

## Bulls Island

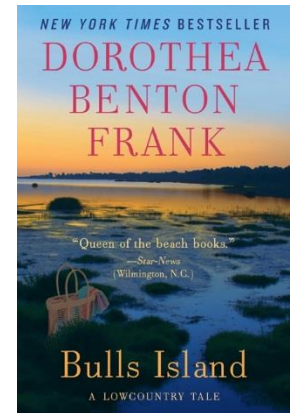
William Morrow

By Dorothea Benton Frank

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### Introduction

A satisfying tale of honor, chance, and star-crossed love, infused with Southern wit, grace, and charm, from the *New York Times* bestselling author Dorothea Benton Frank.



### Questions for Discussion

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?