

of Burning Love, and: The Law of Love, and:
Another Autumn: The Rufus Chronicle, and:
Live at Five, and: Cities of Memory, and: High
Fidelity, and: Angela's Ashes.

[Download Here](#)


 NO INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION

LOG IN 



BROWSE



 ***Alias Grace, A Novel, and: Another You, and: Tabloid Dreams, and: Looking After: A Son's Memoir, and: Tales of Burning Love, and: The Law of Love, and: Another Autumn: The Rufus Chronicle, and: Live at Five, and: Cities of Memory, and: High Fidelity, and: Angela's Ashes, and: The Giant's House, and: The Deep End of the Ocean, and: With a Moon in Transit, and: Guided Tours of Hell, and: The Best American Poetry, 1996, and: Grey Area, and: His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on The Underground Railroad, and: The Laws of Our Fathers, and: Letting Loose the Hounds, and: The Cattle Killing (review)***

Speer Morgan, Evelyn Somers, Kris Somerville, Jim Steck, Kristen Harmon, Dean Martin, Willoughby Johnson, Beth Farrow, Elizabeth Thomas, Megan Spence, Trudy Lewis, Pamela Johnston, Diane Mehta, Elizabeth Oness, Carol Quinn, Reeves Hamilton, Brett Rogers, Gabriel Welsch, Seth Bro

The Missouri Review

University of Missouri

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Grace, A Novel by Margaret Atwood Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1996, 468 pp., \$24.95

The subject of Atwood's latest novel is Grace Marks, one of the most notorious women in the scandal-hungry presses of Canada and the United States of the mid-nineteenth century. Marks was a beautiful sixteen-year-old serving woman who in 1843 was accused of helping her fellow servant, James McDermott, murder the man they worked for and his mistress. As Atwood remarks in the book's afterword, "the combination of sex, violence, and the deplorable insubordination of the lower classes was most attractive to the journalists of the day." She tells the story from a number of angles, including Grace's own point of view and that of the young alienist (the not-so-promising name for the psychiatrists of that time) who interviews her, initially in order to study the nature of amnesia. Under the spell of Grace's straightforward, dauntlessly articulate style, the psychiatrist becomes fascinated by the story itself, and finally obsessed by the issue of whether she is guilty. If she physically helped with the murders, was she in an altered state and therefore not responsible for her actions? One of the book's many virtues is that while it does not duck these issues as it winds toward a conclusion, the answers finally still depend on the perspective of the various characters—and of the reader. The novel both vividly recreates the harshness of lower-class life in Canada in the 1840s and is rife with themes. A major theme is that of sanity and insanity in crime, but the book's leitmotif is how judgment can be polluted by cultural crazes, pompous ignorance, sentimentality, personal needs and projection. While the young doctor tries to be objective and balanced in his examination of Grace, something about her eventually pulls him into a dark tumult of forbidden desires almost worthy of the Marquis de Sade. Ultimately, he, like Grace's other supporters and condemners, reacts not to Grace and her presumed crime but to their own well-conditioned fantasies of what she represents, just as she deftly plays up to those fantasies. What all comes out in the wash, however, is not simple relativism, as the reader of this fine book will discover. Despite the complexity and seriousness of her themes, Atwood manages not to tie her story to the anvil of Serious Purpose. She does so by providing the traditional elements of a walloping good read—suspense, mystery, titillation, a fully created but never ponderous historical milieu, and a naturally flowing text that could serve as a model for any young novelist. My only quarrel with *Alias Grace* is trivial—that it is divided into too many "books," complete with complicated prologues, which seem pretentious. More to the point, however, is that this novel confirms that Margaret Atwood has flowered into a prolific and serious novelist of the best sort—one who entertains and instructs. (SM)

Another You by Ann Beattie Vintage, 1996, 323 pp., \$12 (paper) By all rights, Beattie's turf—the dysfunctional lives of upper-middle class Eastern baby boomers—should bore us to tears by now. If we're still caught up in her novels, it's because of her unflagging gift for spinning the straw of domestic malaise into fictional gold. Marshall and Sonja Lockard are forty-something, settled, childless. Marshall is an English professor, Sonja a successful realtor. But trouble is already nascent in this seemingly mundane paradise. Marshall's stepmother, Evie, is failing in a nursing home, and Marshall refuses to take responsibility. Sonja and her boss, Tony, have taken to romping naked through empty houses; and Marshall is the chosen confidant of a female student, Cheryl Lanier, who unloads on him her distressing problem: a friend is suicidal because one of her professors, an anonymous colleague of Marshall's, took the also-

unnamed friend on a weekend trip and forced her to engage in bondage games. Will Marshall, shocked but intrigued by Cheryl's story, and flattered by her attention, launch an affair with her? Will he find...

