

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ANN SHAFFER

Mary Ann Shaffer was born in Martinsburg, West Virginia. She attended Miami University in Ohio and married in 1958. After moving to California with her husband, Shaffer had two daughters. Over the course of her lifetime, Shaffer worked as a bookshop clerk, a librarian, and at the publishing house Harper and Row first as a receptionist and later, as an editor. The idea for *Guernsey* took hold in 1980, when Shaffer traveled to Cambridge to conduct research for a biography of Kathleen Scott. When Shaffer discovered that Scott's personal papers were unusable, she decided to spend part of her trip in Guernsey but ended up stranded in the Guernsey airport when it shut down due to fog. She spent her time in the airport's bookstore reading about the German occupation of the island, but she didn't begin actually writing the novel until twenty years later. Soon after the novel was accepted for publication, Shaffer's editor requested extensive rewriting. Shaffer was by then fighting cancer and so asked her niece, children's book author Annie Barrows, to finish the novel. *Guernsey* was published posthumously in the same year that Shaffer died.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When the United Kingdom first declared war on Germany in 1939, little changed in Guernsey: the island had no conscription requirements and the British government actually relaxed travel restrictions. However, in 1940 after the Allied defeat in France, the government decided that the Channel Islands (that is, Guernsey and Jersey) were of no strategic importance and began to demilitarize them. The British government initially offered to evacuate anyone from the islands who wished to leave but when it became clear that not everyone could be evacuated in time, the government began to encourage people to stay. Because the UK kept it a secret that the Channel Islands were demilitarized, the Germans did bomb them before invading in the summer of 1940. The rest of the invasion proceeded much as the characters in the novel say it did: it was a relatively peaceful occupation (despite the inability to communicate with the outside world) until D-Day, after which the German soldiers were just as hungry as the islanders. The Todt workers on the island were part of the Organization Todt, a military engineering organization created by Fritz Todt. More than 95% of the laborers were prisoners of war or forced laborers from occupied countries, and most didn't survive the war. They built road systems in mainland Europe, built fortifications in France, and fortified the Channel Islands. The island of Guernsey now promotes the bunkers built by the Todt

laborers as tourist attractions.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The members of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* read books from a variety of time periods and genres, from ancient Roman philosophers like Seneca the Younger to poets like Wordsworth and Longfellow. Charles Lamb's book *Selected Essays of Elia* and Emily Brontë's [Wuthering Heights](#) are especially beloved, though other books by Charlotte and Anne Brontë ([Jane Eyre](#), [Agnes Grey](#)) are also favorites. The works the Society members read often help them make sense of their lives; Clovis finds that the poems of Wilfred Owen give voice to his experiences fighting in World War One, while Isola later decides to become a detective like Miss Marple from Agatha Christie's mystery novels. Other novels in which characters love and rely on books to make sense of their worlds include Markus Zusak's [The Book Thief](#) and several of John Green's young adult novels, including [Looking for Alaska](#) and [The Fault In Our Stars](#). As an epistolary novel, *Guernsey* shares stylistic similarities with Bram Stoker's [Dracula](#) and C.S. Lewis's [The Screwtape Letters](#). *Guernsey* also tackles similar themes as Louis de Bernières's novel *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, which details the German occupation of the Greek island of Cephalonia during World War Two and the years following the war.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society
- **When Written:** 2000-2008
- **Where Written:** California, USA
- **When Published:** 2008
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Historical Fiction; Epistolary Novel
- **Setting:** London and Guernsey, 1946
- **Climax:** Kit shares her box of treasures with Juliet
- **Antagonist:** World War Two and the Nazis; hunger; Gilly Gilbert and Billee Bee Jones; Miss Adelaide Addison
- **Point of View:** First person limited, told in a series of letters between various characters

EXTRA CREDIT

Driving. During the German occupation, Germans insisted that Guernsey change its road rules to comply with the rest of Europe and drive on the right side of the road, rather than the left. Guernsey Islanders reverted to driving on the left after the war ended.

The Real Society. While the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society is entirely fictional, there were real secret societies on Guernsey during the occupation. The most notable of these was GUNS (Guernsey Underground News Service), which relied on hidden radios to distribute news of the war to locals. All of the GUNS members were eventually caught and imprisoned in mainland Europe.



PLOT SUMMARY

Juliet, a young author living in London, writes to Sidney, her friend and editor: she's lost interest in her current book project and no longer wants to write under the pseudonym **Izzy Bickerstaff**, which she used during World War Two. Soon after, Juliet embarks on a tour to promote the book she wrote with her pseudonym, *Izzy Bickerstaff Goes to War*. While on the tour, she has a brief run-in with Gilly Gilbert, a journalist who publishes only gossip. Gilly tries to get Juliet to speak ill of her engagement with Lieutenant Rob Dartry, but Juliet throws a teapot at him. Later, Juliet confides in Sidney that she broke off her engagement with Rob because he tried to move her books to the basement and replace them with sporting trophies. While on the tour, Juliet begins receiving flowers from a man named Mark Reynolds. Sidney calls Juliet home from the tour early, as the *Times* wants her to write three articles about reading.

A man named Dawsey Adams starts writing to Juliet. He has one of her old copies of a book by Charles Lamb and wants help finding others by Lamb. He lives in Guernsey. He piques her interest by mentioning that he's part of a literary group called the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, which began with an illegal roast pig during the German occupation. Juliet, intrigued, helps Dawsey find more books by Lamb and asks him to tell her about the Society and the pig. He obliges and explains that the Society began after the pig roast when he, John Booker, and Elizabeth McKenna were caught out after curfew. Elizabeth made up the Society as a cover story and they had to actually start it, since the Germans wanted to attend. Juliet asks if she can write about the Society for her *Times* articles, so Dawsey asks his friend Amelia Maugery to write to Juliet.

Amelia is concerned, after reading *Izzy*, that Juliet will make fun of the Society, but Juliet asks Reverend Simon Simplex and Lady Bella Taunton to provide character references. Satisfied, Amelia tells Julia more about the Society and her friend Isola also writes to Juliet. Juliet attempts to write to Sidney about her new pen pals, but discovers that he ran off to Australia to care for their friend Piers, who mysteriously showed up in Australia after being shot down over Burma in 1943. In Sidney's absence—which becomes even longer when Sidney breaks his leg—Juliet begins dating Mark. Mark is handsome, rich, and American, though he's a bully.

Juliet receives letters from several other members of the Society. Eben tells Juliet about how he wasn't enthusiastic about reading until he discovered Shakespeare. He also tells Juliet about Eli, his grandson, and how all the children of Guernsey were evacuated before the Germans invaded. Clovis writes that after discovering poetry, he was able to court and marry his wife, the Widow Hubert. Booker reads only *The Letters of Seneca* and says the Society saved him from the life of a drunk.

Through these letters, Juliet begins to learn about Elizabeth McKenna. She first came to Guernsey as a girl, as her mother worked for Sir Ambrose. Elizabeth ran wild and befriended Eben's daughter, Jane. She returned to the island right before the invasion to close up Sir Ambrose's house and chose to stay, as Jane was pregnant and on bed rest. Jane died when the Germans bombed Guernsey. Elizabeth became a nurse, concocted a plan for the partially Jewish valet Booker to impersonate his employer, Lord Tobias, and fell in love with a German soldier, Christian Hellman. Everyone speaks well of Christian. He helped the islanders and planned to return after the war to marry Elizabeth. However, a few months before Elizabeth gave birth to their child, Kit, Christian was sent to work in a hospital in France and died. In 1944, Elizabeth was imprisoned and sent to the mainland for helping one of the Todt workers. Nobody knows where she is now. The Society shares the duties of caring for Kit, who is now four years old. Juliet also receives letters from a Miss Adelaide Addison, who believes it's her duty to make sure Juliet knows that Elizabeth was a self-important upstart.

As Juliet corresponds with her friends in Guernsey, she also continues to date Mark. He takes her out every night and won't accept her refusals if she wants to stay in. Susan and Juliet beg for Sidney to come home, and Juliet tells Sidney of her research into Guernsey. Dawsey recounts to Juliet how his friendship with Christian began, and the two talk about their love of reading and Charles Lamb. Amelia writes Juliet about the Todt workers: the slave laborers who built the **bunkers** on the island. The Germans starved them, and the bunkers remind Amelia of the atrocities the Nazis committed.

Isola asks Juliet to answer some personal questions. Juliet answers all of them and says that she was orphaned at age twelve and went to live with her great-uncle, Dr. Ashton. She tried to run away twice, after which he sent her to boarding school where she met her best friend, Sophie. Juliet and Sophie lived together after school and worked in bookstores, and now Sophie lives in Scotland with her husband and son. Juliet is her son's godmother. Juliet says that while she has a suitor, she's not sure she likes him.

Mark insists on taking Juliet out and proposes. She insists in a letter that she didn't actually refuse; she just wants to think. Later, Juliet writes and tells Sophie about the proposal. Mark made Juliet cry by berating her to say yes. She wonders if she's

stupid for not accepting and says she wants to go to Guernsey to write about the occupation. She asks Sidney about going to Guernsey and he gives his permission. Everyone in Guernsey is thrilled to have Juliet and they set about preparing Elizabeth's cottage for her. Isola tells everyone she knows to write Juliet about the occupation and the letters flood in. An Animal Lover writes about how the U.S. euthanized most of Guernsey's house pets, while Sally Ann Frobisher writes about Elizabeth's skill at nursing. Micah Daniels tells Juliet about the boxes of food that the British sent and that the Germans, surprisingly, didn't steal. In preparation for Juliet's arrival, Booker writes to share that he actually spent a year in a concentration camp after his ruse was discovered. Mark tries one last time to stop Juliet from going to Guernsey, but she goes anyway.

Juliet recognizes everyone immediately upon her arrival. Though Kit is stern at first, she warms to Juliet by the end of the evening. Juliet tours the island and attends a meeting of the Society. She receives more letters from locals about the invasion and when she hears that Sidney is in London, she invites him to visit. She confides in him that Kit has been staying with her and they play a morbid game called Dead Bride. She asks Sidney to send paper dolls for Kit. Sidney's new secretary, Billee Bee Jones, sends the dolls.

The Society receives a letter from a Frenchwoman named Remy. Remy writes to say that Elizabeth became her friend at the Ravensbrück concentration camp and was executed in March of 1945. Elizabeth stood up for a woman who was beaten for menstruating. Remy's nurse, Sister Touvier, includes a note saying that Remy is very ill, but she hopes the letter will help her heal. Amelia and Dawsey ask if they can visit, and Juliet's friends on Guernsey mourn. Juliet worries for Kit's future, as she's now an orphan. She also forbids Mark from visiting.

Dawsey and Amelia visit Remy and Juliet cares for Kit. Remy is exceedingly frail, but she wants to move to Paris. Dawsey, however, wants Remy to come to Guernsey. Juliet tries to keep things normal for Kit and asks Sidney to visit. He agrees to come over the weekend. While Sidney is in Guernsey, he writes Sophie that Dawsey and Juliet are clearly in love with each other, and Kit loves Juliet. After returning to London, Sidney reads Juliet's manuscript and suggests she tell Elizabeth's story. Juliet sets to work asking everyone about Elizabeth and discovers some of Elizabeth's drawings.

Juliet writes to Sophie and admits that she loves Dawsey—but Mark showed up unannounced and ruined everything. In another letter the next day, Juliet says that she turned Mark down for the last time when he said that the locals are forcing Juliet to care for Kit. Soon after, Juliet discovers that Elizabeth was arrested with a man named Peter Sawyer for helping a Todt worker named Lud Jaruzki. Peter was allowed to return to Guernsey, but he never heard from Elizabeth or Lud after their arrest.

Dawsey convinces Remy to come to Guernsey and asks Juliet if she'll spend time with Remy, as her sunny disposition will be good for Remy. Juliet takes this as proof that Dawsey doesn't love her. However, she does find that she likes Remy. During this time, Sidney sends Isola a book on phrenology. Not long after, Isola reads letters written to her Granny Pheen that Juliet believes were written by Oscar Wilde. An expert confirms this, and Isola asks Sidney if she could write the preface if he publishes the letters. Billee Bee tells Juliet that Sidney is sending her to fetch the letters, and Juliet confides in Sophie that she'd like to try to adopt Kit. A few days later, Susan tells Juliet to not let Billee Bee take the letters: she's in cahoots with Gilly Gilbert. Fortunately, Isola and Kit locked Billee Bee in Isola's smokehouse before she could steal the letters.

Juliet writes to Sidney and recounts a horrific event: while walking along the cliffs, Remy suffered a violent panic attack at the sight of a German Shepherd. Dawsey explained later that the guards used to set dogs on prisoners. Juliet begins to wonder if Dawsey loves her, and Sidney plans another visit to the island. Soon before Sidney's arrival, Amelia gives Juliet her blessing to adopt Kit and Kit shares a box of secret treasures with Juliet. It contains mementos from her parents. Juliet and Dawsey have dinner, but Juliet is distraught when she sees Dawsey with Remy the next day, purchasing a suitcase.

In a notebook given to her by Sidney, Isola states she's going to observe her friends, just like Miss Marple. She notices that something seems amiss with Remy and Dawsey, but can't figure out what. Isola observes that when Sidney arrives, he and Dawsey look at each other strangely. She's worried when, at Eben's party, Juliet falls back when Eben announces that Remy is returning to France. She sees Dawsey looking sad and decides he must be in love with Remy, but is too shy to tell her. Isola offers to clean Dawsey's house so she can look for clues of Dawsey's love. Isola finds no signs that Dawsey loves Remy, but she finds letters, photos, and a handkerchief of Juliet's. Distraught, Isola tells this to Juliet, who promptly asks Dawsey to marry her. Juliet writes Sidney a final letter asking him to return to Guernsey so he can give her away at her wedding.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Juliet Ashton – Juliet is the 33-year-old protagonist of the novel. She's a writer living in London and is attempting to come up with a new idea for a book after deciding she no longer wants to write humorously under her wartime pseudonym, **Izzy Bickerstaff**. Juliet corresponds with a number of close friends, as she has no living family. Juliet adores books and literature above all; she called off her first engagement when Rob Dartry, her fiancé, tried to put her books in the basement. This love of books leads her to develop pen pal relationships

with several people on the island of Guernsey. Dawsey writes first, as he acquired one of her used copies of a Charles Lamb book with her address in it. Juliet becomes enchanted by Dawsey's stories of his local literary society, the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. When she's asked to write three articles for the *Times*, she chooses to write them on Guernsey and the Society. During this time, Juliet begins to date the American Mark Reynolds. While she enjoys dating Mark, Sidney believes that Mark only likes Juliet because she's pretty and intellectual. Juliet is perpetually unsure about Mark and when he eventually proposes marriage, she refuses and moves to Guernsey to write a book about the German Occupation. During Juliet's time on Guernsey, she becomes a member of the Society and a valued member of the community. She lives in the house of Elizabeth McKenna, the brain behind the Society's inception. Juliet feels as though Elizabeth becomes a true friend, and Juliet decides to write her book about Elizabeth. Juliet becomes very close with Elizabeth's four-year-old daughter, Kit, which eventually leads her to break things off with Mark--he wouldn't respect her relationship with Kit. She also falls in love with Dawsey, though she questions Dawsey's feelings when he appears to care more deeply for Remy, a visiting woman who knew Elizabeth. Finally, when Isola discovers that Dawsey keeps mementos of Juliet's, Juliet asks Dawsey to marry her. The two get married the weekend after the novel ends.

Dawsey Adams – Dawsey is a jack-of-all-trades on Guernsey and a founding member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. Prior to his membership in the Society, however, Dawsey was extremely shy, quiet, and had a stutter. After his parents' early deaths, he was alone and mostly friendless. After the Society began and he started reading, Dawsey's stutter disappeared and he became more confident. He writes to Juliet after obtaining a used copy of a Charles Lamb book that Juliet used to own. The two begin a correspondence about the Society, the German occupation, and about their shared love of books and of Charles Lamb in particular. He's instrumental in asking others, specifically Amelia Maugery, to write to Juliet about their experiences of the occupation. Through their letters, Juliet learns that Dawsey was good friends with Elizabeth and eventually, Elizabeth's lover, the German Christian Hellman. In the present, with Elizabeth missing on the continent and Christian dead, Dawsey helps the other Society members care for their four-year-old daughter, Kit. He adores Kit and loves caring for her. When Juliet arrives on Guernsey, Dawsey shows her a number of beautiful places and generally acts as her tour guide. Others observe that Dawsey is in love with Juliet, but neither Dawsey nor Juliet accept this until much later. Things become more complicated after the Society receives news of Elizabeth's death from Remy, a Frenchwoman who met Elizabeth in the concentration camp. Dawsey believes that it's the Society's moral obligation to Elizabeth to house and care for Remy, which

Juliet takes to mean that Dawsey loves Remy, not her. Isola notices that, after Remy announces her return to France, Dawsey—who has always been lonely—seems to mind being lonely for the first time. Isola also takes this to mean that Dawsey is in love with Remy, but rather than discover clues that support that hypothesis, she finds a number of clues that Dawsey actually loves Juliet. When Juliet proposes to Dawsey, he accepts immediately. Juliet writes to Sidney afterwards that becoming engaged seems to have done away with all of Dawsey's shyness.

Elizabeth McKenna – Elizabeth was a witty, loyal, and quick-thinking young woman who, though not a Guernsey local, had a long history on the island. Her mother was in Lord Ambrose's service, and Lord Ambrose treated Elizabeth like a daughter and later sent her to the Slade School of Art. Because Lord Ambrose summered on Guernsey, he brought Elizabeth with him every year as a child. During those summers, Elizabeth met Jane and the girls got into all sorts of mischief. While some, like Amelia and Eben, found this charming, others, like Adelaide, thought Elizabeth was a pompous disgrace. At the start of the war, Lord Ambrose sent Elizabeth to close up his house on Guernsey. Elizabeth ended up staying on the island, where she became a nurse and volunteered to help evacuate Guernsey's children. Elizabeth loved playing with children and was able to distract them from the fact that they were leaving their parents. During the occupation she fell in love with Christian Hellman, a German soldier. She gave birth to Kit not long after Christian was sent away from Guernsey and died at sea. Elizabeth also invented the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, which was just one of several instances in which Elizabeth's quick thinking saved her friends from persecution. She also conceived of John Booker's impersonation of Lord Tobias and painted a portrait to complete the effect. Because of this, the entire island and the Society especially loved Elizabeth dearly. When Kit was about a year old, Elizabeth was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp for providing medical attention to a Todt worker, Lud Jaruzki. There, she befriended Remy and was instrumental in lifting Remy's spirits. Elizabeth was executed at the camp after defending a woman from a guard who was beating her for menstruating. Remy writes the Society to share this, as she wants Kit especially to know how loyal, brave, and kind her mother was. Juliet feels as though Elizabeth is a dear friend, though they've never met, and decides to use Elizabeth's story to frame her book about the German occupation of Guernsey.

Sidney Stark – Sidney is Juliet's editor at the Stephens & Stark publishing house and her longtime personal friend. He's witty, self-important, and often does his best to behave like an obnoxious older brother. This is because Sidney has known Juliet for about 20 years, as Juliet's best friend from school is Sidney's sister, Sophie. Sidney is also gay, though many people who don't know this believe that Sidney and Juliet are in love

with each other. Despite Sidney's self-importance, he cares deeply for his friends and loved ones. He flies to Australia when a friend and possible lover, Piers, shows up there after they all thought he'd died in the war. Sidney often acts as a mentor for Juliet; he gives her permission to abandon her project that would've been written under her pseudonym, **Izzy Bickerstaff**, and later, he gives her direction on her book about the German occupation of Guernsey. He also provides romantic and personal advice and takes great offense to Juliet's romance with Mark Reynolds. Sidney believes that if Juliet married Mark, she'd never write another book and her independence would disappear. He believes this would be a tragedy and does everything in his power to annoy Juliet about Mark, mostly by including photos of Mark dancing with other women when he sends Juliet letters. Juliet begins sharing her letters from Guernsey with Sidney while he's in Australia, and she continues to do so when Sidney returns to London. This leads Sidney to come to love and care for the islanders as much as she does; he actively mourns when he gets news of Elizabeth's death. Though he only visits the island twice, he and Isola become close friends. He gives her eccentric gifts, like a cuckoo clock and a book on phrenology, which she adores. He also sends lavish gifts for Kit and for his nephew, Dominic, who are around the same age. When Juliet and Dawsey get engaged, Juliet asks Sidney to return to Guernsey to give her away at her wedding.

John Booker – John Booker isn't a native of Guernsey; he arrived on the island right before the start of the war as a servant to Lord Tobias. Lord Tobias wanted to wait out the war on the island, but left as soon as the Germans bombed Guernsey. Booker, however, decided to stay: he loves alcohol, and Lord Tobias was unable to take the contents of his wine cellar with him. After a few months, Booker became friendly with Elizabeth and Amelia, as they'd heard his mother was Jewish and wanted to warn him that the Germans were registering Jews. To help him, Elizabeth concocted a plan for Booker to impersonate Lord Tobias and even painted his portrait. The plan worked, and Booker spent three years drinking wine and pretending to be Lord Tobias. He's a member of the Literary Society and is partially responsible for its inception: his drunken singing caused him, Dawsey, and Elizabeth to be discovered by the Germans after Amelia's pig feast. He attends Society meetings regularly, but only reads Seneca the Younger's book *The Letters of Seneca* over and over again. He finds the letters witty and applicable to his life. Other Society members often mention trying to get Booker to read something else, but nobody is successful in this endeavor. Right before Juliet comes to Guernsey, Booker writes to her about what happened after he was discovered to be a fraud. He was sent to Neungamme and then to the Belsen concentration camp, where he was made to first run through fields to clear them of live bombs and then dig mass graves for dead victims of the concentration camps. Though he cannot speak about this trauma, he has a full life in the present. His time as Lord Tobias

instilled in him a love of acting and he acts in several local productions. Isola also admits to Sidney that Booker is gay.

Isola Pribby – Isola grows herbs and makes elixirs on Guernsey, where she lives with her goat and her parrot. She's one of the first Society members to write to Juliet. Isola describes herself as tall and not very beautiful, which she believes is why she's never had a romantic encounter with a man. Because she's never been in love, Isola adores romantic novels, especially *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Isola is eccentric, charming, and has little regard for politeness; she asks Juliet personal questions very soon into their correspondence and questions Sidney about why he doesn't plan to marry Juliet. Though she has no issue with Sidney being gay and promises to keep it a secret, her response does betray that she's not the best at keeping secrets: she lets slip that Booker is also secretly gay. Isola's prospects begin to look up when she learns that the letters her Granny Pheen left her were written by Oscar Wilde; the money she'll earn from publishing royalties will allow her to buy a motorcycle. Isola wants nothing more than to see her friends happy, which is why she's so willing to care for Kit, help Juliet with her book, and near the end of the novel, attempts to facilitate a romance between Dawsey and Remy. She does this after Sidney's sub-editor introduces her to the Miss Marple mystery books. Having already given up on her brief study of phrenology, Isola latches onto Miss Marple's habit of quietly watching and recording what she sees. Though Isola tries her best to emulate Miss Marple and look for clues that Dawsey loves Remy, Isola fails to recognize all the photos of Juliet, the letters from her, and Juliet's handkerchief as evidence that Dawsey loves Juliet, not Remy. She's thrilled nonetheless when Juliet and Dawsey get engaged.

Remy Giraud – Remy is a young Frenchwoman whom Elizabeth met at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. At the age of 22, Remy was imprisoned for stealing ration cards. She and Elizabeth soon became friends and Remy clung to Elizabeth's stories of Guernsey and the Literary Society. After the war, Remy writes to the Society to tell them of Elizabeth's death, as she wants Kit in particular to know how brave and kind her mother was. Remy's nurse, Sister Touviers, includes a note explaining that Remy is very ill and frail; she came to the hospital weighing only sixty pounds. Sister Touviers believes that Remy needs to move on and forget her time at the concentration camp. After receiving Remy's letter, Amelia and Dawsey visit Remy in France. They find that she's still very weak and thin and has a haunted look about her. Though she initially refuses their offer to host her on Guernsey, she eventually agrees to visit thanks to Dawsey's convincing. Remy slowly begins to open up on Guernsey; she starts to laugh and occasionally shares recollections of the camp or of Elizabeth with Juliet. She and Kit become very close, and it's clear to everyone that Remy feels very comfortable with Dawsey. This leads Juliet and Isola to believe that Remy and Dawsey are in

love, and Juliet becomes quite jealous. Juliet feels horrible about her jealousy after an experience in which Remy experiences a violent panic attack at the sight of a German Shepherd; Dawsey later explains that the German guards used to let dogs attack prisoners for sport. This impresses upon Juliet that while Remy may look better, she's still recovering from the trauma of the camp and isn't well. Near the end of the novel, Remy decides to return to France to apprentice in a Paris bakery.

Mrs. Amelia Maugery – Amelia Maugery is one of only a few highly educated people on Guernsey. She houses the library for the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. In her sixties, Amelia is described as being extremely beautiful, kind, and fiercely protective of her friends and chosen family. Her protective nature shines through when she begins corresponding with Juliet and asks first for Juliet to assure her that she won't make fun of the Society. As Juliet learns more about the Society's history and about Elizabeth, Amelia shares that she's also very protective of Kit: while she feels that they have an obligation to look for any of Kit's German relatives, Amelia is also uneasy about possibly having to send Kit to live with Nazis in a foreign and destroyed country. Though she was initially wary about Elizabeth's romance with Christian, she too came to see Christian as a good, honest, and kind man. Amelia struggles to come to terms with the horrors of the war and the constant reminders that it happened. She lost her son Ian in the war and she sees the **bunkers** the Todt laborers built as a constant reminder of the war's atrocities. This becomes especially pronounced when the Society receives a letter from a Frenchwoman named Remy with news of Elizabeth's death. Amelia and Dawsey visit Remy, and Amelia finds Remy's emaciated and frail appearance extremely difficult to bear. When Remy does agree to visit Guernsey, she stays with Amelia while Kit, who was in Amelia's care, lives with Juliet. When Juliet later approaches Amelia about her desire to adopt Kit, Amelia cries with relief and promises to support Juliet and speak to Kit's legal guardian and the lawyer in charge, Mr. Dilwyn, whom she's known since he was a boy.

Markham V. Reynolds – Mark is an extremely wealthy American in the publishing business. He begins courting Juliet while she's on her book tour and leaves her flowers at every stop. When the two finally begin communicating, Mark admits that Juliet's **Izzy Bickerstaff** columns were the only pieces written by women that made him laugh during the war, which is why he's interested in pursuing her. Though Juliet says that Mark is everything a woman *should* want—he's wealthy, single, powerful, and bossy without being outright mean to servers—she also never feels fully comfortable with him. To her credit, Mark doesn't take Juliet's work seriously and he often bullies her into going out with him. He also believes that Juliet is in love with Sidney, which makes him even more difficult to deal with. When Juliet refuses Mark's proposal of marriage,

Mark takes it very badly: he berates Juliet for saying no, calls her an idiot, and only stops when she starts to cry. He attempts to stop her from going to Guernsey and shows up unannounced to try to take her back to London so they can get married. Juliet refuses when Mark suggests that Juliet can't take care of Kit forever and says she's wasting *his* time by staying on Guernsey. After this, Juliet turns him down for good. She recognizes afterwards that while Mark is, by many metrics, a catch, being married to him would've turned her into a woman who was afraid to think for herself. Sidney also believes that if they'd gotten married, Juliet would've never written another book thanks to Mark's disinterest in Juliet's career.

