

# Mary Baldwin College Alumnae/i Book Club

March 2007

What we are reading in  
2006/2007:

Dec 7: *The Memory Keeper's  
Daughter* by Kim Edwards

Jan 4: *The Body in the  
Library* by Agatha Christie

Feb 1: *Never Let Me Go* by  
Kazuo Ishiguro

Mar 1: *The Empress Orchid*  
by Anchee Min

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

May 3: *The Glass Castle* by  
Jeanette Walls

June 7: To Be Announced

July 5: To Be Announced

Aug 2: To Be Announced

Sept 6: To Be Announced

Oct 4: To Be Announced

Nov 1: To Be Announced

Dec 6: To Be Announced

If you have any book  
suggestions please feel free  
to pass them on to me at any  
time.

## CALLING ALL BOOK CLUB MEMBERS!!!!!!!!!!

I need your book suggestions for the rest of the  
year!

What book would you like us to read and discuss? Is  
there a particular genre you would like to see us read  
and discuss?

Let me know! I am looking to get any and all  
book/genre suggestions by April 2.

In addition to the title and author please also include  
a few sentences about the book.

### Phillip Roth wins third PEN/Faulkner Award

Philip Roth has won yet another literary prize, this time the  
PEN/Faulkner award for "Everyman," his short, bleak novel about illness  
and mortality.

"It's such a slim volume," PEN/Faulkner judge Debra Magpie Earling  
said Monday in a statement, "and the book haunts me, its simplicity and  
brutishness, the unflinching look at life. Roth never looks away, never  
trivializes, never shrugs. He manages to wrestle with grief, the immensity  
of losing self."

The runners-up were Charles D'Ambrosio's "The Dead Fish  
Museum," Deborah Eisenberg's "Twilight of the Superheroes," Amy  
Hempel's "The Collected Stories of Amy Hempel" and Edward P. Jones' "All  
Aunt Hagar's Children."

Roth, who will receive \$15,000, is the first three-time winner of  
the PEN/Faulkner, having received it in 1994 for "Operation Shylock" and  
in 2001 for "The Human Stain." The PEN/Faulkner Award was founded in  
1980. [www.news.yahoo.com](http://www.news.yahoo.com)

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

<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](mailto:tlewis41203@yahoo.com) or the Alumnae/i office at 1-800-763-7359.



## Your Guide to the Classics: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* (commonly written as *1984*) is an anti-utopian novel by the English writer George Orwell, published in 1949. The book tells the story of Winston Smith and his degradation by the totalitarian state in which he lives.

Originally Orwell titled the book *The Last Man in Europe*, but his publisher, Frederic Warburg, suggested a change to assist in the book's marketing. Orwell did not object to this suggestion. The reasons for selection of this particular year are not known. Orwell may have only switched the last two digits of the year in which he wrote the book. Alternatively, he may have been alluding to the centenary of the Fabian Society, a socialist organization founded in 1884. The allusion may have also been to Jack London's novel *The Iron Heel* (in which the power of a political movement reaches its height in 1984), to G. K. Chesterton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (also set in that year), or to a poem by his wife, Eileen O'Shaughnessy, called "End of the Century, 1984". A final supposed explanation is that his original re-titling was to be *1980*, however, with his illness the book was taking a long time to write, so he felt obliged to push the story further and further into the future.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteen\\_Eighty-Four](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteen_Eighty-Four)

The year is 1984; the scene is London, largest population center of Airstrip One.

Airstrip One is part of the vast political entity Oceania, which is eternally at war with one of two other vast entities, Eurasia and Eastasia. At any moment, depending upon current alignments, all existing records show either that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia and allied with Eastasia, or that it has always been at war with Eastasia and allied with Eurasia. Winston Smith knows this, because his work at the Ministry of Truth involves the constant "correction" of such records. "'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'"

In a grim city and a terrifying country, where Big Brother is always Watching You and the Thought Police can practically read your mind, Winston is a man in grave danger for the simple reason that his memory still functions. He knows the Party's official image of the world is a fluid fiction. He knows the Party controls the people by feeding them lies and narrowing their imaginations through a process of bewilderment and brutalization that alienates each individual from his fellows and deprives him of every liberating human pursuit from reasoned inquiry to sexual passion. Drawn into a forbidden love affair, Winston finds the courage to join a secret revolutionary organization called The Brotherhood, dedicated to the destruction of the Party. Together with his beloved Julia, he hazards his life in a deadly match against the powers that be. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)