

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows

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Synopsis

January 1946: writer Juliet Ashton receives a letter from a stranger, a founding member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. And so begins a remarkable tale of the island of Guernsey during the German occupation, and of a society as extraordinary as its name.

Summary

"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.

Reviews

Publishers Weekly

The letters comprising this small charming novel begin in 1946, when single, 30-something author Juliet Ashton (nom de plume Izzy Bickerstaff) writes to her publisher to say she is tired of covering the sunny side of war and its aftermath. When Guernsey farmer Dawsey Adams finds Juliet's name in a used book and invites articulate and not-so-articulate neighbors to write Juliet with their stories, the book's epistolary circle widens, putting Juliet back in the path of war stories. The occasionally contrived letters jump from incident to incident including the formation of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society while Guernsey was under German occupation and person to person in a manner that feels disjointed. But Juliet's quips are so clever, the Guernsey inhabitants so enchanting and the small acts of heroism so vivid and moving that one forgives the authors (Shaffer died earlier this year) for not being able to settle on a single person or plot. Juliet finds in the letters not just inspiration for her next work, but also for her life as will readers.

Booklist

Winding up her book tour promoting her collection of lighthearted wartime newspaper columns, Juliet Ashton casts about for a more serious project. Opportunity comes in the form of a letter she receives from Mr. Dawsey Adams, who happens to possess a book that Julia once owned. Adams is a member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society—no ordinary book club. Rather, it was formed as a ruse and became a way for people to get together without raising the suspicions of Guernsey's Nazi occupiers. Written in the form of letters (a lost art), this novel by an aunt-and-niece team has loads of charm, especially as long as Juliet is still in London corresponding with the society members. Some of the air goes out of the book when she gets to Guernsey; the humorous tone doesn't quite mesh with what the islanders suffered. But readers should enjoy this literary soufflé for the most part, and curiosity about the German occupation of the British Channel Islands will be piqued

. "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*

San Francisco Chronicle

Traditional without seeming stale, and romantic without being naive...It's tempting to throw around terms like "gem" when reading a book like this. But *Guernsey* is not precious...This is a book for firesides or long train rides. It's as charming and timeless as the novels for which its characters profess their love."

Boston Globe

"The letters that make up this novel shed light on the suffering of the Channel Islanders during the German occupation, but there is also a rich vein of humor. After Julia moves to Guernsey to work on her book, she finds it impossible to leave the island and her new friends, a feeling readers may share when they finish this delightful novel."



Biography

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 Jack-Boot* 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 coauthor, 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.

Copy & paste link to view interview with Annie Barrows

<http://www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/guernsey/book/#video>

Interview with the Author (From Novel Journey website 2008)

<http://noveljourney.blogspot.com/2008/12/annie-barrows-author-interview.html>

Annie, you wrote *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* with your aunt, Mary Ann Shaffer, who sadly passed away before the book came to print. It is one of the most delightful books I've read in a long time. Tell us how she came up with the story.

Mary Ann was visiting England in 1980, and on a whim, she decided to fly down to Guernsey. Once she was there, "a terrible fog" rose from the sea and enveloped the island, and all ferry and plane service was shut down. Immured in the airport for seventy-two hours, Mary Ann passed the time warming herself under the hand-dryer in the men's restroom (the one in the women's restroom was broken) and reading all the books she could find in the airport bookstore.

Apparently, in 1980, the airport was the primary outlet for local publishing, and the subject of most of their books was the German Occupation of the island during the second World War. Mary Ann was always fascinated by accounts of the war, but this episode was unknown to her. She was riveted, there under the hand-dryer, gulping down book after book. When she was finally allowed to fly out, she brought half the contents of the airport bookstore in her suitcase.

That was the beginning of the story, but she didn't start writing the book for until twenty years later, when she became part of a writing group that cajoled and demanded and begged her to complete the manuscript.

I have to ask, is the letter from Oscar Wilde real or fictional?

You must read this book, and when you do, email me at ane@anemulligan.com and I'll give you the answer.

Mary Ann asked you to finish the book when her health declined. I never noticed a change of style or voice. How did you manage to do that so seamlessly?

Before I began, I was a little worried about my ability to carry through with Mary Ann's voice, but once I sat down and started writing, I realized that hers was a voice and a style that I knew from the inside out—because I had been hearing it all my life. Mary Ann and my mother always lived near each other, and their stories were the wallpaper of my life. Without noticing it, I had come to tell a story in the same way that she did, so working on the book felt very natural.

