

# Under Magnolia: A Southern Memoir

By Frances Mayes

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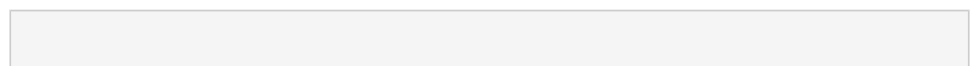
**A lyrical and evocative memoir from Frances Mayes, the Bard of Tuscany, about coming of age in the Deep South and the region's powerful influence on her life.**

The author of three beloved books about her life in Italy, including *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *Every Day in Tuscany*, Frances Mayes revisits the turning points that defined her early years in Fitzgerald, Georgia. With her signature style and grace, Mayes explores the power of landscape, the idea of home, and the lasting force of a chaotic and loving family.

From her years as a spirited, secretive child, through her university studies—a period of exquisite freedom that imbued her with a profound appreciation of friendship and a love of travel—to her escape to a new life in California, Mayes exuberantly recreates the intense relationships of her past, recounting the bitter and sweet stories of her complicated family: her beautiful yet fragile mother, Frankye; her unpredictable father, Garbert; Daddy Jack, whose life Garbert saved; grandmother Mother Mayes; and the family maid, Frances's confidant Willie Bell.

*Under Magnolia* is a searingly honest, humorous, and moving ode to family and place, and a thoughtful meditation on the ways they define us, or cause us to define ourselves. With acute sensory language, Mayes relishes the sweetness of the South, the smells and tastes at her family table, the fragrance of her hometown trees, and writes an unforgettable story of a girl whose perspicacity and dawning self-knowledge lead her out of the South and into the rest of the world, and then to a profound return home.

*From the Hardcover edition.*



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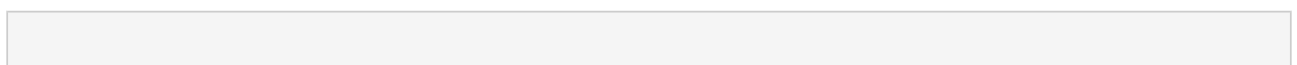
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## **Under Magnolia: A Southern Memoir** By Frances Mayes Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Mayes, adored for her famed Tuscany books (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 1996; *Every Day in Tuscany*, 2010), mined the murky depths of her family's history for her first novel, *Swan* (2002). She now returns to the scene of the crimes in both literal and figurative senses. Her "southern memoir" is a tale straight out of Faulkner, rife with episodes of dissipation and disillusion, parents who loved and fought with equally wild abandon, and ancestors with names like Big Mama and Daddy Jack. While on a book tour in Oxford, Mississippi, Mayes realized her southern roots ran deeper than she believed or would have liked. But she and her husband were sufficiently compelled to relocate from Northern California to North Carolina, settling in a university town with a far enough remove to allow her an objective distance from which to analyze the signature episodes of her childhood. With her trademark skill for capturing the essence of place and time, Mayes candidly reveals a youth riddled with psychological abuse and parental neglect that, nevertheless, ignited a fiery passion for adventure and self-discovery. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** A best-selling sensation worldwide, Mayes will galvanize readers with this vigorously promoted coming-of-age tale set on her home terrain. --Carol Haggas

Review

### **A BookPage Best Book of the Year**

Southern Independent Booksellers Association Spring 2014 Okra Pick

"The strength of *Under Magnolia* lies in the very claustrophobia Mayes aches to flee as a child...In certain heightened moments of this memoir, Mayes breathes the same air as [Carson] McCullers." --***New York Times Book Review***

"As gothic as anything Faulkner could have dreamed up, populated by characters straight out of a Flannery O'Connor story...a thorny memoir that strips away the polite Southern masks, sweet magnolias be damned. Unforgettable." -- ***Atlanta Journal Constitution***

"With perfect-pitch language, Mayes unblinkingly describes her growing-up years... One can almost taste the mushiness of 'a pot of once-green beans falling apart in salt pork'; one can almost smell the cloying scent of honeysuckle, gardenias and overripe peaches that infuse the always-too-humid air." -- **USAToday.com**

"Just the right balance of humor, irony and tragedy. And no tourist guide or coffee table book will offer a more sensually pleasing portrait of the culture, food, language, and landscape of the place she now calls home." --***Roanoke Times***

"*Under Magnolia* is a vibrant example of Mayes' literary artistry. Her memoir teems with beautiful, pellucid vignettes, described with a painter's eye for detail, [about a young girl maturing to adulthood amidst domestic tumult]." --***Arts Atlanta***

"You better believe we devoured every page of this delicious read." --**SouthernLiving.com**

"A memoir of luminous language and sensory memory that explores the concept of home, the growth of a woman—and the pull of the South on all those who have experienced the scent of magnolias on a summer's night or a tall, frosty glass of sweet tea on the porch." —***Live Happy magazine***

“With powerful, compact language and an uncanny skill with imagery, American writer Frances Mayes has raised the bar on writing memoirs.” —**Winnipeg Free Press**

“Mayes has the gift of transporting the reader to other worlds and vividly renders this visit to the South of a few decades ago.”—**Palm Beach Daily News**

“A wonderful memoir, searingly honest, beautifully descriptive and totally compelling.” —**M/C Reviews**

“A landmark event.”—**Wellington City Libraries**

“The prose is dazzling throughout...readers will not tire of Mayes’ splendid imagery.”— **Publishers Weekly**