Kit McKenna – Kit McKenna is the four-year-old daughter of Elizabeth and Christian. She was born during the war and never met her father; he'd already died by the time she was born. Elizabeth was arrested when Kit was just over a year old, so Kit doesn't remember either of her birth parents. This, however, doesn't seem to bother Kit; she lives primarily with Amelia but spends time with all the Society members in turn, often staying at their houses overnight. When Juliet meets Kit, she finds Kit serious, attentive, and a bit intimidating. After discovering a portrait of Elizabeth as a child, Juliet realizes that Kit and Elizabeth have the exact same glare. Kit carries a box of treasures with her that Juliet feels unable to ask about, but within a few hours, Kit begins to warm to Juliet. When Amelia and Dawsey go to France to visit Remy, Kit is comfortable enough with Juliet to stay with her in Amelia's absence. During this time, she and Juliet grow even closer. Kit also comes to love Sidney, as he sends fantastic gifts. When Amelia tells Kit that Elizabeth is dead, Kit seems mostly unaffected. Unbeknownst to her, this does mean that she inherits Sir Ambrose's estate and will therefore have income and property to her name. Not long after Juliet decides that she'd like to adopt Kit, Kit finally shows Juliet the treasures in her treasure box. It contains mementos and photos from Elizabeth and Christian. After sharing it with Juliet, Kit falls asleep in Juliet's bed, and Juliet recognizes that Kit trusts her like a parent.

Sophie Strachan – Sophie Strachan (née Stark) is Juliet's close friend and confidante, and Sidney's younger sister. She lives in Scotland with her husband, Alexander, and her three-year-old son, Dominic. Juliet and Sophie met as young teens at boarding school. Sophie was a perfect-looking girl with blond curls, and when she heard that Juliet planned to run away as soon as she found a train timetable, Sophie found a timetable and gave it to Juliet. In the following years, the girls bonded over a shared love of novels and the Brontë sisters especially. After school, Sophie and Juliet lived together and worked in a bookshop, where Sophie introduced customers to her favorite books. She married Alexander not long after. Though Sophie never writes letters herself, she corresponds often with both Juliet and Sidney. She cares deeply for both and wants to do what she can to help them; she nearly flies to Australia when she learns that

Sidney broke his leg. Sophie isn't particularly good at sneakily finding out details of Juliet's romances; she asks direct questions like whether Juliet is in love or not. She becomes pregnant with her second baby over the summer while Juliet is in Guernsey.

Miss Adelaide Addison – Adelaide is a Guernsey islander who takes it upon herself to police the morals and righteousness of everyone on the island. She writes Juliet to tell her that Kit is an illegitimate child fathered by a Nazi, and that Kit's birth was improper—Dawsey and Amelia acted as midwives. She finds it repugnant that the Society members all care for Kit in turn and implores Juliet to not write about the Society, as she believes it's a sham. From others, Juliet learns that nobody knows why Adelaide is so horrible. She hates fun and anyone who isn't extremely humble. Though she tells Juliet all about how Elizabeth used to watch people through a telescope as a child, Adelaide isn't above spying on Juliet with her opera glasses. Isola writes Juliet and tells her that when the Guernsey children were being evacuated, Adelaide told the children to pray and to behave so that if their parents died, their parents could be proud of them. Elizabeth slapped her for this.

Susan Scott – Susan Scott is an employee at Stephens & Stark. Though her title is never stated, she accompanies Juliet on her book tour and appears to work closely with Sidney. Juliet refers to Susan as a wonder, as Susan procures ingredients for meringue and also gives Juliet a makeover. She takes responsibility for Juliet's actions when Juliet throws a teapot at Gilly Gilbert; she believes she never should've allowed the interview to take place at all. Later, Susan writes to Juliet and admits that she reads all of Juliet's letters and so feels compelled to share that Billee Bee is sickening, not motherly as Juliet would like to think. After Billee Bee comes to Guernsey to pick up Isola's Oscar Wilde letters, which she says Sidney asks her to do, Susan discovers the plot and shares Billee Bee's true intentions with Juliet, saving the letters and Juliet from ending up in *The London Hue and Cry*.

Eben Ramsey – Eben is an elderly farmer on Guernsey. His daughter, Jane, was the same age as Elizabeth, so Eben has a long history with Elizabeth. In the present Eben cares for Jane's son Eli, as Jane and her husband died during the war. Like many of the Society members, Eben was no lover of literature before agreeing to read *Selections from Shakespeare*. However, he soon found that Shakespeare was able to provide him words to describe his life that he never would've come up with himself. He shares with Juliet stories of the German occupation and makes it clear that though the Germans were mean and cruel, they were also hungry and desperate. During the occupation, he was forced to tell Eli of his parents' deaths via postcards. In the present, Eben leads the effort to plant **trees** on Guernsey and accompanies Juliet around the island. He acts as a voice of reason and sense, both during the occupation and in the present.

Clovis Fossey – Clovis Fossey is a farmer on Guernsey and one of the original members of the Literary Society. He was at first uninterested in poetry or literature, but decided to give poetry a try when he was trying to court the Widow Hubert: he noticed that she accepted the advances of another man who quoted poetry to her. Eben lent Clovis a book of Wilfred Owen's poems. Owen's poetry did allow Clovis to successfully court and marry the Widow Hubert, and it also introduces him to poetry about World War One as a whole. Clovis fought in the war and finds most poems written about it to be truthful and moving. He's incensed when Amelia lends him *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, 1892-1935*, and he reads that the editor deliberately chose to exclude poems about World War One on the grounds that they were about "passive suffering." He acts with Booker in several local theater productions.

Will Thisbee – Will is an ironmonger, inventor, and the member of the Literary Society responsible for inventing potato peel pie and adding it to the name. He's also a hobby baker, though most other members wish he'd stop cooking—his recipes often turn out horribly. He wasn't thrilled to be a member of the Society at first, but he discovered that reading could be fun and interesting after reading some books on religious theory. This helped him develop a friendship with the psychiatrist Thompson Stubbins, and now, the two often ride together and discuss religion. While Will would like to marry, he's willing to wait to find the right woman and polls his friends about whether or not to court certain women on the island.

Captain Christian Hellman – Christian Hellman was a German soldier stationed on Guernsey. He fell in love with Elizabeth and is Kit's father. Most of the Society members found that Christian was very kind, loved literature, and didn't believe in the Nazi ideals. He helped Dawsey carry water for islanders, helped Sam Withers dig graves, and won Amelia's heart by informing her that he intended to return and marry Elizabeth after the war. Many of the islanders who write to Juliet say that they were good friends with Christian. He was also a doctor and not long before Kit's birth, he was sent to the continent to a hospital. However, his ship was torpedoed and he died somewhere in the English Channel.

Lieutenant Rob Dartry – Juliet's first fiancé. They were going to get married in 1942 but while Rob was moving his things into Juliet's apartment, she realized she didn't want to marry him: he tried to box up all of her books and instead fill her shelves with sports trophies, ribbons, and memorabilia. They called off their engagement immediately. Despite this, Juliet says that Rob was a very good and honest man; they just weren't right for each other. He died three months later in the war. In the present, Gilly Gilbert attempts to spread rumors about Juliet by dragging up her engagement to Rob and speaking ill of both of them.

Eli – Eli is Eben's grandson. He's twelve years old and loves carving animals out of wood. His mother, Jane, died right after

Eli evacuated Guernsey, and his father died fighting in North Africa. Because of this, Eli lives with Eben. Eli is bright, kind, and loves spending time with Kit. He practices carving wood whenever he can. Eben resents that he missed so much of Eli's childhood, as Eli was in England for five years. Prior to evacuating, Eli was very close to Elizabeth. She sent him to England with her father's medal from World War One, which he later passes onto Kit.

Reverend Simon Simplex – Juliet's childhood reverend, who provides Amelia Maugery with a character reference for Juliet. Reverend Simplex appears to have a way with children; he took Juliet seriously when, as a child, she insisted the congregation not sing a certain hymn because it portrayed God as a distracted slacker. He returned a runaway Juliet to her great-uncle Dr. Roderick Ashton twice and the second time, convinced Dr. Ashton to send Juliet to boarding school. He made sure to suggest a school that wasn't harsh and unfeeling and housed Juliet several times during her school breaks.

Billee Bee Jones – Sidney's second secretary of the novel. She's a slightly older woman who at first appears to be kind and maternal. She sends Kit paper dolls and is very sweet and accommodating in her correspondence with Juliet. When she arrives on Guernsey in Sidney's stead to fetch the letters written by Oscar Wilde, however, Juliet learns the truth: Billee Bee is actually Gilly Gilbert's lover and co-conspirator, and she hopes to steal the letters for Gilly. As Billee Bee tries to leave the island, Isola and Kit accost her and manage to take the letters back.

Dr. Roderick Ashton – Juliet's great-uncle and her guardian after her parents died. Reverend Simplex describes him as an uninspired and boring man, which he believes is why Dr. Ashton was unable to keep Juliet from running away—he couldn't keep her entertained or earn her loyalty. He agreed to send Juliet to boarding school. Despite her behavior as a child, Juliet is thankful for Dr. Ashton's care of her. She wishes she'd thanked him and apologized for her poor behavior, but she never had the chance, as he died when she was seventeen.

Sir Ambrose Ivers – Sir Ambrose cared for Elizabeth when she was a child; the novel never mentions her father. He was a portrait painter of some repute and owned a large house on Guernsey. He brought Elizabeth and her mother, who was a servant, to the island with him in the summers. He later sent Elizabeth to the Slade School of Art and at the start of the war, he asked Elizabeth to close up his house on Guernsey. He dies in a bombing raid in London and leaves his estate to Elizabeth.

Gilly Gilbert – Gilly Gilbert is a journalist for *The London Hue and Cry*, a disreputable gossip paper. He first attempts to humiliate Juliet by accusing her of abandoning Lieutenant Rob Dartry at the altar, but she throws a teapot at him. Later, to get revenge, Gilly sends his lover, Billee Bee Jones, to infiltrate Stephens & Stark and steal Isola's letters from Oscar Wilde.

According to Susan, Gilly just wanted to be able to publish the letters before Sidney did and effectively steal the story from him.

Henry Toussant – A man who, after Juliet arrives on Guernsey, writes her a letter about tormenting German soldiers with his whistling. He also writes about the German brothels and the women who worked there. Toussant believes the women didn't want to be there, and he often witnessed them sharing food with the Todt workers. When Toussant's aunt insulted the women after they all died trying to cross the Channel, Toussant defended the women. He no longer speaks to his aunt or his mother.

Lady Bella Taunton – Bella was a fire warden with Juliet during the Blitz. Juliet asks Bella to write a character reference for her for Amelia Maugery. Through Bella's letter, it's clear that she's a stickler for rules and regulations and thinks little of books. She disparages Juliet's humorous writings under the name **Izzy Bickerstaff** and finds Juliet's love of books a complete mystery, but she does say that Juliet can be trusted to keep her word.

Granny Pheen – Isola's grandmother; Pheen is short for Josephine. As a young girl, Pheen's father drowned her cat. A man stopped to comfort Pheen, explained that he could commune with cats' spirits, and over the course of a year, he sent her eight letters detailing Pheen's cat's new life as a French cat. Pheen kept the letters in a biscuit tin and left them to Isola. In the present, Juliet helps to discover that the letters were written by Oscar Wilde.

Thompson Stubbins – A Literary Society member and a former psychiatrist and member of the Freud Society in London. Stubbins was kicked out of the Freud Society after he suggested that Freud invented the ego to play to people's fears that the soul isn't real. He and Will Thisbee became great friends after Thisbee started a discussion about the soul at a Society meeting and after, they began spending time together to talk about religion.

Mrs. Clara Saussey – A woman who attempted to join the Literary Society, but decided against it after the other members were rude to her for reading out of her own cookbook. She insists to Juliet that her recipes are "poetry in a pan" and wants to make it very clear that if hadn't been for the occupation, none of the Society members would've read books at all.

Charlie Stephens – Sidney's partner at their publishing house, Stephens & Stark. Susan implies that Sidney does most of the actual work of publishing; Charlie is better suited to writing checks and letting other people do the work. He's forced to come into the office while Sidney is in Australia, but the effort makes him look ill.

Sally Ann Frobisher – A young woman who writes to Juliet about her experience of the war. In 1943, when she was twelve, she had scabies on her scalp and was treated at the hospital by Elizabeth. Sally speaks very well of Elizabeth and says that

Elizabeth made the painful and humiliating treatment bearable by turning it into a game.

Peter Sawyer – Peter was arrested with Elizabeth. He found Lud Jaruzki in his garden, took the boy in, and Elizabeth provided care. Peter is in a wheelchair, which became his saving grace: the Nazis imprisoned him for a week but didn't know what to do with a prisoner in a wheelchair, so they soon let him go. He loves brandy and is happy to talk to Juliet about being arrested.

Sam Withers – The elderly groundskeeper at the Guernsey cemetery. He knew Christian and Elizabeth and liked them both. He tells Juliet that there were plenty of nice Germans who snuck food for children or gave out medicine. Sam insists that those Germans and the islanders who accepted their help were just being human; it wasn't collaboration.

The Benoit Sisters – A set of twins in their eighties who live on Guernsey. They conduct a ritual in which they invite young women to their home for tea and then invite their guests to throw darts at a photograph of the Duchess of Windsor. The Duchess of Windsor married the Prince of Wales, whom the sisters loved, and they believe she stole him.

Miss Tilley – Sidney's first named secretary. She's very proper, though this often crosses the line into outright rudeness. She also takes Sidney's confidentiality seriously; she's initially unwilling to tell Juliet where Sidney is when he goes to Australia. Neither Juliet nor Susan like her and both advise Sidney to fire her upon his return.

Piers Langley – A friend of Juliet, Sophie, and Sidney. He disappeared in Burma in 1943 and a month before the novel begins, he mysteriously reappears in Australia. The news is that he's turned to alcohol to deal with the trauma of the war, and Sidney flies to Australia to help care for him. Though the novel never says it outright, it's implied that Piers is gay and is possibly involved with Sidney.

Mr. Dilwyn – Mr. Dilwyn works in banking and law, and manages the estate of Sir Ambrose after his death. He heads up the search for Elizabeth and acts as Kit's legal guardian, though he never actually cares for her himself. Juliet notes that she's never met a banker who is as kind and accommodating as Mr. Dilwyn.

Lud Jaruzki – A sixteen-year-old Polish boy and a Todt laborer. When he attempted to steal from Peter Sawyer's garden, he collapsed from malnourishment. Peter and Elizabeth cared for him for a few days. After the Germans caught them and arrested Peter and Elizabeth, nobody was able to find out what happened to Lud.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Lord Tobias Penn-Piers – Lord Tobias was John Booker's employer; Booker was his valet. He initially came to Guernsey

to escape the war, but decided to leave immediately when the Germans bombed the island. From Booker's descriptions, Lord Tobias cared much more for his possessions than for his wife.

Jane – Eben Ramsey's daughter and Eli's mother; she died with her newborn when the Germans bombed Guernsey. She and Elizabeth were childhood friends and Eben says that Jane was one of the main reasons why Elizabeth decided to stay on the island and not evacuate.

Jonas Skeeter – An unwilling member of the Literary Society who presents at Juliet's first Society meeting. He read *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* and thinks very poorly of the book, Marcus Aurelius himself, and his friend who made him read the book by insulting him.

The Commandant – The German commander on Guernsey during the occupation. Though he's presumably the one in charge of the ever-changing and often cruel rules, he also expresses a love of literature.

Micah Daniels – A man who writes Juliet to tell her about the *Vega* boxes of food and supplies from the Red Cross. He also tells her the story of seeing a German soldier kill and cook a cat.

An Animal Lover – A man who writes anonymously to Juliet about how the United States euthanized islanders' pets in the weeks before the German invasion. He thinks more highly of animals than he does of people, so he found this especially horrendous.

Lisa Jenkins – The Guernsey woman responsible for revealing John Booker's true identity to the German authorities. She dated German soldiers in exchange for food and gifts.

Sergeant Willy Gurtz – A German soldier who dated Lisa Jenkins. He passed the photo of the real Lord Tobias onto the Commandant, thereby condemning John Booker to a concentration camp in mainland Europe.

Sister Cecile Touvier – A nurse who cares for Remy in Louviers. She transcribes Remy's letter to the Society telling them of Elizabeth's death, though she desperately wants Remy to forget about her experience in Ravensbrück and heal.

Eddie Meares – A big and mean man on Guernsey. During the war, he habitually told on his neighbors to earn favors from the Germans. He told on Elizabeth and Peter and for that, Dawsey beat him in the pub one night.

Alexander Strachan – Sophie's husband and Dominic's father. He and Sophie live in Scotland.

Dominic Strachan – Sophie and Alexander's three-year-old son. Juliet is his godmother.

Nancy/Widow Hubert – A woman on Guernsey whom Clovis Fossey woos using poetry.

Mrs. Dilwyn – Mr. Dilwyn's wife. She's a somewhat vain lady and was very upset when Guernsey ran out of soap.

Ian – Amelia's son; he died in the war. As a boy, he was friendly

with Elizabeth and Jane.

Augustus Sarre – A Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society member. He presents on Chaucer's [The Canterbury Tales](#) and finds them extremely distasteful.

Daphne Post – A Guernsey woman who spends her nights digging for a silver teapot she hid during the occupation.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



LITERATURE AND CONNECTION

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society follows Juliet, a London author, as she strikes up a correspondence with Dawsey Adams and other residents of the island of Guernsey. It's 1946, almost a year after the end of World War Two, and as England begins the work of putting the country back together, Juliet becomes fascinated by Guernsey residents' stories of the German occupation of the island and how the islanders dealt with it. In particular, Juliet is fascinated by the origins of the Guernsey literary society and the impact the Society had and has on its members. As Juliet conducts research for a series of articles and eventually a book on the German occupation of Guernsey, the novel explores the power of literature to connect people to each other and provide support during difficult times.

From the start, books themselves are held up as symbols of connection. Dawsey initially writes to Juliet about his used copy of Charles Lamb's essay collection *The Selected Essays of Elia*, which Juliet used to own and wrote her contact information in. He asks her for assistance in finding a bookseller capable of tracking down and shipping more of Charles Lamb's work to Guernsey, thus beginning Dawsey and Juliet's friendship. In their early letters, Juliet and Dawsey write about their shared love of Charles Lamb's life and work and Juliet follows through with connecting Dawsey to a bookseller in London. These early stages of their relationship illustrate how a shared interest in literature can provide a point of connection for two total strangers and, in turn, open them up for a true friendship to form.

While Juliet and Dawsey's friendship serves as an introduction to the connective possibilities of literature, Dawsey's offhand mentions—and later, his and others' detailed descriptions—of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society take this a step further. The Society came into being one night during the German occupation, when Amelia Maugery invited several Guernsey residents to an illicit feast of roast pig and, while

returning home, several of her guests were caught out after curfew. Quick-thinking Elizabeth McKenna told the German soldiers that they'd been at a meeting of the local literary society, gave a membership list, and even invited the Germans to join them for their next meeting. This necessitated the formation of the Society in order to save themselves from persecution and cover up the roast pig. Several of the members who write to Juliet about the Society, including Amelia, John Booker, and Eben Ramsey, admit outright that most of them weren't friends and weren't even all that interested in literature prior to the birth of the Society. However, they all stress that the friendships they formed through the Society and the ideas they discovered through reading were what enabled them to make it through the occupation.

The most potent example of literature's ability to connect people is that of Elizabeth herself. Elizabeth spent her childhood summers on Guernsey and as an adult just before the war, came to the island as part of Sir Ambrose Ivers's household. Rather than flee with him when the Germans invaded, she chose to stay and become a nurse, and eventually became a valued member of the community. Her quick thinking in inventing the Society saved a number of people from death in concentration camps and earned her the respect and friendship of the members of the Society—respect and friendship that they later return to her. After the Germans send her to a concentration camp for attempting to save one of the Todt laborers on Guernsey, they band together to care for Kit, Elizabeth's toddler daughter. In this way, the novel suggests that Kit has literature to thank for the happy life she leads, cared for by the various members of the Society in turn. In the novel's present, she also owes her impending adoption by Juliet and Dawsey to Dawsey's first letter to Juliet—a letter that set off a string of events that brought Juliet to Guernsey, Dawsey, and the discovery of a robust community bound by a shared love of literature.



FAMILY, PARENTING, AND LEGITIMACY

As the novel follows Juliet and reveals the past compositions of her family, as well as the compositions of other characters' families, it's telling that few of the families are conventionally organized with two married parents and biological children. However, this is seldom seen as a bad thing—in many cases, people are simply happy to be able to care for children after their parents' deaths in the war—and indeed, there are situations where one's biological family is actually regarded with fear and apprehension. In this way, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* suggests that there's no single correct way to form a family or for a family to look. Instead, what's most important is that family members, biological or otherwise, provide unconditional love and care for others.

Juliet's early childhood was very happy. She was raised on a

farm by two loving parents, and she was able to read as much as she wanted. However, this all came to an end at twelve years old, when Juliet's parents died and she was sent to live with her elderly great-uncle, Dr. Roderick Ashton. The transition was understandably difficult for Juliet. After she ran away twice, Dr. Ashton took a friend's advice and sent Juliet to a girls' boarding school. At school, Juliet befriended Sophie Stark and the entire Stark family, who increasingly came to treat her more as a family member than a mere friend of their daughter's. Upon Dr. Ashton's death when Juliet was seventeen, the Starks continued to house Juliet during school vacations and supported her through early adulthood. The Starks' treatment of Juliet makes it clear that blood ties or formal ties (like marriage) aren't necessary prerequisites to providing love and care to children. Despite this, Juliet's inclusion in the family is later formalized when Sophie names Juliet the godmother of her son, Dominic. Taken together, this suggests that while relationships recognized by the state aren't necessary, per se, they do offer a sense of legitimacy—and in the event of a worst-case scenario like Sophie and her husband's death, it won't just be because of luck that Dominic has someone to care for him, love him, and guide him through life as the Starks did for Juliet.

Guernsey explores similar ideas of legitimacy and what makes a family in its consideration of Kit, the four-year-old daughter of Elizabeth McKenna and the German soldier Christian Hellman, both of whom are deceased by the start of the novel. Elizabeth kept her relationship with Christian and Kit's paternity a secret from the authorities, though it's suggested the German authorities were aware of at least the relationship. Two years later, after Elizabeth is taken to a concentration camp in mainland Europe, the Society takes turns caring for and parenting Kit, offering Kit a loving extended family—none of whom are related to her by blood, but love her fiercely just the same.

Later, Amelia tells Juliet that the secret of Kit's paternity persists to the present, as Kit's caretakers on Guernsey fear that if Christian's relatives were to find out about her, they'd attempt to take her away. Though it's impossible to know whether Christian's family is alive, or if any of them truly believe in Nazi ideals if they are, this suggests that as far as Kit's adoptive family is concerned, it's far preferable to be raised by people not related by blood but who are known to be kind and on the right side of history, than would be to be raised by blood family with horrific and dehumanizing views of life and other people.

A few months after Juliet moves to Guernsey, her integration into the "family" of the Society members is so complete that she's put in charge of caring for Kit while Dawsey is in France. During the month or so that Juliet cares for Kit, the two become extremely close and Juliet becomes increasingly interested in how to properly and effectively parent a child. Especially as Juliet listens to stories about the children of

Guernsey being evacuated in the days before the German occupation, she comes to realize that the crushing love that caused Guernsey parents to send their children to England to keep them safe is something that she feels for Kit, despite the fact that Kit isn't her biological child. Notably, this helps Juliet to begin to think of herself as a parent, and shows again that a blood relationship isn't necessary to have a child's best interests at heart.

This also leads Juliet to decide to pursue formally adopting Kit, an idea that Amelia fully supports and Kit agrees with as well. However, despite the community's support for the adoption, Juliet recognizes that because she's unmarried, Mr. Dilwyn, Kit's legal guardian and the executor of Elizabeth's estate, may be unwilling to grant her request in full—indicating that, at least when it comes to formal parenthood, the lack of a blood relationship with a child combined with presenting an other-than-acceptable image of a parent (in this case, being unmarried) can keep people from being able to effectively protect and parent a child. Though the novel ends before tying up these particular loose ends, it's important to note that because Juliet marries Dawsey, she'll be in a much better position to adopt Kit within a week of the novel's close. The family that those three presumably create then becomes the novel's most successful and most compelling example of a chosen, adopted family, legitimized in the eyes of the law to nurture and protect a child.



WAR, HUNGER, AND HUMANITY

When Juliet decides that she'd like to write about Guernsey for her *Times* articles and then her book, she asks the members of the Literary Society to ask other Guernsey residents to write her about their experiences of the German occupation. As the letters flood in, Juliet is struck by the way the islanders write about the Germans: while some of the Nazis were inarguably cruel to the people of Guernsey, others demonstrated surprising kindness and compassion. In representing the German soldiers as individuals and not as an unfeeling monolith, the novel ultimately proposes that war can be both humanizing and dehumanizing for all involved, whether one is a supposed conqueror or the conquered.

Prior to the German invasion in 1940, residents of Guernsey thought of German soldiers as evil and interested only in furthering Nazi ideals. While this view is understandable, those in Guernsey soon found that such a simplistic reading of the Germans didn't fully describe the invaders. Instead of immediately and violently taking control of the island like the islanders expected them to, the Germans shock Guernsey when they stroll through the streets, laugh, and shop for gifts for family members at home. This acts as an early indicator that while the Germans may be the oppressors of Guernsey, they're not entirely unfeeling or cruel.

This sentiment reoccurs in several of the letters to Juliet and most notably in Society members' recollections of Elizabeth's romance with Christian Hellman. Amelia in particular tells Juliet that she'd initially made up her mind to hate Christian for being a Nazi, but found it impossible to do so when he came to her house and earnestly informed her of his intentions to return for Elizabeth and marry her after the war. This, along with Dawsey's friendship with Christian and Christian's lack of support for the Nazis, turns Christian into a real, feeling person for the Society members, not a faceless and evil Nazi.

As the war progressed, the lack of food became an equalizing force that, in some ways, dissolved the hierarchy among the German soldiers, the residents of Guernsey, and the forced laborers the Germans brought to Guernsey, the Todt workers—though in other ways, it made the hierarchy even more pronounced. Although the Germans were supposed to be superior and the ones in charge, after D-Day, the soldiers became just as hungry and emaciated as the people they oppressed, given that they could no longer receive supplies from the mainland. One man, Micah Daniels, recounts seeing a German soldier kill and cook a housecat, which he interprets as an act of desperation that, for him, highlighted the soldier's humanity. He and others note that killing cats and vermin was one of the few legal ways for soldiers to obtain food other than their rations, as they were forbidden from stealing from the gardens of Guernsey. Further, despite the Germans' sense of superiority, Micah also recounts how, when England finally sent supplies to Guernsey, the Germans not only unloaded the parcels and distributed them to the islanders, but the Commandant threatened to kill any soldiers who tried to steal food from the boxes. Micah writes that "honor due is honor due," and says that it's his responsibility to share things like this in order to make it known that the Germans were desperate, hungry, and capable of kindness and empathy.