You also write adult fiction under the name of Ann Fiery. Do you have a new work in progress you'd like to tell us about?

I used to write non-fiction under the name Ann Fiery (I thought that having a pseudonym was cool), but for the last five years, I've been writing children's books under my regular name, Annie Barrows. Now I'm working on a novel for adults, but as Juliet says, it's a "tiny infant of an idea, much too frail and defenseless to risk describing."

Whether it's children or adult fiction, novelists sometimes dig themselves into a hole over implausible plots, flat characters or a host of other problems. What's the most difficult part of writing for you?

For me, the most harrowing aspect of writing is my utter inability to determine whether what I've written is good or vile. How can my critical faculties, so razor-sharp when it comes to muffins or pants or other people's books, melt away in the face of one of my own paragraphs?

How do you overcome it?

Aging. I try to ignore euphoria or despair and just stick the manuscript in the deep freeze for a couple of days or weeks. When I read it again, my reaction is much more reliable than the immediate post-writing frenzy.

Where do you write: In a cave, a coffeehouse, or a cozy attic nook?

It's not particularly cozy, but it is in an attic. The best thing about my office is that it's at the top of my house and I look out into leaves—red and green right now. If I shove myself into a corner, I can see a little smidge of the Pacific Ocean, too.

The worst thing about my office is that they stopped manufacturing filing cabinets in white about five years ago, which has resulted in an unfortunate expansion of papers into the suburbs of my floor, windowsills, and bookshelves.

One of the many books I read too young was that one about the two brothers in New York who never threw away their newspapers and were crushed to death by falling piles and only found when they started to smell. This could happen to me.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I race around getting my children to school and reconstituting my house until about 9:30 or 10, when I get into my office. I have to deal with a lot of email these days, so the first hour or so is devoted to that. I've had four books published this year, so I've had lots and lots of production issues and publicity events to take care of.

It's a constant battle to get through the daily blitz and find time to write and think—if I get six hours a week of real creative work done, that's a success. My heroine is Jane Austen, who wrote all of her books at a table in the middle of her family's sitting room, with her mother nagging and visitors dropping in and people asking her to hold their yarn. If she could do it, I can do it.

Do you prefer creating or editing? Why?

I much prefer creating to revising. When I talk to kids, the teachers always want me to say that I love revising, but I don't. I will say it's important, but writing something for the first time is really what I love. I do like editing other people's stuff.

What are a few of your favorite books (not written by you) and why are they favorites?

Little Women, by Louisa May Alcott. Okay, it's a kids' book, but I love it. Plus, I think it's a great work of art about the difficulty of being peculiar in America.

The Letters of Charles Dickens, v. 1-12. I adore reading letters, and I adore Dickens. This edition, published by Oxford University Press, has about eight million footnotes, which is glorious. It took me five years to read all twelve volumes, and I'm about to start the whole thing again.

Mansfield Park, by Jane Austen. This is one of the Austens "that nobody reads," but it's my favorite because the author champions moral fiber over glitz and manages to make us all agree that dull Fanny Price is a heroine and charming Mary Crawford is a villain.

Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte. This book drives me crazy. I just can't figure out what the heck is going on from chapter 28 to 36. But still, I read it over and over.

The Habit of Being: The Letters of Flannery O'Connor. More letters from another fabulous writer. She kept peacocks.

Cloud Atlas, by David Mitchell. I read this last year and was transfixed. Six novels in one, a feat of imagination and writerly verve.

The Long Walk, by Slavomir Rawicz. Everyone should read this. It's the story of a man who escaped from a Soviet prison camp during World War Two—by walking to India. You will never complain again.

His Dark Materials trilogy, by Philip Pullman. Along with everyone else in the world, I devoured these books. I've never read so fast in my life.

My Sister Eileen, by Ruth McKenney. My family runs to sisters, and this book makes all of us laugh and laugh.

What's the best writing advice you've heard?

You have to write from a position of strength. You can write about despair, but you can't be in despair as you write because despair is the antithesis of creation.

Do you have any parting words of advice?

