

“Full of surf, rediscovered love, and second chances, this **perfect beach read** will be enjoyed by Wiggs’ many fans.”

—BOOKLIST

“What happens when you dream one thing and something else comes your way? This story is rich with life and danger, and ultimately, hope.

**Fans of Colleen Hoover will gobble it up.”**

—Barbara O’Neal, bestselling author of *This Place of Wonder*

**From #1 New York Times Bestselling Author**

**Susan Wiggs**

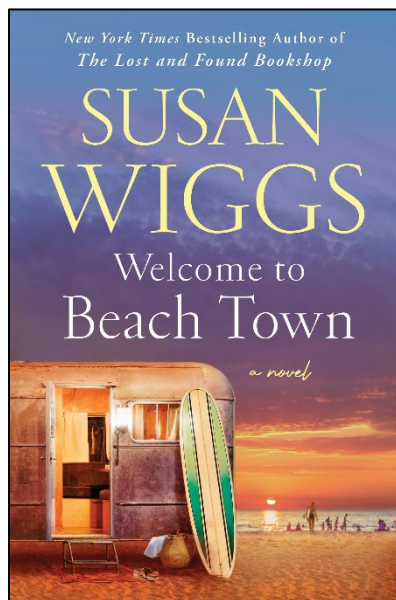
**WELCOME TO BEACH TOWN**

**William Morrow Hardcover | On Sale June 20**

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**"A Susan Wiggs novel is a masterclass in storytelling.** Readers will savor sunny skies and perfect surf in this **stunning** new novel, but one thing is for sure: In this beach town, there is always more happening than meets the eye. Don’t miss this expansive beauty of a summer book!"

—**Kristy Woodson Harvey**, *New York Times* bestselling author of  
*The Summer of Songbirds*



**25 million copies in print. Published in 30 countries. Translated into over 20 languages.** To say that **#1 NYT bestselling author Susan Wiggs** is an accomplished writer would be nothing short of an understatement. A Harvard graduate and former math teacher, Susan’s passion for writing dates back to **grade school** when she **penned her first book, titled *A Book About Some Bad Kids*.**

**More than 50 published novels** later, Susan has come a long way from those early days. She returns this summer with the compulsively readable novel, **WELCOME TO BEACH TOWN (William Morrow Hardcover; On Sale 6/20)** set in an idyllic California beach town. Here, residents are forced to reckon with scandal after a high school valedictorian’s speech reveals shocking secrets, shaking the town to its very core.

It’s graduation day at the elite Thornton Academy in dreamy Alara Cove, a California beach town known for its sunny charm and chill surfer vibe. At Thornton, the students are the worldly and

overindulged children who live in gated enclaves with spectacular views. But the class valedictorian is Nikki Graziola, a surfer's daughter who is there on scholarship. To the shock of everyone in the audience, Nikki veers off script while giving her commencement address and reveals a secret that breaks open the whole community. As her truth explodes into the light, Alara Cove will face a reckoning.

Nikki Graziola's accusation shakes the foundation of Alara Cove, pitting her against the wealthy family whose money runs the town. Her new notoriety sends Nikki into exile for years, where she finds fame—but not fortune—overseas as a competition surfer...until a personal tragedy compels her to return to Alara Cove.

As Nikki struggles to rebuild her future, she finds that the people of the town have not forgotten her. But time has changed Alara Cove, and old friendships, rivalries, and an unexpected romance draw her back into the life of the beach town she's never quite forgotten, and where joy and redemption may be possible after all.

Susan is known for illuminating the everyday dramas of ordinary people facing extraordinary circumstances in her writing, and WELCOME TO BEACH TOWN is no exception. With grace and care, she delves deep into **timely, complex themes, including: the dark side of privilege and class; bullying and hazing in schools; drug and alcohol abuse among adolescents; women's empowerment; grief and trauma.**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

[Susan Wiggs](#) is the author of more than 50 novels, including the beloved Lakeshore Chronicles series and the recent *New York Times* bestsellers *The Lost and Found Bookshop*, *The Oysterville Sewing Circle*, and *Family Tree*. Her award-winning books have been translated into two dozen languages. She lives with her husband on an island in Washington State's Puget Sound.