Despite the Germans' relative respect for the islanders, their treatment of the Todt laborers, particularly in terms of food, remained horrific and cruel. The laborers were allowed to wander at night to forage for food, something that allowed the Germans to justify not feeding them as much—though, like the Germans, the Todt workers were forbidden from stealing from gardens, and the Guernsey residents were forbidden from helping them. This left the Todt workers more emaciated and desperate than anyone else on the island. This can also be read as an attempt by the Germans to rope the islanders into the same kind of elitist and dehumanizing beliefs held by the Nazi party, as it utilized the scarcity of food and the threat of concentration camps to push the islanders to dehumanize the Todt laborers, just like the Germans did—their lives depended on it.

In this way, the letters to Juliet create a picture of a complex system fueled by power and hunger, that in turn created an environment in which some people, like Christian and the

unnamed German soldier, become *more* human, while others, like those who exposed their neighbors' kindnesses in order to curry favor with the Nazis, become *less* human. Though the various writers condemn the cruelty of the Germans and of their neighbors who told on others, they also recognize that at least some of the cruelty was borne out of hunger and desperation, not out of malice. In other words, while the novel never excuses the cruelty that took place on Guernsey or the Nazis as a whole, it instead suggests that humanity's true enemy, regardless of one's nationality or politics, was hunger and desperation.



WOMEN, MARRIAGE, AND WORK

Over the course of the novel, Juliet becomes engaged three times, and at the novel's close, she's finally set to follow through and marry Dawsey Adams days later. By exploring Juliet's previous two engagements to Lieutenant Rob Dartry and Mark Reynolds, particularly in terms of how her relationships with those two men intersect with Juliet's desire to work and the societal norms of the mid-1940s, the novel suggests that Juliet is in a unique position for women at that time. Ultimately, for an independent woman like Juliet who wishes to continue writing after marriage and seeks a relationship in which her thoughts and desires will be taken seriously by her partner, she must actually step outside of traditional gender roles in order to find a fulfilling relationship, and must find a partner who is willing to do the same.

In a letter to Sophie that Juliet writes after meeting a disgusting doctor on her book tour, Juliet suggests that she's simply not good at interacting with men and has standards that are too high. While she does say that she'd never lower her standards to the level of the doctor, she does wonder if she's too picky about the men she dates. It should be noted that Juliet's high standards come from her life of relative independence and her love of her work, something that stands in direct contrast to the trajectory of Sophie's life. Though the novel never looks down on Sophie for choosing the more conventional life path of getting married and having children, it's also worth keeping in mind that nobody who writes to or about Sophie mentions that she has pressing or attention-heavy interests outside of her familial duties. This in turn suggests that one of the reasons that Juliet struggles with romance and the possibility of marriage is because she does have interests aside from pursuing marriage and a family.

Juliet confirms that she has no interest in giving up her career as a writer or her love of books when she recounts to Sidney the particulars of how her engagement to Rob Dartry ended the day before their wedding. The two were in the middle of moving Rob's things into Juliet's flat, which she had prepared for by clearing out half of her dressers and shelves. However, Juliet returned from an outing to find that Rob had boxed up all

her books and filled the shelves with sporting trophies, ribbons, and memorabilia, thereby erasing Juliet's independence and identity separate from his own. Horrified at the sight of her books in boxes, she ended their engagement and sent him packing. For Juliet and her friends, this casts her as an eccentric and independent woman, though notably, not a bad, cold, or inadequate woman.

Mark Reynolds represents an entirely different kind of man for Juliet. Mark is charming, American, and extremely rich—in other words, he's everything that a woman like Juliet is supposed to want in a man. However, while Juliet finds Mark interesting and fun for a while, she's surprised by his proposal of marriage after only two months of dating, as well as upset by his lack of support for her project in Guernsey. In Juliet's letters to Sidney and Sophie in the days following her refusal of Mark's proposal, Juliet is very aware that she's turning down the prospect of a conventionally desirable life—but she's also aware that the life Mark offers her isn't one that she actually wants. She describes how, in the hours after Mark proposed, he angrily berated her for refusing and only stopped when she began to cry. Poignantly, Juliet notes that she almost said yes in that moment, but reconsidered when she thought of having to cry in order to make Mark treat her kindly and respectfully. As painful as that moment was for Juliet, it strengthens her resolve to not marry a man who callously disregards her beliefs and her career. Later, when Mark comes to fetch Juliet from Guernsey, a new occurrence of Mark's callousness combined with the memory of his prior bad behavior leads Juliet to send him away again, this time for good.

Unlike Rob or Mark, Dawsey is genuinely interested in Juliet's career as a writer and, over the course of their correspondence and their in-person relationship, he actively helps her in her career by writing and speaking about Guernsey's occupation and by providing anecdotes about Elizabeth. Through these actions, Dawsey shows Juliet that he respects her for who she is and doesn't seek to change her at all—to the point where his love remains a secret until Isola begins watching Dawsey for signs that he loves Remy, a Frenchwoman that Elizabeth befriended in the concentration camp, and instead uncovers signs that Dawsey loves Juliet. Juliet's proposal of marriage to Dawsey then becomes a testament to Juliet's independence and her willingness to flout traditional gender roles in order to find happiness in her future marriage. With this, the novel finally suggests that an independent woman like Juliet can find happiness, as long as she's willing to stand up for herself and insist that she be taken seriously.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



BUNKERS

Over the course of the German occupation, the Nazis sent thousands of forced laborers known as Todt workers to Guernsey to fortify the island. Amelia tells Juliet mostly about the concrete bunkers the Germans had built along the coastline. Amelia sees the bunkers as symbolic of the cruelty of the Germans, and of the thousands of deceased Todt workers themselves. When she looks at them, she cannot forget how many people died, cold and starving, over the course of the bunkers' construction—and while she hopes that vegetation will soon cover the bunkers, she also recognizes that reclamation by nature won't erase the bunkers from the landscape or her memory. With this, the bunkers act not just as symbols of cruelty and death, but also become symbols of the war itself. They indicate that while the war may be over, it will continue to affect and influence people for years to come.



TREES

During the war, nearly all of Guernsey's trees were cut down as firewood, leaving the island bare in the present. Because of this, the absence of the trees comes to represent a sort of paradise lost as well as the horrors of the war: the island's trees are just some of many casualties that Guernsey suffered. However, in the present, islanders like Eben and Eli begin to plant trees in the hope of returning the island to its former wooded beauty. In this way, the new trees symbolize the islanders' hope for the future: that, like the trees, the islanders themselves will be able to recover, regrow, and flourish.



THE SEA

For the islanders, the sea represents freedom and, in some cases, the end of the war. Amelia writes about resuming her evening walks along the cliffs and notes that if she looks out at the sea, she can pretend that the German-built **bunkers** behind her aren't there, and even that the war was just a dream. The sea also situates Guernsey as a place free from British rule, as it's technically owned by the British but, because it's far away in the English Channel and is actually closer to France than England, it maintains a great deal of sovereignty and independence.



IZZY BICKERSTAFF

Prior to the start of the novel, Juliet wrote columns and a book under the pseudonym Izzy Bickerstaff. As the novel opens, she admits that the book she's working on—a book that would also be the work of Izzy—isn't going to happen; Izzy is no longer an interesting character for Juliet.

Because of this, Izzy Bickerstaff comes to represent an old version of Juliet, while her decision to write under her real name and *not* use Izzy symbolizes Juliet's process of coming into herself. Because of this, it's telling that Mark mentions that he's interested in Juliet because of her work under Izzy's name—it shows that he doesn't truly love Juliet, he loves a fake version of her instead. Juliet's final decision to cast off Mark then completes her process of casting off Izzy and that identity, and instead, becoming fully herself.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Dial edition of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* published in 2008.

Part 1: 8 Jan, 1946 Quotes

☹☹ 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 can't write humor without them.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Sidney Stark

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 3-4

Explanation and Analysis

In a letter to Sidney, Juliet explains that she wants to abandon her current writing project, which would've been written under her pseudonym, Izzy Bickerstaff. Juliet wrote the Izzy Bickerstaff columns during the war in order to make people laugh despite the circumstances. Because of this, the columns themselves illustrate the power of writing: it can help people to make sense of and deal with horrendous situations by making them laugh. In the present, however, Juliet's desire to move away from Izzy Bickerstaff and instead write more serious pieces under her own name shows that Juliet is ready to come into her own identity and, in some ways, come of age as a writer. Notably, this also means that she'll be stepping into a more male-dominated arena by writing serious (masculine) works rather than frivolous and light-hearted (feminine) pieces.

Part 1: 12 Jan, 1946 Quotes

☹☹ Charles Lamb made me laugh during the German Occupation, especially when he wrote about the roast pig. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie society came into being because of a roast pig we had to keep secret from the German soldiers, so I feel a kinship to Mr. Lamb.

Related Characters: Dawsey Adams (speaker), Juliet Ashton

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

In Dawsey's letter to Juliet, he explains how much Charles Lamb means to him and why this is so. This becomes the first example of how the members of the Literary Society used literature during the war to find solace and friendship. In other words, literature impresses upon Dawsey that he's not alone—someone a hundred years ago also roasted a pig and wrote about it, just as Dawsey did during the war and is doing now.

Dawsey also speaks to the power of laughter and camaraderie during difficult times. This is one of the many reasons why he and Juliet become friends: Juliet attempted to help Londoners deal with the war by writing her Izzy Bickerstaff columns. In this way, Juliet and Dawsey are able to find common ground with each other and connect through their shared appreciation for what literature and writing can do.

Part 1: 21 Jan, 1946 Quotes

☹☹ All the windows we passed were lighted, and I could snoop once more. I missed it so terribly during the war. I felt as if we had all turned into moles scuttling along in our separate tunnels.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Susan Scott, Sidney Stark

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 13

Explanation and Analysis

Gleefully, Juliet tells Sidney about being able to look in people's windows from the train, as people can now leave lights on and their curtains open since the war is over. Notably, Juliet characterizes the war as something that

separated people from each other and forced them to go through the war as lonely individuals. It deprived people of a sense of community, and she's thrilled to see the community coming back now that the war is over. By looking into people's homes from the train, Juliet is able to feel a connection to them and remember that they're all in the process of rebuilding England together: they're not actually alone, and they're better for it.

Part 1: Feb 5, 1946 Quotes

☝☝ The simple truth of it is that you're the only female writer who makes me laugh. Your Izzy Bickerstaff columns were the wittiest work to come out of the war, and I want to meet the woman who wrote them.

Related Characters: Markham V. Reynolds (speaker), Juliet Ashton

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

In Mark's first note to Juliet, he compliments her Izzy Bickerstaff columns and insists he must meet her. There are several things to notice in Mark's letter. First, he tries to separate Juliet from women as a whole by insisting that she's the only funny female writer. Though the novel doesn't offer examples of other funny (and professional) female writers, this is certainly not true; it's just a way for Mark to attempt to make Juliet feel special. Second, it's telling that he wants to meet Juliet only because of columns she wrote under a pseudonym. By this point, Juliet is no longer interested in using Izzy's persona; she wants to write serious pieces under her own name. Mark's interest in Juliet as Izzy suggests that he won't actually be interested in Juliet herself and these new interests; he's more interested in knowing the Juliet who wrote lighthearted and frivolous columns during the war.

Part 1: 28 Feb, 1946 Quotes

☝☝ One poor soldier was caught stealing a potato. He was chased by his own people and climbed up a tree to hide. But they found him and shot him down out of the tree. Still, that did not stop them from stealing food. I am not pointing a finger at those practices, because some of us were doing the same. I figure hunger makes you desperate when you wake to it every morning.

Related Characters: Eben Ramsey (speaker), Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 65

Explanation and Analysis

Eben writes to Juliet for the first time and tells her about the German occupation, and in particular, about how dire the situation was and how hungry everyone—the Germans included—was at the end. By including these anecdotes about the Germans struggling with hunger, Eben admits that the Germans were human, just like the islanders. While he doesn't excuse the atrocities that they committed (and indeed, Eben goes on to share some of the most horrific and critical accounts of what the Germans did), he understands that all humans are driven by hunger and are willing to go to desperate measures in order to survive.

Part 1: 4 Mar, 1946 Quotes

☝☝ Passive Suffering? Passive Suffering! I nearly seized up. What ailed the man? Lieutenant Owen, he wrote a line, "What passing-bells for these who die as cattle? Only the monstrous anger of the guns." What's passive about that, I'd like to know. That's exactly how they do die. I saw it with my own eyes, and I say to hell with Mr. Yeats.

Related Characters: Clovis Fossey (speaker), Mrs. Amelia Maugery, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 73

Explanation and Analysis

In Clovis's first letter to Juliet, he includes a postscript telling her about a volume of poetry that Amelia lent him that excluded all World War One poems on the grounds that they were just about passive suffering. Clovis's indignant response illustrates the power of literature to give people the words to describe their experiences and

their worlds: Clovis fought in World War One, and he found that Wilfred Owen's poetry described his experience perfectly. What Clovis takes issue with is when others attempt to minimize others' experiences by excluding writings that speak to a very specific experience. With this, Clovis implies that there's something out there in terms of literature or poetry for everyone, and suggests that it's cruel to deprive people of access to works that might speak to them.

Part 1: 12 Mar, 1946 Quotes

☞ Though I had little hope of success, I knew it was my duty to warn her of the fate that awaited her. I told her she would be cast out of decent society, but she did not heed me. In fact, she laughed. I bore it. Then she told me to get out of her house.

Related Characters: Miss Adelaide Addison (speaker), Captain Christian Hellman, Elizabeth McKenna, Kit McKenna, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 82

Explanation and Analysis

Miss Adelaide writes to Juliet to tell her the dirty truth about Kit and Kit's parentage and mentions that she took it upon herself to tell Elizabeth that she'd become an outcast for bearing a baby fathered by a German. With this, Adelaide shows that she adheres to an extremely traditional view of how families should look: parents should be married before having children or face dire social consequences. She also implies that Christian was nothing more than a faceless Nazi, which shows that she was never able to see any of the German soldiers as true people worthy of love. When Elizabeth laughed at Adelaide, it's likely because Elizabeth knew that her relationships with her friends would be able to make her life as a parent bearable. Fortunately, Elizabeth was right: her friends helped her give birth, and after her disappearance, they care for Kit. Elizabeth knows that chosen family can be far more powerful and fulfilling than blood family, and doesn't believe she has to be married to be worthy of love or parenthood.

☞ The principal work of the baby's maintenance was undertaken by Amelia Maugery, with other Society members taking her out—like a library book—for several weeks at a time.

They all dandled the baby, and now that the child can walk, she goes everywhere with one or another of them—holding hands or riding on their shoulders. Such are their standards!

Related Characters: Miss Adelaide Addison (speaker), Mrs. Amelia Maugery, Elizabeth McKenna, Kit McKenna, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 83

Explanation and Analysis

Miss Adelaide explains how the Society shares the care of Kit between them. She finds this arrangement horrific, which again points to her belief that families should look and behave in certain ways in order to be considered legitimate. In other words, Adelaide hasn't considered that Kit may be perfectly happy to be cared for by so many different people, as Adelaide doesn't believe that a chosen family like the Society is legitimate or even worth mentioning.

Most importantly, Adelaide sees the Society's desire to care for Kit as a reason why Juliet shouldn't write about the Society. She believes that such familial structures shouldn't be acknowledged at all, let alone in three widely circulated articles in a prominent paper.

Part 1: 2 Apr, 1946 Quotes

☞ The way that Christian and I met may have been unusual, but our friendship was not. I'm sure many Islanders grew to be friends with some of the soldiers. But sometimes I think of Charles Lamb and marvel that a man born in 1775 enabled me to make two such friends as you and Christian.

Related Characters: Dawsey Adams (speaker), Captain Christian Hellman, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 97

Explanation and Analysis

Dawsey tells Juliet about his friendship with Christian and is especially surprised and thankful that his relationships with both Juliet and Christian began because of a shared

love of literature—Christian and Dawsey became friends after Christian mentioned that he also loved Charles Lamb's work. This illustrates another example of literature connecting people across differing cultures, political views, and time periods.

Dawsey's comment that many people befriended Germans also speaks to the power of literature to humanize people in the eyes of others. Dawsey was able to see Christian as a friend and a fellow person because they loved literature, but he implies that plenty of others were also able to look past the Germans' politics to see that, underneath the Nazi uniforms, they were human just like the islanders. In this way, Dawsey presents friendship itself as something normal and possible between people who may have thought they had nothing at all in common.

Part 1: 22 Apr, 1946 Quotes

☝ There was an old canvas bathing shoe left lying right in the middle of the path. Eli walked around it, staring. Finally, he said, "That shoe is all alone, Grandpa." I answered that yes it was. He looked at it some more, and then we walked on by. After a bit, he said, "Grandpa, that's something I never am." I asked him, "What's that?" And he said, "Lonesome in my spirits."

Related Characters: Eli, Eben Ramsey (speaker), Kit McKenna, Jane, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 124

Explanation and Analysis

After Eben dropped Eli off at the school so he could be evacuated, he remembered a time when Eli told him that he was never lonely. Eli's admission speaks to the strong and supportive connections between the Guernsey islanders. Even as a young child (Eli was about seven when this happened), Eli knew that he was never truly alone on the island—he had his mother, Jane, at that point, as well as plenty of other family members and friends to support and care for him. It's this same community that later rallies to care for Kit, proving Eli's assessment to be even more true. Kit is never alone or forced to wonder if she'll be cared for; the Society makes sure that she always has a friend to play with or to look after her, even though her mother is dead.

☝ The States didn't want the parents to come into the school itself—too crowded and too sad. Better to say good-byes outside. One child crying might set them all off.

So it was strangers who tied up shoelaces, wiped noses, put a nametag around each child's neck. We did up buttons and played games with them until the buses could come.

Related Characters: Isola Pribby (speaker), Miss Adelaide Addison, Elizabeth McKenna, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 126

Explanation and Analysis

Isola tells Juliet about volunteering to get kids ready for the evacuation from Guernsey. The simple fact that strangers performed the final preparations for the departing children again speaks to the strong sense of community on Guernsey as a whole. It's worth noting that both Elizabeth and Adelaide, two childless women, also volunteered to help (though Adelaide's help left a lot to be desired, as she made children cry). This suggests that there's a great deal of strength and power in non-family relationships, especially when it comes to raising children. In this case, non-family members were able to perform a necessary task that the children's families weren't able to do themselves. By doing this, the volunteers shared the emotional burden of sending the children away, as well as the actual work of caring for the children.

Part 1: 1 May, 1946 Quotes

☝ But then I imagined a lifetime of having to cry to get him to be kind, and I went back to no again. We argued and he lectured and I wept a bit more because I was so exhausted, and eventually he called his chauffer to take me home. As he shut me into the back seat, he leaned in to kiss me and said, "You're an idiot, Juliet."

And maybe he's right.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Markham V. Reynolds, Sophie Strachan

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 133

Explanation and Analysis

Juliet, writing to Sophie, recounts Mark's marriage proposal and says she decided to stand firm in her "no" when she had

to cry to make Mark stop berating her. Mark's behavior betrays that he doesn't think highly of Juliet at all and further, doesn't see her as an independent woman who can or should make her own decisions. This supports Sidney's later assessment that Mark only wants Juliet because she looks like an impressive wife; he doesn't actually want Juliet to continue to be impressive by writing.

Then, Juliet's suggestion that maybe Mark is right speaks to the social mores of 1946. By all normal standards, Mark is a catch because he's rich, American, and takes Juliet out all the time. In Juliet's mind, it's possible that those things outweigh her happiness and her own dreams for her future. This illustrates how the societal beliefs surrounding marriage force Juliet to question her own goals and wonder which is more important: marriage or her career.

Part 1: 13 May, 1946 Quotes

☝ I sometimes think that we are morally obliged to begin a search for Kit's German relations, but I cannot bring myself to do it. Christian was a rare soul, and he detested what his country was doing, but the same cannot be true for many Germans...And how could we send our Kit away to a foreign—and destroyed—land, even if her relations could be found? We are the only family she's ever known.

Related Characters: Mrs. Amelia Maugery (speaker), Captain Christian Hellman, Kit McKenna, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 137-38

Explanation and Analysis

Amelia confides in Juliet that she believes she should look for Kit's German relatives, but hasn't done so because she both fears the Nazis and believes that the family Kit is a part of on Guernsey is better than any German blood relatives. With this, Amelia makes it very clear that she values a loving, committed chosen family over a blood family that possibly believes horrific things about other people. Kit's family on Guernsey is able to care for her in a way that's simply not possible in a conventional, nuclear family: because she has so many "family" members, Kit never has to be alone and she has a number of people to spend time with or call on for help.

Part 1: 15 May, 1946 Quotes

☝ It may be about those Germans, but honor due is honor due. They unloaded all those boxes of food for us from the *Vega*, and they didn't take none, not one box of it, for themselves. Of course, their Commandant had told them, "That food is for the Islanders, it is not yours. Steal one bit and I'll have you shot."

Related Characters: Micah Daniels (speaker), The Commandant, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 147

Explanation and Analysis

A man writes to Juliet about his Vega boxes, which were boxes of foodstuffs and other supplies that the Red Cross delivered to Guernsey after D-Day. Micah believes that it's his responsibility to make sure Juliet hears that even though the Germans were awful to the islanders, in this situation, they behaved honorably and didn't steal from the boxes. Their Commandant insisted that the soldiers should go hungry rather than steal food not intended for them.

This begins to humanize the German soldiers and suggests that there were at least some soldiers who recognized the humanity of the people they oppressed, despite the Nazi ideals espoused by their country as a whole.

Part 2: 24 May, 1946 Quotes

☝ Maybe I am a complete idiot. I know of three women who are mad for him—he'll be snapped up in a trice, and I'll spend my declining years in a grimy bed-sit, with my teeth falling out one by one.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Markham V. Reynolds, Sophie Strachan

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 163

Explanation and Analysis

From Guernsey, Juliet writes to Sophie and wonders if she is stupid for refusing Mark's offer of marriage. Juliet's suggestion of what her life might look like after saying no speaks to the power of marrying someone like Mark. Despite his bad qualities, Juliet would never go hungry and would have access to all manner of things, simply by virtue of Mark's wealth. Juliet recognizes that as an independent, single woman and a working woman, she doesn't have the

security that married women have because of their relationships to their husbands and the legal benefits that come with marriage. This re-introduces the idea that there are benefits to forming a family in conventional, state-sanctioned ways, but also suggests that for an independent woman like Juliet, she'll need to decide which is more important: her independence or security.

Part 2: 6 Jun, 1946 Quotes

☝ I knew that all children were gruesome, but I don't know whether I'm supposed to encourage them in it. I'm afraid to ask Sophie if Dead Bride is too morbid a game for a four-year-old. If she says yes, we'll have to stop playing, and I don't want to stop. I love Dead Bride.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Sophie Strachan, Kit McKenna, Sidney Stark

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 175

Explanation and Analysis

In a letter to Sidney, Juliet tells him about a morbid game called Dead Bride that she plays with Kit and wonders if she shouldn't encourage such games. This shows that Juliet is beginning to become more interested in parenting theory and how to properly care for children, which begins Juliet's internal journey towards becoming a parent. Her desire to parent correctly shows that she cares deeply for Kit and wants to do right by her, even if it means putting a stop to a game that they both love. Going forward, Dead Bride provides Juliet the basis for her desire to formally parent Kit. At this point, Juliet is in a state of limbo; she cares for Kit sometimes, like the other Society members, but she's not an official parent. This does give Juliet some wiggle room to make mistakes and encourage potentially inappropriate games, as she's not yet constrained by what a true, full-time parent should do.

Part 2: 12 Jun, 1946 Quotes

☝ I also know that she cherished you as her family, and she felt gratitude and peace that her daughter, Kit, was in your care. Therefore, I write so you and the child will know of her and the strength she showed to us in the camp.

Related Characters: Remy Giraud (speaker), Isola Pribby, Eben Ramsey, Kit McKenna, Elizabeth McKenna

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 178

Explanation and Analysis

Remy sends a letter to the Society with news of Elizabeth's death. She wants to share this information specifically so that Kit will know how brave and kind Elizabeth was. Remy's choice to mention that Elizabeth thought of the Society as family again reinforces the novel's assertion that chosen family and friends can often provide a much more caring and engaged familial network than one's blood family. Notably, Remy appears to agree with Elizabeth simply by choosing to write the letter in the first place—she recognizes that the Society will mourn Elizabeth like a family member and that it's their right to know what happened to her.

Part 2: 16 Jun, 1946 Quotes

☝ It's odd, I suppose, to mourn so for someone you've never met. But I do.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Elizabeth McKenna, Sidney Stark

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 184

Explanation and Analysis

After Elizabeth's death, Juliet writes to Sidney and wonders if it's strange to feel so upset about Elizabeth's death, especially since Juliet never knew Elizabeth. The relationship that Juliet feels with Elizabeth isn't strange at all within the world of the novel, given the novel's insistence that literature is a strong connective force and that chosen family can offer someone stronger bonds than one's blood family. Juliet learns about Elizabeth through the Society, which was Elizabeth's brainchild and eventually became her chosen family. In this way, though Juliet and Elizabeth never meet, the two women are joined by their shared love of literature. Further, especially once Juliet chooses to stay on Guernsey and adopt Kit, the two become family members: Juliet is an accepted member of the greater Society family, and by adopting Elizabeth's daughter, she formalizes her connection to Elizabeth.

Part 2: 6 Jul, 1946 Quotes

☝ If she marries him, she'll spend the rest of her life being shown to people at theaters and clubs and weekends and she'll never write another book. As her editor, I'm dismayed by the prospect, but as her friend, I'm horrified. It will be the end of our Juliet.

Related Characters: Sidney Stark (speaker), Markham V. Reynolds, Juliet Ashton, Sophie Strachan

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 194-95

Explanation and Analysis

During Sidney's first visit to Guernsey, he writes to Sophie and shares his fears: that if Juliet marries Mark Reynolds, she will lose all her independence. With this, Sidney makes it clear just how integral Juliet's independence and her work are to who she is—given that without them, Juliet as Sidney and Sophie know her would cease to exist. This suggests that, at least as far as Juliet's friends are concerned, her independence and her work are far more important than being married, even if Juliet's suitor is rich and conventionally attractive. Sidney then sets up the hope that Juliet will either choose to flout convention entirely by not marrying at all, or that she'll find a partner who will not just allow her to continue writing, but will support her desire to do so.

Part 2: 17 Jul, 1946 Quotes

☝ Maybe every mother looks at her baby that way—with that intense focus—but Elizabeth put it on paper. There was one shaky drawing of a wizened little Kit, made the day after she was born, according to Amelia.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Mrs. Amelia Maugery, Kit McKenna, Elizabeth McKenna, Sidney Stark

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 203

Explanation and Analysis

Juliet writes to Sidney about discovering some of Elizabeth's drawings that she made during the occupation. There are many of Kit as a baby, and Juliet begins to wonder if looking closely and intensely at one's child is something that all mothers do. This also continues to develop Juliet's growing belief that she's becoming a mother, as she's

beginning to look at Kit in the same way that Elizabeth did.

