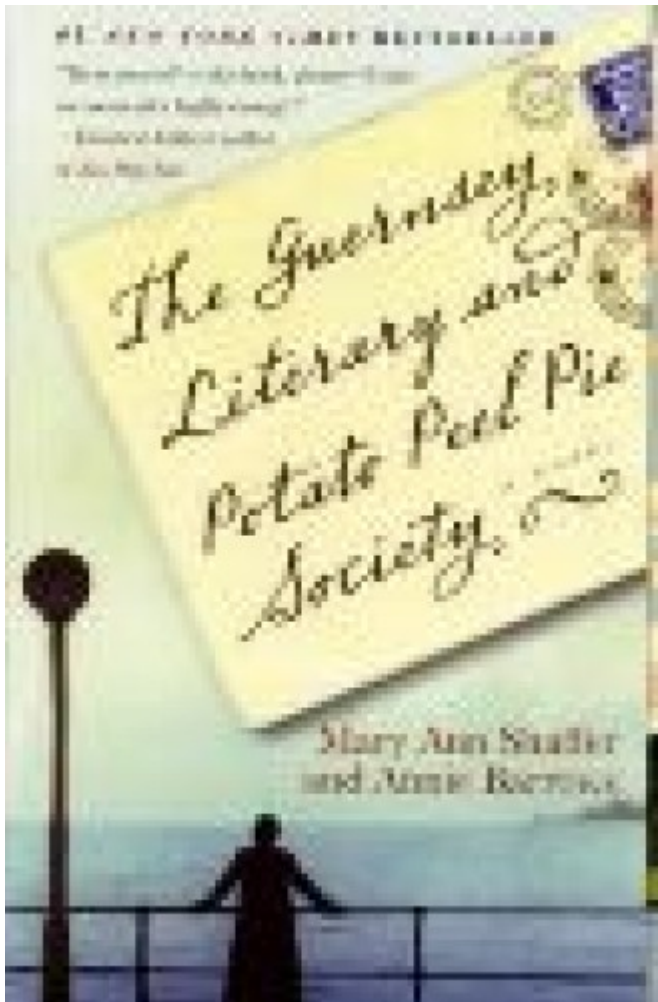


# BookMarks

Books in the [February 9, 2010](#) issue

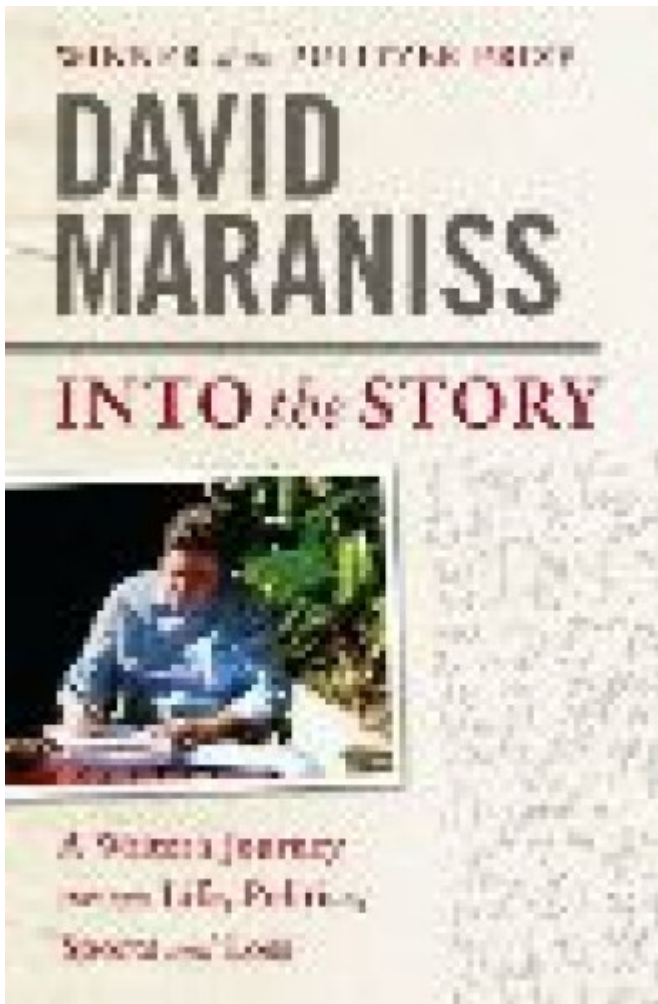
## In Review



### **The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society: A Novel**

Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Dial



## **Into the Story: A Writer's Journey through Life, Politics, Sports and Loss**

David Maraniss  
Simon & Schuster

This book is a collection of witty, whimsical and charming fictional letters written in 1946. Most of the letters take place between a writer, Juliet Ashton, and a circle of friends and acquaintances. Juliet, in search of a subject, begins to correspond with a group of people on the Channel Island of Guernsey about their experiences during the German occupation of World War II. Eventually, she goes to the island to meet members of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. She falls in love with the island and its quirky people and decides to stay to write a biography of one of the society's founders. The novel paints a complex and enlightening portrait of England in the days immediately after the war. Sometimes the conventions of the book become too conventional, but it is about the power of storytelling, and it tells

its story in a way that captures the imagination.

Maraniss is one of the finest nonfiction writers alive who has plied his trade on political and sports figures, as well as historical events. This is a collection of his articles, many from the *Washington Post*, where he is an associate editor. A skilled biographer, these articles range from an insightful piece on Barack Obama's mother to a gut-wrenching account of his younger's sister tragic death in a car accident. Maraniss advises writers: "Be open to any possibility, remain flexible, look for connections, let the story take you where it will and always use detail for a purpose, with a larger design in mind." The ego of a writer gets in the way of a story, and it "serves too often, not as a form of revelation but as a cover for writer's block or for a paucity of research."