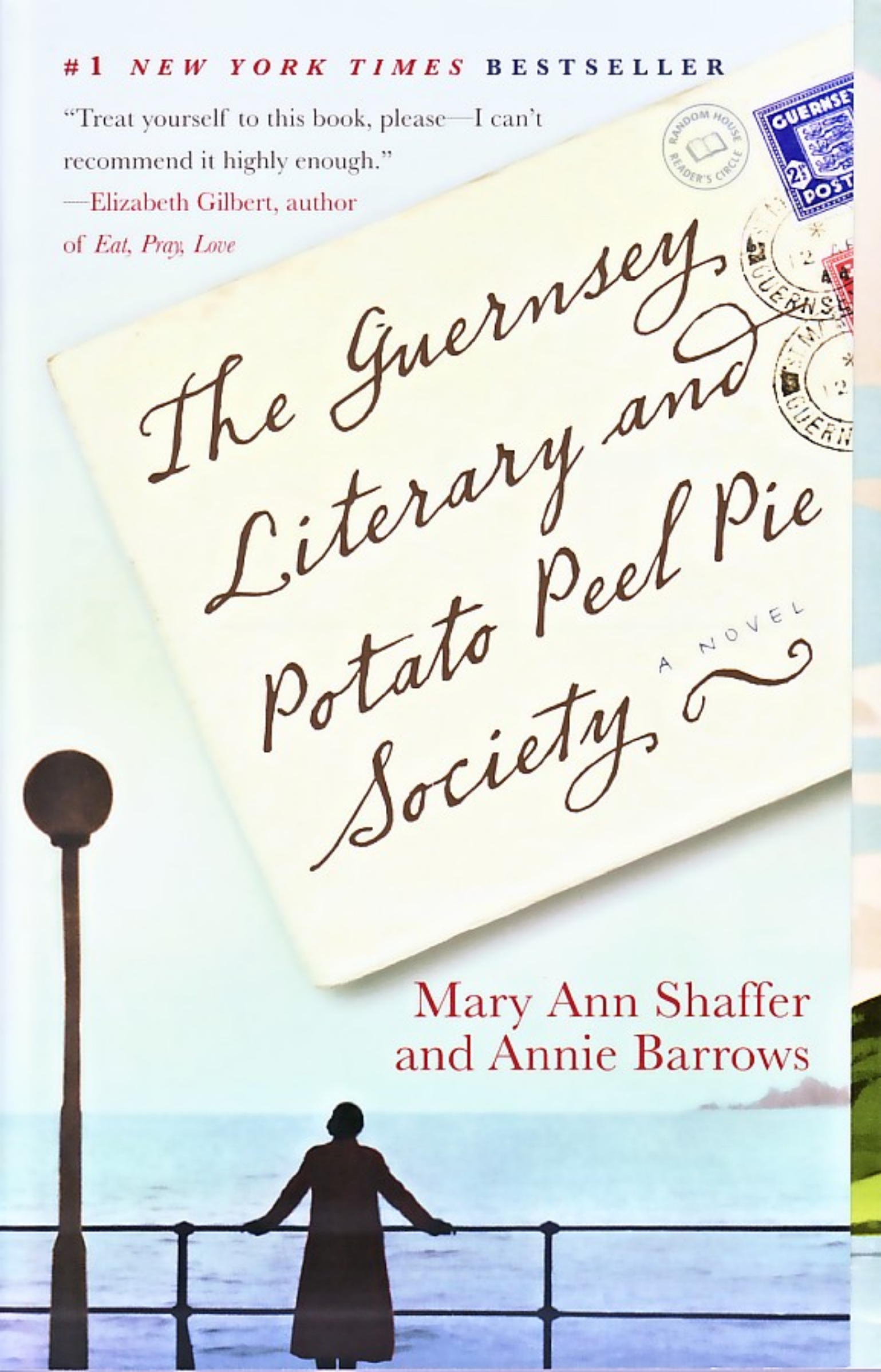


#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"Treat yourself to this book, please—I can't recommend it highly enough."