It's also worth noting that Elizabeth's drawings act in much the same way as writing and literature do in the rest of the novel. Through her drawings, Juliet is able to understand more about Elizabeth and learn about how Elizabeth saw Kit. In doing so, Juliet is also able to feel closer to Elizabeth herself, thereby helping herself along as she becomes an integrated member of the Society's extended chosen family, which Elizabeth started.

Part 2: 19 Jul, 1946 Quotes

☝ Why, there'd be soldiers riding guard in the back of potato lorries going to the army's mess hall—children would follow them, hoping potatoes would fall off into the street. Soldiers would look straight ahead, grim-like, and then flick potatoes off the pile—on purpose.

Related Characters: Captain Christian Hellman, Sam Withers (speaker), Elizabeth McKenna, Kit McKenna, Sidney Stark, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 208

Explanation and Analysis

Sam Withers, the groundskeeper at the cemetery, tells Juliet about how German soldiers would sometimes give Guernsey children food. This again impresses upon Juliet and the reader that while the Nazis committed a number of atrocities over the course of the war, some individual soldiers truly cared for the people around them and wanted to help—but couldn't due to the fact that their own lives depended on remaining outwardly loyal to the Nazi government and the cause. In other words, they were forced into "losing" potatoes off their trucks because it was the only way for them to safely perform acts of kindness for the Guernsey islanders.

Part 2: 24 Jul, 1946 Quotes

☝ How could I ever have considered marrying him? One year as his wife, and I'd have become one of those abject, quaking women who look at their husbands when someone asks them a question. I've always despised that type, but I see how it happens now.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Markham V. Reynolds, Sophie Strachan

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 214

Explanation and Analysis

After turning down Mark's proposal of marriage for the final time, Juliet writes to Sophie and says she understands now that marriage to Mark would have deprived her of all of her independence and her personal thoughts. With this, Juliet shows that she finally recognizes that her independence and her career are far more important to her personally than being a wealthy wife, especially when being a wife to someone like Mark would mean that she no longer got to be her own person. She also now sees that when women turn into timid wives, it happens because they prioritized the security of marriage—even to an overbearing and rude man—over their own happiness, which in the long run, doesn't allow those women to be happy.

Part 2: 2 Sep, 1946 Quotes

☝☝ She told me once that those guards used big dogs. Riled them up and loosed them deliberately on the lines of women standing for roll call—just to watch the fun. Christ! I've been ignorant, Juliet. I thought being here with us could help her forget.

Related Characters: Dawsey Adams (speaker), Remy Giraud, Sidney Stark, Juliet Ashton

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 255

Explanation and Analysis

Juliet writes to Sidney and tells him that earlier, Remy experienced a violent panic attack after seeing a (friendly) German Shepherd. She tells him that Dawsey shared with her why Remy had this reaction and that Dawsey now questions the wisdom and the positive effects of having Remy in Guernsey at all. Dawsey's fears and Remy's panic attack show that while people may be beginning to move on

from the trauma of the war by this point, not everyone is able to do so. The war inflicted extreme trauma on many and they'll spend years trying to recover from what they experienced in battle or in concentration camps. With this, Dawsey also recognizes that being welcomed into a chosen family isn't enough to make up or erase trauma like this. While caring and supportive relationships can help, they can't always fix the fact that people's lives were severely damaged by the war.

Part 2: 7 Sep, 1946 Quotes

☝☝ She was showing me her treasures, Sophie—her eyes did not leave my face once. We were both so solemn, and I, for once, didn't start crying; I just held out my arms. She climbed right into them, and under the covers with me—and went sound asleep. Not me! I couldn't. I was too happy planning the rest of our lives.

Related Characters: Juliet Ashton (speaker), Captain Christian Hellman, Elizabeth McKenna, Kit McKenna, Sophie Strachan

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 259

Explanation and Analysis

Juliet happily tells Sophie that Kit finally shared her box of treasures, which contained photos and mementos of Elizabeth and Christian, with Juliet. Juliet sees this as proof that Kit now trusts her and loves her as though Juliet were a parent, which encourages Juliet in her decision to try to formally adopt Kit. This shows that Kit herself will accept Juliet as a formal parent, which will in turn give Kit a sense of security and safety—there's no chance, after adoption, that she'll be able to be given to any living German relatives.

The way that Juliet thinks about this shows that she does her best to respect who Kit is as a person, as well as Kit's wants and desires. In doing so, she's training Kit to be independent and to value her own thoughts, just like Juliet does.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART ONE, 8TH JANUARY, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney that Susan Scott is amazing: in addition to selling 40 copies of Juliet's new book, Susan also managed to whip up a real meringue. Juliet also has bad news: her new book, *English Foibles*, isn't going well and she doesn't want to write it anymore. She says that she no longer wants to write under the name **Izzy Bickerstaff** because she longs to be taken seriously. She thinks she did a great thing by making people laugh during the war, but she's done.

Juliet will later explain that the columns she wrote under the name Izzy Bickerstaff were humorous and light. Her desire to no longer write under the pseudonym suggests that Juliet is ready to move into a new stage of her career in which she is able to write pieces that aren't just frivolous—and that reflect who Juliet truly is.



PART ONE, 10TH JANUARY, 1946

Sidney returns Juliet's letter and assures her that given what Susan said about the success of the book launch luncheon, Juliet's upcoming book tour will be wonderful. He does suggest that she not throw the book at the audience, like she did once when she was a teen. Sidney explains that while Sophie wants the tour extended to Scotland so she can see Juliet, he's doing his best to be vague and infuriating. He says that the sales from *Izzy Bickerstaff Goes to War* are excellent, and because of this, Juliet shouldn't worry about not wanting to write *English Foibles*. He asks that they get dinner before the book tour.

Sidney's suggestion about not throwing books at the audience indicates that Juliet has always been a bit wild and prone to actions that demonstrate her independence. In other words, Juliet's desire to become independent from the Izzy pseudonym isn't anything new; it seems a perfectly normal and expected result of a lifetime of independent thinking and an attempt to write with Juliet's true voice.



PART ONE, 11TH JANUARY, 1946

In Juliet's reply, she says she'd love to have a lavish dinner. Because the sales from *Izzy Bickerstaff Goes to War* are so good, she insists that she pay. Juliet includes a postscript insisting that she didn't throw the book at the audience; she aimed for the elocution mistress but missed.

The good sales figures from Juliet's book indicate that she's already successful in her writing career, even though her work thus far has been under this name. This again sets up how independent Juliet is.



PART ONE, 12TH JANUARY, 1946

Juliet writes to Sophie, lamenting that Sidney is currently refusing to extend the book tour to Scotland. She says she'd love to visit and asks if Sophie's husband, Alexander, would allow her to sleep on their couch for a while. Juliet admits that despite the excitement she should feel about getting to promote her book, she's melancholy and gloomy because England is so broken after the war. She attributes this sense to an awful dinner party that Juliet attended. She says she ran into one old friend who used to be pretty, but the woman is now bony and married to a doctor who clicks his tongue when he speaks.

While Sophie and Juliet only see each other once throughout the novel, their friendship is able to remain strong because they continually write to each other. Though not literature as far as Sophie and Juliet are concerned, the fact that their letters comprise the novel itself speaks to the power of writing to connect people to each other. Juliet's comment about the woman suggests she doesn't think well of women who settle in their relationships.



Juliet wonders if there's something wrong with her, given that she finds men intolerable. She admits that she's always been bad with men and thinks that she should lower her standards. She asks Sophie if the furnace man was her one true love, even if the two of them never spoke to each other. Juliet remembers the year that Sidney took it upon himself to introduce her to poets, and then asks again if she's too particular. She says she doesn't want to be married just to be married.

From the island of Guernsey, Dawsey Adams writes to Juliet. He explains that he knows of Juliet because he owns *The Selected Essays of Elia* by Charles Lamb, which used to belong to her and has her address inside the front cover. Dawsey admits that he loves Charles Lamb and wants to know if he wrote more books. He asks Juliet if she'd put him in contact with a London bookseller and possibly procure a biography of Lamb. Dawsey says that Charles Lamb made him laugh during the German occupation, especially his writing about a roast pig—the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society came about because of a secret roast pig. He mentions that his friend Mrs. Maugery owns one of Juliet's old pamphlets and finds Juliet's margin notes amusing.

PART ONE, 15TH JANUARY, 1946

Juliet replies to Dawsey and explains that she's thrilled his letter reached her, as she no longer lives at the address written in the cover of the Charles Lamb book. She wonders how the book ended up in Guernsey. Juliet says that she loves going to bookshops so upon receipt of Dawsey's letter, she went to her favorite bookshop and asked the proprietor to send Dawsey a copy of *More Essays of Elia* and put him on the hunt for a biography.

Juliet says that she's enclosed a copy of Charles Lamb's *Selected Letters* as a gift, which she believes is a better way to learn about Lamb than through a biography. She includes her favorite passage and explains that she only began reading Lamb's work after learning that Lamb, while visiting a friend in prison, helped his friend paint a mural in his cell, offered money to the friend's family, and taught his friend's daughter to say the Lord's Prayer backward. Juliet says that this is her favorite part about reading: tidbits like these lead a person into book after book with no end in sight. She says she's included a postcard of Charles Lamb's portrait.

Though Juliet can't vocalize it now, what she finds intolerable about men is that most of the ones she sees try to control the women around them. Because Juliet is so independent, this means that she's naturally disinclined to see those men as worthy of her attentions. Note too that she doesn't see marriage as something that should be a goal in and of itself; she believes there should be more to it than security.



Dawsey chooses to write to Juliet because he believes the two have something in common: a love of Charles Lamb. This introduces the idea of literature as a connecting force even more clearly, and the connective powers of books as objects specifically. By reading used books that Juliet made notes in, both Dawsey and Mrs. Maugery are able to learn something about someone else and because Dawsey has Juliet's address, he's able to bring this relationship into the real world.



Juliet's desire to help Dawsey shows just how much she values literature and helping others connect with it as well. By writing him back, she makes sure that their correspondence can continue and with this, that they can continue to connect with each other over their shared love of literature.



By sending Dawsey Charles Lamb's letters, Juliet holds up the power of personal correspondence as the best way to get to know someone. This feeds into the structure of the novel as a whole, as this is exactly how the reader learns about the various characters. Juliet's comments about how one book leads to another also indicates that books don't just connect people to each other; they connect dedicated readers to even more books and new authors as well.



In closing, Juliet asks Dawsey if he'd answer three questions for her about the secret pig roast, how the Society began, and what a potato peel pie is and what it's doing in the Society's name. She gives Dawsey her current address and laments that her old flat was bombed in 1945.

Juliet's interest is piqued mostly because the Society represents, for her, a group of people who might love books just as much as she does—in other words, she sees them as potential friends thanks to their shared love of literature.



PART ONE, 18TH JANUARY, 1946

Juliet apologizes to Sidney for complaining about having to travel to promote her book: the teas and luncheons she's attended have been wonderful, and Bath is a glorious town—clean, white, and bright. According to Susan, guests are enjoying themselves at all Juliet's engagements.

Through Juliet's book tour, she's able to connect in person with a number of people she wouldn't otherwise have a chance to meet. Izzy Bickerstaff then becomes a point of contact between Juliet and her readership.



PART ONE, 21ST JANUARY, 1946

In a letter to Sidney, Juliet says she's thrilled to be able to travel by train at night again. Unlike during the war, she's now able to snoop in people's kitchen or sitting room windows as the train zooms by. She says that in a bookshop today, one man got very indignant that she chose to "bastardize the name of Isaac Bickerstaff," whom he described as a noted journalist. Before Juliet could respond, a woman in the audience angrily pointed out that Isaac Bickerstaff was a pseudonym as well.

The joy that Juliet feels joy at being able to look in people's windows now that the war is over suggests that for her, the war was an isolating experience. Now that it's over, she can reconnect with her friends and with perfect strangers, simply by being able to see that they also exist and lead normal lives.



Juliet asks if Sidney knows a Markham V. Reynolds, as this man is leaving her flowers at every stop on her book tour. She wonders how this man knows where she is, and admits she's not sure whether to feel flattered or like he's hunting her.

The possibility that Juliet should feel hunted shows that she's unsure about Mark from the beginning; he treats her like prey, not like a person with thoughts, feelings, and desires of her own.



PART ONE, 23RD JANUARY, 1946

Writing to Sidney, Juliet expresses disbelief at the sales figures for *Izzy Bickerstaff Goes to War*. She says that traveling to promote her book is exhilarating, and she loves hearing other women's stories of the war. She asks if Sidney remembers Juliet and Sophie's boss when they worked in his bookshop. He'd order extra books so they could read them. Juliet says that she and Sophie were experts at introducing customers to new books because of this and asks Sidney to send extra reader's copies to bookshops that order *Izzy*.

Again, the best part of the tour for Juliet is getting to connect with other people after so many years spent feeling isolated during the war. Her request that Sidney send out extra readers' copies for salespeople at bookshops indicates that even though Juliet is no longer working that job, she still feels a sense of connection to those who do and wants to continue to foster that by providing books.



In addition to managing the book tour, Juliet says that Susan has also given her a makeover. Juliet has had a haircut, acquired new cosmetics, and Susan even talked her into buying a new dress. Juliet laments that she'll have to wait on new shoes. She says that now, she looks lively and youthful instead of old and bedraggled. Juliet remarks on the fact that there's more stringent rationing now than there was during the war, and she privately resents that so many Europeans who need assistance are Germans. In closing, Juliet explains she's stopping in to see Sophie and offers to pass on messages for Sidney.

The comments that Juliet makes about rationing suggests that while the war may have been over for about a year by this point, it continues to seriously affect people and curtail their lives in significant ways. Looking lively again allows Juliet to feel as though she's healing and helps her to move on, though it should be noted that Juliet was relatively lucky to make it through the war and the Blitz alive—others, like Remy later, weren't so lucky.



PART ONE, 25TH JANUARY, 1946

Susan writes to Sidney and assures him that no matter what the papers say, Juliet was not arrested. Juliet did, however, throw a teapot at Gilly Gilbert. Susan accepts responsibility, as she never should've let Gilly interview Juliet. What happened was that Gilly met Susan and Juliet at the hotel and begged them to have tea so he could interview Juliet. They agreed. Everything went well until Gilly mentioned that Juliet was almost a war widow, as she'd left Lieutenant Rob Dartry at the altar in 1942.

When Juliet throws the teapot at Gilly, she again tells everyone that she's independent and won't be bullied, especially by or about men. Susan's tone suggests that she, like Juliet, is an independent woman who takes great pride in her work and possibly prioritizes it over romance. This suggests that Juliet's not so much of an anomaly in her independence.



Snappily, Juliet corrected Gilly: she left Rob the day before they were to be married, and he was relieved to not have to marry her. When Gilly asked if Rob had "a touch of the old Oscar Wilde," Juliet threw the teapot at him. Susan says that Juliet is worried that she's embarrassed Stephens & Stark, as well as distraught that Rob Dartry is being insulted like this. Susan says that all the gossip is nonsense, but asks if Sidney knows why Juliet called off the wedding. She wonders if they should extend their tour for longer to keep Juliet out of London and asks if Sidney's figured out who Markham V. Reynolds is yet.

The comment about Oscar Wilde is an underhanded insult asking if Rob was gay, indicating that Juliet's society still relies on and promotes traditional gender roles and heterosexuality—not female independence, as in the case of Juliet and Susan, or being gay. Because of this, it's important to keep in mind that the novel's two gay characters (Sidney and Booker) keep this a secret from nearly everyone; they might face prosecution if they made this public.



PART ONE, 26TH JANUARY, 1946

Juliet sends a telegram to Sidney, apologizing for embarrassing Stephens & Stark. Sidney replies with a letter, assuring Juliet that she should've done more damage with the teapot, and he's going to give a statement accusing Gilly of being a horrible journalist. He continues that he wants Juliet to come home instead of go to Scotland, as the *Times* wants her to write three articles for their literary supplement under Juliet's real name, not as **Izzy Bickerstaff**.

The possibility of the Times articles indicates that there are publications out there who are willing to take Juliet seriously and give her a chance to develop her real writing voice. Sidney's apparent lack of concern for what happened between Juliet and Gilly suggests that because he's male, he both has less to worry about and can protect Juliet.



Sidney continues that the *Times* doesn't want the article until late in the spring, so they'll have time to come up with a new topic for her book. Then, he says he does know who Markham V. Reynolds is. He's an American in the publishing business. Sidney says he's cheeky and has wooed many women, including Sidney's secretary—Sidney fired his secretary for giving Reynolds Juliet's contact information. Sidney believes that Reynolds wants to poach Juliet for his own publishing house.

The decision for Sidney to fire his secretary for giving out Juliet's information indicates that Sidney thinks of Juliet as an independent person, not as a commodity to be consumed by men like Mark. He shows that he believes Mark should have to talk to Juliet himself, rather than be sneaky about it in a way that only increases Mark's image as a powerful man.



PART ONE, 28TH JANUARY, 1946

Writing to Sidney, Juliet is relieved she didn't embarrass Stephens & Stark by throwing the teapot. She says that while she doesn't want to make a statement publically, she does want Sidney to know why she didn't marry Rob Dartry. Juliet says that in preparation for his move into her apartment, she cleared out half of the dressers and her desk. The afternoon before the wedding, she went to deliver an article while Rob moved in. When Juliet returned, she found Rob in front of her bookcase, packing up all of her books to go into the basement. The shelves were filled entirely with athletic trophies and memorabilia.

It's especially telling that Juliet was out delivering an article—in other words, doing her job—when this all went down. This positions not just Juliet's independence and control over her house as being in opposition to marriage to Rob, but suggests that her job is in jeopardy as well. Rob's decision to move Juliet's books suggests that he didn't take her interests seriously and felt that his love of sports was more important than her interests.



Juliet screamed at Rob to put her books back and in the course of their argument, they decided not to marry. Rob packed up his things and left. Juliet says that the irony of all of this is that if she'd allowed Rob to put her books in the basement, they wouldn't have all been destroyed when her flat was bombed.

The recognition that the books would've survived had Juliet married Rob shows that Juliet is well aware that there are a number of perks that come from marriage—but those perks don't make the marriage itself seem bearable or positive.



Juliet thanks Sidney for tracking down Markham V. Reynolds and says that she plans to remain true to Stephens & Stark. She says she's excited for the *Times* proposal and hopes that it'll be a serious subject.

Juliet's assurance that her work belongs to Sidney and her subject change to the article indicates that she still cares more about her work than romance.



PART ONE, 31ST JANUARY, 1946

Juliet writes Sophie and thanks her for making the quick trip to visit her in Leeds. She explains that what the *London Hue and Cry* wrote about her was exaggerated. Sidney has given a press conference to defend Juliet and the sanctity of journalism in which he called Gilly Gilbert lazy and a lying weasel. Juliet says that Sidney is quite the champion, and mentions that Reynolds sent her another bunch of orchids.

By standing up for Juliet, Sidney uses his power as a man to make sure that the women who write for him feel as though they'll be supported in their work, even if it does attract scandal. This will help Sidney maintain these female authors, as they know they can trust him.



Dawsey returns Juliet's letter, thanking her for the book. He says he has a job at the harbor now, so he can read on his tea breaks. Dawsey tells her the story of the roast pig dinner. When the Germans arrived, they took all the pigs and gave the Guernsey residents specific crops to grow. People tried to keep pigs secret with varying success. One afternoon, Mrs. Maugery sent a note asking Dawsey to come with a butcher knife: she'd managed to keep a pig and planned to throw a feast.

The dinner party was the first that Dawsey had ever been to. He didn't know it, but it was also the first meeting of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. All the guests forgot about the curfew until an hour after it began, but they decided to go home anyway. Dawsey walked with Elizabeth McKenna and John Booker. Drunk, John started singing and attracted the attention of German officers. Elizabeth told the officers that they'd been at a meeting of their literary society and had lost track of time. The officer smiled, took their names, and told them to report to the Commandant in the morning.

Dawsey says he has a question. He explains that ships are coming to Guernsey now, bearing supplies like food, medicine, and shoes, all wrapped in old newspapers. Dawsey and his friend Clovis save the papers and read them, as the Germans cut off all contact with the outside world when they invaded and the people of Guernsey are desperate to know what happened during the war. This does mean that Dawsey doesn't understand some of the cartoons, and he asks Juliet to explain one that features men with one large ear talking about "Doodlebugs."

PART ONE, 3RD FEBRUARY, 1946

Juliet replies to Dawsey, thanking him for his story about the pig roast, and asks him if he'd tell her more about the Society. She tells him about writing under the name **Izzy Bickerstaff** during the war and says that now, she'd like to write a book under her own name. She explains that the *Times* has asked her to write three articles about the value of reading and she would like to include the Society in the article.

Juliet tells Dawsey about the "Doodlebugs:" they were bombs. They came during the day and were so fast, there was no time to take cover. A person was fine if they could hear them, but as soon as the noise stopped, it meant there were 30 seconds before the bomb hit. She saw one fall once; women watching from an open window were sucked out by the force of the blast. Juliet remarks that it seems impossible that they all could've laughed at such a cartoon, but she supposes that it's true that humor is the best way to get through difficult times.

Mrs. Maugery's choice to throw a feast (rather than keep the pig for herself) suggests that there was already some sense of community and camaraderie on the island, even before the Society began. It indicates that Mrs. Maugery recognized that all her neighbors were likely hungry and is generous enough to share her good fortune.



Elizabeth shows here that she's very quick thinking and can charm even strict German soldiers. She also shows that she recognizes the power of literature, as it appears she was aware that the mention of a literary society would go over well with the officers. This again speaks to the power literature has to connect people and in this case, save lives: because the officer doesn't have a problem with literature, the members survive.



Dawsey's constant perusal of the papers again shows how writing allows a person to learn about and make sense of their world. The fact that Dawsey has to learn about the war through old newspapers like this also suggests that there aren't any people coming to Guernsey who are able or willing to talk about the war, meaning that Dawsey's only option is to turn to writing.



Juliet recognizes that the Society was something special, given that it was one of the primary ways in which islanders were able to make it through the war. Her implication that the Society will be able to show the value of reading indicates how highly Juliet herself thinks of reading.



As Juliet describes the Doodlebugs, it becomes clear that her experience of the war was horrific and damaging. When she talks about the value of humor and cartoons like this one, she suggests that because Londoners had access to papers that printed such things, those papers performed much the same purpose as the Literary Society did on Guernsey.



PART ONE, 4TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Juliet begins a letter to Markham Reynolds. She explains that she caught his delivery boy and made him reveal Reynolds's address. She thanks him for the flowers and says they've brightened her winter.

The politeness indicates that Juliet isn't going to make it known yet that she felt unsafe because of Mark's advances—she feels the need to be polite.



PART ONE, FEBRUARY 5, 1946

Markham Reynolds returns Juliet's letter and thanks her for catching the delivery boy; this means he doesn't have to try to arrange some way to meet Juliet a party. He explains that the **Izzy Bickerstaff** columns were the only things written by women that made him laugh during the war, and he wants to meet Juliet. He invites her to have dinner next week.

Notice that Mark seems to believe that he couldn't just have written Juliet; he needs to devise a plan to meet her "by chance." This allows him to feel more powerful and sneaky. His interest in Juliet because of the Izzy columns also suggests that he's interested in a fictional version of Juliet, not the real Juliet.



PART ONE, 6TH AND 7TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Juliet accepts Mark's invitation and suggests Thursday. In his reply, Mark insists that Thursday is too far away, suggests Monday, and signs off with his first name. He also asks if Juliet has a telephone. Juliet replies that her telephone is buried in her old apartment.

When Mark moves the date up after asking Juliet her preferences, he shows her that he doesn't actually believe she should get a say—asking her is just a way for him to seem as though he respects her.



Dawsey writes to Juliet and says that the Society would like to be included in her articles. He explains that he's asked Mrs. Maugery to write Juliet about their meetings, as she's more educated. Dawsey says that he hasn't yet obtained a Charles Lamb biography, but the bookseller is looking. He says that he's currently re-roofing the Crown Hotel and enjoys corresponding with Juliet.

The joy that Dawsey finds through communicating with Juliet again reinforces the power of literature to connect two complete strangers. Now, he's more comfortable telling her about his life and wants to bring her into the community by connecting her with Mrs. Maugery.



PART ONE, 8TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Amelia Maugery writes to Juliet and says that when Dawsey came to ask her to write to Juliet, Dawsey forgot to be shy. Amelia says that she'd be happy to write about the German occupation with one caveat. She explains that a friend sent her a copy of *Izzy Bickerstaff Goes to War*. She found it amusing and informative, but she's concerned about just how amusing it was. Amelia says that she doesn't want to participate if Juliet just wants to make fun of the Society's name. She asks that Juliet tell her about herself and what the article will entail.

Amelia's note that Dawsey wasn't shy when he asked her to write is an early indicator that Dawsey is nursing feelings for Juliet—which shows that literature can lead to even deeper and more meaningful relationships than just pen pals. Amelia's concerns about Izzy indicate that she's very protective of the Society and will defend them as though they were blood family.



PART ONE, 10TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Juliet returns Amelia's letter and says she's happy to answer her questions. She says that the *Spectator* felt that a lighthearted and funny approach to the bad news would boost morale in London, but Juliet no longer feels the need to be so funny. She assures Amelia that she'd never make fun of someone who loves to read. Juliet says that she's asked the Reverend Simon Simplex and Lady Bella Taunton to provide character references. Bella Taunton doesn't like Juliet, so Juliet feels they'll give a well-rounded assessment of her between them. Juliet also encloses a copy of the biography she wrote about Anne Brontë so Amelia can see that Juliet can write seriously.

Compare Juliet's considered and respectful response to Amelia to the way that Mark treats Juliet: while Mark brushes off Juliet's wishes, Juliet takes Amelia's concerns seriously and does everything in her power to reassure her. This shows that Juliet is kind and empathetic, while it makes Mark look like even more of a bully.



PART ONE, 12TH FEBRUARY, 1946

In a letter to Sophie, Juliet tells her about Mark Reynolds. He invited her to Claridge's and she spent three days worrying about her hair. Fortunately, Juliet's neighbor was able to help her with an elegant updo. Mark himself is dazzling: he's tall, elegant, and appears accustomed to ordering people around, but not in a cruel way. They sat in a private alcove and as soon as the waiters disappeared, Juliet asked him why he sent the flowers with no note. Mark explained that he wanted to make Juliet interested and knew that if he'd written her directly and invited her out, she would've refused. They talked about Victorian literature. Juliet says that there's nothing wrong with Mark: he's not married and he's not a Nazi. They're going dancing tomorrow.

Though Juliet's comment about Mark not being a Nazi is intended to be somewhat sarcastic, it's also worth keeping in mind that not being a Nazi is a very low bar for a romantic interest—there are plenty of people who aren't Nazis who are still cruel and unkind. However, Juliet also recognizes that Mark is an attractive partner because he can offer her a life of security that she hasn't found elsewhere and that she can't guarantee for herself as a single woman, even if she is working.



Lady Bella Taunton writes to Amelia. She says that Juliet's only fault is that she has no common sense. The two of them were Fire Wardens during the Blitz, which meant that they sat on rooftops at night and watched for incendiary bombs. Bella learned that Juliet's parents were farmers and her mother ran a bookshop until they were killed in a car accident. Juliet was sent to live with her great-uncle, ran away twice, and finally, he sent her to boarding school. Instead of going to college afterwards, Juliet lived in a studio with Sophie Stark, worked in bookshops, and wrote a biography on a Brontë sister.

