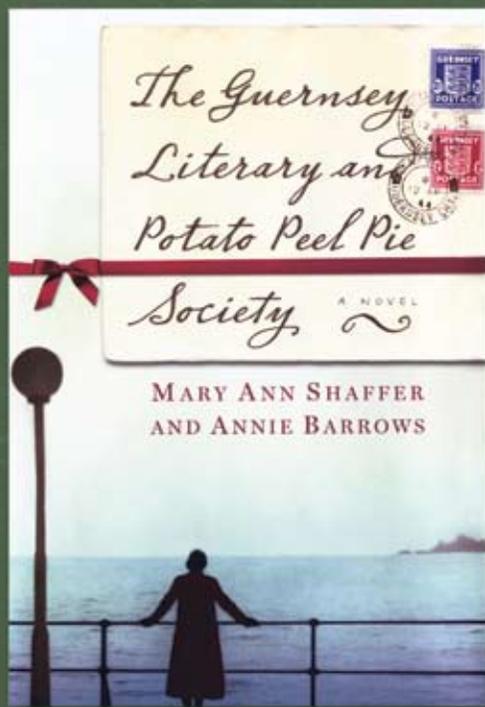




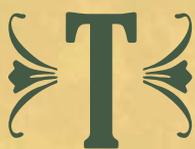
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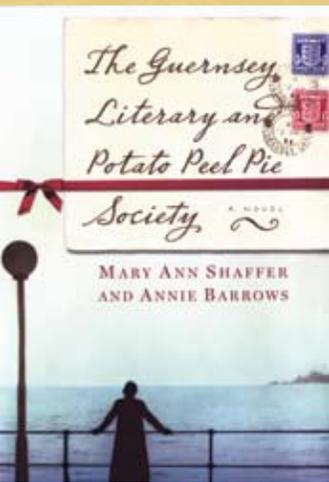


his word is not in every dictionary, but it is one that booksellers often use—and the one we use to describe our Barnes & Noble Recommends selections. Nothing gives us more pleasure than recommending books that we have read and loved, and finding unputdownable books gives us the greatest pleasure of all. ♦ Barnes & Noble Recommends provides us with the opportunity to share such books with you. Each is chosen by a group of our discriminating and independent-minded booksellers from across the country. Each one is a book we are sure you will recommend to another reader. Our inaugural selection was Diane Setterfield’s suspenseful *The Thirteenth Tale*. Other choices have included Chris Bohjalian’s psychological thriller, *The Double Bind*; Mohsin Hamid’s subtly political novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*; Paulette Jiles’s Texas family saga, *Stormy Weather*; Sarah Addison Allen’s enchanting *Garden Spells*; Maggie O’Farrell’s taut and revealing *The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox*; *Belong to Me* by Marisa de los Santos, a heartwarming story of old friends and new acquaintances; *Child 44*, Tom Rob Smith’s compelling examination of deception, murder, and courage in Stalinist Russia; and most recently, Ethan Canin’s sweeping saga of politics, love, and coming of age, *America America*. All are riveting reads as well as books worthy of stimulating discussion—as is our newest selection: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows.



A Chorus of Voices Celebrates Friendship and Hope.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society begins in January 1946, when popular author Juliet Ashton, much like her fellow British citizens, is emerging from the dark days of World War II. As Juliet exchanges a series of letters with her publisher and her best friend, readers immediately warm to this author in search of a new subject in the aftermath of



war. By the time Juliet receives an unexpected query from Dawsey Adams, we are caught in a delightful web of letters and vivid personalities, eager for Juliet to find the inspiration she seeks. ◆ Dawsey, a farmer on the island of Guernsey in the English Channel, has come into possession of a book that once belonged to Juliet. Spurred by a mutual admiration for the writer, the two launch an epistolary conversation that reveals much about Dawsey's Guernsey and the islanders' recent lives under Nazi occupation. Juliet is especially interested to learn about the

curious beginnings of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, and before long she is exchanging letters with its other members—not only Dawsey, but Isola the vegetable seller, Eben the fisherman, and blacksmith Will Thisbee, creator of the famous potato peel pie. ◆ As Juliet soon discovers, the most compelling island character is Elizabeth, the courageous founder of the society who lives in the memories of all who knew her. Each person who writes



to Juliet adds another chapter to the story of Elizabeth's remarkable wartime experiences. Touched by the stories the letters deliver, Juliet can't help but travel to Guernsey herself—a decision that will have surprising consequences for everyone involved.  Drawn together by their love of books and affection for each other, the unforgettable characters of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* collectively tell a moving tale of endurance and friendship. Through the chorus of voices they have created, Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows have composed a rich tale that celebrates the power of hope and human connection in the shadows of war.

hen Elizabeth drew in her breath and stepped forward. Elizabeth isn't tall, so those pistols were lined up at her eyes, but she didn't blink. She acted like she didn't see any pistols at all. She walked up to the officer in charge and started talking. You never heard such lies. How sorry she was that we had broken curfew. How we had been attending a meeting of the Guernsey Literary Society, and the evening's discussion of *Elizabeth and her German Garden* had been so delightful that we had lost all track of time. Such a wonderful book—had he read it?

