



Jessica Handler learned creative writing from the late Pat Conroy when he served as a guest instructor at the Paideia School in Atlanta, just prior to the publication of his first novel, *The Great Santini*.

Handler, the author of two memoirs, published her debut novel *The Magnetic Girl*

in April of this year. The nonprofit Pat Conroy Literary Center (905 Port Republic Street, Beaufort) will host Handler for a reading and discussion of her novel on Tuesday, August 6, at 5:30 p.m. Free and open to the public, the discussion will be followed by a book signing.

*The Magnetic Girl* has been named one of *Wall Street Journal's* Ten Books You'll Want to Read this Spring, an Indie Next Pick, and a Spring Okra Pick of the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance. Set in rural north Georgia two decades after the Civil War, the novel follows thirteen-year-old Lulu Hurst. Lulu reaches high into her father's bookshelf and pulls out an obscure book, *The Truth of Mesmeric Influence*.

Deemed gangly and undesirable, Lulu wants more than a lifetime of caring for her disabled baby brother, Leo, with whom she shares a profound and supernatural mental connection.

Lulu begins to "captivate" her friends and family, controlling their thoughts and actions for brief



[www.patconroyliterarycenter.org](http://www.patconroyliterarycenter.org)