Bella's story reveals that Juliet's birth family hasn't been around to care for her for a number of years—instead, she's had to rely on extended family members like her great-uncle and friends like the Stark family. This suggests that Juliet is likely already aware that a person doesn't need to be related by blood to provide care and support like a family member would, especially given her close relationship with Sophie's family.



During the war, Juliet's "light, frivolous" writing attracted a following and allowed Juliet to purchase a flat in Chelsea, where irresponsible people live. Then, Bella explains that one night in 1941, she and Juliet were present when a bomb dropped on a library. Juliet left her post and tried to rescue books—exactly what she wasn't supposed to do. Juliet was banned from serving as a Fire Warden. This did give Juliet the time to write the *Izzy Bickerstaff* columns, which made Bella cancel her subscription to the paper that ran them due to how tasteless they were. Bella does say that despite Juliet's many faults, she is honest.

Bella's tone suggests that unlike Juliet, she sees no value in chosen family or friends, and isn't sold on the idea that humor can help people get through the war. Her letter indicates that she love rules and regulations, which means she likely doesn't believe that relationships not recognized by the state are "real."



PART ONE, 13TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Reverend Simon Simplex writes to Amelia, telling her that she can trust Juliet. He says that she's stubborn but even as a child, had a shocking amount of integrity. Her parents died when she was twelve and Juliet went to live with Dr. Roderick Ashton. He, unfortunately, had no sense of humor and no imagination, which is why Juliet ran away. Reverend Simplex suggested a boarding school and there, Juliet thrived. She became friends with Sophie and Sidney and that helped immensely. Reverend Simplex closes by saying that Juliet is extremely trustworthy.

In contrast to Bella's letter, Reverend Simplex shows that he values non-familial relationships and believes they can save a person's life. His reasoning for why Juliet ran away also indicates that children require someone to meet them on their level in order to trust them, something that Dr. Ashton wasn't able to do.



PART ONE, 17TH-18TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Susan writes to Juliet, asking about a photo of Juliet dancing with Mark Reynolds that ran in the paper. She suggests that Juliet hide to escape Sidney's wrath, but promises to keep everything a secret if Juliet shares juicy details. In a one-line reply, Juliet denies the existence of the photo.

Susan's excitement confirms that Mark is considered a desirable partner by the wider world, which only makes Juliet question the wisdom of not actually liking him later in the novel.



Amelia writes Juliet and thanks her for the character references. She says that several members should write soon with tales of the Society and then picks up the story of the Society's inception where Dawsey left off. Amelia had no idea what transpired after the roast pig feast until Elizabeth arrived the next morning to see how many books Amelia owned. Elizabeth suggested that they purchase as many books as they could. Fortunately and surprisingly, the Germans encouraged cultural pursuits among the islanders. They hoped to make Guernsey a "Model Occupation," though this didn't last long.

Though Amelia never defines what a model occupation meant to the Germans, she implies that it meant that the Germans wanted to show the world that they were capable of treating their conquered people with kindness and respect. However, the fact that this didn't happen suggests that there are a number of barriers that the Germans faced to doing this.



Elizabeth, Dawsey, and the other dinner guests were forced to pay fines and submit a membership roster for the Society. The Commandant asked if he could attend meetings and Elizabeth assured him he'd be welcome. Then, Elizabeth, Amelia, and Eben bought as many books as they could and casually visited every member and asked them to come choose a book to read for the next meeting. Amelia says that before the Society's inception, she didn't know any members other than Isola and Eben very well. She says that most of the members hadn't read literature before, but soon the meetings became their greatest pleasure. They made up their own rules for discussion and invited others to join them, and Will Thisbee, a cook of questionable skill, was responsible for adding "Potato Peel Pie" to the name.

Amelia's insistence that the Society helped everyone become friends with people they previously didn't know well shows that people are able to form strong and lasting relationships when they connect with people over a shared love of literature. The members seem to come from a variety of different professions and situations, which suggests that literature also allows them to transcend boundaries that society puts up to keep people separate from each other—this is especially true given the number of men and women who join.



PART ONE, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Isola Pribby, the sergeant-at-arms for the Society, writes to Juliet. She praises Juliet for writing a biography of Anne Brontë; Isola loves all the Brontë sisters and their work. She expresses distaste for the girls' father and brother, and suggests that Emily Brontë had to devise Heathcliff to make up for her disappointing male family members. Isola says that she loves the Brontë sisters because she loves stories of passionate encounters, as Isola is single and likes to daydream. She says she didn't begin to like [Wuthering Heights](#) until Cathy's ghost appeared. Now, she thinks that good literature like [Wuthering Heights](#) ruins a person for enjoying bad books.

It's worth keeping in mind that Heathcliff isn't actually a kind or romantic character: he's domineering, controlling, and scary. However, Isola's assessment offers some insight into why a woman like Juliet might go for a man like Mark, who exhibits some similar characteristics to Heathcliff: both men are powerful in their own rights, while women rely on their husbands' power to keep them safe.



Isola tells Juliet about herself. She lives in a small cottage near Amelia's farm and has chickens, a goat, and a parrot. She sells vegetables and elixirs at market every week, and Elizabeth's four-year-old daughter, Kit, helps stir the elixirs. Isola describes herself as ugly and too tall. She offers to write again and to tell Juliet about how reading helped her get through the occupation. She says the only time that reading didn't help was when Elizabeth was caught hiding a Todt laborer and was sent to a prison in France. They're still waiting for Elizabeth to come home.

Isola's mention that literature didn't help soften Elizabeth's arrest makes it clear that while connecting with other people over books can help make life bearable, it's not magic. However, it'll become clearer later that while the books themselves didn't help much, the friendships that the Society formed because of the books were instrumental to their ability to move on with life after Elizabeth was arrested.



PART ONE, 20TH FEBRUARY, 1946

Juliet thanks Dawsey for sending white lilacs, her favorite flower, via Mr. Dilwyn—who explained that he'd do anything for Dawsey because of some soap. She mentions that she's received wonderful letters from Amelia and Isola, and had no idea that the Germans didn't even permit letters to or from Guernsey during the war. She admits she knows nothing of Guernsey and is off to the library to research. Juliet also mentions that she's heard that Elizabeth is still missing in France and offers hope that she'll come home soon. She includes a postscript asking for the story behind the soap for Mr. Dilwyn.

Juliet's response to Dawsey's flowers—especially compared to her thoughts about Mark's flowers—suggests that sending tokens like this is actually more effective when the recipient knows who's sending flowers and more about the sender's intentions. This removes the guesswork for Juliet and allows her to trust Dawsey, as he doesn't try to trick or bully her into accepting his gifts.

**PART ONE, 21ST-26TH FEBRUARY, 1946**

Juliet sends several short letters to Sidney, jokingly asking if he's not responding to her letters because of Mark Reynolds. Finally, Juliet sends a longer letter explaining that she went to Sidney's office, met with Sidney's secretary, Miss Tilley, and discovered that he left for Australia. Miss Tilley coolly promised to forward letters. Juliet says that she knows Sidney is in Australia to see Piers Langley. She reminds Sidney that she is capable of being discreet.

Sidney will later reveal that he's gay; because of this, Juliet's mention that she can be discreet suggests that Piers may be Sidney's love interest. Sidney's secrecy indicates that he knows that a public relationship with Piers wouldn't go over well, given that society still supports heterosexual marriage only.



Juliet says she liked Sidney's old secretary better than Miss Tilley, and explains that she met Mark Reynolds. She says that Mark is perfectly fine and hasn't tried to poach her, and she even thinks that he and Sidney could be friends. She mentions that her *Times* article is going well and says she's made new friends on Guernsey.

Miss Tilly, like Bella Taunton, prefers to stick to rules and regulations rather than treat people like multifaceted and feeling people—which explains why Juliet doesn't like her, given Juliet's desire to treat everyone with kindness and empathy.

**PART ONE, 28TH FEBRUARY, 1946**

Juliet writes to Sophie and says that she's surprised that Sidney went to Australia, but she's happy he's there to take care of Piers. She's also happy that Sidney isn't in London—with him gone, Juliet can spend time with Mark. Sidney doesn't like Mark at all, but Juliet thinks that Sidney is too dramatic. She says that she's having a grand time with Mark; they go out nearly every night and Juliet is struck by the fact that Mark seems untouched by the war. In closing, she asks if Dominic is too old for a jack-in-the-box.

Juliet's ability to brush Sidney's concern off as simple drama illustrates how independent she is, even from people who are her close friends. Juliet later reveals that Dominic is her godson; her query about the jack-in-the-box shows that Juliet takes her role seriously and wants to provide good and age-appropriate gifts.



Juliet writes to Isola, thanking her for her letter. She says that the first time she read [Wuthering Heights](#), the ghost hooked her too. Juliet explains that her teacher had assigned the book over a holiday. She and Sophie whined about it for two days, started reading, and then spent the rest of the holiday working through all of the Brontë sisters' novels. She explains that she chose to write about Anne Brontë because she's the least known, but still an exceptional writer.

Eben Ramsey writes to Juliet. He says that before the war, his family cut tombstones, but now he mostly fishes. Eben says that though he hadn't wanted to ever talk about the war, he trusts Amelia's judgment and wants to help with Juliet's article. He says that before the Society began, most of the members hadn't read since school. Eben selected *Selections from Shakespeare* that first afternoon and though he was initially unenthusiastic about reading, he soon came to believe that Shakespeare wrote for men like him. Eben believes that if he'd read Shakespeare before the occupation, he would've had the words to console himself when the Germans landed.

Eben writes that the Germans arrived on the 30th of June, 1940, after bombing the island. The bombs killed about 30 people. At first, the Germans were generous and full of themselves, as they thought taking London would be easy. However, when it became clear they wouldn't be able to, they became mean. They changed rules constantly. Food soon disappeared and the Society members clung to their books and to each other. By 1944, everyone went to bed by 5pm to keep warm. After D-Day, the Germans no longer received supplies from France, so the soldiers were just as hungry as the locals. They killed house pets and stole from gardens, even though it was illegal. Eben watched one soldier shot for stealing, and comments that hunger makes a person desperate. He says that his grandson, Eli, was evacuated.

PART ONE, 1ST MARCH, 1946

Miss Adelaide Addison writes to Juliet. She says that she laughed when she heard that Juliet wants to write about the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society for the *Times*, as Elizabeth isn't even an Islander: she's a "jumped-up servant" of Sir Ambrose Ivers, a London portrait painter. Sir Ambrose let Elizabeth play in his studio and sent her to the Slade School of Fine Art. His encouragement led Elizabeth to develop a shocking lack of humility. Sir Ambrose, along with Elizabeth and Elizabeth's mother, used to summer on Guernsey and Elizabeth has been a disgraceful terror since then. At the start of the war, Sir Ambrose sent Elizabeth to close up the house on Guernsey and she decided to stay. Miss Adelaide insists that Elizabeth isn't a selfless heroine, and the Society is a scandal and a sham.

The series of events that led Sophie and Juliet to read so many Brontë novels proves Juliet's point from earlier: books have the power to lead a person to more and more books, either as the reader follows the author or follows tidbits from the books themselves.



The decision to write to Juliet specifically to help with her article shows that Eben believes he has a responsibility to help others learn about how reading helped him make it through the war, in the hopes that this realization will help someone else. In other words, Eben wants to bring others into the worldwide "family" of sorts comprised of readers, especially those who love the same books.



Notice that while Eben makes it very clear that the Germans did horrible things to the islanders, they weren't entirely inhuman: hunger made the Germans and the islanders more alike and began to dissolve some of the distance between them. His story about the soldier who was killed for stealing suggests that the Germans may have even had it worse in some ways, given that nobody who writes Juliet says that islanders who stole were killed or even imprisoned.



Miss Adelaide's concerns betray that she believes in rules, order, and legitimacy: Elizabeth is a bad person and subject for the article because she doesn't have blood ties to the island, and she's even more disgraceful because a man who wasn't her father cared for her like he was. Miss Adelaide's concerns aside, notice that Elizabeth still has strong ties to the island: she spent her summers there as a child, which means she likely had a number of friends by the time she chose to stay at the start of the war.



PART ONE, MARCH 2, 1946

Mark writes to Juliet and says that he's obtained opera tickets from his music critic for that evening. Juliet agrees to go, but expresses sadness for the music critic. Mark says that the critic can watch from the standing room and write about the "uplifting effect of opera on the poor."

Mark's comment about his music critic again shows how little he cares for or respects others. He also encourages Juliet to think this way, suggesting that if they were to marry, he'd want her to share all of his thoughts.

**PART ONE, 3RD MARCH, 1946**

Juliet returns Eben's letter. She says that she vowed to not talk about the war, but she suggests that the war is the story of their lives now. Juliet asks about Eli and about the other Guernsey children who were evacuated. Then, she asks how Amelia hid the pig and praises Elizabeth's bravery and quick thinking. Juliet says she hopes Elizabeth will come home soon, and mentions Piers's surprising reappearance in Australia after being shot down in Burma in 1943.

Juliet's mention of Piers's reappearance suggests that the war and its aftereffects don't necessarily make sense; it was fundamentally something horrific that people will spend years trying to understand. Her hopes for Elizabeth's return shows that Juliet is becoming attached to her new friends on Guernsey.

**PART ONE, 4TH MARCH, 1946**

Clovis Fossey writes to Juliet. He says that at first, he didn't want to go to Society meetings. Then, he started courting the Widow Hubert and noticed that she accepted another man's advances. *That* man would brag about using poetry to woo women, so Clovis decided to find poems to woo the Widow Hubert. He found a book of poetry by a Roman named Catullus. Clovis found Catullus's poems horrid since most of them were meant to women. Eben eventually gave Clovis poems by Wilfred Owen, who fought in World War One. Clovis also fought in that war and found the poems very moving. Eventually, Clovis successfully wooed the Widow Hubert and now, she's his wife.

Clovis's experience with literature and the Society shows that the power of literature to bring people together doesn't just stop at friendship; it can actually give a person the tools they need to convince another person to marry them. Further, Clovis also insists that Wilfred Owen's poems in particular gave him the language to describe his experience of the war, which shows that literature can also help a person make sense of their world.



Clovis includes a postscript about a book that Amelia lent him, *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, 1892-1935*. Yeats selected the included poems and deliberately chose to exclude poems from World War One; he felt those poems were about "passive suffering." Clovis finds this outrageous.

The outrage that Clovis feels stems from his recognition that by excluding World War One poems, the book is shutting out a number of potential readers who may have connected with those poems, thereby depriving them of the power of literature.



PART ONE, 10TH MARCH, 1946

Eben responds to Juliet. He explains that Eli is his daughter Jane's son, but Jane and her newborn baby died in the hospital when the Germans bombed the island. Eli's father died in north Africa during the war. Eli left the island with thousands of other children. Eben received postcards about Eli and though he hated to do it, he sent Eli postcards with news of his parents' deaths. When the war ended, all the children came home together. Eli's "parents" during his time away sent him home with a letter telling Eben about all the things he missed. Now, Eli helps on the farm and is learning to carve wood. There's little wood to practice with as the islanders cut down most of the **trees** for firewood, but they're planting more.

Eben explains that the Germans were particular about farm animals and kept strict count of live animals, milk production, and fish. When a litter of piglets was born, an officer would count them all. If a piglet died, a farmer was given a death certificate. Amelia got her pig from Will Thisbee. One of Will's pigs died, so he got the death certificate and then took the body to Amelia. She hid one of her live pigs and called the officer to deal with "her" dead pig. They passed the carcass around until it began to stink. Amelia called Dawsey to kill the pig because he has a way with the creatures and can kill them quietly.

The feast was magnificent, and Eben says that Elizabeth was brave. He says that Elizabeth and Jane became friends when they were girls. In 1940, Elizabeth stayed on the island to be with Jane, who was on bed rest for her pregnancy. Elizabeth played with Eli until they evacuated the children, and she's the one who got Eli ready to go and sent him off. Then, she and Eben sat by Jane until Jane and the baby died. Together, she and Eben watched the bombs fall, thankful that Eli was away. Now, Eben is glad to care for Kit in Elizabeth's absence.

PART ONE, 12TH MARCH, 1946

Dawsey tells Juliet about the soap he gave Mr. Dilwyn for Mrs. Dilwyn. Near the midway point of the occupation, soap became scarce and what people did get was ineffective. Some women, especially Mrs. Dilwyn, were very upset about this. One day, a pig died of milk fever and Dawsey acquired the carcass. Nobody wanted to eat it, so Dawsey and Booker decided to try to make soap. They gave it to the Society ladies as gifts.

The very fact that children like Eli were cared for so kindly by families in Europe reinforces the novel's assertion that people don't need to be blood relations in order to care for others. Eli's family in England clearly recognized that having to send Eli away was very difficult for his parents, hence the letter. In doing this, they show that they respect the ties that Eli has to his birth family and to Guernsey—they don't want to take that away from him—and instead, want to be part of Eli's wide extended chosen family.



It's worth noting that hiding pigs like this was likely very dangerous; this indicates that because the people of Guernsey were so hungry, they were willing to take risks to get food that they wouldn't normally. It increases the sense of desperation surrounding food in the novel and reminds the reader that everyone, islanders and Germans alike, was hungry.



The way that Eben frames it, he feels that caring for Kit in the present is how he can continue to show Elizabeth that he values her connection to his blood family and will treat her daughter like family. Elizabeth demonstrates her skill at leading others when she sends Eli off for Jane; it's an early example of Elizabeth's ability to make people feel safe and secure.



Dawsey mentions that he's working at the port and the quarry. Amelia and Kit came for supper yesterday and Kit was bright and talkative as usual. He asks Juliet if she knows much about children. Dawsey says caring for Kit was easier when she was a baby, though it's more fun now that she can talk. He feels like he can't keep up with her questioning though, as he, for example, doesn't know what a mongoose looks like.

Adelaide Addison writes Juliet again. She feels she must tell the whole truth: the Society is raising the "bastard" child of Elizabeth and her German lover, Captain Christian Hellman. Adelaide assures Juliet she wouldn't call Elizabeth a "Jerry-bag;" Elizabeth didn't go out with *any* German soldiers who offered gifts like other "hussies" on the island, but the truth is bad enough. In April of 1942, Elizabeth gave birth. Eben, Isola, Amelia, and Dawsey attended the birth. Christian wasn't there; he'd been sent to the continent not long before. Adelaide says she knew this would happen and told Elizabeth so.

Adelaide says she's not proud of knowing these things, as being proud wouldn't be Christian. However, a year after Kit's birth, Elizabeth sheltered an escaped prisoner and was sent to a prison on the continent. Amelia took over caring for Kit, but the other Society members care for her in turn and "take her out like a library book."

PART ONE, 20TH-23RD MARCH, 1946

Sidney sends Juliet a telegram explaining that he'll be delayed; he fell off a horse and broke his leg. He says that Piers is nursing him. Juliet then writes Sophie, imploring her to not run off to Australia to take care of Sidney. She reminds Sophie that Sidney is a horrendous patient and clearly doesn't want them there. Juliet says she's going to think about her new book idea in honor of Sidney.

Juliet turns the subject to Mark. She reprimands Sophie for asking if she's in love with Mark—she insists that Sophie needs to be more careful if she's going to snoop, and ask roundabout questions instead of direct ones. Juliet throws out facts about Mark such as his favorite author and favorite color, but says she cannot answer if she's in love with Mark. Juliet says she's getting tired of the constant nights out.

Like Juliet, Dawsey is also very interested in how to best care for a child. This indicates that both of them believe that it's best if they know something about how to interact with children, since both Dawsey and Juliet are in caretaker roles for Kit and Dominic.



"Jerry-bag" rudely refers to women who consorted with the Nazis during World War Two. In Adelaide's assessment of the "hussies" and "Jerry-bags" on Guernsey, she indicates a belief that those women were entirely wrong to sleep with Germans—even though, as other characters reveal, plenty of young women fed their families because their German lovers gave them food.



Adelaide's displeasure at Kit's familial arrangement indicates that she also believes that families should look a certain way, and a group of friends caring for a child isn't right. She puts blood relations over kind and caring friends, in other words.



Because Juliet recognizes that Sidney is perfectly happy with Piers, she does her best to take care of Sidney by respecting his wishes and making sure that others do the same. This also allows Sidney to become closer to Piers and possibly, bring Piers back into the fold of the chosen family.



Juliet's recognition that she's not enjoying so many nights out tells her that a life with Mark isn't something she'd actually enjoy, as a number of character simply that Mark wouldn't stop taking Juliet out just because they were married. Her lack of commitment should also tell her that she's not in love with him.



PART ONE, 25TH MARCH, 1946

Juliet writes to Dawsey and mentions that she's received two letters from Miss Adelaide Addison and others from Isola and Clovis. Because of those letters, her article is coming along well. Juliet shifts topics and says she'd like to more about children. She explains that she's a godmother to a three-year-old named Dominic, and is always shocked by how fast he grows. She explains what a mongoose looks like.

When Juliet explains what a mongoose looks like, she indirectly begins to care for Kit as well as Dominic by nurturing her curiosity and teaching her about the world. In this way, she's able to begin the process of integrating herself into Kit and Dawsey's lives.

**PART ONE, 27TH MARCH, 1946**

John Booker begins a letter to Juliet. He explains that he only reads one book over and over: *The Letters of Seneca*. Seneca and the Society kept him from the life of a drunk. From 1940-1944, he pretended to be his employer, Lord Tobias Penn-Piers, who fled Guernsey when the Germans bombed it. He doesn't remember much of the night that he, Dawsey, and Elizabeth were stopped after the pig roast, as he was drunk. Booker says that Seneca's book is comprised of letters to imaginary friends telling them how to behave. He says that they're witty and are applicable even in the modern day.

For John, the Society kept him connected to other people so that he couldn't waste his life away drinking alone. With this, the novel again holds up literature as one of the best ways to make friends. However, the fact that Booker only reads one book makes it clear that making friends thanks to books isn't contingent on reading many different things; one book is enough to form a connection.



Booker writes that at the start of the war, Lord Tobias purchased a manor on Guernsey and moved there with his wife. Booker was his valet and supervised the outfitting of the house, including the stocking of the wine cellar. However, as the finishing touches were put on the house, the Germans bombed Guernsey. Lord Tobias took as many of his possessions as possible and left the island. Booker still had the key to the wine cellar, so he stayed.

Like Elizabeth, Booker isn't a Guernsey local but he still managed to become part of a robust and strong community through the Society. This begins to challenge people like Adelaide, who insist that not being a native of Guernsey is a mark against someone and a reason why they're not worthy of consideration.



Booker worked his way through the cellar uninterrupted until September, when Elizabeth and Amelia warned him that the Germans wanted to register all Jews on the island. Elizabeth knew that Booker's mother was Jewish, and she'd come up with a plan: that John impersonate Lord Tobias. Elizabeth even offered to paint John's portrait as a sixteenth century noble to complete the effect. Two weeks later, when the Germans came to try to take control of the house, they bought the act and let him live in the gatekeeper's cottage. Booker had already found friends in the Society by the time he ran out of wine, and the meetings made the occupation bearable. Now, he refuses to read anyone but Seneca and his experience as Lord Tobias has led him to acting.

Once again, Elizabeth shows that she cares deeply for the people on Guernsey regardless of whether or not she's related to them or even knows them well. This indicates that Elizabeth recognizes the humanity of all people, not just those she calls family. Booker suggests that without the Society or wine, he might not have made it through the war. Again, this speaks to the power of the Society's friendships to keep people alive during difficult times.



PART ONE, 31ST MARCH, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney and Piers and includes copies of all the letters she's received from Guernsey. She says she's in love with Dawsey and Eben, wants Amelia to adopt her, and would like to adopt Isola. She writes that she spends all her time waiting for the post to come and asks Sidney if he thinks there's enough material in the letters for her next book.

The ways in which Juliet talks about Dawsey, Eben, Amelia, and Isola betray that she already wants to experience familial relationships with them; it's now a matter of fostering their relationships and making that happen.



PART ONE, 2ND APRIL, 1946

Dawsey writes to Juliet that according to Adelaide Addison, having fun is the worst sin. He explains that during the war, there were few eligible local men and the ones around were scraggly. The Germans, on the other hand, were glamorous and rich. Some women dated Germans in order to feed their families. Dawsey says that others befriended the Germans because they were bored. Some people thought that greeting Germans was conspiring with the enemy, but Dawsey found that Christian Hellman was a good man.

Dawsey's willingness to understand that people became friends with the Germans for a variety of reasons shows that he believes that all people are multifaceted and complex; while some of the Germans may have been terrible, it's clear that plenty of others were kind, at least to women who agreed to sleep with them.



By late 1941, there was no salt. The Germans decided to get salt for everyone by boiling seawater. This plan failed, as there wasn't enough wood to boil the water away, so people started cooking soups in seawater. Dawsey noticed that there were people who couldn't haul buckets home, so he acquired a pram and two wine casks and began carrying water to those who couldn't fetch it themselves. One November day, Christian helped Dawsey lift one full barrel and then helped him lug the second up the cliff. They dropped it and somehow found it funny.

Notice that in the case of the Germans' plan to get salt, they devise a plan that will help both themselves and the islanders. This suggests that not everything about their occupation was unfeeling and cruel, even if the system they came up with couldn't actually serve everyone effectively.



Christian noticed that Dawsey dropped his Charles Lamb book and mentioned that he loved the author. As they parted, Dawsey offered to let Christian borrow a book and with that, they became friends. Christian often helped Dawsey carry water and they'd talk. Dawsey soon discovered that Christian and Elizabeth knew each other. In early 1942, the Germans sent Christian to work in a hospital, but his ship sank. Dawsey marvels that Charles Lamb helped him find friends like Juliet and Christian.

When Dawsey attributes his friendships with Juliet and with Christian to Charles Lamb, it shows that Dawsey believes that literature has the power to connect people despite living miles apart or vastly differing political ideologies. In other words, it helps him to humanize both of his friends, as their love of Lamb helps Dawsey see that they have feelings and care for others.



PART ONE, 4TH APRIL, 1946

Juliet writes to Amelia that the sun is out; she's trying to avoid looking at the rubble so she can pretend London is beautiful. She mentions Dawsey's letter telling her about Christian and laments that the war goes on and on. In closing, Juliet writes that she's watching a man paint the door of his house and the man is letting two little boys help him—possibly, evidence that there is an end to the war.

For Juliet, the children represent the future and the end of the war. Especially since these little boys are helping to paint a door and make London beautiful again after the Blitz, this suggests that the children in England will be a major force in helping the country recover.



PART ONE, APRIL 5, 1946

Mark writes to Juliet, annoyed that she doesn't want to go to a play with him. He says he'll do anything to get her out of the house on a date. Juliet writes back and invites him to the British Museum with her, as she has an appointment in the Reading Room. He rudely refuses, tells her to come have lunch with him, and says he's done being nice.

When Mark rudely refuses Juliet's invitation and won't accept her desire to stay in, it again indicates that he doesn't respect her as an individual capable of making decisions. Instead, he'd like to control her and dictate everything she does.

**PART ONE, 7TH APRIL, 1946**

Will Thisbee introduces himself to Juliet; he's an ironmonger and enjoys inventing "labor-saving devices." He writes that at first, he didn't have any interest in reading. It wasn't until Isola gave him *Past and Present* by Thomas Carlyle that he learned to love it. Though Will wasn't a religious man, when he got to a passage in the book about the soul, he finally came to conclusions about religion: namely, that he could decide for himself whether he has a soul or not.

