



## Plantation

*Dorothea Benton Frank*

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## **Plantation** Dorothea Benton Frank

When Caroline Wimbley Levine learns that her mother, Miss Lavinia, has supposedly gone mad, she leaves the big city bustle of Manhattan and returns to Tall Pines Plantation. Caroline originally left Tall Pines to escape her feisty, eccentric mother and her drunken brother, Trip, but when Miss Lavinia dies, Caroline is forced to come to terms with her family's troubled history as well as her failing relationship with her husband. As Caroline reminisces about her past rebelliousness and her childhood, she realizes that her father's sudden and tragic death many years before served as a catalyst for the family's disintegration. Caroline and Trip also learn that their seemingly selfish and self-assured mother was not so uncaring after all.

## **Plantation Details**

Date : Published March 2nd 2004 by Jove (first published July 1st 2001)

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Author : Dorothea Benton Frank

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## From Reader Review Plantation for online ebook

### **Gloria says**

This may have even been better than Sullivan's Island, which was the first Frank book for me. It was so clever and funny, but yet so poignant. The characters were so well developed--it was a really fun read, for sure. Hmmm, which Dorothea Benton Frank book I will tackle next?????

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### **Stacy says**

moves right to the top of my list.....can't wait for "Lowcountry Summer".....God Bless Dottie Frank!

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### **JudiAnne says**

I picked this novel up at a local library book sale for 25 cents and I got a big surprise when I opened the book and started reading. I couldn't stop turning the pages of this mesmerizing story of a family in distress in the Low Country, which are the islands surrounding Charleston, SC. As I was reading this wonderful novel I couldn't help thinking the writing style seemed similar to a cross between Pat Conroy and Fannie Flagg, two popular southern authors. This novel will be a revisit for anyone who has been to the shores of South Carolina and for anyone who has not, I will bet that you will make plans to visit soon after reading this smart and sassy tale of the shores of the Low Country. Also, the language is right on for that area. I only say this because I read a comment where a reviewer asks the question, "Who talks like that"?

From page one you know that the matriarch of the family, Lavinia has died since the prologue starts out with her funeral. From the first chapter the story goes back a few months and brings you up to that time. During this time you will get to know and love the characters of the dysfunctional Wimbly family and their friends. "Plantation" is such an emotional roller coaster that I promise they will keep you smiling, laughing out loud and boo hooing like a baby.

Caroline Wimbly has fled to New York City to get away from her mother and the Low Country. She marries and has a son who has learning disabilities. When her disastrous marriage falls apart, she and her son flee NYC to return to her home where she feels safe. Even though her brother is in financial trouble, and his wife is a loose tongued, mean spirited piece of trash she begins to feel as though she has really come home. In light of all of this and while she is in the mist of several other colorful characters, she finds comfort in the arms of her cantankerous but larger than life mother and her surrogate mother, Millie, the housekeeper. Caroline begins a journey of new found love of family and her very own Low Country of South Carolina. As, they say in the south, "It's a hoot, ya heah?"

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### **Rebecca says**

Lord, I love this woman's writing. If you are looking for fast-paced excitement and steamy sex, buy a

different book. But if you want to sink into a slow, sensuous taste of the deep South, with all its traditions, its failings, and its triumphs, if you want to feel the low, sleepy waters of the Low Country move like warm honey through your veins, then Plantation will take you there in style. ALL of Dorothea Benton Franks books that I have read to date (and I am sadly behind) leave me wanting to sip mimosas in the shade of a magnolia tree next to a lazy river.

Don't worry about reading the Low Country Tales in order. This is a "series" connected by geography, not plot line or characters. Grab the first one you see, find a comfy spot to settle in for a while, take a deep breath and relax.

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### **Kimberly says**

The characters in Plantation are fantastic! Love them (Miss Lavinia) or not (Frances Mae), they are all vividly portrayed and intriguing. Certain characters reminded me so much of members of my own family, especially Trip's brood (I probably shouldn't say that, haha!). Frank's descriptions of the ACE Basin are so colorful and graphic you can feel the mugginess in the air, taste Miss Sweetie's strawberry jam, and smell Miss Lavinia's roses. This is one of the few books I've read that emotes both humor and sorrow. As much as I enjoyed the story, it meandered a bit in parts for me; I felt as though it could have used some more editing. Still, I would rate it at 4.5 stars, rounded up to 5. I'm really looking forward to reading the sequel, Lowcountry Summer: A Plantation Novel.

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### **Clare says**

One star is too many for this book. In the spirit of full disclosure, I need to say that I could not get past the first 100 pages before I put it down in disgust. The author relies on stereotypes (a pregnant woman thinks she is going to have a girl because she craves pink food), improbabilities (a woman says nothing to her husband after calling his hotel room and his jealous ex-wife answers the phone), and misinformation (the information shared regarding learning disabilities is misleading and just plain WRONG!). This is not a book for me!

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### **Jacqui says**

I love the molasses-y southerness of this book - the music of the speech, the visceral presence of the setting, the irreverent reverence of "Mother," the slow waltz of character interplay.

And it was the perfect book for this moment in my life.

warning: sort of spoiler alert for next paragraph...