Whew. I don't think I'm in any position to give anyone advice on writing. It's just as improvisational for me as it is for anyone else

Potato Peel Pie Recipe

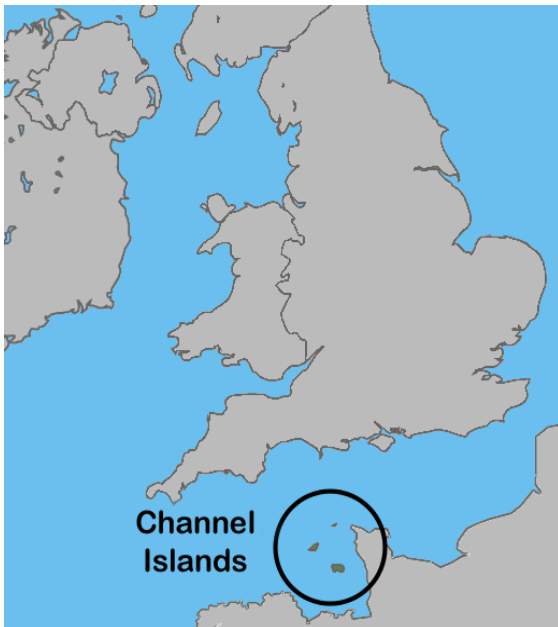
Here's a recipe for a potato peel pie, but I warn you, it tastes like paste. The more authentic it is, the nastier. These ingredients will make a very small pie (expand at will):

1 potato
1 beet
1 Tablespoon milk

Peel the potato and put the peelings in a pie pan. Don't cook the peels, because you're in the middle of an Occupation and you don't have any fuel. Boil the potato and the beet together in salty water, but not for very long, due to the fuel problem. Just until you can stick a fork in the potato. Take them out and mash them up with the milk. Pour the glop in the pie pan. Bake at 375 for as short a time as is consonant with digestion (fuel again), say, fifteen minutes.

The finished product will look quite attractive and pink. If you squint, you can almost imagine raspberries. Don't be fooled. It looks a lot better than it is. However, if you forgot that you were in the middle of WWII and added a bunch of butter and milk and salt, it could be quite tasty.

Guernsey during World War II (from Wikipedia)



During the Second World War, the islands were the only part of the British Commonwealth occupied by Germany. The German occupation of 1940–45 was harsh: over 2,000 Islanders were deported by the Germans, Jews sent to concentration camps; partisan resistance and retribution; accusations of collaboration; and slave labour (primarily Russians and eastern Europeans) brought to the islands to build fortifications, with 65,718 landmines laid in Jersey alone.

The British government demilitarised the islands in June 1940 and the Lieutenant-Governors were withdrawn on 21 June, leaving the insular administrations to continue government as best they could under impending military occupation.

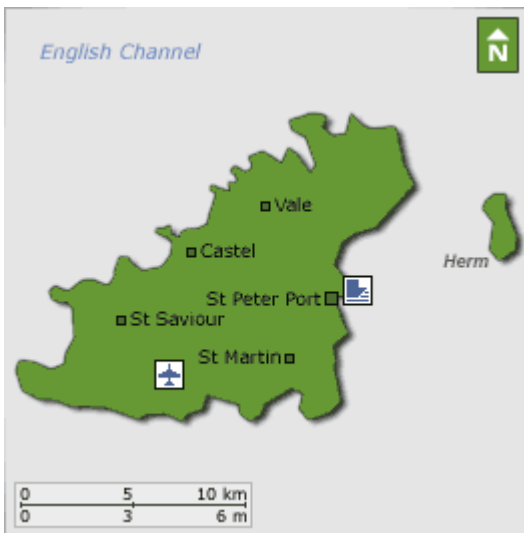
Before German troops landed 30 June–4 July 1940, evacuation took place (many young men had already left to join the Allied forces): 6,600 left Jersey (out of 50,000); 17,000 left Guernsey (out of 42,000); the population of Sark remained overwhelmingly but in Alderney, the entire population, save for six persons, left. In Alderney, the occupying Germans built four concentration camps in which over 700 people died (out of a total inmate population of about 6,000). Due to the destruction of documents, it is impossible to state how many forced workers died in the other islands. These were the only Nazi concentration camps on British soil.

The Royal Navy blockaded the islands from time to time, particularly following the liberation of mainland Normandy in 1944. There was considerable hunger and privation during the five years of German occupation, particularly in the final months when the population was close to

starvation. Intense negotiations resulted in some Red Cross humanitarian aid, leading to the arrival of the Red Cross supply ship Vega in December 1944.