Will's newfound interest in religion thanks to the Society offers another perspective on how literature can help people make sense of their lives and provide different angles on constant problems. For Will, he gained a sense of purpose and relief because he now knows where he stands in terms of religion.



This stirred up a great argument at the next meeting and in particular, riled Thompson Stubbins. Stubbins used to be a London psychiatrist but at one Freud Society dinner, he suggested out that Freud came up with the idea of the ego to make people question their souls. He was banned from the Freud Society and moved to Guernsey. Stubbins often rides with Will to discuss religion. Will invites Juliet to Guernsey and says that she's welcome to ride with them.

Past and Present also helped Will make friends with someone he wouldn't have been friends with otherwise, again indicating that literature is capable of transgressing all sorts of boundaries and differences in order to bring people together.

**PART ONE, 8TH APRIL, 1946**

A woman named Clara Saussey writes to Juliet about her experience with the Literary Society. She says that she read from her own book of recipes and it was a disaster. She read about roasting pigs and about cakes, and the audience threatened her. The following day, Eben visited to remind Clara that most of the Society members only had turnips or potatoes to eat, but Clara refused to forgive them for their rudeness. She insists that her recipes were "poetry in a pan" and wants Juliet to make it clear that the Society only began because of the occupation.

Clara's assessment of the Society falls more in line with Adelaide's; she wants to show Juliet that the Society isn't as welcoming as others make it out to be. However, this is because Clara herself offended the group by refusing to read the room and not read about food during a time when nearly everyone was starving, suggesting that Clara is somewhat self-centered.



PART ONE, 10TH APRIL, 1946

Amelia returns Juliet's letter and agrees that it seems like the war continues to drag on. She recounts how, after her son died, people would tell her that life goes on. Amelia says that this is a lie; *death* goes on. She wonders if the sorrow will end and if happiness will ever return to the island. In small ways, life is returning to normal: Amelia can now walk along the cliffs, there are no mines on the beaches, and if she looks out to **sea**, she doesn't have to look at the cement **bunkers** or the **treeless** land. She hopes that soon, vines will grow over the bunkers.

Amelia says she'll never forget how those **bunkers** were built by the Todt slave workers. Hitler wanted the Channel Islands fortified, so he sent forced laborers. Most of the workers arrived in 1942. The Germans housed them in pens and though they sometimes let the workers accept food from islanders, they beat the Todt workers for accepting food just as often. Amelia says she's recently learned that the Germans intended to work and starve the Todt laborers until they died. Children sometimes went down to the pens and gave the laborers food through the fence. On Sundays, the workers had a half-day off. Most of them stood in the sewage in the **sea**, hoping to catch the swarming fish. In closing, Amelia invites Juliet to Guernsey.

For Amelia, the lack of trees and the new bunkers are constant reminders that the war happened and wrought all sorts of damage on the island. However, like Juliet, she's beginning to realize that life will go on, even as these reminders of the war will persist for years to come. Essentially, the war will become a part of her; she'll never be able to simply forget it.



The Todt workers add a new layer to the hierarchy on Guernsey. They become a "class" of people who are even lower than the islanders, which means that there will likely be some islanders who, in order to curry favor with the Germans, will dehumanize the Todt workers. As far as Amelia is concerned, the bunkers are a direct representation of the thousands of people who died to build them and therefore, can never be beautiful.



PART ONE, 11TH APRIL, 1946

Juliet writes Dawsey about her most recent letter from Adelaide, in which Adelaide incredulously recounted going to find Dawsey to help her distribute the parish magazine and found him reading Charles Lamb in the hay. Juliet asks why Adelaide is so horrible. She says she enjoys the image of Dawsey reading in the hay, as she used to do the same thing as a child.

Susan writes to Sidney and begs him to come home: Charlie Stephens has started coming into the office, but she believes the effort will kill him. In other news, various employees are running amok and she advises that Sidney fire Miss Tilley. She also mentions that she's seen Juliet and Mark out on a date. It looked very romantic and though Juliet invited Susan to join them, Mark looked very upset that she interrupted.

Now that Juliet has heard about how and where Dawsey reads, she's able to see that the two of them are very alike and share even more interests. With this, they continue to develop their relationship through their shared love of reading.



Susan's assessment of Mark is telling: he doesn't want to have to acknowledge that Juliet is her own person with her own friends. This reinforces that Mark's intentions are to eventually control Juliet, not treat her as an equal partner.



PART ONE, 12TH APRIL, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney and Piers and tells them that she's been spending all her time researching Guernsey. She discovered one travel book on the island. The author is very unserious and wrote poems about the flowers, the cows, the "simple folk of the country parishes," and the **sea**. The co-author seems to hate Guernsey and have less of an inclination towards poetry. She wrote about the island's history and was incensed that the Channel Islands technically belong England, but don't pay taxes and don't have to listen to England's government.

In the case of Guernsey itself, the sea means that it's able to exist independently from either England or France, which it's geographically closer to. This in turn offers the people of Guernsey more freedoms to dictate their own lives. In the case of the war, this meant that Guernseymen weren't conscripted like other men in England; they joined the war effort voluntarily or not at all.



PART ONE, 15TH APRIL, 1946

Dawsey returns Juliet's letter and says he doesn't know why Adelaide is so horrible. He says the Charles Lamb biography arrived. Dawsey has already read it once, but is going to read it again. He feels as though Lamb's words making him feel more at home in London than he does on Guernsey. Dawsey says he cannot imagine Lamb's experience of caring for his sister Mary after her mental break. Dawsey wonders at how anxiety-inducing caring for her must've been. Dawsey says he writes like this to show Juliet how thankful he is that she procured him the book. He closes by asking Juliet about her childhood on a farm and mentions that Kit is now interested in snakes.

The comment that Lamb's writing makes Dawsey feel at home in London suggests another way in which literature acts as a connecting force: people can develop relationships with places they read about, not just people. Juliet also proves this true through her letters with Guernsey's residents—which pique her interest in the island—and the travel book she read about Guernsey.



PART ONE, 18TH APRIL, 1946

Juliet responds to Dawsey; she's thrilled to be able to talk about Charles Lamb with him. She writes that she believes Lamb's sorrow made him a better writer and commends Lamb's love for other people.

Juliet's insistence that Lamb's love of people made him a better writer reinforces the novel's assertion that writing helps people connect with others, both as readers and as writers.



Isola writes to Juliet with some "highly personal" questions. She says that Dawsey told her not to ask them, but she believes that being a man, Dawsey has different ideas of what makes a question rude. Isola's questions have to do with Juliet's appearance—how old she is and what color her hair is—and where Juliet lives. She also asks if Juliet has a serious suitor and if she would like to visit Guernsey.

The invitation to Guernsey is proof that Juliet's strong relationships with her pen pals are indeed as strong as she'd like to think they are. Similarly, Isola's shift to personal questions means that she's now interested in Juliet as a person after speaking to her about books.



PART ONE, 20TH APRIL, 1946

Juliet answers Isola's questions. She's 33 and has chestnut hair that's naturally curly. She says she used to live by the river, but now, she lives in a borrowed flat away from the river. Her old flat was bombed about a year ago but fortunately, Juliet wasn't home. Sidney took Juliet to see the rubble and Juliet could see her destroyed books. Sidney was able to retrieve a crystal paperweight engraved with *Carpe Diem*, but that was the only thing she was able to save.

When Sidney saves the paperweight for Juliet, he demonstrates his love for her and shows her that he values her desires, even if it's just to save one memento of her old life. Juliet's choice to answer Isola's questions suggests that she's also ready to take their friendship a step further away from just books.



Juliet writes about her childhood. She tells Isola about her parents' death and about living with her great-uncle, Dr. Ashton. She says she was bitter and awful to him and never got to apologize, as he died when she was seventeen. Dr. Ashton sent Juliet to boarding school when she was thirteen, where Juliet promptly decided to hate Sophie Stark. Sophie was very kind and when Juliet spat that she'd run away as soon as she figured out the trains, Sophie brought Juliet a train schedule. The Starks became close friends after that.

After school, Juliet and Sophie rented a flat in London and worked in a bookshop while Juliet wrote at night. Then, Juliet won an essay contest by writing about her fear of chickens. When the war broke out, the *Spectator* hired her to write the columns "**Izzy Bickerstaff** Goes to War." Sophie married Alexander and had her son, Dominic. Juliet says she does have a suitor who's charming, but says she's not used to him yet. She wonders if she prefers suitors in books. She says she'd like to visit Guernsey.

PART ONE, 21ST APRIL, 1946

Eli writes Juliet to thank her for blocks of wood she sent. He asks how Juliet found so many kinds and shapes of wood and says that the wood came at just the right time: Kit wants him to carve her a ferret. He asks Juliet if she has an animal she'd like a carving of and offers to carve her a mouse.

PART ONE, 22ND APRIL, 1946

Eben also sends Juliet a letter of thanks for Eli's wood. He writes about the evacuation of the Guernsey children. The parents were in an awful predicament when they had to decide whether to send their kids away to keep them safe. Nobody knew if the Germans would actually come, but there was also no guarantee that the Germans wouldn't invade England. When France fell to Hitler, it became clear both that England was next and that England couldn't help Guernsey. The United States arranged ships to take children away, but only gave parents a day to prepare. Jane was adamant that Eli evacuate.

Sophie also shows that she's willing to help Juliet with whatever she needs, even something as silly as a train timetable. The fact that this leads to Juliet's 20-year relationship with the Stark family again indicates that one's chosen family can be even more supportive than one's birth family.



For Juliet, the "suitors in books" provide her a counterpoint to Mark and though she doesn't say what books she's referring to, they likely show her that men don't have to be as overbearing and rude as Mark is. With this, she can begin to compare Mark to others and decide if he's truly right for her or not.



Eli's thank-you note shows that like the adults around him, he also takes part in caring for Kit by carving her toys when she asks. In this way, he acts like an older brother or cousin and becomes part of Kit's family.



In the case of the lead-up to Guernsey's occupation, its relative independence and freedom actually becomes a bad thing: it means that England has less incentive to protect or try to keep it. By choosing to send their children to England, parents were forced to trust that complete strangers would care for their children as though they were family.



On the 19th and 20th of June, the U.S. took children and mothers with babies to England. The small children were excited; the older ones knew better. The authorities asked that the children be dropped off at the school so that kids wouldn't cry saying goodbye on the pier. Elizabeth and Eben walked Eli to the school and Elizabeth helped get the children ready. On his way back to Jane, Eben remembered when, as a small child, Eli had seen a lone shoe in the path, commented that it was all alone, and remarked that *he* never felt alone. Eben says he's asked Isola to write about what happened at the school, as Elizabeth slapped Adelaide. Juliet promptly sends Isola a telegram asking for details.

Eli's childhood musings about the lone shoe show that even at a very young age, Eli felt very connected to his family and his community, as he recognized that he was never truly alone. Eben presumably hopes that this outlook will help Eli bond with the family that cares for him in England and instead, will help him see it as a way to expand his community and his chosen family even further than Guernsey.



PART ONE, 24TH APRIL, 1946

Isola is happy to tell Juliet about Elizabeth slapping Adelaide. The U.S. wanted to minimize the stress and tears, so they had volunteers walk kids to the ships instead of parents. Isola had one group of kids, Elizabeth was playing games with another, and Adelaide had a group singing a hymn. Then, Adelaide told her charges to pray for their parents and to be good so that their parents, if they died, could look down on their children from Heaven and be proud of them. The children were distraught. Elizabeth told Adelaide to be quiet, slapped her, and threw her out.

By volunteering to care for the kids, Isola, Adelaide, and Elizabeth share the emotional burden of having to send the children away to an uncertain future. This is true even though Adelaide botches her attempt, though when Elizabeth is successful in throwing her out, it indicates that people can take control of who exactly is a part of their chosen family and cull as needed.



The shock of seeing Elizabeth slap Adelaide seemed to snap the kids out of their fear and sadness. Isola says that it was a sad day and she's glad she didn't have children. She tells Juliet that she's glad that Juliet had the Starks when she was a child, and says that Clovis Fossey wants to read her winning essay about chickens. Isola says she also hates chickens and that the Society would love for Juliet to visit.

Because Isola wasn't a mother, the pain wasn't nearly as bad for her. Instead, she was able to help biological mothers carry the pain of having to say goodbye to the children by volunteering for this.



PART ONE, 26TH APRIL, 1946

Dawsey writes to Juliet that his job at the quarry is over and he's taking care of Kit for a while. She's currently whispering to herself under the table. Dawsey explains that Kit doesn't look like Elizabeth, but she's just as strong-willed as Elizabeth. Elizabeth insisted that Dawsey learn about babies and used to say that Dawsey was fated to be a father. Dawsey says that Kit knows her father is dead, but they still hope that Elizabeth will return. They've recently learned that Sir Ambrose Ivers died in London. Elizabeth inherited his estate, so solicitors are looking for her. Mr. Dilwyn is trying to track her down. Dawsey tells Juliet that the Society is going to the theater to see John Booker and Clovis Fossey in [Julius Caesar](#).

Dawsey's assessment of what traits Kit inherited from her mother shows that even when there are blood relationships involved, that doesn't mean that family looks a particular way—it acts a particular way, in his opinion. This is what allows him and the rest of the Society to think of themselves as a family and as parents to Kit, as they all act like a loving and caring family despite the unconventional makeup.



PART ONE, APRIL 30, 1946

Mark sends a note to Juliet explaining that he managed to bully his way through the slow line at customs. He asks to see Juliet and says he needs to talk to her. Juliet suggests they eat a sausage at her flat, but he wants to go out. Juliet makes him say "please" before he agrees.

Again, Mark's tone demonstrates a lack of concern for anyone but himself and a desire to control and bully Juliet. Making Mark say "please" first indicates that Juliet isn't giving in without a fight.

**PART ONE, 1ST MAY, 1946**

Juliet writes to Mark and says that she didn't refuse, she just wanted time to think—but says that Mark was too busy ranting about Sidney and Guernsey to notice. She points out that they've only known each other for two months and after almost marrying a man once before, she's not willing to make a mistake again. She insists they don't actually know each other well enough to be married.

Notice that Juliet refers to marrying Mark as a mistake already—this tells the reader that Juliet will go on to say no, even if she dithers in the moment. It's also clear that Mark is jealous of Juliet's life that doesn't include him, which means he's jealous of her work in particular.



Juliet writes to Sophie about her proposal. She says that Mark offered her a huge diamond ring and is very upset that she didn't say yes straight away. He became convinced that Juliet was actually in love with Sidney. Juliet says they were at his flat by then, and Mark started yelling about Sidney, Guernsey, and pen pals. Finally, Juliet started to cry, which made Mark feel bad. Juliet almost agreed to marry him, but thought about spending her life crying in order to make him treat her kindly and decided not to. They fought for a few hours and as Mark helped her into the car to go home, he called her an idiot.

Mark recognizes that he's a desirable bachelor: he's rich, powerful, and leads a glamorous life. He knows that for plenty of women who value security above all else, he'll be able to offer them everything they want. Juliet, however, is more interested in her work (Guernsey, in Mark's rant) and her life outside of a possible marriage than she is in the kind of security Mark could offer, hence her decision to say no.



Juliet suggests that maybe Mark is right. She asks if Sophie remembers the romance novels they used to read as girls and one of the dashing men from those novels. Juliet says that Mark is just like that character: tall, handsome, and other women talk about him all the time. Juliet writes that she has a nagging feeling that he's not right for her, especially since he's trying to keep her from going to Guernsey to write a book about the Occupation.

Juliet's wondering if Mark is right that she's an idiot speaks to the power of the cultural narratives of the era: Juliet understands that she doesn't want what's considered normal and acceptable and is therefore turning down an acceptable life path in favor of unknowns, but freedom nonetheless.

**PART ONE, 3RD MAY, 1946**

Juliet writes to Sidney, begging him to send her to Guernsey. She says she's read as much as she can about the island and conducted some interviews with soldiers in London, but there's only so much she can learn by reading. Juliet says she wants to learn the stories of the people who were there and possibly write a book about it all.

Juliet's desire to go to Guernsey indicates that while reading can connect people, the books themselves only go so far. In order to build a true friendship, it's necessary to get to know others more intimately than just through books.



PART ONE, 10TH AND 11TH MAY, 1946

Sidney sends a cable giving Juliet his blessing to go to Guernsey, but asks if Mark will let her go. Juliet responds that Mark doesn't get a say.

Juliet's sass speaks to both her confidence and trust in Sidney, as well as her desire to be independent.



PART ONE, 13TH MAY, 1946

Amelia writes Juliet; she's thrilled that Juliet is coming to Guernsey. The entire Society is excited and Isola has been asking everyone she knows to send Juliet letters about the occupation. They've decided to let Juliet rent Elizabeth's cottage. Mr. Dilwyn had already planned to rent the property to provide income for Kit. Amelia also shares that they've found records of Elizabeth in France, but none in Germany.

Isola's enthusiasm again speaks to the Society's belief that others will find their story inspiring and that it might help, just as books themselves helped them all make it through the occupation.



Amelia says she feels obligated to look for any German relations of Kit's, but she feels as though Christian was a rare good man. She doesn't want to send Kit to a foreign land, as the Society is the only family Kit knows. Amelia explains that Elizabeth kept Kit's paternity a secret from the authorities because she feared they'd take Kit, though Amelia wonders if telling them this would've saved Elizabeth from the concentration camp.

As far as Amelia is concerned, it's better for Kit to be raised by people who she doesn't share blood with than be raised by blood relatives who possibly hold horrific ideas about other people. This is one of the novel's strongest endorsements of chosen family, and shows that blood family can actually be dangerous or bad.



Turning to a happier subject, Amelia says that the Society enjoyed Juliet's article in the *Times*. They all loved her take on the Society. Will Thisbee wants to bake a potato peel pie and throw a party for Juliet when she arrives. Privately, Amelia wishes that Will would stop cooking. She tells Juliet that they'll welcome her whenever she arrives and suggests that she come by the mail boat, as the **sea** makes the island even more beautiful.

Amelia's comment about the sea shows that she believes the sea and the freedom it affords the island is an integral part of the island itself. It helps Guernsey develop an identity and a reputation entirely separate from the rest of England.



PART ONE, 14TH MAY, 1946

Isola tells Juliet that she's getting the house ready for Juliet's arrival and has told all her friends to write about their experiences. Then, Isola recounts seeing the invading Germans for the first time. Elizabeth was with Isola and she suggested they go stare at the Germans. When they got down to St. Peter Port, they found the Germans shopping. Many were acting like tourists. Then, a regiment of marching soldiers turned onto the street. A man who'd fought in World War One cried and after a few minutes, Elizabeth suggested they get a drink.

The juxtaposition of the shopping Germans with the marching ones reinforces that not all Germans act a particular way: like the islanders, they hold differing thoughts and ideals regardless of their participation in the German army. The marching Germans, however, impressed upon the islanders that their cruelty was going to rule, not their kindness.



PART ONE, WEDNESDAY EVENING

A man who identifies himself as An Animal Lover writes to Juliet. He says that he's a member of the Society but rather than tell Juliet about books, he'd like to share what the islanders did to their pets. Thousands of people evacuated and left their pets behind to roam the streets. Then, the U.S. issued an order: there wasn't going to be enough food for people, so families could keep one pet and the rest would be put to sleep. It took two days to kill and bury truckloads and truckloads of pets.

An Animal Lover extends his ability to view other people as worthy of life unequivocally to animals, which makes him view this as a disgustingly inhumane act. As far as he's concerned, these euthanized house pets are some of the most tragic unspoken deaths of the war, especially since nobody else will tell this story.



PART ONE, 15TH MAY, 1946

A teenager named Sally Ann Frobisher writes to Juliet about having scabies during the war. She had it on her scalp and the doctor insisted she go to the hospital to have her head shaved and the tops of the scabs cut off. Fortunately for Sally, her nurse was Elizabeth, who was kind and funny. Elizabeth told Sally the truth that the treatment was going to hurt, but she turned the process into a game. That evening, Elizabeth came to visit with a beautiful scarf to wrap around Sally's head. When Sally asked Elizabeth if she was going to ever be pretty, Elizabeth assured her that she would look like Nefertiti in a few years.

In dealing with Sally, Elizabeth again demonstrates her ability to be kind to everyone and say exactly the right thing to make a person feel seen and heard. The fact that Sally feels compelled to write to Juliet about Elizabeth and this experience shows that Elizabeth's ability was extremely important and, like literature did for the Society, her care and compassion made the war bearable for non-members.



Micah Daniels, another islander, writes to Juliet. He says that a fancy restaurant in Paris wouldn't come to close to the Vega box he received from the Red Cross in December of 1944. The ship came six times to deliver boxes of food, as there was none on the island. Prior to the Vega, Churchill hadn't allowed ships to deliver food as he didn't want the Germans to have it—by then, the Germans were just as hungry as the islanders. Micah lists all the things that were in his box, including butter, tea, salmon, cheese, and soap.

Churchill's decision to not send supplies to Guernsey suggests that he continued to view the islands as pointless in terms of the war, despite the fact that Englishmen were dying there—Churchill decided they weren't human enough when he refused to help. In this way, Churchill is implicated for his cruelty during the war, just as the Nazis are.



Micah says he has one more thing to say and that "honor due is honor due." The Germans unloaded the boxes from the Vega and stole nothing for themselves. The Commandant threatened to shoot any soldier who stole from the boxes and instead, gave his men teaspoons to scrape up any spills on the road. Micah says the soldiers were pitiful. He saw one soldier kill and eat a cat once. Micah had laughed and felt sick to his stomach, and now, he's ashamed of his reaction.

Micah likely laughed at the soldier because, for the first time in five years, Micah felt superior to the Germans—but now, he recognizes that the soldier was starving and, above all, human and desperate. In other words, the man was just as deserving of food as anyone else, no matter which side he fought for.



PART ONE, 16TH MAY, 1946

Booker writes Juliet again. He explains that he'll welcome her when she arrives, but he can't talk about his experience of the war—he shakes when he does. Booker explains that while he was pretending to be Lord Tobias, Lisa Jenkins was dating German soldiers and specifically, Sergeant Willy Gurtz. In 1944, Lisa discovered a photo of the real Lord Tobias in a magazine. She passed the photo to Willy, who passed it to the Commandant. The Germans sent John to the camp at Neuengamme.

At the camp, Booker was sent into fields to clear unexploded bombs. He kept telling himself that he was still alive, but in truth, he and the other prisoners weren't: they were just surviving. Booker was there for a year before the Germans shipped him to Belsen. There, he dug pits in which to burn and bury the dead: the Germans' attempt to hide the carnage from the approaching Allies and the USSR. Fortunately, Booker was only there for a few days before the British arrived. Those soldiers wept at what they saw and later, burned Belsen to the ground.

Booker says that he learned that the site of Belsen is now a refugee camp. He can't quite stomach the land being used for a good purpose and feels it should be empty forever. With this, Booker concludes his account, but offers one more recollection of watching bomber planes headed for London with Elizabeth. The Germans told the islanders that London was gone, but one night, they overheard a German radio playing the London BBC station: London still stood.

Dawsey writes Juliet and lists how everyone on Guernsey is preparing for her arrival. He's been trying to keep Isola alive, as Isola has been up on the roof of Elizabeth's cottage looking for loose tiles.

PART ONE, 19TH MAY, 1946

Juliet responds to Dawsey and says that she'll be there in two days. She'll arrive on the evening mail boat and will wear a red wool cape so Isola can recognize her. She's very excited to meet everyone in Guernsey.

Remember that the women who dated German soldiers often did so to feed their families; while Lisa's actions were inarguably awful, she likely told on Booker so that she herself had a better chance at surviving the war. This illustrates how desperation can turn former neighbors against each other as they try to survive.



The Germans' attempts to hide or diminish what they'd done indicates that they knew they'd have to pay for their cruelty. It's an attempt on the part of the Germans to look more human and garner sympathy when in reality, people like Booker who saw these attempts firsthand and survived to tell the tale can share stories of their inhumane treatment and refuse to excuse the Nazis' cruelty.



Booker believes that the concentration camp sites should act as the bunkers do on Guernsey, and remind everyone who sees them of the atrocities that were committed there. This turns the camps into a text of sorts that communicates this and acts as a warning to future generations.



The mention that everyone is preparing for Juliet speaks to the strong connections that Juliet already has with her friends in Guernsey.



By taking Amelia's advice and coming on the mail boat, Juliet will allow the sea to free her from her obligations in England and discover herself in Guernsey.



PART ONE, 20TH MAY, 1946

Mark writes to Juliet. His tone is exasperated as he insists that, as Juliet requested, he's given her time and not mentioned marriage. However, he takes great offense to her going to Guernsey and calls her ridiculous. He lists all the ways that she makes him happy and accuses her of running away. In closing, he offers to take her to Guernsey on their honeymoon if he has to.

Juliet writes back and says she's going to Guernsey and still can't give Mark an answer. He offers to drive her to meet the boat and she accepts, though she asks that he not lecture her.

Notice that Mark doesn't say or ask anything about how Juliet might feel; his self-centeredness again shows that he doesn't value Juliet, her friends, or her independence. By continuing to call her names, he sets up that the only way to make the abuse stop is to marry him.



Accepting Mark's offer shows that Juliet still wonders if turning him down is the right thing, given how "perfect" he is.



PART TWO, 22ND MAY, 1946

Juliet writes to tell Sidney about her first day in Guernsey. The trip on the mail boat was horrendous until she caught sight of the glistening island. Then, as she pulled into St. Peter Port, Juliet was excited to see all her friends. Juliet could recognize all of them: Isola, Eben, Eli, Dawsey, and Kit. When she finally stepped onto land, Isola immediately hugged her. Kit sat on Eli's shoulders and looked dark and forbidding. Dawsey offered Juliet flowers from Booker, who was in the hospital, and Juliet believes Dawsey has the sweetest smile. Then, Juliet met Amelia. Juliet noticed a flashing light and Isola said it was Adelaide with her opera glasses.

Dawsey managed Juliet's bags and kept Kit safe, and Juliet realized that everyone depends on Dawsey to do this. He drove Juliet, Amelia, and Kit to Amelia's farm in the country, passing the **bunkers** as they went. Juliet did a few magic tricks for Kit, which piqued Kit's attention but didn't make her laugh. At supper, Kit sat right next to Dawsey and climbed into his lap when they finished. Kit did ask Juliet to tuck her into bed. Kit asked for a story about a ferret and then asked if Juliet would kiss a rat. Juliet's answer seemed to win Kit over; she let Juliet kiss her cheek.

Remember that Adelaide specifically said that Elizabeth was a terror with her telescope; Adelaide's use of opera glasses reinforces that she's hypocritical and nosy, and none of her letters should be taken seriously. The large group that greets Juliet reinforces the Society's closeness with each other and their sense of closeness with Juliet, given that they can't wait to see and welcome her.



The bunkers remind Juliet both of Amelia's letter and of the Todt workers who built them, which impresses upon her that she's entering a place that was touched by the war in a very different way than London was. Kit's acceptance of Juliet indicates that truthfulness and taking a child's questions seriously will help ingratiate oneself with children.