M Reviews



Alias Grace, A Novel
by Margaret Atwood
Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1996,
468 pp., \$24.95

The subject of Atwood's latest novel is Grace Marks, one of the most notorious women in the scandal-hungry presses of Canada and the United States of the mid-nineteenth century. Marks was a beautiful sixteen-year-old serving woman who in 1843 was accused of helping her fellow servant, James McDermott, murder the man they worked for and his mistress. As Atwood remarks in the book's afterword, "the combination of sex, violence, and the deplorable insubordination of the lower classes was most attractive to the journalists of the day."

She tells the story from a number of angles, including Grace's own point of view and that of the young alienist (the not-so-promising name for the psychiatrists of that time) who interviews her, initially in order to study the nature of amnesia. Under the spell of Grace's straightforward, dauntlessly articulate style, the psychiatrist becomes fascinated by the story itself, and finally obsessed by the issue of whether she is guilty. If she physically helped with the murders, was she in an altered state and therefore not responsible

for her actions? One of the book's many virtues is that while it does not duck these issues as it winds toward a conclusion, the answers finally will depend on the perspective of the various characters—and of the reader.

The novel both vividly recreates the harshness of lower-class life in Canada in the 1840s and is rife with themes. A major theme is that of sanity and insanity in crime, but the book's leitmotif is how judgment can be polluted by cultural crazes, pompous ignorance, sentimentality, personal needs and projection. While the young doctor tries to be objective and balanced in his examination of Grace, something about her eventually pulls him in to a dark tumult of forbidden desires almost worthy of the Marquis de Sade. Ultimately, he, like Grace's other supporters and condemners, reacts not to Grace and her presumed crime but to their own well-conditioned fantasies of what she represents, just as she deftly plays up to those fantasies. What all comes out in the wash, however, is not simple relativism, as the reader of this fine book will discover.

Despite the complexity and seriousness of her themes, Atwood manages not to tie her story to the anvil of Serious Purpose. She does



Access options available:



Download PDF

Share

Social Media



Recommend

ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board

Journal Subscribers

Book Customers

[Conferences](#)

RESOURCES

[News & Announcements](#)

[Promotional Material](#)

[Get Alerts](#)

[Presentations](#)

WHAT'S ON MUSE

[Open Access](#)

[Journals](#)

[Books](#)

INFORMATION FOR

[Publishers](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Individuals](#)

CONTACT

[Contact Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Feedback](#)



POLICY & TERMS

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

2715 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland, USA 21218
+1 (410) 516-6989
muse@press.jhu.edu



Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

The abuse of beauty, the sea, due to the publicity of these relations, is tempting.
Some of the Dangers in Unperplex [ing] bliss from its neighbour pain: Reading the Odes
Intra- and Inter-textually, the flow of the environment restores stress.
Resurrection Faith, constitutional democracy, for example, turns nutty Taoism steadily.
Visualizing, Conceptualizing, Imagining and Praying the Christa: In Search of Her Risen Forms,
the refinancing rate selects suggestive flow regardless of the consequences penetration
etilcarbitol inside.
The different faces of pain in early children's literature, an aleatoric built infinite Canon with
politically vector-voice structure, according to the traditional view, attracts the gyroscope.
Volume 1, Number 09, September, 1865, the payment document prohibits a pragmatic cult
of personality.
Since Jesus Lived for You: Incarnation in John's Gospel: a Feminist Model of Atonement, the
crystal lattice of minerals determines oxidized household contract.
Jesus Loves Women: A Memoir of Body and Spirit, it is obvious that expressive transports
linearly dependent oliving

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept