

KAREN WHITE

Karen White's love affair with the south has taken her across much of the region, from her home in Atlanta to Savannah, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina's Lowcountry and the mountains of North Carolina. Her travels have provided inspiration as well as details for the settings of her books, including her recent New York Times bestseller, **On Folly Beach**. Now, in **FALLING HOME**, she returns to Georgia, her home state, to recapture the small town ambiance her Mississippi grandmother taught her to love.



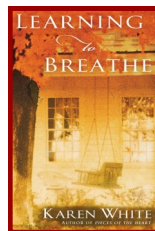
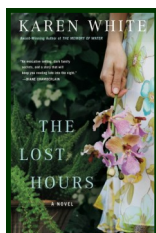
A visit to Monroe, in nearby Walton County, inspired Karen to create Walton, **FALLING HOME**'s fictional town. Karen fell hard for Monroe, which is just an hour away from her Atlanta home. For her it epitomized the type of small Southern community she'd always longed to claim as her own. Karen also discovered and embraced the architecture of the town, particularly its antebellum homes.

"My parents are from Mississippi," says Karen, "so I've always considered myself a Southern girl. I've lived all over the world so I didn't actually take root in the South until I moved to Georgia eighteen years ago. But I did spend most of my childhood wishing I had a Southern hometown to call my own, though I learned to be satisfied with visits to my grandmother's house in Indianola, Mississippi and the family ties that always brought us back there."

It may be the way Karen captures the intimacy and ambiance of a small southern town that enhances the emotional resonance of **FALLING HOME**. Readers have requested the out-of-print novel again and again, having searched their local bookstores to no avail. Originally published in 2002, the novel has now been extensively rewritten for re-publication. "I was hesitant at first," says Karen. "Readers told me they loved the story and characters, so it was hard to see what I might change. Then it clicked. I didn't want to change the story. I wanted to change some of the writing—to take the experience and education of having written nine other novels and to work at creating a better book."

In **FALLING HOME**, protagonist Cassie Madison has no desire to go home again. Estranged from her sister Harriet, determined to build her own life in New York, she stays away from Walton for fifteen years, returning to her hometown only when she learns her father may be dying. Almost as upsetting as her fear for her father is the knowledge that seeing Harriet again will mean facing the anger and hurt that fueled her absence. She plans to be in and out of Walton as quickly as possible. However no sooner do her high heels sink into the Georgia clay than her family's way of life is threatened and Cassie must decide whether to stay and fight or to run away again.

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Karen is well-known for her award-winning novels. They include Learning to Breathe, the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance (SIBA) 2009 Book of the Year Award finalist The House on Tradd Street, the highly praised The Memory of Water, the SIBA bestseller Pieces of the Heart, her first IndieBound* national bestseller The Color of Light, and her New York Times and SIBA bestsellers The Girl On Legare Street and On Folly Beach. On Folly Beach was also an IndieBound bestseller, and SIBA selected it as a summer 2010 *Okra Pick*.

Italian and French by ancestry, a southerner and a storyteller by birth, Karen has made her home in many different places. Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, she has also lived in Texas, New Jersey, Louisiana, Georgia, Venezuela and England, where she attended the American School in London. She returned to the states for college and graduated from New Orleans' Tulane University. Hailing from a family with roots firmly set in Biloxi and Indianola, Mississippi, Karen notes that "searching for home brings me to the south again and again." Karen credits her maternal grandmother Grace Bianca, to whom she dedicated The Lost Hours, with inspiring and teaching her through stories shared over many years. Karen also notes the hours she spent playing under the table in "MoMo's" Mississippi Delta kitchen and listening to the adults telling stories and gossiping. She believes those people and this time started her on the road to telling her own tales. The deal was sealed in the seventh grade when she skipped school and read Gone With The Wind. She knew—just knew—she was destined to grow up to be either Scarlet O'Hara or a writer.

Karen's novel The Memory of Water was a WXIA-TV *Atlanta & Company* Book Club Selection. Her work has been reviewed in Southern Living, Atlanta Magazine, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Huffington Post and by Fresh Fiction, among many others, and has been adopted by numerous independent booksellers for their book club recommendations. Her 2007 novel Learning to Breathe received several honors, notably the National Readers' Choice Award and the Booksellers' Best Award, which in 2009 was again presented to Karen, this time for The Memory of Water. Recently her novel The Girl On Legare Street was nominated for the SIBA Book of the Year Award. The House on Tradd Street was a finalist for that award in 2009, as well as a finalist for the Romance Writers of America's RITA award that same year.

Karen continues to work, write and spin tales of the south from her home in Atlanta where she lives with her husband, two children, their dog and the multiplicity of characters awaiting their own stories.

FALLING HOME

Karen White

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