



Shem Creek

Dorothea Benton Frank

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Pat Conroy has called her books “hilarious and wise”, noting that they are “funny, sexy and usually damp with sea water.” Anne Rivers Siddons said of **Sullivans Island** that it “roared with life.” Now Dorothea Benton Frank takes us back to the Lowcountry to introduce a whole new cast of characters whose lives will surely move your heart. Linda Breland has no experience managing a restaurant, but then neither did Brad Jackson, and he owns the place.

Meet Linda Breland, single parent of two teenage daughters. The oldest, Lindsey, who always held her younger sister in check, is leaving for college. And Gracie, her Tasmanian devil, is giving her nightmares. Linda’s personal life? Well, between the married men, the cold New Jersey winters, her pinched wallet and her ex-husband who marries a beautiful, successful woman ten years younger than she is—let’s just say, Linda has seen enough to fill a thousand pages.

As the story opens, she is barreling down Interstate 95, bound for Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, the land of her ancestors. Welcomed by the generous heart of her advice dispensing sister, Mimi, Linda and her daughters slowly begin to find their way and discover a sweeter rhythm of life.

And then there’s Brad Jackson, a former investment banker of Atlanta, Georgia who hires her to run his restaurant on Shem Creek. Like everyone else, Brad’s got a story of his own—namely an almost ex-wife, Loretta who is the kind of gal who gives women a bad name.

The real protagonist of this story is the Lowcountry itself. The magical waters of Shem Creek, the abundant wildlife and the astounding power of nature give this tiny corner of the planet its infallible reputation as a place for introspection, contemplation and healing.

As in all her previous work, you’ll find Shem Creek to be compulsively readable, irreverent but warm and blazingly authentic—and you’ll dread reaching the last page. It is her vivid writing, colorful characters and rich narrative that have made Dorothea Benton Frank one of our nation’s greatest storytellers. **Shem Creek** is a triumphant novel that proves we are all entitled to a second chance. The challenge is to learn how to recognize it when it comes and to know which chance to take.

Shem Creek Details

Date : Published (first published 2002)

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Author : Dorothea Benton Frank

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Holly says

The first book I read on vacation was Dorothea Benton Frank's Shem Creek. All of her books are based in South Carolina, which is one reason I'm such a fan. What was really cool was that we actually drove over Shem Creek while I was reading this book in the car - COOL. Anyway, like her others, I really enjoyed this book. Most of her stories have a similar premise - a woman (usually divorced) returns home to the South with at least one teenaged daughter. However, the stories above and beyond that are all very different and enjoyable. They usually make you laugh and cry. She has a great sense of humor. And there is usually a good romantic storyline as well.

Ellen says

Fun book, easy and light reading canned a bit, but sweet. Find it interesting that there are recipes in the back. Think I may to try the biscuit recipe and the pound cake.

Patricia says

A wonderful story that made me laugh and cry! But the sad tears were replaced many times over with happy tears. Another must read by Ms. Frank.

Donna says

Enjoyed this book. Linda did the right thing getting her daughters out of New Jersey after her divorce. It took her awhile to realize what everyone else knew, that she and Brad had fallen in love. It took a confrontation with Amy and a fire at the restaurant and Gracie in the hospital to hit the nail on the head. Love DBF books...

Janice says

Starts off well. Linda Breland, single mom of two teen daughters, is tired of her life in NJ. She heads down to SC to her sister's to see if she can start over. We see her problems with her ex, her job, the men she dates, and her kids. Then we get her to SC where she lives with her supportive sister who is glad to have her around. She finds a job with a good group of people. Then all of a sudden the problems pretty much stop. The teen daughter who was getting trouble at every turn, stops. It's just too miraculous, just like the quick romance at the end. We go from slow, well-crafted story to finishing it up in a NY minute. Shouldn't the slow pace have been at the end in SC? Like her life wouldn't have been good if she hadn't found a man? She couldn't have enjoyed her good fortune? I wouldn't have minded leaving it on an up note, but it just seemed too rushed at the end.

Amy says

I think I'll give Ms Frank a rest for awhile. The last couple books I've read seem to be pretty similar in plotting and a little formulaic. I like the low country venue, but "woman somehow gets to big city, gets married, has kids, husband cheats (epically), woman flees back to low country where she deals with rotten history, makes new and reacquaints with old friends, finds the man of her dreams and lives happily ever after has been done, ad nauseam.

Elizabeth Oporto says

This book was pretty mediocre, even taking into account my low expectations/needling an easy read for a long car ride.

Vicky says

Ehh

Michele says

I hate to give a fellow South Carolinian one star, but I really didn't like this book. I grew up in Mt. Pleasant, where the story take place and it was really neat to see real places from my hometown in print, but I thought the writing was mediocre, the story was sappy and there wasn't really a good ending. It was like she got close to the end and the publishers said, "Ok, we need your manuscript right now!" and she just ended it.

Melissa says

Another great book in this series. This author definitely doesn't disappoint. The characters were definitely relatable and there was enough going on in the story to not make it boring.

Babs says

This by far is my favorite book by D. Frank. I loved Linda, her sister Mimi and her girls Gracie and Lindsay. They were all a hoot. Brad and his gang made the story so wonderful to read. I could read this book again and again. Linda shows what a real single parent is like and how easy it can be to start over. Just a lovely read all around.

Sharon Huether says

A mother with custody of her daughters leave NJ for her home in SC. She needs a fresh start since her divorce. Her sister is there in Mt Pleasant. Linda gets an interesting job in a popular local restaurant. As she works there she is observed by all and is well liked, especially by the owner. To her surprise he asked her to marry him. The story brings out love, friendship, second chances and family. Great story

Marleen says

This is a delightful and cute story by one of my favorite authors. I love how the beauty and atmosphere of the Low Country (SC) jumps off the page. “Shem Creek” was certainly a bit lighter than any other books I’ve read so far by Dorothea Benton Frank, but nonetheless it was very entertaining and the book was over too soon! It’s amazing how Benton Frank captures the rhythm of this uniquely beautiful area around Charleston. Another plus here is the great ensemble cast – the people working at the seafood restaurant “Jackson Hole”. These totally awesome personalities become friends and unmissable to the main character: Linda Breland, a single mother who, tired of living hand-to-mouth in New Jersey, decides to move herself and her two teenage daughters to her distant hometown of Mount Pleasant, S.C., where her sister, Mimi, still lives. She quickly finds work at this seafood restaurant. I actually have eaten at such a place and I could easily imagine the ambiance.

A truly pleasant read!

One little remark though: I have never read a book with so many exclamation points! (smile).

Judy says

I fell in love with South Carolina and the characters of this story. Linda Breland, mother of 2 teenage daughters has decided that life in New Jersey is for the birds. She needs to go back to her roots and so she packs her daughters and her car and leaves her house and her job to head to Charleston, to Mount Pleasant and the shores of Shem Creek.

Linda is brash, bold, and a bit irreverent. She is also fiercely loyal, a loving mother, a devoted sister and a downright valuable employee. Just give her a chance and she will have you falling in love with her.

This is one of the rare books that put a tear in my eye. That never happens to me anymore. This story was mostly believable, had the ending I expected, but it took a few twists and turns that were unexpected. The minor characters, Louise, Duane and Mimi were likable and believable too. I do believe I have found a new favorite author.

Ana says

Just an easy, sappy summer read.