—Elizabeth Gilbert, author
of *Eat, Pray, Love*



The Guernsey
Literary and
Potato Peel Pie
Society, ^{A NOVEL}

Mary Ann Shaffer
and Annie Barrows



8th January, 1946

Mr. Sidney Stark, Publisher
Stephens & Stark Ltd.
21 St. James's Place
London S.W.1
England

Dear Sidney,

Susan Scott is a wonder. We sold over forty copies of the book, which was very pleasant, but much more thrilling from my standpoint was the food. Susan managed to procure ration coupons for icing sugar and *real eggs* for the meringue. If all her literary luncheons are going to achieve these heights, I won't mind touring about the country. Do you suppose that a lavish bonus could spur her on to butter? Let's try it—you may deduct the money from my royalties.

Now for my grim news. You asked me how work on my new book is progressing. Sidney, it isn't.

English Foibles seemed so promising at first. After all, one should be able to write reams about the Society to Protest the Glorification of the English Bunny. I unearthed a photograph of the Vermin Exterminators' Trade Union, marching down an Oxford street with placards screaming "Down with Beatrix Potter!" But what is there to write about after a caption? Nothing, that's what.

I no longer want to write this book—my head and my heart just aren't in it. Dear as Izzy Bickerstaff is—and was—to me, I don't want to write anything else under that name. I don't want

to be considered a light-hearted journalist anymore. I do acknowledge that making readers laugh—or at least chuckle—during the war was no mean feat, but I don't want to do it anymore. I can't seem to dredge up any sense of proportion or balance these days, and God knows one cannot write humor without them.

In the meantime, I am very happy Stephens & Stark is making money on *Izzy Bickerstaff Goes to War*. It relieves my conscience over the debacle of my Anne Brontë biography.

My thanks for everything and love,
Juliet

P.S. I am reading the collected correspondence of Mrs. Montagu. Do you know what that dismal woman wrote to Jane Carlyle? "My dear little Jane, everybody is born with a vocation, and yours is to write charming little notes." I hope Jane spat on her.

From Sidney to Juliet

10th January, 1946

Miss Juliet Ashton
23 Glebe Place
Chelsea
London S.W. 3

Dear Juliet:

Congratulations! Susan Scott said you took to the audience at the luncheon like a drunkard to rum—and they to you—

so please stop worrying about your tour next week. I haven't a doubt of your success. Having witnessed your electrifying performance of "The Shepherd Boy Sings in the Valley of Humiliation" eighteen years ago, I know you will have every listener coiled around your little finger within moments. A hint: perhaps in this case, you should refrain from throwing the book at the audience when you finish.

Susan is looking forward to ushering you through bookshops from Bath to Yorkshire. And of course, Sophie is agitating for an extension of the tour into Scotland. I've told her in my most infuriating older-brother manner that *It Remains To Be Seen*. She misses you terribly, I know, but Stephens & Stark must be impervious to such considerations.

I've just received *Izzy's* sales figures from London and the Home Counties—they are excellent. Again, congratulations!

Don't fret about *English Foibles*; better that your enthusiasm died now than after six months spent writing about bunnies. The crass commercial possibilities of the idea were attractive, but I agree that the topic would soon grow horribly fey. Another subject—one you'll like—will occur to you.

Dinner one evening before you go? Say when.

Love,
Sidney

P.S. You write charming little notes.

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.

“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.”
—*San Francisco Chronicle Book Review*

“[The] characters step from the past radiant with eccentricity and kindly humour. [The] writing, with its delicately offbeat, self-deprecating stylishness, is exquisitely turned.”
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“I’ve never wanted to join a club so desperately as I did while reading *Guernsey*....[The novel] is a labor of love and it shows on almost every page.”
—*The Christian Science Monitor*

“I could not put the book down. I have recommended it to all my friends.”
—*Newsday*

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