The end of the occupation only came after VE-Day on 8 May 1945. Jersey and Guernsey were liberated on 9 May 1945. The German garrison in Alderney did not surrender until 16 May 1945 and was one of the last of the Nazi German remnants to surrender. The first evacuees returned on the first sailing from the UK on 23 June but the population of Alderney was unable to start returning until December 1945.

Post-1945 Following the Liberation of 1945, reconstruction led to a transformation of the economies of the islands, attracting immigration and developing tourism. The legislatures were reformed and non-party governments embarked on social programmes, aided by the incomes from offshore finance which grew rapidly from the 1960s



GUERNSEY HISTORY AND TRIVIA

<http://www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/guernsey/a-glimpse-of-guernsey/>

- Guernsey Island is the second largest of the Channel Islands; it is also the western-most. It lies a mere 30 miles from France, and 125 miles south of England.
- Guernsey is the site of the Les Fouillages burial mound, possibly the oldest man-made structure in Europe.
- Geology indicates that the Channel Islands were once part of France's mainland. Rising sea levels created these islands around 6000 B.C.
- The Bailiwick of Guernsey (comprised of the Island of Guernsey as well as Sark, Alderney, Herm and other islets) is not part of the United Kingdom, but a possession of the Crown, comparable to the Island of Man, and not part of the European Union.
- In 933 A.D. Guernsey became a possession of the Duchy of Normandy; when William the Conqueror's took Britain's crown in 1066, the Channel Islands were already part of his oversight. The name for the Islands' overlord is The Duke of Normandy and this is the title given to Elizabeth II today.
- On June 15, 1940, in the midst of World War II, the British Government declared that the Channel Islands were of no strategic importance and would not be defended militarily. However, elected island officials were consulted on a plan to evacuate the islands. True to their iconoclastic heritage, each of the four islands (Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark) chose a different strategy. Guernsey elected to evacuate all children of school age but gave the parents the option of keeping the children with them on the island, or allowing them to evacuate with their class.
- German reconnaissance planes saw a convoy of lorries in St. Peters Port (the capital of Guernsey) and mistook them for troop carriers; the subsequent bombing killed 41 civilians. In truth, the convoy was carrying tomatoes to the ships attempting to bring produce to Britain.
- The German forces landed on Guernsey on June 30, 1940 (the other Channel Islands followed over the next few days) and remained—heavily reinforcing the islands well

beyond their strategic value—until May 9, 1945, still celebrated today as Liberation Day.

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- Victor Hugo wrote many of his novels while exiled to Guernsey, including *Les Misérables*. He lived in Hautville House which has since become the French Embassy; his novel, *Toilers of the Sea*, was set on and dedicated to the island.
- There are two national animals of Guernsey: the Guernsey cow and the donkey. While the former's position is self-evident, the latter was important due to the steepness of the ways in and out of St. Peter's Port. It has also been said that the donkey was also tribute to Guernsey inhabitant's stubbornness.
- During the English Civil War, Guernsey sided with Parliament while neighboring Jersey was Royalist. However, the Royalist-tending Governor of the Island, Sir Peter Osbourne, took possession of Castle Coronet and bombarded St. Peter's Port regularly. When he capitulated in 1651, Osbourne was the last Royalist to do so.
- The official language of Guernsey is English, but French influence is clear in the several local dialects including *Guernésiais* (aka Guernsey Norman French).
- Potato Peel Pie is not a delicacy of Guernsey, but should you visit you may enjoy a Guernsey Gache which is a bread laced with raisins, sultanas, and mixed dried peels ... of fruit, not potato.
- Renior painted on Guernsey; some of his paintings were used in a set of commemorative stamps issued in 1983.
- In more recent years, Guernsey and other Channel Islands have become popular havens for people seeking tax relief; its largest industry is finance.
- Guernsey's colorful recent history includes:
 - The Island's official color is Green—sports jerseys, etc.
 - The Island hosts the same distinctive post-boxes and phone-booths one sees in England...but Guernsey's are not painted red (like Royal Mail boxes) but a cobalt blue.
 - A new flag was instituted in 1985; it incorporates the badge of William of Normandy (aka the Conqueror of 1066) as show in the famous Bayeux Tapestry, touting the island's French-British heritage.
- Did you know this person lived in Guernsey?
 - Victor Hugo (mentioned above)
 - Roy Dotrice—actor (best known for “Beauty and the Beast,” “Picket Fences” and the reader of 3 of the Audio-book adaptations of George R.R. Martin's *Song of Ice and Fire* Saga)
 - William La Lacheur—considered the “father” of the coffee import business bringing the great bean from Costa Rica to the UK.
 - Oliver Reed—actor, who although born in Wimbledon, lived in great part in Guernsey due to some difficulty with the tax officials.
 - Andrew (Andy) Graham Priaux – current World Touring Car Championship Champion, a crown he has held since 2004.
 - Olivia de Havilland and Joan Fontaine—Academy-award winning actresses descended from a 15th century family of Guernsey natives.

