

# Mary Baldwin College Alumnae/i Book Club

February 2008

What we are reading in  
2007/2008:

Apr 5: *Handmaiden's Tale* by  
Margaret Atwood

May 3: *The Glass Castle* by  
Jeanette Walls

June 7: *The Bean Trees* by  
Barbara Kingsolver

July 5: *The Last  
Witchfinder* by James  
Morrow

Aug 2: *Snow Flower and the  
Secret Fan* by Lisa See

Sept 6: *Tortilla Curtain* by  
T.C. Boyle

Oct 4: *The Girls Who Went  
Away* by Ann Fessler

Nov 1: *The Same Sweet  
Girls* by Cassandra King

Dec 6: *The Secret Agent* by  
Joseph Conrad

Jan 3: *I Got Somebody in  
Staunton* by William Henry  
Lewis

Feb. 7: *Love* by Toni  
Morrison

Mar 6: *The Kite Runner* by  
Khaled Hosseini

Apr 3: *The Lovely Bones* by  
Alice Sebold

## *Time to Pick Books!!*

As you can see we only have books chosen thru April. For the next 2 or 3 months, instead of an article and the normal Classics sections I will be featuring a few books for us to choose from. I will be taking suggestions over the next month or so. In the past we have always enjoyed having one classic each year along with at least one biography. I will be including these suggestions along with the others. If you would like to suggest a book please send me an email @ [pinkferrets@gmail.com](mailto:pinkferrets@gmail.com). Include the title, author and a brief description of the book. Thanks!!!!

From Laura Beth:

**Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . .  
One School at a Time**

By Greg Mortenson (biography)

Anyone who despairs of the individual's power to change lives has to read the story of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who, following a 1993 climb of Pakistan's treacherous K2, was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. Over the next decade he built fifty-five schools-especially for girls-that offer a balanced education in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth. As it chronicles Mortenson's quest, which has brought him into conflict with both enraged Islamists and uncomprehending Americans, *Three Cups of Tea* combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit.

From Alison:

**How My Magic Refrigerator Sent Me To Paris Free. 7 Rules To  
Make Dreams Come True**

by Lolly Anderson - MBC Alumnae

Lolly Anderson's 7 Rules universal principles that she created out of her crucibles and triumphs, will transform your life as it transformed hers. Read about how she battled the Big B-Bankruptcy the Big C-Cancer the Big D-Divorce, plus how her Magic Refrigerator sent her to Paris free. Lolly Anderson's book is not based on a true story. It is a true story. Expect to be amazed and inspired.

We are on the MBC website!!  
[www.mbc.edu/alumnae](http://www.mbc.edu/alumnae)

Join us online!!  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MBCAlumBookClub>

If you are in the Richmond, VA area we would love for you to join us! All meeting times are 7pm and last approximately 1 hour.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Theresa Cash Lewis '99 at [pinkferrets@gmail.com](mailto:pinkferrets@gmail.com) or the Alumnae/i office at 1-800-763-7359.

From Sharron:

### **Prep**

by Curtis Sittenfeld

"Lee Fiora is an intelligent, observant fourteen-year-old when her father drops her off in front of her dorm at the prestigious Ault School in Massachusetts. She leaves behind her animated, affectionate family in South Bend, Indiana, at least in part because of the boarding school's glossy brochure, in which boys in sweaters chat in front of old brick buildings, girls in kilts hold lacrosse sticks on pristinely mown athletic fields, and everyone sings hymns in chapel." "As Lee soon learns, Ault is a cloistered world of jaded, attractive teenagers who spend summers on Nantucket and speak in their own clever shorthand. Both intimidated and fascinated by her classmates, Lee becomes a shrewd observer of - and eventually a participant in - their rituals and mores. As a scholarship student, she constantly feels like an outsider and is drawn to and repelled by other loners. By the time she's a senior, Lee has created a hard-won place for herself at Ault. But when her behavior takes a self-destructive and highly public turn, her carefully crafted identity within the community is shattered." "Ultimately, Lee's experiences - complicated relationships with teachers, intense friendships with other girls, an all-consuming preoccupation with a classmate who is less than a boyfriend and more than a crush, and conflicts with her parents, from whom Lee feels increasingly distant - coalesce into a singular portrait of the painful and thrilling adolescence universal to us all."--

