

KAREN WHITE

Karen White has long been fascinated by ghost stories. “My dad used to tell me ‘true ghost stories’ when I was a little girl, guaranteeing that I wouldn’t actually sleep in my own bed until I was an adolescent.” Time passed and as Karen’s interest in the history and lore of the South grew, she uncovered more and more stories involving the dead, especially among her favorite places in Georgia and South Carolina’s Lowcountry. It’s not surprising that her three novels involving apparitions, The House on Tradd Street, The Girl on Legare Street and The Strangers on Montagu Street, take place in Charleston, where tales of ghostly sightings abound.



“One of my favorite Charleston legends is about Francis Simmons and his wife Ruth” she says. According to legend, in 1776, Ruth tricked Francis into marrying her and when he found out, he vowed to make her his wife in name only. After the wedding, he installed Ruth in the house at 131 Tradd Street and himself at 14 Legare. Still today, during the night, one may hear the sound of a horse-drawn carriage at 131 Tradd Street. It’s said to be Ruth returning home to her empty bed. Does Karen believe in ghosts? “Well,” she says, “my paternal grandmother spoke to them.” She adds, “though it has been said my family tree is chock full of crazy people.”

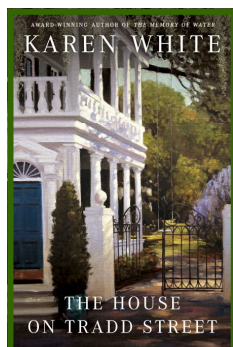
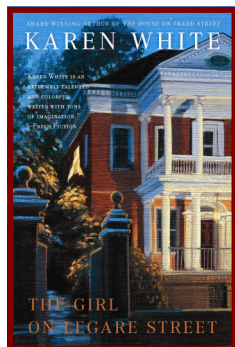
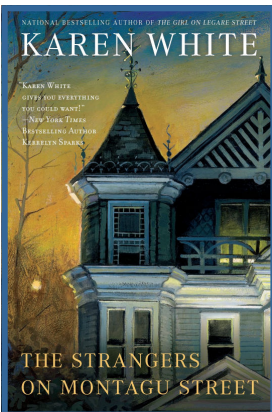
Karen takes advantage of every opportunity she can to spend time in Charleston, whether in person or vicariously. She’s always happy to return and to take readers with her as she does in her **Tradd Street** novels featuring Realtor Melanie Middleton, purveyor of historic homes. Melanie’s occupation, her ability to see, hear and talk to ghosts, and her Tradd Street home in a constant state of renovation, allow Karen to indulge in and share her exploration of Charleston’s architecture, history, urbanity, ambiance, and legends.

Her new **Tradd Street** book, **The Strangers on Montagu Street**, involves an antique dollhouse possessed by a malevolent spirit that will do anything to protect its secrets. Among the uniquely Charleston settings are a mid-19th century Victorian Queen Anne home, boutiques along King Street, White Point Gardens, Charleston City market, the Fireproof Building, which houses the South Carolina Historical Society, the Circular Church Cemetery, a garden designed by Loutrel Briggs boasting crape myrtles, wisteria and tea olives, and other locations Karen admires and enjoys.

Karen has traveled or lived in much of the south, 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 detail for the settings of her books, including the recent *New York Times* bestsellers, **The Beach Trees** (Mississippi and New Orleans), **Falling Home** (Georgia) and **On Folly Beach** (South Carolina). Her parents are both from Mississippi. However, Karen lived all over the world and, as she says, “didn’t actually take root in the South until I moved to Georgia eighteen years ago.”

Italian and French by ancestry, a southerner and a storyteller by birth and inclination, 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 gossiping and telling stories. 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.



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Each of Karen's fifteen novels is set in the South. Her first national bestseller, **The Color of Light**, unfolds on South Carolina's Pawleys Island. It appeared on the American Bookseller Association's IndieBound bestseller list, foreshadowing the strong relationship she enjoys with independent booksellers. Her first *New York Times* bestseller was **The Girl on Legare Street**, followed by **On Folly Beach**, **Falling Home** and **The Beach Trees**, which debuted at number 14 and remained on the list for five weeks.

Karen's writing has been honored with numerous awards and nominations including the Booksellers' Best Award and the National Readers' Choice Award. **On Folly Beach**, **The Girl on Legare Street** and **The House on Trade Street** were all nominated for the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance (SIBA) Book of the Year. SIBA also named **On Folly Beach** a Summer 2010 Okra Pick. Additionally, **On Folly Beach**, **The House on Tradd Street** and **Learning to Breathe** have all been finalists in the "Novels with Strong Romantic Elements" category for the prestigious RITA Award presented by the Romance Writers of America.

In 2010, *First for Women* magazine selected **Falling Home** as an "Editor's Pick" and **On Folly Beach** was presented as one of "10 Captivating Reads" for summer by WomansDay.com. **The Color of Light** was name among the "Top 10 Summer Reads" by *Atlanta* magazine.

Karen and her novels have been featured in numerous publications, including *Southern Living*, *Atlanta*, *Atlanta Woman*, *Woman's World*, *Southern Lady*, *Southern Season*, and *Jezebel* magazines. She has been interviewed by numerous television and radio outlets and coverage has appeared in major newspapers, such as the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and Charleston's *The Post and Courier*, as well as on dozens of book review and related online sites.

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

www.karen-white.com

THE STRANGERS ON MONTAGU STREET

Karen White

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