

Mary Baldwin College Alumnae/i Book Club

June 2007

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
Alice Sebold

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

The National Book Critics Circle's Campaign to Save Book Reviews

Over the past five years, one by one, newspapers have begun to forsake books and their readers. While book review sections at the Washington Post and the New York Times continue strongly, many other newspapers have begun packing up and winnowing down their book coverage. And it started at the top. Not long ago, the San Francisco Chronicle Book Review, which has readership levels in excess of fifty percent, was folded into another part of the paper. The community protested, it was restored, but just recently the section was cut in half in order to make space for an advertisement.

Elsewhere at the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune, Newsday, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the Memphis Commercial Appeal, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Dallas Morning News, the Sun Sentinel, the New Mexican, the Village Voice, the Atlanta Journal Constitution and dozens upon dozens of other papers book coverage has been cut back or slashed all together, moved, winnowed, filled with more wire copy, or generally been treated as expendable.

So the board of the National Book Critics Circle has launched a campaign to try and beat back these changes. Over the next six weeks, in [a new series on our blog Critical Mass](#), we will feature posts by concerned writers, interviews with book editors in the trenches, links to op-eds by critics, novelists and other NBCC board members, Q&As with newspaper editors and owners who will explain the business context for these changes, and [tips for what you can do to help save book reviewing](#).

We hope you join us in that fight, because it is a fight that benefits us all - readers, publishers, critics, booksellers. Everyone.

John Freeman, President, National Book Critics Circle

Taken from <http://www.bookcritics.org/?go=saveBookReviews>

Does your local paper have a book reviews section? Do you read it? What do you think about it? Have there been any changes in it lately? Let me know and next month I'll include everyone's responses in the newsletter.

We are on the MBC website!!
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 tLewis41203@yahoo.com or the Alumnae/i office at 1-800-763-7359.



Your Guide to the Classics: *Summer*

One of America's first novels to deal frankly with a young woman's sexual awakening, *Summer* shocked readers with its forthright exploration of desire and sexuality. Set in the Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts, it tells the story of Charity Royall, a young New England woman of humble origins who meets and falls in love with the worldly Lucius Harney, an architect from the city. In evocative and descriptive prose, Edith Wharton conveys the ecstasy of Charity's first experience in sexual and romantic love, and pulls her heroine through the throes of loving a man who ultimately cannot choose her. Wharton's tale elicits the passion and despair of all great but ill-fated love affairs and enthralls the contemporary reader with its pathos just as it did nearly one hundred years ago.

Accreditation

Though best known for her novels of manners detailing upper-class New York society in works such as *The House of Mirth* (1905) and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), Edith Wharton was the prolific author of more than two dozen novels, story collections, essays, and poems. She was also a highly regarded tastemaker and author of nonfiction manuals such as *The Decoration of Houses* (1897), *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (1904), and *Italian Backgrounds* (1905). Born in 1862 into the privileged, aristocratic milieu of Old New York and financially independent at twenty-one years old, Wharton came of age during what is commonly called the Gilded Age, and her life in many ways paralleled that of her wealthy but longing New York City characters.

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