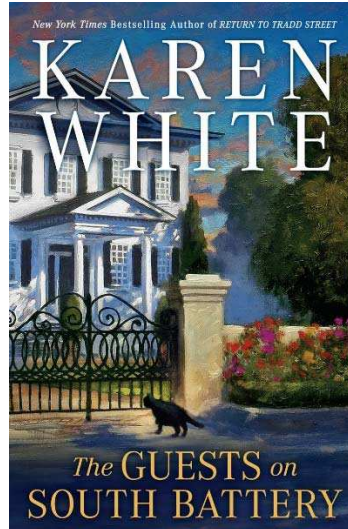


A Conversation with

Karen White

Author of THE GUESTS ON SOUTH BATTERY



How long has it been since the last Tradd Street book? Was it hard to get back into Melanie's head?

Karen: The fourth book in the series, *Return to Tradd Street*, came out in January 2014, three years before installment #5, *The Guests on South Battery*.

Because Melanie has been with me since the first book in the series, *The House on Tradd Street*, I've lived with her in my head for eight years so I feel as if we really know each other. Also, and I will neither confirm nor deny this, people who know me well and have read this series believe that Melanie and Karen White have a lot in common.

How has Melanie changed in the time that has passed? She's a mother to twins and a wife, how has this affected her?

Karen: Her life is no longer just about her. She relishes this change, but has also matured and can recognize that she still has issues that she needs to work on. It's an ongoing battle, but she's up for the challenge.

You introduce a new character in THE GUESTS ON SOUTH BATTERY named Jayne. How did the idea for Jayne come about? Was she inspired by anyone?

Karen: Jayne wasn't inspired by a real person, but instead she was created because (without giving anything away) Melanie needed someone in her life (besides a nanny) as a possible threat to her newfound happiness. Melanie's not allowed to take down her guard – at least not until the last book in the series, and Jayne is the perfect character to unsettle her.

Speaking of characters inspired by people, the character of Meghan Black bears a certain resemblance to your daughter Meghan. What about them is similar? Does your daughter like your portrayal of the character based off her?

Karen: Both my daughter and I have always loved old houses, and Charleston, so when it came to her degree it was an obvious choice for her to choose a Masters in Historic Preservation program that was based in Charleston. And it just so happened that Melanie's best friend in the series, Dr. Sophie Wallen-Arasi, is a professor of Historic Preservation at the College of Charleston. It was a no-brainer to give Sophie a grad student who just happens to bear a startling resemblance to my daughter.

Meghan hasn't read the book yet so no comments yet, although I shared snippets without complaint. I think Meghan Black might be a slightly exaggerated version of Meghan White, but the similarities are startling.

What's your favorite part about the Tradd Street Series? Are these books more or less fun to write than your stand-alone novels?

Karen: Maybe it's because I've been with these characters for eight years, but I love writing the series more than any of my other books. The setting, the ever-expanding cast of characters, and the paranormal happenings make these books my favorites to write. They also give me the opportunity to inject more humor than I do in my stand alone books. Every time I start a new Tradd Street novel, it's like visiting old friends.

Finally, what is next for Melanie? Can we expect another Tradd Street book?

Karen: I think Melanie will continue to mature, to learn to be more trusting, to perhaps relax a little and become maybe a little less controlling of her environment. But she will always remain quirky.

Happily, there are two more books coming in the series!