#### **WELCOME TO BEACH TOWN: A Novel by Susan Wiggs**

William Morrow | On sale: June 20, 2023 | 336 pages

Hardcover ISBN: 9780062914163; \$30.00 | eBook ISBN: 9780062914194; \$14.99

Digital Audio ISBN: 9780062914217; \$27.99

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## A Conversation with Susan Wiggs

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**You're known for your signature "ripped from the headlines" storytelling and for exploring the timely, complex social issues facing people today. Were there real-life events that inspired *WELCOME TO BEACH TOWN*?**

I've been a commencement speaker, and I remember wondering what would happen if I abandoned my prepared speech and simply spoke the blunt, uncomfortable truth to the audience. In *Welcome to Beach Town*, Nikki does just that. Teenagers are often deeply concerned with speaking the truth no matter what, even if it gets them in trouble.

The notorious "Murdaugh Murders" case—the epic collapse of a prominent South Carolina family—captivated the media last year, but a lesser-known related case informed a key event in the novel. The death of Mallory Beach—a beautiful, promising young girl—involved Paul Murdaugh, who was later a murder victim. The incident involved teenagers, drinking, and speedboating at night, and this tragedy exposed the ways youthful impulse, privilege, and issues of law enforcement can lead to disaster. There's a similar incident in *Welcome to Beach Town*, which underscores some of the key themes of tragedy and redemption in the story.

**The dark side of privilege and class is a powerful theme illuminated throughout the novel, and at the center of it all, we meet our protagonist, Nikki Graziola. Motherless and the daughter of an on-again, off-again surfer dad, she attends her town's prestigious high school on scholarship. What makes Nikki's unique position so important to the book's overall message?**

One thing I loved about writing Nikki's story is that it's truly a big, expansive coming-of-age journey. Stories like this are always more interesting to me when the character is truly a fish out of water. As a scholarship student, Nikki is surrounded by the children of power and privilege, and she feels compelled to prove herself over and over again. Despite her many achievements, she never does quite fit in, and it leads her to make some impulsive life choices. Ultimately, she gains the hard-won realization that her worth has nothing to do with wealth and position.

**Nikki's relationship with her father is anything but simple. In one vivid, coming-of-age scene, her first period led to a shoplifting incident and yelling match with her father followed by him leaving a drugstore bag full of different sanitary products outside her bedroom door. What does this moment say about their relationship? About father-daughter relationships in general?**

Oh, that scene is a microcosm of Nikki's relationship with her father, Guy. It's a rare father who is completely chill about the process of seeing his little daughter becoming a woman, and that discomfort is evident in this scene. He was totally unprepared for fatherhood, even though his heart was in the right place. Although *Welcome to Beach Town* is Nikki's story, we also see Guy evolving as a father, gaining wisdom and confidence from his mistakes.

**Each character grapples with their own painful, very personal experiences with loss and trauma. What do you hope to convey to readers about grief and healing?**

You never really heal from grief. You survive the loss. You remember to breathe and move through your day, but healing completely from it? Not possible. Nor should it be. You wear the scars that were made by love and loss, and you don't really want them to disappear. You want them to make you more mindful, more tender, more patient, more appreciative of the love and memories. I experienced a huge loss while writing the book—my brother died of pancreatic cancer—and there will always be a vast hole in the world, and there is no healing from that. What you do is adjust and feel your feelings instead of trying to deny them or heal from them. And you go on, a better person for having known your loved one.

**What is one thing that would surprise readers to know about you?**

I've been writing since before I knew how to read! As a toddler, I would scribble pictures and tell my mother, "Now, write this down..." and my ever-patient mom would be my scribe. Ever since, I've written all my books in longhand, with a fountain pen in fancy notebooks. It's not very efficient, but I suppose it's part of my creative process.

**In addition to there being more than 25 million copies of your books in print, you've written more than 50 novels that have been translated into over 20 languages and published in more than 30 countries. That's no small feat! How do you manage to keep each new novel you write so fresh, unique, and exciting?**

There are really only a few human stories we repeat over and over again—redemption, revelation, renewal—but each is unique in the telling. Starting a new story is like meeting a new group of people in a new setting. Everyone has their own unique story, and it's not like any other story ever told. I love diving into new research—surfing? Baking? Restoring a vintage Airstream? Each different person and milieu feels fresh and unique to me.