friends.? Even though she doesn?t have much in common with these younger women, should Leslie have tried to give them a chance? Is being friendly with a new, younger wife a sign of disloyalty?

4. Leslie and Wes have two adult children. Talk about their relationship with their kids. What kind of parents are they? Did they raise their daughter and son well?

5. One of the most important people in Leslie?s life is her brother, Harlan. Why did she allow herself to be separated from him for so long? What does Harlan bring to her life that is lacking in Atlanta?

6. What happens to Les emotionally when she heads to Charleston to see Harlan? Why is Charleston important to her?

7. While she?s in Charleston, Leslie learns a great deal about Josephine Pinckney. How does Miss Pinckney inspire Leslie?

8. Being in Charleston, Les is reunited with her first love, Jonathan. Compare him with Wes. What does Jonathan provide Les that Wes does not? Do you think she and Jonathan will live happily ever after?

9. Wes and his friends are all in late middle age. Do you think that younger generations of men will be different? How does Wes see himself and his friends? Have their financial achievements given them a false sense of security about their lives? What do you think will happen to Wes?

10. If you?ve read other books by Dorothea Benton Frank, how does THE LAST ORIGINAL WIFE compare with them?

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

Critical Praise

?Dottie Frank?s books have the fizz of a gin and tonic, the hilarity of a night out at a comedy club and the warmth of a South Carolina sun. Dip in, dive in, but no matter how you go, you?ll love her. THE LAST ORIGINAL WIFE is a keeper.?

?Adriana Trigiani, *New York Times* bestselling author of BIG STONE GAP and THE SHOEMAKER?S WIFE

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Publication Date: June 11, 2013
Genres: Fiction
Hardcover: 368 pages
Publisher: William Morrow
ISBN-10: 0062132466
ISBN-13: 9780062132468