Having just been blind-sided by the sudden death of my mother, I, like Caroline in the novel, find myself stopped short by brief glimpses of her presence. I'll see it out of the corner of my eye. There I am, dressed in mom's clothes, standing with her familiar stoop, excitedly chattering in that way I always found so annoying and endearing. Eerie, yet wonderful.

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### **Carolyn says**

I've read several excellent novels set in the Low Country of the U.S. Southeast (roughly, along the tidal coast between Charleston and Savannah) by three authors: Pat Conroy, Anne Rivers Siddons, and Dorothea Benton Frank. Though a long way from being a native, I'm familiar with the territory because my husband grew up in Savannah and one of my brothers has lived in the Charleston area for 45 years or so.

As with the others, this book's characters are so richly drawn I felt as if I knew them as well as members of my own family by the time I finished. They all have their problems and their character flaws, their moments of joy and grief. Most of them learn and grow. The plot is definitely secondary here. The story is mostly a family history, described sometimes by a mother, sometimes by her daughter, and sometimes by a neutral narrator. The land, the family, and the 19th century gracious home bind the characters with ties that are sometimes elastic, but almost unbreakable.

I enjoyed the story very much and will definitely read more of Ms. Frank's sagas of the South.

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### **Patricia says**

I enjoyed the Prologue tremendously. The next 100 pages were just okay, but it kept getting better after that. I loved the character development and the setting in the Lowcountry of South Carolina!

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### **Alyce Joines says**

An "eyes wide open" look at mother-daughter relationships, *Plantation* introduces us to Caroline Wimbley Levine who left her southern home for the big city, married and had a son. She also left behind her mother, Miss Lavinia, and her brother, Trip. Caroline comes back to the plantation after both call her with wildly varying stories of an incident in which Miss Lavinia fired a gun at Trip. Finding the truth behind this story and many others which Caroline had believed since she was a child gives her a new perspective on her family and the plantation which her ancestors built. The book is a slow roller-coaster ride of emotions, long but quickly read, a good choice as a summer beach book.

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### **Zainab Shah says**

Ehh it was a pretty good book.

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### **Amanda says**

I really enjoyed reading this book, until the end; not that the ending was bad...I just don't care for sad endings. The whole book tended to be on the humorous side but the ending took a turn for the serious that

didn't really mesh with the tone of the rest of the book.

The main character, Caroline, deals with major life changes with a quick wit and sassy southern charm. She grows up idolizing her father who was taken away from the family far too early. Caroline is left with her brother while her mother falls apart with the loss of her beloved partner in life. These details might have been more helpful towards the beginning of the book, rather than in the middle, as to explain Caroline's reluctance at returning to Tall Pine to lick her wounds.

You will cheer for Caroline and the Wimbley's all the way through till the end. This book doesn't disappoint, but falls a bit short at the end for me.

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### **Christina says**

Nice easy read. I liked it a lot...was it a five star read? heavens, no, but it was an entertaining easy read where I didn't need to think at all so it was just the book to get me out of my reading slump.  
It dragged a wee bit for the last third, but then don't all things drag a bit in the South ? :)

2 and a half star read...I gave it the extra half here on good reads, because it helped me get out of my reading slump.

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### **Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says**

I love Dorothea Benton Frank. She always writes wonderful stories with very strong women characters and Plantation is no exception. Millie is wonderful with her fiery personality and her Gullah dialect and her potions. She is a great sidekick to Miss Lavinia, the Queen of Tall Pines. Miss Lavinia is eccentric as they come. She rules her little world with a strict discipline - Miss Manners must be proud. She is irreverent. She is funny. She is warm when she wants to be. And she loves to have fun and loves her men. And she is dying. It is at an inopportune time - she is just discovering her two children, Trip and Caroline and her grandson, Eric.

Caroline Wimbley Levine has returned to Tall Pines to see about Mother. That is what she tells herself. Miss Lavinia could not be "off her rocker," could she? There is more to Trip's story that meets the eye - why does he need money so frequently and more importantly why does he want to remove Miss Lavinia from her throne at Tall Pines? Her marriage to Richard is shaky - good gawd girl, what were ya thinkin'!?! *Plantation* is Caroline's and Lavinia's stories in the last months of the Queen of Tall Pines' life. It is the story in which Caroline becomes Miss Caroline of Tall Pines with Miss Lavinia, Millie, Miss Sweetie, and Miss Nancy all helping.

But I only have one complaint about this delicious book - Frances Mae! What a work she is - an always pregnant piece of redneck trailer park white trash! Ohhhhhh my Southern is showing!

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### **Marcia says**

Plantation by Dorothea Benton Frank has been on the "gotta get to this book" list for some time. Now that a

follow-up book, *Lowcountry Summer*, has just come out, I figured it was time to get to *Plantation* which I had downloaded to my Kindle last year.

*Plantation* was a story of a family finding its true self again after years of misinterpretations and misunderstandings. I enjoyed seeing Caroline Wimbley Levine find her true heart and home, although it seemed at times that she certainly was taking a lot of needless side trips along the way. I have put *Lowcountry Summer* on my library reserve list; however, I see from many reviews that this follow-up to *Plantation* is getting some of the same bad reviews as did *Return to Sullivan's Island*. Sometimes, unless it is clear that the author set out to write a series, characters may be best served by our remembering them as we last knew them in print or as we, the readers, chose to imagine what happened next.

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