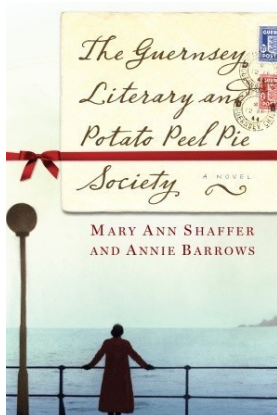


The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society
by Mary Ann Shaffer

Caution! It is likely that the following reading guide will reveal, or at least allude to, key plot details. Therefore, if you haven't yet read this book, but are planning on doing so, you may wish to proceed with caution to avoid spoiling your later enjoyment.



About the Book

"I wonder how the book got to Guernsey? Perhaps there is some sort of secret homing instinct in books that brings them to their perfect readers." January 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject.

Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey, who has come across her name written inside a book by Charles Lamb....

As Juliet and her new correspondent exchange letters, Juliet is drawn into the world of this man and his friends—and what a wonderfully eccentric world it is. *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*—born as a spur-of-the-moment alibi when its members were discovered breaking curfew by the Germans occupying their island—boasts a charming, funny, deeply human cast of characters, from pig farmers to phrenologists, literature lovers all.

Juliet begins a remarkable correspondence with the society's members, learning about their island, their taste in books, and the impact the recent German occupation has had on their lives. Captivated by their stories, she sets sail for Guernsey, and what she finds will change her forever.

Written with warmth and humor as a series of letters, this novel is a celebration of the written word in all its guises, and of finding connection in the most surprising ways. (*From the publisher.*)

Discussion Questions

1. What was your experience reading a novel composed entirely of letters? Are there types of information or emotion 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?
- 6.** Whose lives are changed the most by their membership in the society?
- 7.** 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?
- 8.** 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?
- 9.** How does Remy's presence enhance the lives of those on Guernsey? Through her survival, what recollections, hopes, and lessons are preserved?
- 10.** 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?
- 11.** 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"?