PART TWO, 24TH MAY, 1946

Juliet tells Sophie that Mark tried to stop her coming to Guernsey but was ultimately unsuccessful. As the boat pulled away Juliet wondered if Mark was right that she's an idiot for not marrying him. She wonders if she'll be alone forever and go crazy. Juliet says that Guernsey is wonderful and the beauty of the **sea** makes it easy to pretend that Mark doesn't exist.

The sea does allow Juliet to find freedom from Mark: it's distracting and keeps her from dwelling on him. However, she does still worry about what her life will look like as an independent woman, which shows she understands what she'd give up by refusing.



PART TWO, 27TH MAY, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney about Elizabeth's cottage. It's large with lots of windows, which means that Juliet is often distracted watching the **sea**. Elizabeth's possessions are fascinating, especially her books and her collections of feathers, shells, and flowers. She also has a portrait of her as a child that Sir Ambrose painted. Sir Ambrose's big house is just up the drive. Eben and Eli are planting new **trees** around it to replace those that were cut down for firewood.

Eben, Eli, Dawsey, and Isola have taken Juliet all around the island. The architecture is impressive and varied. St. Peter Port is drab now, but it looks more alive than London does. Kit shows Juliet butterflies and flowers, and carries a box of secret treasures everywhere. Juliet has no idea what's in it but feels she can't ask.

Planting new trees gives the islanders a tangible way to begin to recover and rebuild after the war by returning the island to its former wooded state. Again, the sea offers Juliet a way to distract herself from her troubles in London; instead, she can throw herself into her work and her friends in Guernsey.



Comparing St. Peter Port to London indicates that different English cities are healing at different rates after the war. This is because they experienced the war very differently and suffered different types of trauma.



PART TWO, 30TH MAY, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney that last night, she attended her first Literary Society meeting. The speaker was Jonas Skeeter. He was a new member who read *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Skeeter was clearly unhappy to be there and eviscerated his friend who convinced him to join the society. Then, he insisted that Marcus Aurelius himself was a brooding woman more concerned with his own thoughts than actually doing anything. Eventually, Skeeter and his friend left for the local pub. Juliet says that Dawsey laughed, but everyone else said that it was a pretty normal meeting.

Everyone's insistence that this is a perfectly normal Society meeting indicates that the Society is very interested in how individuals connect with different works, both in terms of connecting with people in their lives and the text itself. This allows them to achieve a more in-depth discussion and analysis of how the text fits into the lives of the readers.



PART TWO, 31ST MAY, 1946

Juliet sends a note to Sidney with a letter she found slipped under her door. It's from Henry Toussant. He says that he's a champion whistler and would use his talent to torment the Germans. At night, he'd hide near the Germans' brothel and, when a whistling soldier left the building, he'd follow and whistle the same tune. Toussant says that the women in the brothels were much like the Todt workers—prisoners of war. The women were given extra food and often shared with the Todt workers. After D-Day, the Germans decided to send the women to France, but the boat hit rocks and all the women drowned. When Toussant's aunt insisted that the women deserved their fate, Toussant knocked the table over on her.

Toussant indicates that he saw the Germans' sex slaves as human and worthy of consideration, despite their line of work. Toussant's aunt's awful comment that the women deserved to die suggests that she focuses on whether or not a woman behaves in a way that's acceptable in polite company and isn't willing to look at any extenuating circumstances to come to a more compassionate reading of a woman's choices.



PART TWO, 6TH JUNE, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney. She's thrilled to hear he's back in London and invites him to visit. Juliet mentions that she has a lot of notes about the occupation, but no direction for a book. Kit has been spending mornings playing quietly in the house and in the afternoon, she and Juliet play a game called Dead Bride. It's a simple game like hide-and-seek and Juliet loves it, though she wonders if it's too morbid for a four-year-old. After spending more time with Kit, Juliet has lots of questions about how to raise children. Juliet says in any case, Kit seems to be suffering no ill effects from being raised by all the Society members.

Juliet says that Amelia recently told her a story about Elizabeth and her son, Ian. When Ian was about to go to school in England, he decided to run away. Elizabeth offered to sell him a boat. She didn't have one, but built one in three days. Ian set off, but the boat sank not far off the shore. Elizabeth swam out to save him. She returned Ian's money and Ian gave up on his plan to run away. Juliet asks Sidney to send her a book of paper dolls for Kit.

By observing Kit at close quarters, Juliet is able to come to her own conclusions about the merits of chosen family versus blood family—and as far as she can tell, people who care far outrank people who are just related by blood. Her interest in knowing whether Dead Bride is an inappropriate game shows that Juliet is taking her role as a caregiver very seriously and wants to do her best, and she's beginning to think of herself as a parent.



This story about Elizabeth shows that she's always had an attitude that she could do anything, and she's also always been fair about things. Juliet's request for paper dolls shows that she'd like to treat Kit as though she's more of a formal caregiver and in doing so, participate in Kit's entertainment.



PART TWO, 10TH JUNE, 1946

Juliet thanks Sidney: his new secretary, Billee Bee Jones, sent two books of paper dolls for Kit, as well as a pair of child's scissors. Juliet expresses hope that Billee Bee is plump and motherly, as she seems very kind. In a postscript, Juliet points out that she hasn't written about Dawsey in this letter.

Billee Bee seems to know something about parenting and children, given her inclusion of scissors. This sets her up to be a resource for Juliet as she begins to figure out how to care for Kit.



PART TWO, 12TH JUNE, 1946

The Society receives a letter. The writer is Remy, a Frenchwoman, and she writes to say that Elizabeth was executed at the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp in March of 1945. Remy says that Elizabeth used to speak to her about the Society and about Kit. Remy wants to make sure that Kit knows how strong and kind her mother was. Remy was sent to the camp in 1944. Elizabeth introduced herself and showed her a "wonderful surprise:" a beautiful sunset.

Remy's desire to write to the Society because she knows they were important to Elizabeth shows that Remy too understands the power of chosen family. In this case, she demonstrates the belief that Elizabeth's chosen family has the right to know what happened to her.



Remy says that they lived in a block with almost 400 women. Elizabeth would talk about the Society and Guernsey, and her stories made the filthy bunks almost disappear. During the day, the women worked in a factory or dug trenches. Elizabeth once covered for a woman who stole a potato. She was sent to the punishment bunker for a week. While there, a guard sprayed high-pressure hoses at the prisoners. Elizabeth survived, but another woman died after freezing to the floor.

The stories about the German guards' cruelties continue to show that at the camps, the prisoners weren't treated like living beings: they were humiliated, tortured, and killed simply for existing. Despite the fact that Elizabeth was likely aware that she could be killed for covering for people, she believed it was her duty to stand up for others when they needed help.



Remy says that most women stopped menstruating, but those that didn't stop were given no hygiene supplies or soap—their blood just ran down their legs. The overseers took the blood as an excuse to beat the women. One evening, Elizabeth rushed to help a woman being beaten, stole the guard's rod, and hit the guard. The next day, the guards executed Elizabeth in a grove of poplar **trees**.

By beating women for menstruating, the guards effectively punish them for being human. Elizabeth's actions then stand as an insistence that all people deserve to be cared for and to live, not to be treated inhumanely.



Sister Cecile Touvier includes a note with Remy's, explaining how ill Remy is and how bad she believes remembering what happened is for Remy. Sister Touvier says that when Remy arrived at the hospital she weighed less than 60 pounds. She hopes that Remy will begin to heal after writing this letter. While she says that the Society can write to Remy, she asks that they not mention Ravensbrück.

Though she doesn't say so outright, Sister Touvier expresses the belief that if Remy doesn't talk about the camp, she'll eventually move on. This shows that even those who care, like nurses, can't always provide truly effective care for the kind of emotional trauma like Remy experienced.



PART TWO, 16TH JUNE, 1946

Amelia writes to Remy and thanks her for her letter and the news of Elizabeth. She asks if she and Dawsey might come to visit. Juliet also writes to Sidney and calls Elizabeth's death an abomination. She wonders if it's odd to mourn for Elizabeth when she's never met her, but she says she feels she knows Elizabeth after living in her cottage. Everyone else is in mourning. Dawsey and Amelia are going to go to France to invite Remy to Guernsey, and Juliet is going to care for Kit while they're gone. Kit's future is now uncertain, as she's officially an orphan. Mr. Dilwyn has assured Juliet that nothing needs to be done immediately; Kit can remain with the Society.

Juliet feels Elizabeth's loss so keenly because she's well on her way to becoming an integral member of Elizabeth's chosen family on Guernsey—and by extension, one of Elizabeth's chosen family members. Her worry for Kit in particular shows that Juliet is becoming more concerned about parenting and recognizes that Kit's future is dependent on someone choosing to formally parent her, which will provide her protections under the law.



PART TWO, 17TH JUNE, 1946

Juliet apologizes to Mark for how their phone conversation unfolded last night. She says that it's true that she doesn't want him to visit, but it has to do with Elizabeth's death, not him. Juliet writes that she knows he's probably wondering why Elizabeth's death has anything to do with him, but she says that she's mourning.

By standing up to Mark and forbidding him from coming, Juliet shows that she's now more loyal to her friends on Guernsey than she is to her romantic partner. This is one way in which Juliet begins to assert her independence more substantially going forward.



PART TWO, 21ST JUNE, 1946

Dawsey writes to Juliet from Louviers, France. He says that the trip across France was awful; there's destruction everywhere. People and tractors are trying to move the rubble. The **trees** are charred sticks only. The innkeeper explained that the Germans ordered the trees chopped down, stripped of branches, coated in creosote, and stuck upright in fields. This was to keep Allied gliders and soldiers from landing.

The innkeeper's story about the trees turns the trees into symbols of death and destruction, not life: creosote is highly flammable and any landing aircraft or people would've gone up in flames, destroying both the people and the trees.



PART TWO, 23RD JUNE, 1946

Amelia tells Juliet that meeting Remy yesterday was very difficult. Remy is so thin she's almost like glass, and her eyes are haunted. She wanted to know about Kit and Sir Ambrose. Amelia could barely speak; Dawsey answered most of Remy's questions. Remy is alone now. Her parents are both dead and her brothers are missing. Amelia invited Remy to Guernsey, but Remy explained that the French government is offering pensions to survivors and is offering to help with housing and education. Remy wants to be an apprentice in a Paris bakery. Dawsey seems unsatisfied; Amelia believes he thinks that they have a moral obligation to Elizabeth to care for Remy.

Remember that Dawsey used to be very silent and shy. The fact that he takes control of the conversation with Remy suggests that when Dawsey has someone to care for, his shyness lessens. In other words, Dawsey's connections to people improve his language skills and his ability to connect, creating a cycle that will allow him to continue to improve going forward.

**PART TWO, 28TH JUNE, 1946**

Juliet thanks Sidney for the red satin tap shoes he sent for Kit. She explains that Kit will stay with her for a while, as Amelia is tired after the trip to France and Remy might yet come to stay with her. Kit knows that Elizabeth is dead, and Juliet has been careful to not press or treat her differently. Juliet remembers how Reverend Simpless's wife made her cakes when her parents died, and it was awful to have to eat them.

Because of Juliet's own experiences losing her parents, she's better able to care for Kit during this time and not force her to act a certain way. This shows that Juliet respects Kit as an individual, and believes that Kit should do and say what she needs to do to feel okay.



Juliet says that she's having trouble with her book. She has data and interviews, but can't figure out a structure. She asks if she can send him her pages so he can look at them. Juliet also includes a postscript, thanking Sidney for the clipping of Mark dancing with another woman. She says he failed to send her into a jealous rage, that both he and Mark want her to be unhappy, and suggests they form a club.

It's worth noting that Juliet's ability to not feel jealous about the photograph is an indicator that she's not particularly torn up about Mark; she understands that not marrying him is what will allow her to continue writing and allow Sidney to continue editing her work.

**PART TWO, 1ST JULY, 1946; WEDNESDAY; FRIDAY**

Sidney asks Juliet if he can visit over the coming weekend. He says he'll take her pages back to London with him. Sidney wants to have a supper party too so he can meet Eben, Isola, Dawsey, and Amelia. Juliet is thrilled and explains that Isola will host Sidney. On Friday, Isola slips a note under Juliet's door. She's happy to host Sidney and asks if Juliet would like her to slip an elixir into his coffee.

Isola's offer to slip an elixir to Sidney indicates that she believes Sidney and Juliet are actually in love, just as Mark does. This suggests that true friendships between single men and woman are somewhat rare and unusual, given that many can't accept that they're just friends.

**PART TWO, 6TH JULY, 1946**

Sidney writes Sophie from Guernsey with information about Juliet, Kit, and Dawsey. Kit appears to love Juliet and is adorable, though her glare is withering. Juliet seems more alive and healthier than ever. Sidney believes she won't move back to London after this, and he doesn't blame her.

In this letter, Sidney confirms that Juliet is becoming a valued member of the Society and the Society family—and in particular, is becoming a valued adult in Kit's life. This is all thanks to a shared love of literature.



Then, Sidney tells Sophie about Dawsey. He's quiet and has a calming presence. Juliet seems nervous around him and he watches her, but glances away when she looks at him. Sidney believes he's way better than Mark Reynolds, whom Sidney believes is a bully. Sidney says that Mark just wants Juliet because she's pretty and smart. Their married life would consist of clubs and outings and Juliet would never write another book. Sidney declares it'd be the end of the Juliet they know. On the plus side, Juliet doesn't seem to miss Mark much.

Sidney turns to the occupation and Juliet's book. Sidney has been learning about the day the island was liberated. Many of the soldiers that marched ashore were Guernseymen who hadn't heard from their families in five years. The postman told Sidney a story about St. Sampson's Harbor a few miles north of St. Peter Port. Instead of all the soldiers marching up to the town, one soldier dressed as a caricature of an Englishman and held the *Times*. The rest of the soldiers gave out tea, oranges, and cigarettes.

PART TWO, 7TH JULY, 1946

Juliet assures Sophie that Sidney is in fine health. She hosted a supper party for him last night and cooked the entire meal herself. Sidney is having a great time with Isola. Apparently she asked him last night when he was going to marry Juliet, and he informed her that he's gay. When he assured Isola that Juliet has always known, she kissed him, said that he's just like Booker, promised to keep it a secret, and started talking about Oscar Wilde's plays. He wants to get her a cuckoo clock as a gift. In a postscript, Juliet also tells Sophie about her horrendous phone call with Mark in which she again refused to marry him.

PART TWO, 8TH JULY, 1946

Isola writes Sidney and thanks him for visiting and talking with her. She invites him back whenever he'd like. Isola also says that when she had Dawsey and Amelia over for tea yesterday, Amelia mentioned that she was sure he and Juliet were going to get married—and Isola didn't utter a word. She loves her cuckoo clock but her parrot bit the head off the bird.

Sidney's assessment of Mark confirms the reader's suspicions about him: he doesn't respect Juliet as a person or as a writer, and has no intention of allowing her to continue to work after marriage. Juliet's lack of emotion about possibly breaking up with him again implies that she values her freedom and her work more highly than marrying him.



The single soldier holding the Times represented the fact that for the first time in five years, Guernsey would have access to news. This meant that Guernsey was once again able to participate with the rest of England in recovering after the war, as the island could use the writing in papers to catch up and make sense of what happened.



Isola's reaction to hearing that Sidney is gay suggests that while she may promise to keep it a secret, Sidney shouldn't necessarily trust her given that she outs Booker in the process. However, this does give Isola valuable information about the rest of Juliet's chosen family so that Isola can more effectively puzzle out where Juliet's romantic loyalties lie.



Isola's letter suggests that because Sidney shared his secret with her, the two of them will be able to become great friends. Again, they met because of Juliet's interest in literature, which shows that their friendship is also rooted in literature.



PART TWO, 9TH JULY, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney and thanks him for his visit. She says that Kit loves him mostly because of the book he brought her, *Elsbeth the Lispering Bunny*. She's taken to lispering all the time. Juliet assures Sidney that he didn't see the best of Dawsey, as Dawsey is preoccupied with Remy at the moment. She also asks what Sidney said to Isola, since Isola recently berated her for not telling her about *Pride and Prejudice* and other, better love stories.

*Isola presumably is comparing [Pride and Prejudice](#) to [Wuthering Heights](#) and Heathcliff; this shows that like Juliet, Isola is also developing healthier ideas of what romance and a relationship should look like. It's also worth noting that Elizabeth Bennett from *Pride and Prejudice* is a great book lover, like Isola and Juliet.*



PART TWO, 12TH JULY, 1946

Sidney writes Juliet that her few chapters won't do; her book needs a single voice to ground it. He believes that voice should be Elizabeth McKenna's. Everyone spoke about her at some point and she's responsible for saving so many people. Sidney wonders how an art student became a nurse, fell in love with the enemy, and had a baby alone. He suggests that Juliet speak to people again and look carefully at Elizabeth's things. He also believes a story about Elizabeth would be invaluable to Kit.

The comment that Elizabeth had Kit alone suggests that while Sidney may now be a beloved friend of the Society chosen family, he's not entirely sold on the idea that chosen family can alleviate all the stress of having to bear and raise a child alone. He does, however, recognize that Elizabeth held the Society together, and that her story is compelling and will resonate with many readers.



PART TWO, 15TH JULY, 1946

Juliet replies to Sidney and says that he's absolutely right; Elizabeth's voice is perfect. She shares that Remy will come to Guernsey soon and stay with Amelia, so she'll get to keep Kit longer. She wonders if Elizabeth kept a diary.

A diary of Elizabeth's would allow Juliet to conduct a deep dive into Elizabeth's experience in a more personal way than through interviews with others, suggesting that others' stories are limited in their effectiveness.



PART TWO, 17TH JULY, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney that she hasn't found a diary, but Elizabeth did draw until she ran out of supplies. Most of the drawings are of Kit or Society members. There's one of Christian. Upon seeing the drawing, Amelia explained that she'd been set against Christian, as she was afraid. Christian came to visit Amelia the next day. Amelia was afraid he was going to take her house, but he nervously told her that when the war ended, he intended to come back, marry Elizabeth, grow flowers, and forget about the war. This made Amelia change her mind about him.

In the absence of a diary, Elizabeth's drawings allow Juliet to "read" and understand who was important enough to Elizabeth to draw over and over again. This shows Juliet whom Elizabeth was closest to. Amelia's story about Christian turns him into a man and divorces him from his post as a Nazi, as he clearly means to defer to Amelia and accept her power as the Society matriarch.



Juliet also says that Will Thisbee called yesterday to ask her about which mysterious woman, Miss X or Miss Y, she would marry were she a man. Both women were clearly locals and neither was particularly friendly, and Juliet suggested that if he needed to ask, he probably shouldn't marry either of them. Juliet discovered that Will had asked a bunch of others and it made her feel like an islander that he asked her too.

As Juliet notes, Will's inclusion of Juliet in his poll shows that she's becoming a valued member of the Guernsey family. Her answer suggests that she's also coming to better conclusions about love and marriage, and recognizes that it's not a good thing to settle for someone that one knows won't make them happy.



PART TWO, 19TH JULY, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney that now that she's looking for them, she's finding stories of Elizabeth everywhere. Earlier, she and Kit walked to the churchyard. The groundskeeper, Sam Withers, was around and mentioned that Juliet reminded him of Elizabeth. He'd known her as a girl and mentioned that Kit was sweet and he knew she was Christian's daughter. Sam said he'd liked Christian and told Juliet that she couldn't cast Kit off because her father was German. Christian had, on several occasions, helped dig graves.

Sam says that there were a number of nice German soldiers and he felt sorry for them, especially at the end—they all knew their families were dying in Germany. He says that some of them would ride in the backs of produce trucks and flick potatoes or oranges off the back for children. A German doctor even stole medicine for a boy who had pneumonia. The doctor was later caught and sent away for the same thing. Sam glared and said that anyone who accuses them of collaborating with the Germans instead of being human will have to talk to him.

The way that Sam Withers speaks about Kit suggests that while he's not a Society member, he still feels a sense of responsibility to make sure that Kit is loved and cared for. His stories about Christian continue Amelia's project of humanizing him, as he clearly didn't think the islanders were less than human and took it upon himself to make the occupation more pleasant.



Sam also recognizes that the Germans, for all their faults and cruelties, had families they loved, just like the islanders. They experienced tragedy and heartbreak along with the rest of Europe, even if they were the aggressors. The fact that he speaks about these Germans who performed acts of kindness shows that he believes these stories need to be told so that others can learn that there were kind German soldiers.



PART TWO, 22ND JULY, 1946

Juliet tells Sophie to burn this letter after reading it. She admits that she has loved Dawsey from the moment she arrived, but has been trying to be calm about it. However, last night, Dawsey came to borrow a suitcase for his trip to collect Remy. Kit was asleep, so Juliet and Dawsey walked out to the cliffs and watched the [sea](#). Juliet desperately wanted to take his hand. Dawsey turned to her but before they could kiss, Mark arrived.

Juliet wanted to kill Mark but greeted him anyway. She felt queasy as she introduced Dawsey and Mark. Dawsey left and Juliet tried to seem happy to see Mark. She convinced him to take a room at the hotel. Though he went, he wasn't pleased. Juliet's been chewing her fingernails all night, wondering what to do about Dawsey. She doesn't want to make a fool of herself and wonders why she cares so little for Mark and so much for Dawsey.

Watching the sea with Dawsey helps Juliet realize that she's actually in love with him and her heart isn't beholden to Mark. It's also important to note that Dawsey is attempting to get closer to Juliet while he's caring for Remy, which again shows that for him, caring for others lets him connect to even more people.



Though Mark's visit is poorly timed, it does make it clear to both Juliet and the reader that she's not in love with him—if she were, she would've been happy to see him. Her remark about not wanting to make a fool of herself suggests that she still believes that marrying Mark is the right thing to do, even if he's a bully.



PART TWO, 23RD JULY, 1946

Amelia leaves a note under Juliet's door inviting her to come for raspberry pie in the afternoon. Juliet sends Kit with her reply, explaining that she has a guest and won't be there but Kit would love some pie.

These small notes allow the islanders to continue to connect with each other while also providing each other space.



PART TWO, 24TH JULY, 1946

Juliet writes Sophie again and instructs her to burn this letter as well: she's just refused Mark for the last time and she feels free. The morning after Mark's arrival he showed up, tried to fix a wedding date, and asked no questions about Juliet or what she's been doing. When Kit came downstairs Mark was nice to her, but became annoyed by her presence. After Kit went outside, Mark sighed about Juliet's friends saddling her with childcare. He went on to say that Juliet should get Kit a doll and say goodbye before Kit gets too attached. Angry, Juliet whispered at Mark to get out and said she never wanted to see him again.

Mark tried to argue, but Juliet held firm. She feels now that after a year of marriage, she would've been scared to think for herself. Mark left two hours after their fight and Juliet spent her afternoon eating pie with Amelia. In a postscript, Juliet assures Sophie that this doesn't mean anything about Dawsey.

The fact that Juliet only rejects Mark after he speaks poorly of her friends and of Kit in particular suggests that Juliet is thinking of herself in an increasingly parental way when it comes to Kit, and she won't put up with having this questioned. This suggests that while Juliet may be an independent person, she still needs that extra boost from having someone else depending on her to stand up for what she wants.



Juliet does recognize Mark's true intentions now and that marriage to him would've ruined her career. With this, Juliet also casts off Izzy Bickerstaff—the woman that Mark actually fell in love with.



PART TWO, 27TH JULY, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney about her discovery that Elizabeth had an accomplice in sheltering a Todt worker. The man's name is Peter Sawyer. Juliet went to visit him; he's in a wheelchair and lives in a nursing home. Peter explained that the Germans let the Todt workers roam at night to find food, which meant they could feed them less. Peter had been living at home during the war when, one night, a Todt worker tried to steal from his garden. The boy, Lud Jaruzki, collapsed. He was too weak to stand and covered in vermin.

Peter was shocked to see how young Lud was. He managed to move Lud into his house and remove some of the lice and maggots. He couldn't ask for help; helping Todt workers was a crime. Elizabeth was Peter's nurse and came the next day. She immediately set to work nursing Lud. Unfortunately, someone told on them and one night, the Germans burst in. Nobody knows what happened to Lud, but both Elizabeth and Peter were sent to St. Malo. They sent Peter back after a week, as the Germans didn't know what to do with a prisoner in a wheelchair. He believes that nobody knew that Elizabeth was helping with Lud.

Dawsey writes Juliet from Louviers. He says that Remy is doing better, though she's still frail. Sister Touvier has cautioned him that Remy needs to stay warm and be around cheerful people. Dawsey knows that Amelia will keep Remy warm and fed, but Dawsey says that he knows *he's* not a particularly cheerful person. He suggests that Juliet spend time with Remy when they arrive, since she's so cheerful.

By finally giving a face and a name to one of the Todt workers, the novel further humanizes them and makes it clear that it was humans who built the bunkers on the island, not faceless automatons. Peter makes this same realization and chooses to accept Lud's humanity rather than dehumanize him by letting him die.



Lud becomes yet another nameless and faceless victim of the war when Peter isn't able to track him down afterwards. This shows that one of the worst consequences of the war was that thousands of people like Lud simply disappeared and were erased from history. By preserving Lud in these letters and in Juliet's book, Juliet gives Lud a proper memorial and makes sure that others will know that someone in Guernsey cared for him.



Again, Sister Touvier's suggestions indicate a belief that if Remy only spends time with happy people, she'll eventually forget what happened. However, Lud's story suggests that forgetting is actually a tragedy—telling these stories allows people to find closure.



PART TWO, 29TH JULY, 1946

Juliet tells Sophie to ignore everything she's written about Dawsey: Dawsey has just written about how sunny and cheerful Juliet is, which she sees as proof that Dawsey doesn't love her and thinks she's shallow. Juliet believes that she deluded herself about Dawsey.

With this, Juliet expresses the belief that Dawsey cannot care about Remy and make note of Juliet's personality at the same time—especially since Dawsey never gives any indication he thinks Juliet is shallow.

**PART TWO, 1ST AUGUST, 1946**

Juliet shares with Sidney that Remy is in Guernsey. Remy is still very frail, intense, and reserved—unless she's with Kit. Amelia threw a dinner party on the night Remy arrived. Remy appeared comfortable with Amelia and relaxed around Dawsey. Juliet says that yesterday, she, Remy, and Kit built a sandcastle. As Kit played in the waves, Remy suggested that Elizabeth must've been like Kit once. Remy spoke about Elizabeth's plan to come home. They all thought they'd make it out alive, as they knew that the Germans were losing. Remy suggested it might've been better if Elizabeth hadn't had such a big heart.

Remy suggests that Elizabeth's kindness and compassion was actually a bad thing, though the text leaves the truth of this up to the reader. It does, however, turn Elizabeth's sacrifice into something noble that she did in order to try to make sure others had the chance to live with dignity, even if it was likely ineffective in doing so.



Isola writes to Sidney. She's now the Secretary of the Society and wanted to share her minutes from the last meeting. One woman read part of her autobiography, after which the woman's husband wanted a divorce and Juliet and Amelia served cake to lighten the mood. Another member asked if she could read her own writing, and Isola suggested they have a special meeting next week so that she can talk about Jane Austen. In closing, Isola offers to secretly swear Sidney in as a member of the Society.