~ from *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*



About the Authors

In 1976, inspired by a newfound fascination with Guernsey, Mary Ann Shaffer traveled to the island in the English Channel, only to be stranded there due to inclement weather. Waiting for a thick fog to lift so she could return to London, Shaffer read all the books in the Guernsey airport bookstore. *Jersey Under the Jackboot* sparked a particular interest in the German occupation of the Channel Islands. Years later, prompted by her book club to write a novel of her own, Shaffer turned to this subject in creating the vivid world of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. Told entirely through a series of letters—because, Shaffer confessed, “for some bizarre reason, I thought it would be easier”—the novel skillfully renders the characters and concerns of Juliet, Sidney, and the other residents of Guernsey who have just emerged from the horrors and hardships of the Second World War. ✦ Born in 1934 in Martinsburg, West Virginia, Mary Ann Shaffer made a career working with books—as an editor, librarian, and bookseller—before her death in February 2008.



She died knowing that her novel was scheduled for publication, and in the good hands of her niece and co-author, Annie Barrows. Also a veteran of the publishing industry, having been an editor at a textbook company and at Chronicle Books before becoming a writing teacher, Barrows has written nonfiction for adults under the pen name Ann Fiery. Her energetic series for young readers, *Ivy and Bean*, has received multiple awards, including an ALA Notable Children’s Book designation. She lives in northern California.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society is the first novel for both authors.



Get the most out of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* with these reading group discussion questions.

1. What was your experience reading a novel composed entirely of letters? Are there types of information or emotions that letters convey more successfully than other forms of expression? Would a novel in emails have different strengths and weaknesses?
2. What makes Sidney and Sophie ideal friends for Juliet? What common ground do they share? Do you now have or have you had people in your life who have offered similar support to you?
3. Dawsey first writes to Juliet because books are so difficult to obtain on Guernsey in the aftermath of the war. What differences do you note between bookselling in the 1940s and bookselling today? Do book lovers share common qualities across generations?
4. What were your first impressions of Dawsey? How is he different from the other men in Juliet's life?
5. Discuss the writers who capture the hearts of the members of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. Does a reader's taste in books reveal anything significant about his or her personality? Whose lives are changed the most by their membership in the society?
6. In what ways are Juliet and Elizabeth kindred spirits? What does Elizabeth's spontaneous invention of the society say about her approach to life? What does her bravery reveal about it?
7. Numerous Guernsey residents give Juliet access to their private memories of the occupation. Which voices were most memorable for you? What is the effect of reading a variety of responses to a shared tragedy?
8. How does Remy's presence enhance the lives of those on Guernsey? Through her survival, what recollections, hopes, and lessons are preserved?
9. What historical facts about life in England during World War II were you especially surprised to discover? What qualities of wartime experience are captured in a detail such as the invention of the potato peel pie? Are there ways in which fiction can provide the means for more fully understanding a historical reality?
10. Which member of the society was your favorite? Whose literary opinions are most like your own? Do you agree with Isola that "reading good books ruins you for enjoying bad ones"?

Further Reading:

84, Charing Cross Road by Helene Hanff

Love Walked In by Marisa de los Santos

Garden Spells by Sarah Addison Allen

The Book of Ebenezer Le Page by G. B. Edwards



Praise for *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*

FROM OUR BOOKSELLERS

"Clear your calendars and take the phone off the hook. You won't want to be interrupted once you start this book!"

Anne Sojka, Wheaton, IL

"Reminiscent of *84, Charing Cross Road*, this book is a gem. It celebrates the very reasons we read for pure enjoyment. It made me want to take the next boat to Guernsey to search for these charming characters."

Karen Schafroth, Des Peres, MO

"What a story! The war, the possibility of romance in the most unlikely of places, and best of all, the glowing love of reading and of books—all of it wrapped up in such lovely, unpretentious prose that after every chapter I wanted to hand it to strangers."

Steve Donoghue, Boston, MA

"I fell in love with the characters, and became so enamored with Guernsey that I had to get out a map to make sure it was real, and then google it to see how I could get there."

Jill Borage, St. Louis, MO

PRAISE FROM WRITERS & REVIEWERS

"I can't remember the last time I discovered a novel as smart and delightful as this one, a world so vivid that I kept forgetting this was a work of fiction populated with characters so utterly wonderful that I kept forgetting they weren't my actual friends and neighbors. Treat yourself to this book please—I can't recommend it highly enough."

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of Eat, Pray, Love

"Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows have written a wondrous, delightful, poignant book—part Jane Austen, part history lesson. . . . An absolute treasure."

Sarah Addison Allen, author of Garden Spells

"Charming. . . [Heroine] Juliet finds in the letters not just inspiration for her next work, but also for her life—as readers will."

Publishers Weekly

"A sure winner. . . Elizabeth and Juliet are appealingly reminiscent of game but gutsy '40s movie heroines."

Kirkus Reviews



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| Member Price \$13.20

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