Discussion Questions

(from Reading Group guides)

http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides_G/quernsey_literary_pie_society1.asp#discuss

1. What was it like to read a novel composed entirely of letters? What do letters offer that no other form of writing (not even emails) can convey?
2. What makes Sidney and Sophie ideal friends for Juliet? What common ground do they share? Who has been a similar advocate in your life?
3. Dawsey first wrote to Juliet because books, on Charles Lamb or otherwise, were so difficult to obtain on Guernsey in the aftermath of the war. What differences did you note between bookselling in the novel and bookselling in your world? What makes book lovers unique, across all generations?
4. What were your first impressions of Dawsey? How was he different from the other men Juliet had known?
5. Discuss the poets, novelists, biographers, and other writers who capture the hearts of the members of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. What does a reader's taste in books say about his or her personality? Whose lives were changed the most by membership in the society?
6. Juliet occasionally receives mean-spirited correspondence from strangers, accusing both Elizabeth and Juliet of being immoral. What accounts for their judgmental ways?
7. In what ways were Juliet and Elizabeth kindred spirits? What did Elizabeth's spontaneous invention of the society, as well as her brave final act, say about her approach to life?
8. Numerous Guernsey residents give Juliet access to their private memories of the occupation. Which voices were most memorable for you? What was the effect of reading a variety of responses to a shared tragedy?
9. Kit and Juliet complete each other in many ways. What did they need from each other? What qualities make Juliet an unconventional, excellent mother?
10. How did Remy's presence enhance the lives of those on Guernsey? Through her survival, what recollections, hopes, and lessons also survived?
11. Juliet rejects marriage proposals from a man who is a stereotypical "great catch." How would you have handled Juliet's romantic entanglement? What truly makes someone a "great catch"?
12. What was the effect of reading a novel about an author's experiences with writing, editing, and getting published? Did this enhance the book's realism, though Juliet's experience is a bit different from that of debut novelist Mary Ann Shaffer and her niece, children's book author Annie Barrows?
13. What historical facts about life in England during World War II were you especially surprised to discover? What traits, such as remarkable stamina, are captured in a detail such as potato peel pie? In what ways does fiction provide a means for more fully understanding a non-fiction truth?

14. Which of the members of the Society is your favorite? Whose literary opinions are most like your own?

15. Do you agree with Isola that “reading good books ruins you for enjoying bad ones”?

16. Why are there no letters from Sophie? Juliet references Sophie’s letters but the authors never show them to the reader. Any thoughts?

List of Important Books in *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*

<http://www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/guernsey/books-mentioned/>

Jane Austen - *Pride and Prejudice*. Isola plans on speaking about it at a meeting but her goat eats her notes (p. 234).

Emily Bronte - *Wuthering Heights*. One of Isola’s favorite books. She talks about Anne and Charlotte Bronte as well but doesn’t mention specific titles (p. 53).

Thomas Carlyle - *Past and Present*. The first book that Will Thisbee enjoys helps him “get a grip on Faith.” (p. 101).

Geoffrey Chaucer- *The Canterbury Tales*. Sidney’s favorite favorite book; the topic of a Society meeting (p. 243).

Charles Dickens - *The Pickwick Papers*. Amelia’s favorite – it lifts her spirits during the Occupation (p. 50).

Charles Lamb - *Selected Essays of Elia*. Dawsey has Juliet’s old copy; reason for his first letter to her (p. 9).

- *More Essays of Elia and Selected Letters*. Juliet sends to Dawsey (p. 11).

Wilfred Owen - *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*. Owen’s poetry helps Clovis Fossey to describe his experiences in WWI (p. 72).

Rainer Maria Rilke- *Collected poetry* (exact title not specified). A gift from Christian to Elizabeth, with the inscription, “For Elizabeth, who turns darkness into light.” (p. 259).

Seneca - *Letters of Seneca*. John Booker writes that Seneca and the Society keep him from being a drunk (p. 88).