The offer to swear Sidney into the Society shows that Isola now thinks of Sidney as a member and wants to make it official. This indicates that even if the chosen family of the Society is chosen, there are still rules and regulations (albeit house rules) guiding how the family is built and organized.

**PART TWO, 3RD AUGUST, 1946**

Juliet writes to Sidney. She's distraught because he recently sent Isola a book on phrenology, which Isola is taking very seriously. Isola has insulted several neighbors. The one good thing to come of this is that, at supper last night, Isola was inspecting Eben's head and Remy was unable to contain herself—she burst out laughing. Juliet mentions that she and Dawsey are awkward around each other now.

Phrenology, or reading one's head for personality clues, is entirely baseless. Isola's seriousness about it then suggests that she's not particularly critical when it comes to what she reads; if it's in a book and is interesting, she'll take it as fact. In this case, this actually deprives her of connections.

**PART TWO, 5TH AUGUST, 1946**

Susan writes to Juliet and admits that because Sidney leaves her letters on his desk, she reads them. She wants to assure Juliet that Billee Bee isn't running errands and sending things because Sidney asked her to—she's disgustingly devoted to Sidney and sends things of her own volition. She's also from a temp agency but has somehow made herself permanent.

As far as Susan is concerned, Billee Bee must have ulterior motives given how devoted she is to Sidney. This suggests that not all chosen family is positive, especially given that the reader has thus far been given no reasons to question Susan's assessments.



Isola writes Sidney to thank him for the book on phrenology. She says she's been studying hard and is thrilled to learn so much about her neighbors. Eben is "garrulous," and Juliet has a lot of "amativeness" and "conjugal love." Isola's surprised Juliet isn't married with a reading like that. Will made a joke about Sidney when Isola shared that with the group, but Isola kept Sidney's secret. Dawsey escaped before Isola could read his head. She finds him perplexing. He was chatty for a while but is silent now.

Dawsey's escape after Isola's reading of Juliet's head could easily point to the fact that Dawsey is actually in love with Juliet, though it seems as though nobody on Guernsey picks up on this. This suggests that at this point, they're telling their own stories about the relationships between members and aren't willing to think critically about the information in front of them.



PART TWO, 6TH AND 7TH AUGUST, 1946

Sidney sends a telegram to Juliet, asking if Kit would like a bagpipe. Juliet writes back that *she* doesn't want one, but her work is going well. She believes that biographies should be written within a generation of the subject's life, especially given what she's been able to learn about Elizabeth from people who knew her. Juliet feels as though Elizabeth is a true friend.

Juliet's mention that she herself doesn't want the bagpipes indicates that she's taking an even greater role in Kit's life, given that she believes she'd be the one who had to listen to the instrument.



Earlier, Juliet and Kit had supper with Eben and Eli. Eben told Juliet that when the children were being evacuated, Elizabeth was there with Eli. Eli had asked Elizabeth who he'd say goodbye to if the boat was bombed. Elizabeth took off a medal she wore, told Eli that it was magic, and told him how to "call up the charm." Juliet wonders at the Guernsey parents' decisions to send their children away to keep them safe. She notes that she feels protective around Kit already and couldn't imagine having to send her away.

As Juliet thinks more critically about her relationship to Kit and the experience of having to send children away, she's becoming more maternal and curious about what it means to be a parent. Here, she recognizes that a parent's job is to protect their child, which parents couldn't do themselves if they sent their children to England.



PART TWO, 9TH AUGUST, 1946

Juliet congratulates Sophie on her new pregnancy. She tells Sophie that Isola is sending a bottle of "Pre-Birthing Tonic," and Sophie shouldn't drink it. Juliet says that she can't answer any questions about Dawsey, as she never sees him anymore. After Mark showed up, Juliet and Dawsey stopped talking and it seems as though they're barely friends anymore.

The fact that Isola sent a gift to Sophie at all suggests that with Juliet becoming more and more integrated on the island, the Society will naturally accept her friends and chosen family along with her.



Juliet says she asked Isola about Dawsey since he won't talk. Isola is becoming disillusioned with phrenology; she commented that Dawsey should have a larger "violence node" given that he beat a man named Eddie Meares. Juliet learned that Eddie Meares ratted out his neighbors to the Germans in exchange for favors, and he's the one who reported Peter and Elizabeth. After he disclosed what he'd done, Dawsey beat him in the pub. Dawsey spent a month in jail for it. Isola then shared the rest of Dawsey's history: his father died when he was a child and his mother became progressively madder and eventually refused to leave the house. She died right before the war.

Given that Peter and Elizabeth were arrested long after the Society's inception, Dawsey's choice to beat Eddie Meares stands as an example of the effect that books, friendship, and Elizabeth's example had on him. Between those three things, Dawsey was able to put his past behind him and find a new and supportive family through the Society, whom he'd defend and go to jail for as he did for Elizabeth.



PART TWO, 11TH AUGUST, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney that Stephens & Stark will very soon be the most famous publisher in the West. Last night, Isola's goat ate her notes, so she read letters that a man had written to her Granny Pheen instead. Supposedly, when Granny Pheen was a young girl, her father had drowned her cat. Pheen had been crying by the roadside when a carriage almost ran her over. The passenger, a big man with a fur collar, jumped out and offered to help Pheen. She explained that her father had drowned her cat. The man insisted the cat wasn't dead; cats have nine lives and Pheen's had six left. He said he had a gift for knowing these things, and he "visited" with the cat. He told Pheen that the cat was being born in a castle in France.

Granny Pheen was so entranced she forgot to cry. The man helped Pheen up and promised to check in periodically on her cat in its new life. He took down Pheen's address and left. Over the next year, Granny Pheen received eight letters about her cat's life as a French cat. The story told in the letters was magnificent. After Isola finished reading the letters, Juliet asked to look at them and noticed that they were signed, "O. F. O'F. W. W."—possibly, Oscar Final O'Flahertie Wills Wilde himself.

The story of Granny Pheen explores the power of oral stories to help someone deal with their tragedies, as this man's story helps Pheen stop crying. The fact that Pheen's father drowned her cat in the first place offers another example of a time when blood family doesn't actually behaving in a kind or caring way—in this case, blood family actually has the power to traumatize a family member.



By then moving the man's verbal story to written letters, it brings the novel's exploration of the power of stories full circle: in this case, this story didn't just help Granny Pheen recover from the death of her cat, if the author is indeed Oscar Wilde, it'll mean that Isola can also benefit from Wilde's kindness to her grandmother.



PART TWO, 13TH AND 14TH AUGUST, 1946

Sidney writes Juliet and says that according to Billee Bee's research, Oscar Wilde did visit Jersey in 1893, so it's possible he stopped in Guernsey. He's sending a handwriting analyst with some of Oscar Wilde's other letters. Isola then writes to Sidney. She believes the letters were written by Oscar Wilde and thinks that Granny Pheen would be so happy to have people interested in her letters. Isola says that she's not going to let anyone take the letters away; she's going to keep them in Granny Pheen's biscuit tin. She gives Sidney permission to publish the letters provided he lets Isola write the preface. She wants to buy a motorcycle with a sidecar with the royalties.

If the letters are Wilde's and if Sidney does publish them, that will mean that many more people will be able to share in Granny Pheen's story and apply it to their own lives. In this way, Wilde's small kindness to Pheen will be able to go on for years to come, thanks to publishing and the connections that Isola formed with both Juliet and with Sidney.



PART TWO, 18TH AUGUST, 1946

Juliet recounts for Sidney the experience of having the handwriting expert come visit Isola. With much pomp and circumstance, the man declared the letters the work of Oscar Wilde. Isola yelled with joy and hugged the man. She then took him to test out a motorcycle and got a ticket for reckless driving.

The shift away from the war and towards these fun letters again shows that Guernsey is recovering from the war—notably, through these happy stories and coincidences.



PART TWO, 20TH AUGUST, 1946

Billee Bee sends Juliet a telegram explaining that Sidney has been called to Rome and asked her to visit Guernsey in his stead to collect the Oscar Wilde letters. Juliet sends a telegram in reply; she's happy to receive Billee Bee.

Remember Susan's note to Juliet that Billee Bee is too sweet—this suggests that Juliet should be cautious about Billee Bee's intentions.

**PART TWO, 22ND AUGUST, 1946**

Juliet writes Sophie that Sidney is getting too important, given that he's sent Billee Bee to collect the letters. Billee Bee was very seasick upon arrival but has been a good sport. Kit, unfortunately, doesn't like her and refused a kiss. Juliet asks Sophie how she corrects Dominic when he's rude like that.

Just as with the romance between Dawsey and Juliet (which many don't see), it's important to recognize that Juliet casts Kit's dislike of Billee Bee as rudeness and not of a signal that there's something off.



Juliet confides that she's been worried about Kit since she learned of Elizabeth's death. She's decided to speak to Mr. Dilwyn, Kit's legal guardian, about possibly fostering or adopting Kit. She's not sure if Mr. Dilwyn will agree to adoption, given that Juliet is unmarried and without steady income. Juliet hasn't told anyone yet; she's too afraid of what Amelia and Dawsey would think. She wonders if Kit would even agree to go to London.

Now that Juliet has had several months to grow close to Kit, she recognizes that the most useful and profound thing she can do for Kit is to provide her stability and legitimacy by trying to adopt her. This would mean that Kit's future isn't in danger, as she'd have a dedicated legal guardian to rely on.

**PART TWO, 23RD AUGUST, 1946**

Juliet sends Sidney a scathing letter, berating him for sending Billee Bee to collect the letters. Billee Bee said that Sidney requested the originals, and Isola would only agree to such a thing because Sidney asked. Juliet says that everyone likes Billee Bee; she's an enthusiastic guest and enjoys the Society meetings. Last night, Augustus Sarre spoke about [The Canterbury Tales](#). Augustus didn't find the book charming at all and thought Chaucer should be ashamed of himself for writing it. The Society discussed original sin and predestination, and even Remy spoke: she said that if there's predestination, than God is the devil.

For Remy, there's only so much comfort that the stories told about religion can provide, as what she experienced was too horrific to truly make sense of. This shows how people can pick and choose what works for them out of stories in order to make their world make the most sense. This also allows them to choose the most comforting reading and in doing so, find some peace.

**PART TWO, 24TH AUGUST, 1946**

Susan sends a frantic telegram to Juliet instructing her to not allow Billee Bee to take the letters. Stephens & Stark's new sub-editor saw Billee Bee with Gilly Gilbert kissing in the park. She believes that Billee Bee's intentions aren't good.

Billee Bee's relationship with Gilly indicates that she likely wants to slander Juliet or Sidney, given how Gilly tried to cast aspersions at Juliet when she was on her book tour.



PART TWO, 24TH AUGUST, 1946, 2:00 A.M.

Juliet thanks Susan for her tip about Billee Bee. The telegram came just in time: Kit and Isola were out gathering herbs early in the morning and Juliet was inside with Billee Bee upstairs. Juliet checked Billee Bee's room, but she and the letters were gone. Juliet called Dawsey and he called Booker to warn him. Dawsey and Juliet started to run down the hill when they passed Isola's house and noticed Kit and Isola sitting outside the smokehouse. There was squawking coming from inside.

Kit had the envelope of letters and a gift from Billee Bee in her hands—a quilted ferret—and Juliet was thrilled to see that the letters were safe. Dawsey opened the smokehouse door and found Billee Bee inside with Isola's angry parrot. Juliet accused Billee Bee of stealing the letters and threw out some possible headlines that might run when the world discovers she's involved with Gilly.

Booker arrived, wearing a uniform jacket, with Remy carrying a hoe. Booker growled that he wouldn't arrest Billee Bee, but he'd make sure she left the island. Billee Bee took the toy ferret from Kit as she left. Juliet says that Isola and Kit were out so early because after reading Billee Bee's head, Isola was concerned: the "duplicitous bump" was huge. Isola and Kit decided to keep watch, and that's how they caught Billee Bee. Juliet asks what Billee Bee and Gilly were going to do with the letters.

PART TWO, 26TH AUGUST, 1946

Susan replies to Juliet and says that Gilly and Billee Bee wanted the letters to exact revenge for when Sidney humiliated Gilly following the teapot incident. Rumors have been circulating that Juliet discovered the Oscar Wilde letters, and Gilly wanted to publish the letters before Sidney could. Later, Sidney sends a telegram. He believes that Isola, Kit, and Juliet all deserve medals and says he'll never leave town again.

Juliet's account of how they caught Billee Bee indicates again that the Society members are family and will do what they can to stand up for each other. This is especially apparent as Juliet calls on Dawsey and Booker, as she recognizes that one person alone can't effectively put this right.



Juliet's threatened newspaper headlines show that while literature can free people and connect them, writing has a variety of purposes and in this case, can actually trap Billee Bee and make her look untrustworthy and pathetic.



Remy's arrival shows that she's also becoming part of the Society family. The reasons for Isola's suspicion suggest that even if phrenology itself is nonsense, books like that have their place—Isola has it to thank for keeping her Granny Phee letters.



At times like this, Sidney is forced to acknowledge the chosen family that surrounds him and recognize that they're truly there to look out for him. In this way, the novel suggests that people must constantly be reminded of who their families are and what they're capable of accomplishing.



PART TWO, 29TH AUGUST, 1946

Juliet tells Sophie that Sidney's sub-editor has visited to copy the letters and they're now safe in Isola's biscuit tin. Juliet says that she was calm the day they discovered Billee Bee, but that evening, she began to get nervous. Dawsey and Remy stopped to check in on Juliet. Juliet didn't find it particularly comforting. She wonders if Remy is homesick for France. Juliet's been reading an article by another political prisoner about how difficult it is for camp survivors to move on, especially since France as a whole doesn't want to talk about their experiences. The writer is discovering that the only way to move on is for survivors to speak to each other, and Juliet wonders if Remy might benefit from talking to other survivors.

Juliet mentions that Mr. Dilwyn has returned to the island. She's putting off making the appointment to talk about adopting Kit and fears he won't agree. She asks if Sophie and Dominic will act as character references, and shares Mr. Dilwyn's plan to restore Lord Ambrose's house and market it as a holiday rental. This would give Kit some income.

Juliet says too that this afternoon, the Benoit sisters invited Juliet and Kit for tea. The invitation was odd; they asked if Kit liked rituals. Juliet checked with Eben before accepting. He laughed and said the sisters were safe and often hosted Elizabeth and Jane. The sisters are identical, 80-year-old twins, and they're very charming. As soon as they'd all finished their tea, they said that Kit is too young, but asked Juliet if she'd participate. Juliet had no idea what was going on. The sisters went on to pull out darts and to reveal a wall panel with a full-page newspaper portrait of the Duchess of Windsor. The twins had adored the Prince of Wales and resented the Duchess for marrying him. Juliet managed to throw three darts into the Duchess's head.

PART TWO, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1946

Juliet tells Sidney of a disturbing event that took place in the afternoon. She was walking along the cliffs with Remy and Dawsey when they saw a woman coming towards them. The woman had a German Shepherd with her. The dog was friendly and jumped on Juliet. She laughed, but then heard gagging behind her. Remy was vomiting violently. Dawsey yelled to get the dog away and finally, the woman dragged her dog away, apologizing as she went. Dawsey carried Remy to Juliet's house, where Juliet drew Remy a bath and put her to bed. Dawsey then explained to Juliet that the guards would let dogs attack the prisoners for sport. He lamented that good will isn't enough to make Remy better.

Though Juliet later characterizes her musings about Remy's healing process as heartless and cruel, it's also worth noting that the article she's reading acknowledges the power of stories and doesn't want to censor them. In this way, this article reinforces the novel's sense of the importance of literature and stories, both spoken and published. The writer's suggestion also implies that it's only through facing what happened that survivors can move on and heal.



Juliet's nervousness about trying to adopt Kit indicates that going through formal channels to create a family is no simple task; there are emotions involved that could make the whole thing impossible. Note too that Juliet might seem less suitable given that she's unmarried.



The Duchess of Windsor is Wallis Simpson, a twice-divorced woman who, in the mid-1930s, began a relationship with the Prince of Wales. This caused a number of scandals as divorced people were excluded from court, and the Prince of Wales wanted to marry her after he assumed the throne. In the end, he had to abdicate as king and chose his lover over his family and England. The Benoit sisters likely see this as a betrayal of the greater English community, hence their emotions about the whole thing.



This event makes it clear to Juliet and to Dawsey that simply being kind to Remy can't make the trauma of the camp go away. For her, dogs will likely continue to be terrifying and serve as reminders of what she experienced at the camp. Again, Dawsey shows that he's using the social skills he's learned from the Society to stand up for his friends in the present, though he recognizes it might not be enough.



Juliet is ashamed of herself for thinking that Remy was well enough to go home, and wonders if she just wanted Remy to get over it. She confesses too that when Dawsey said that good will isn't enough, she wondered if good will is *all* Dawsey feels for Remy.

The fact that Juliet is still thinking about whether Dawsey might love her indicates that she's still in love with him, even if she won't admit it.



PART TWO, 4TH AND 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1946

Sidney writes Juliet and says that she's clearly in love with Dawsey. He asks if he can visit on the 13th. Juliet sends Sidney a telegram in reply, admits that he's right, and says she's thrilled to see him.

It's worth noting that Dawsey hasn't tried to change Juliet at all and has actively supported her career—he'd be a much better partner than Mark.



PART TWO, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1946

Isola writes to Sidney. She's very happy that he's coming to look at Granny Pheen's letters; she thought the sub-editor was nice but uninteresting. He did, however, introduce Isola to Miss Marple, a character from mystery books who solves crimes by using her knowledge of human nature. Isola promptly borrowed Miss Marple books from Amelia and has decided to train herself to solve mysteries—not that there are any on Guernsey. Isola says that Eben is having a beach party when Sidney is here and Sidney's invited. There's supposed to be a happy announcement at the party. Isola hopes that Eben isn't getting married, as she believes a wife wouldn't let him continue with the Society.

Even though Isola is flouting conventions by living as a spinster and making elixirs, her comment about Eben possibly getting married indicates that she still holds a number of very traditional ideas about marriage and how married people relate to each other. Isola's introduction to Miss Marple offers her another way to make sense of the world around her by paying closer attention, illustrating again that books can help people see their world differently.



PART TWO, 7TH SEPTEMBER, 1946

Juliet tells Sophie that she finally went to ask Amelia her thoughts on adopting Kit. Amelia was relieved and both women cried. Then, Amelia said she'd go with Juliet to see Mr. Dilwyn, as she's known him since he was a boy and he wouldn't dare refuse her.

Because Amelia has a long history with Mr. Dilwyn, he's also a part of the family and therefore, will trust Amelia. Amelia's happiness that Juliet wants to adopt Kit shows that Juliet is now a real family member.



Then, the best thing happened: Kit woke Juliet up in the morning and silently offered Juliet her box of treasures. The box contained a baby pillow, a photo of Elizabeth, a handkerchief, a signet ring, and a book of Rilke's poetry that Christian gave to Elizabeth. In the book was the note that Elizabeth left for Amelia on the night she was arrested. Elizabeth's medal was there too. After she'd looked at the treasures, Juliet held open her arms. Kit climbed in, crawled under the covers, and went to sleep. Juliet knows now that she wants to stay in Guernsey to raise Kit. She says that Amelia believes Mr. Dilwyn will likely grant Juliet guardianship, even if he won't grant adoption.

In particular, the presence of the medal indicates that at some point, Eli passed it onto Kit—and likely told her the same story about it being magic that Elizabeth did. In this way, he paid forward Elizabeth's kindness to him and allowed Kit to connect with her birth mother. Crawling into bed with Juliet and sharing her treasures shows that Kit is now fully committed to Juliet and trusts her with her secrets, like she would a parent.



PART TWO, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney and says that earlier, she and Kit took a picnic to spy on Dawsey while he rebuilt a stone wall. Dawsey then invited Juliet for dinner. It was awkward at first; Juliet perused Dawsey's bookshelves while he cooked. She found Anne Brontë's novels and her own biography of Anne Brontë. They discussed all manner of things over dinner and after, Dawsey showed Juliet his pigs. Juliet admits that she's completely in love with him.

Even if dinner was awkward, it did impress upon Juliet that Dawsey is a person she could spend her life with: he has lots of books and must respect her career, given that he owns Juliet's own biography of Anne Brontë. This indicates that he wouldn't try to stop Juliet from writing if they were married.



PART TWO, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 1946

Juliet sends a distraught telegram to Sidney. She saw Dawsey and Remy in St. Peter Port, buying a suitcase. They were smiling and happy. She wonders if it's for their honeymoon.

This telegram betrays Juliet's insecurities, as she doesn't consider any other options as to why they might be buying a suitcase.



PART TWO, DETECTION NOTES OF MISS ISOLA PRIBBY

Isola writes that this notebook is from Sidney. She's going to write only facts in it as she observes the people around her. Today, she observed that Kit loves Juliet and no longer makes faces behind people's backs. Sidney is coming to visit and will stay with Juliet. Daphne Post dug a hole under a tree in the dark, looking for her silver teapot. Isola thinks they should just buy Daphne a teapot so she can stay home.

Though Isola writes down "facts," she doesn't analyze them at all. This suggests that she believes the facts themselves will be all she needs. She shows how kind and caring she is when she writes that they should buy Daphne a teapot; this indicates that Daphne is a valued community member.



For the next few days, Isola notices nothing. On Thursday, Remy comes to visit with a letter from the French government. Isola makes a note to find out what the government wants; this is the fourth letter they've sent Remy. Isola observed that there was something going on in the market, but she figures it's nothing. She has decided that she's going to look at things like artists do: they don't look directly at what they're trying to draw and instead look at things sideways.

As Isola begins to ask questions about what she observes, she only asks one-sided questions (i.e., she doesn't wonder what Remy might want with the French government). By not asking all of these questions, Isola cuts off some possible avenues that might help her come to conclusions and better embody Miss Marple.



On Friday, Isola tests her idea to look at things sideways. She accompanied Dawsey, Juliet, and Remy to fetch Sidney from the airfield. She observed that Dawsey shook Sidney's hand but refused to stay for cake. On Saturday, Remy, Kit, and Juliet came with Isola to gather firewood. Sidney and Dawsey are polite but Dawsey seems to stare strangely at Sidney. Then, Isola noticed Eben patting Remy on the shoulder. This is strange. When Juliet and Sidney walked with Kit and lifted her up between them, Dawsey watched them and then stood looking at the water. Isola thinks that Dawsey seems to suddenly be bothered by being lonely. She wonders why.

As an outside observer who's aware that Juliet is in love with Dawsey, it's easier to see that Isola's sense that he's unhappy being lonely is because he reciprocates Juliet's feelings. It's also easier to see that Dawsey likely doesn't know that Sidney is gay and guess that he sees Sidney as a rival. Notably, Isola only sees Remy's sadness; she hasn't observed any sadness from Juliet. This suggests that Isola may come to questionable conclusions.



On Saturday night, Isola records her observations from the picnic. As everyone was poking the fire, Eben made an announcement, flanked by Remy and Dawsey. Juliet went strangely rigid. Eben explained that this is to be a farewell party for Remy, who will leave for Paris next week. Everyone cheered, but Juliet flopped back into the sand. Dawsey looked sad and suddenly, Isola knew what was going on: Dawsey is in love with Remy but is too shy to say anything. Isola believes that she needs only to tell Remy this and then, things will be well.

Sidney then poked Juliet with his toe, asked if she felt better, and she said yes. Because of this, Isola decided to stop worrying about her. Isola decided to look for evidence of Dawsey's feelings to share with Remy and so offered to scrub Dawsey's floor on Monday. On Sunday, Isola writes and wonders what she'll find at Dawsey's house. She hopes she'll find proof and that then, Dawsey will be happy.

Isola recounts what took place on Monday. She checked trees for carved hearts on her way to Dawsey's house. After two hours of cleaning, she'd found no evidence. She began to dust the books, but found no loose papers. She did find the Charles Lamb biography, which Isola thought was odd: she'd seen him put it in his treasure box. Isola went looking for the box and found it under Dawsey's bed. There were no notes from Remy. It contained a handkerchief of Juliet's, which Isola figured he meant to return. Isola admitted defeat.

To make herself feel better, Isola called on Juliet. Juliet invited Isola in and asked her what was wrong. Isola began to bawl that she failed and Dawsey will be unhappy. After Isola calmed down, she told Juliet about Dawsey loving Remy but finding no evidence. There were plenty of photos of Juliet and Kit, and Juliet's letters tied up in one of her hair ribbons, and Juliet's handkerchief. Juliet got up, picked up her paperweight with *Carpe Diem* etched on it, and said that it was an inspiring thought. Then, Juliet asked where Dawsey is—at Sir Ambrose's house—and ran for him. Isola was thrilled that Juliet was going to tell Dawsey off for not confessing his feelings for Remy.

Isola followed slowly and then hid herself by the library. Juliet entered the library, where Dawsey and the workmen were, and asked for a private word with Dawsey. Isola was sure that Juliet was going to tell Dawsey to propose to Remy, but instead, she proposed to Dawsey herself. Dawsey swore, said yes, and sprained his ankle falling off the ladder. Isola wonders how she could've seen everything so wrong and concludes that she just isn't as good as Miss Marple. She wonders if she should train for motorcycle races instead.

Remy's departure to Paris explains her letters from the French government. Notice that Isola misreads things entirely: Juliet likely flops backwards in relief, and Dawsey is friends with Remy—he can be sad about her departure without being in love with her. This in particular shows that Isola believes that men and women cannot just be friends.



Because Isola decides to take Juliet's assertion that she's fine at face value, she misses out on noticing other clues that might lead her to a more correct conclusion. Isola's desire to snoop through Dawsey's things suggests that she's taking the Miss Marple embodiment very seriously and that it might have a negative impact on her relationships.



The things that Isola is looking for—hearts and letters—remind the reader that Isola has learned about romance primarily through romance novels, where such things occur more often than they do in the real world. Notice how much Isola's belief about what's true colors how she interprets her findings: not considering that Dawsey might love Juliet shows that Isola isn't truly acting as Miss Marple would.



Though Isola doesn't know it, she found the evidence that Juliet needed to know that Dawsey is in love with her. By choosing to go confront Dawsey, Juliet chooses to flout traditional gender roles, take matters into her own hands, and make the relationship happen whether Dawsey will bring it up or not. Despite Isola's wrong conclusions, her desire to care for Dawsey shows how powerful of an effect the Society's friendships have had on the members.



Now that Juliet has proof of Dawsey's feelings, she finally feels safe acting as an independent woman who knows what she wants. This shows that for a woman like Juliet, she can have both a career and a marriage—as long as she finds a partner like Dawsey, who will support her career and allow her her independence.



PART TWO, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 1946

Juliet writes to Sidney and asks him to come back to Guernsey to give her away at her wedding on Saturday; she's marrying Dawsey. Juliet says that her whole life has come into being in the last day, and she doesn't even care if it's unseemly to get married so quickly. She's excited to discover how interesting marriage is and suggests she'll write a book about it. Dawsey arrives to interrupt Juliet's letter writing, and Juliet says he's no longer shy. She includes a postscript saying that even Adelaide is happy they're getting married and formalizing their relationship.

The fact that Dawsey isn't shy anymore after getting engaged speaks finally to the power of creating a family: it makes Dawsey better able to communicate and interact with everyone around him. By asking Sidney to give Juliet away, she asks him to assume a role often held by blood family, thereby formalizing Sidney's inclusion in Juliet's chosen family.





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