From Theresa:

### **The Next Thing on My List: A Novel**

By Jill Smolinski

Meet June Parker. She works for L.A. Rideshare, adores her rent-stabilized apartment in Santa Monica, and struggles with losing a few pesky pounds. But June's life is about to change. After a dark turn of events involving Weight Watchers, a chili recipe, and a car accident in which her passenger, Marissa, dies, June finds herself in possession of a list Marissa has written, "20 Things to Do By My 25th Birthday." Even though they barely knew each other, June is compelled by both guilt and a desire to set things right and finish the list for Marissa.

The tasks before her range from inspiring (Run a 5K), to daring (Go braless), to near-impossible (Change someone's life), and as June races to achieve each goal before the deadline, she learns more about her own life than she ever bargained for. (Great summer read - light and easy)

From Alison:

**The Real Toy Story: Inside the Ruthless Battle for America's Youngest Consumers**

by Eric Clark

London journalist Clark begins by invoking the magic of playtime, but the bulk of the book is a more prosaic snapshot of today's toy industry—a straightforward look at struggles and obstacles ranging from store closings and kids' ever-shorter attention spans to the dominance of Wal-Mart and China. Though the book is far from comprehensive—Clark scarcely mentions computer and video games and pretty much ignores the world outside the U.S. and England—almost any reader will find delight in his lively anecdotes, quotes and life stories from inventors, shop owners and toy-company executives. The subtitle's hint of darkness is here, too: Clark notes the "contrast between the industry's hard, often pitiless pragmatism and the cozy, lovable image of what it's selling." He sets the brutal closing chapter, "Santa's Sweatshop," in China's Pearl River Delta, the "workshop of the world." But this is no Fast Food Nation-style polemic intended to rouse readers to action; when the author's prose edges into commentary, he's more wistful than outraged. Too many of today's toys, he laments, "preach sex and violence" and are too closely linked to TV and film spinoffs. Anyone raised on Erector sets and Legos will relate.

**Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil**

by John Berendt

Voodoo. Decadent socialites packing Lugars. Cotillions. With towns like Savannah, Georgia, who needs Fellini? *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* takes two narrative strands--each worthy of its own book--and weaves them together to make a single fascinating tale. The first is author John Berendt's loving depiction of the characters and rascals that prowled Savannah in the eight years it was his home-away-from-home. "Eccentrics thrive in Savannah," he writes, and proves the point by introducing Luther Diggers, a thwarted inventor who just might be plotting to poison the town's water supply; Joe Odom, a jovial jackleg lawyer and squatter nonpareil; and, most memorably, the Lady Chablis, whom you really should meet for yourself. Then, on May 2, 1981, the book's second story line commences, when Jim Williams, a wealthy antique dealer and Savannah's host with the most, kills his "friend" Danny Hansford. (If those quotes make you suspect something, you should.) Was it self-defense, as Williams claimed—or murder? The book sketches four separate trials, during which the dark side of this genteel party town is well and truly plumbed.

From Theresa:

**The Secret Between Us**

By Barbara Delinsky

Showcasing the taut, perceptive storytelling that has made Barbara Delinsky one of America's most alluring novelists, *The Secret Between Us* features a family that is forced to confront its greatest frailties while hiding a dangerous secret from their small-town community. In the novel's arresting opening scene, physician Deborah Monroe and her teenage daughter are traveling down a dark, rain-slick road when their car hits a pedestrian. The accident places Deborah in a dilemma that threatens to damage her family ties, not only with her children but also her renegade sister and their father, a recent widower. As details emerge about the accident victim—an aloof local teacher who wove his own web of secrecy—Deborah must find a way to reconcile her worst fears with the truth of that terrible night.