William Shakespeare - *Selections from Shakespeare*. Eben Ramsey’s favorite book. He quotes Shakespeare when talking about the German troops landing on Guernsey (p. 63).

Oscar Wilde- An important author in the book—he writes a series of letters to Isola’s grandmother—but none of his works are specifically mentioned.

For Further Reading -- Other Epistolary Novels

Jane Austen *Lady Susan: A Novella*

A tongue-in-cheek account of the exploits of a depraved and stunningly beautiful widow.

Honoré de Balzac *Letters of Two Brides*

Two women who became friends during their education at a convent correspond over a 17 year period, exchanging letters describing their lives.

Nick Bantock *Griffin and Sabine*

A London card-designer and a mysterious South Pacific islander correspond through a series of handmade postcards and colorful envelopes.

Matt Beaumont *E*

E-mails written between the employees of an advertising agency and some of their business partners reveal all kinds of human weaknesses in the office setting.

Elizabeth Berg *The Pull of the Moon*

A Massachusetts woman's mid-life crisis detailed in letters and journal entries as she impulsively travels west.

Fanny Burney *Evelina*

A comedic look at high society in late eighteenth-century Britain told through the letters of a young, innocent country girl as she learns the ways of her society through misunderstandings and embarrassing social errors.

Meg Cabot *The Boy Next Door*

Amusing e-mails recount the budding romance between New York City gossip columnist Melissa Fuller and her elderly neighbor's nephew.

Susan Dundon *To My Ex-Husband*

An ex-wife writes letters to the man who had been both her husband and best friend, healing herself by the process.

Mark Dunn *Ella Minnow Pea*

When a totalitarian government bans the use of certain letters in the alphabet, islanders who live there manage to communicate via the written word, often in highly creative, original ways.

Chris Dyer *Wanderlust*

The madcap adventures of a travel columnist posted to friends and family as she circles globe.

Stephanie Fletcher *E-mail: A Love Story*

A married woman has an online love affair.

David Grossman *Be My Knife*

A love affair by letter between a rare book dealer and the mysterious woman he glimpses at a class reunion.

Elizabeth Hailey *A Woman of Independent Means*

The triumphs and tragedies of a woman who is independent in many ways, told in sixty years of the letters she writes.

Helene Hanff 84, *Charing Cross Road*

Twenty years of correspondence and shared bibliophilia between the author and a London bookseller.

C.S. Lewis *The Screwtape Letters*

Instructional correspondence between a senior demon, Screwtape, and his diabolical nephew

Luanne Rice and Joe Monninger *The Letters*

An estranged husband and wife exchange searching, intimate letters that trace the history of their love affair.

Samuel Richardson *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded*

A classic epistolary novel of seduction and romance first published in 1740, now considered the first modern English novel.

Samuel Richardson *Clarissa*

The tragic story of a heroine whose quest for virtue is continually thwarted by her family.

Elisabeth Robinson *The True and Outstanding Adventures of the Hunt Sisters*

A struggling scriptwriter writes to her younger sister who has been diagnosed with cancer, and to many friends, relatives and coworkers.

Shelley, Mary *Frankenstein**

A scientist learns how to create life and creates a being in the likeness of man, but larger than average and more powerful.

Lionel Shriver *We Need to Talk About Kevin*

In a series of brutally introspective missives to her husband, a mother tries to come to grips with the fact that their teenage son has killed seven students and two adults with his crossbow.

Lee Smith *The Christmas Letters*

Three generations of Pickett family Christmas letters (and recipes), beginning in 1944.

Fair and Tender Ladies

Ivy Rowe lives in the Appalachian mountains of Virginia, and writes like a poet despite little formal education, spilling her joys and sorrows into decades of letters.

Stoker, Bram *Dracula**

Letters and diary entries recount the story of Count Dracula, a tragic, night-dwelling specter who feeds upon the blood of the living.

Alice Walker *The Color Purple*

Letters between two sisters—one a missionary in Africa, the other a wife trapped in an abusive marriage.

Hugh Walpole and J.B. Priestley *Farthing Hall*

A successful young artist writes to his old friend as he seeks out the woman who captured his heart in the theatre the previous night.

Jean Webster *Daddy Long Legs and Dear Enemy*

The adventures of an orphan named Judy Abbott, whose letters to her anonymous male benefactor trace her development as an independent thinker and writer.