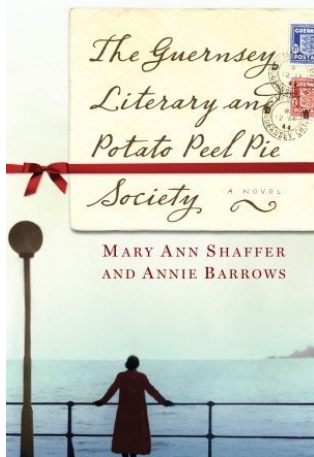




Discussion Guide

About the Book



Book Title: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society*

Author: Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Published by 2008

Author Website: www.anniebarrows.com

Book Website: <http://www.anniebarrows.com/otherbooks/>

Questions for Discussion

1. **What were your general impressions of the book?**
2. **Did you like reading a book that was a series of letters? How did this work or not work? Would you consider writing a book in this way? Why or why not?**
3. **This book tells the story of World War II in a form of social history. What did you learn about the war and its effect on people from this book? Do you think this is a good way to teach history? Why or why not?**
4. **As you read the author's comments, she mentions that humor and storytelling were important parts of her family life, which is incorporated into this book. What did you find funny? Did you find yourself laughing as you read?**
5. **Read over the MAMs comments. Which of the MAMs do you most agree with and why?**
6. **Would you recommend this book for other Book Clubs? Why or why not?**
7. **In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?**

Other Discussion Guides can be found at:

<http://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-guernsey-literary-and-potato-peel-pie-society>

<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/405-guernsey-literary-and-potato-peel-pie-society-barrows-and-shaffer>

Nancy and the MAMs discuss the book...



NANCY: Mary Ann Shafer and Annie Barrows created a very captivating, funny novel, weaving together their love of literature and history. Set in the island community of Guernsey, off the coast of Great Britain during World War II, one experiences firsthand the cruelty of the Nazis and the determination of these islanders who managed to maintain their own dignity through their literary society.

The story comes alive through Juliet's letters and the correspondence with her editor, her best friend, and gradually the people of Guernsey. The letters provide a chronological focus and I was totally drawn in, as was Juliet into this little island society where the people cared for each other and the child left behind when her mother was taken to a concentration camp and her father, a German doctor, killed in the war.

I found this book a delightful work of art, expressing the triumph of the human spirit in the midst of very difficult times. I loved the delicate sense of humor woven into the letters. And, of course, I love that their Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society came together in their love of books, which helped them learn together over time. Book Clubs are powerful community building experiences -- just as the MAMs in *Revelation in the Cave* discovered, and as we are finding in the MAMs Book Club Springfield. Here's to Book Clubs everywhere! A good read for like-minded souls!



SALLIE: Well, the kindergarten teacher in me keeps me focused on children. I've never really read about this sort of experience where the parents had to send their children away to protect them during the war. Heart wrenching, but well written to explain. My heart went out to Kit and her story was so tenderly portrayed. A good read!



MOLLY: My favorite character in this book was Elizabeth. A person of privilege, she could have opted out of this war experience, but instead came and stayed and served people with such undying love, eventually leading to her own arrest. She reminds me of the people like Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman... those during the abolition and civil rights movements who risked their lives to love and forge change. I also liked the Guernsey community as they worked together to face the evil. They show once again the power of nonviolence and community. Inspires me for the work today to continue to fight racism and global warming. I think God is calling us to be modern day heroes.



PRISCILLA: I want to try this Potato Peel Pie. I can't imagine beet juice making it sweet! What I appreciated most was the community of love on Guernsey. These people embraced both Juliet and Kit in their singularity and helped them find each other. I'm a ringer for love and romance and happily ever after. Even though there were sad turns, I loved the perfect ending, but I won't spoil it for you!



KATHARINE: I loved the way authors and literary works were woven into the story. I've never read Charles Lamb, but I found myself wanting to check out this author who brought Dawsey and Juliet together in the first place. And again, so hilarious in points, in a properly British way! Reminded me of some of the "Prairie Home Companion" pieces. Also I found this a great social history book, a snapshot of the people during World War II.



JANE: Once again these strong women characters charm me! I loved this enterprising writer, Juliet, independently wealthy from her humorous war columns. That she would spurn a man who didn't appreciate her work, that she would be dear friends with her gay editor, and that she eventually popped the question herself to the one she loved. Thank you Mary Ann and Annie for creating a feminist of the 1940s! Here's to Juliet!



ABIGAIL: I enjoy this story of people of nonresistance, who protected their gay friend, Booker, by creating an outrageous story about a Literary and Potato Peel Society, and then lived into the fabricated story they told to the occupying Germans! They show the power of the people to resist without choosing violence. The story has much depth, and I especially liked the everyday heroes of Guernsey.