

Dear Reader,

I am the lucky person who has had the pleasure of working with Rita Williams-Garcia on all of her novels. Rita sent me her first novel, *Blue Tights*, which she wrote while she was in college, and I published it as a young editor who was just starting her career. Decades later, here we are. We have shared the joys and the tough moments in our lives. I am so fortunate to work with Rita, to know her well, and to consider her one of my very close friends.

I am also in awe of Rita's talent. You will see that immense talent on full display here, in *A Sitting in St. James*. Rita spent years traveling to plantations and doing research and in writing the book. It is a magnum opus, and I am so very proud to be publishing it.

For those of you who know Rita through *One Crazy Summer* and her other novels for young readers, or even through her novels for teens, such as *Jumped*, this book may come as a surprise. It's for older teens and adults, because, in writing about Louisiana in the 1860s, Rita needed, of course, to write about the horror and brutality of slavery. When you read her brilliant author's note at the end of the book, you will come to understand why Rita wrote this book, and I trust that you will share in her hopes—and mine—for what this novel can accomplish.

Thank you for reading *A Sitting in St. James*. I would love to hear from you after you have read the book.

With best regards,

Rosemary Brosnan

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