“One of those books you want to devour but realize it’s more satisfying to savor for as long as possible.”—**Kirkus Reviews (starred)**

“A best-selling sensation worldwide, Mayes will galvanize readers with this...coming-of-age tale set on her home terrain.” —**Booklist**

“*Under Magnolia* is a gorgeous, dreamy remembrance of hot Southern afternoons, mothers in red lipstick and Shalimar, Elvis turned up loud to cover up the family troubles that ran deep. An unflinching love song to her simultaneously rich and troubled childhood, it is Mayes’ most generous work yet.” —**BookPage**

“[The] writing is so sensory and poetic you’re likely to find yourself, as I did, re-reading sentences over twice, three times, to catch the nuances, the meaning, the beauty... From the opening line, you’re hooked.” —**Enchanted Prose**

“Like the rest of America, I fell in love with Tuscany and Italy when I read Frances Mayes’s wondrous memoir, *Under the Tuscan Sun*. She followed her Tuscan books with a beautiful novel called *Swan*, which alerted me to her southern heritage. In her new southern memoir, *Under Magnolia*, Frances Mayes describes the birth of her extraordinary sensibility, the deep-pooled clarity of her writing, her giddy love of nature, and her sharp and satirical eye for those who brought her up to honorable womanhood in the tortured South of her girlhood. Her prose style is seamless to me and she writes in a royal style.” —**Pat Conroy, New York Times bestselling author of *The Prince of Tides* and *The Death of Santini***

“No other writer today breathes life into place like Frances Mayes. In *Under Magnolia*, she turns her prolific gift of language and description to the South and her childhood there. This memoir recalls bygone days filled with neighborhood characters, sultry weather, Sears Roebuck catalogues, smothered quail—all the trappings of a Southern childhood. *Under Magnolia* is a love song, a rich and beautiful book.” — **Ann Hood, author of *The Knitting Circle* and *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief***

“No one could have invented a more combustible, joy-starved pair of glam and oblivious parents or a more incandescent child to dive into the blue ruins, explore the sealed-off passages, blacked-out dreams and neglected outlets by the beams of her own incredulous eyes; then break the surface a smart-mouthed, truth-seeing sensualist, fully in attendance to the vibratory moment. The deft framing, the exacting word picks, apposite references, high speed wit, singled out synecdoches of a life; the cadence, phrasing, and pulse of a muted Georgian accent are all signature to the prose and poetry, stove-tops and passport stamps of Frances Mayes. In her memoir *Under Magnolia* they are second skin. When she comes clean, you feel, can I say it, cleansed. Freer. Floatable. What an offering.” — **C.D. Wright, author of *One with Others***

*“Under Magnolia is much more than an entrancing memoir: it is a work of art that defies the distinction between prose and poetry or novels and autobiographies. It is also much more than a personal narrative: it is an unflinching meditation on the relation between self and culture, and, more specifically, on the gravitational pull of memory. This is a book to be savored, a feast for both mind and soul.”* – **Carlos Eire, author of *Waiting for Snow in Havana***

*“Mayes has written a brash and delightful, cringe-worthy and uproariously funny memoir. As I read, I wished Mayes had been my teenage neighbor. Wit—as well as misery—loves company.”* –**Margaret Sartor, author of *Miss American Pie***

*“Under Magnolia is one of the most brilliant memoirs ever written, shedding new light on a certain mysterious South and offering a memorable portrait of the artist as a young girl. Frances Mayes, a petite, brainy beauty from what we used to call politely 'a troubled home' has written an unnervingly honest and refreshingly open account of how a child can be neglected even amid privilege and a large family... Reader, artist, scholar, poet—Frances Mayes gradually became the aesthete and writer she is today, a passionate lover of the world and the word.”* –Lee Smith, author of *Guests on Earth*

#### ***From the Hardcover edition.***

#### **About the Author**

In addition to her worldwide bestselling Tuscany memoirs *Under the Tuscan Sun*, *Bella Tuscany*, and *Every Day in Tuscany*, FRANCES MAYES is the author of the travel memoir, *A Year in the World*, illustrated books *In Tuscany* and *Bringing Tuscany Home* (with Edward Mayes), and *The Tuscan Sun Cookbook* (also with Edward Mayes). She has published a novel, *Swan*, set in the South, *The Discovery of Poetry: A Guide for Readers and Writers*, and five books of poetry. Her books have been translated into more than fifty languages. She divides her time between Tuscany and North Carolina. Visit her at [www.francesmayesbooks.com](http://www.francesmayesbooks.com).

#### **Users Review**

##### **From reader reviews:**

##### **Charles Jones:**

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students because they are still students or that for all people in the world, what best subject for that? Only you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has different personality and hobby for every other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't want do that. You must know how great and important the book *Under Magnolia: A Southern Memoir*. All type of book would you see on many methods. You can look for the internet resources or other social media.

##### **Lewis Skinner:**

The reserve with title *Under Magnolia: A Southern Memoir* has lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of profit after read this book. That book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this guide represented the condition of the world at this point. That is important to you to find out how the improvement of the world. This book will bring you with new era of the the positive effect. You can read the e-book on your own smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

**James Thrasher:**

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always aim to and must have the extra time or they will get lot of stress from both daily life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely yes. People is human not really a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is actually Under Magnolia: A Southern Memoir.

**Kenny Hardy:**

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