

Bell Jar



The Bell Jar: Exploring Sylvia Plath's Masterpiece of Despair and Resilience

The shimmering, suffocating image of a bell jar—a metaphor for mental illness—has captivated

readers for decades. Sylvia Plath's semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar*, transcends its time, resonating with anyone who has wrestled with depression, societal expectations, and the search for self. This post delves into the complexities of *The Bell Jar*, examining its enduring relevance, its literary merit, and its profound impact on our understanding of mental health. We'll explore Esther Greenwood's journey, the novel's symbolism, and its lasting legacy. Prepare to unravel the layers of this powerful and poignant work.

Understanding the Bell Jar Metaphor

The titular "bell jar" itself is a potent symbol. It represents the feeling of being trapped, isolated, and suffocated. For Esther Greenwood, the protagonist, the jar becomes a physical manifestation of her mental breakdown. It's not merely a physical object but a symbol of societal pressures, patriarchal expectations, and the crushing weight of her own internal struggles. The seemingly inescapable confines of the jar mirror the feeling of being unable to escape the constraints of her own mind and the expectations placed upon her by a conformist society.

The Suffocating Societal Expectations

Esther's experience highlights the suffocating nature of 1950s societal expectations for women. The pressure to conform, to marry, and to fulfill a pre-defined role contributed significantly to her descent into depression. The novel masterfully portrays the limitations placed upon women, who were expected to prioritize domesticity and marriage over personal ambition and self-discovery. This societal pressure is a key component of Esther's struggle, acting as a catalyst for her mental health crisis.

The Crushing Weight of Internal Conflict

Beyond societal pressures, Esther grapples with intense internal conflicts. The novel delves into themes of existential angst, the fear of failure, and the overwhelming burden of choice. Esther's inability to reconcile her desires with societal expectations leads to a profound sense of alienation and despair. Her internal struggles are depicted with brutal honesty, making her character relatable and deeply empathetic.

Analyzing Esther Greenwood's Journey

Esther's journey is a harrowing descent into madness, punctuated by moments of clarity and resilience. Her experiences in the mental institution, her encounters with various doctors and therapists, and her relationships with other characters illuminate the complexities of mental illness.

The Significance of Relationships

Esther's relationships, both romantic and platonic, play a crucial role in shaping her experiences. Her interactions with Buddy Willard, Doreen, and Joan showcase the diverse ways in which relationships can contribute to both emotional well-being and distress. These relationships offer insight into the complexities of human connection and the impact of others on one's mental health.

The Power of the Narrative Voice

Plath's use of a first-person narrative gives the reader intimate access to Esther's thoughts and feelings. This direct, unflinching portrayal of her mental state allows for a deep understanding of her struggles, and creates a powerful emotional connection with the reader. The raw honesty of Esther's voice is a key element of the novel's enduring impact.

The Enduring Legacy of The Bell Jar

The Bell Jar remains relevant today because it fearlessly tackles issues that continue to affect many. It's a testament to the enduring power of literature to illuminate the human condition and foster empathy and understanding. The novel's exploration of mental illness, societal pressures, and the search for identity continues to resonate with readers of all ages and backgrounds. Its influence on contemporary literature and discussions surrounding mental health is undeniable.

The Bell Jar and Mental Health Awareness

The novel's frank depiction of mental illness has played a significant role in raising awareness and reducing stigma. By humanizing the experience of mental illness, The Bell Jar encourages open dialogue and promotes understanding. Its enduring popularity contributes to broader conversations about mental health and the need for support.

Conclusion

The Bell Jar is more than just a novel; it's a powerful exploration of the human psyche, societal pressures, and the resilience of the human spirit. Sylvia Plath's unflinching portrayal of Esther Greenwood's mental health struggles remains both poignant and relevant, ensuring its continued place as a literary masterpiece that continues to inspire dialogue and understanding. Its exploration of the human condition, with all its complexities and contradictions, makes it a timeless work

deserving of continued study and appreciation.

FAQs

1. Is *The Bell Jar* autobiographical? While fictional, *The Bell Jar* draws heavily on Sylvia Plath's own experiences with mental illness and societal pressures, making it a semi-autobiographical work.
2. What is the significance of the fig tree scene? The fig tree scene symbolizes Esther's feelings of paralysis and inability to make choices, representing the overwhelming weight of her decisions and her fear of the future.
3. What type of mental illness does Esther suffer from? While the novel doesn't explicitly diagnose Esther, many readers and critics interpret her experiences as consistent with symptoms of depression, possibly accompanied by other mental health challenges.
4. How does *The Bell Jar* differ from other novels about mental illness? *The Bell Jar* stands out due to its unflinching portrayal of mental illness through a first-person perspective, offering an intimate and raw exploration of the experience that avoids romanticizing or trivializing the suffering.
5. Why is *The Bell Jar* still relevant today? Its themes of societal pressures, mental health struggles, and the search for self remain profoundly relevant, highlighting the enduring challenges faced by individuals navigating complex personal and societal landscapes.

bell jar: the bell jar sylvia plath, 1971

bell jar: *The Catcher in the Rye* J. D. Salinger, 2024-06-28 *The Catcher in the Rye*, written by J.D. Salinger and published in 1951, is a classic American novel that explores the themes of adolescence, alienation, and identity through the eyes of its protagonist, Holden Caulfield. The novel is set in the 1950s and follows Holden, a 16-year-old who has just been expelled from his prep school, Pencey Prep. Disillusioned with the world around him, Holden decides to leave Pencey early and spend a few days alone in New York City before returning home. Over the course of these days, Holden interacts with various people, including old friends, a former teacher, and strangers, all the while grappling with his feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction. Holden is deeply troubled by the "phoniness" of the adult world and is haunted by the death of his younger brother, Allie, which has left a lasting impact on him. He fantasizes about being "the catcher in the rye," a guardian who saves children from losing their innocence by catching them before they fall off a cliff into adulthood. The novel ends with Holden in a mental institution, where he is being treated for a nervous breakdown. He expresses some hope for the future, indicating a possible path to recovery..

bell jar: *Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar* Harold Bloom, 2009 A summer internship at a fashion magazine in New York City reveals only the lack of beauty in the young woman's inner life, as Esther Greenwood succumbs to a pervasive depression that she likens to being trapped beneath the title object, a bell jar, struggling for her next breath.

bell jar: *The Bell Jar*, by Sylvia Plath Janet McCann, 2012 *The Bell Jar* has always been troubling reading, because its main character Esther Greenwood is so fully identified with Sylvia Plath herself. Attempts to separate them critically have not been successful. This volume consists of essays about *The Bell Jar*. Essays discuss how the novel reflected the time in which it was written and on the

critical reception of the novel.

bell jar: Sylvia Plath Raychel Haugrud Reiff, 2009 A biography of writer Sylvia Plath that describes her era, her major works--the novel *The bell jar* and her poetry--her life, and the legacy of her writing.

bell jar: Pain, Parties, Work Elizabeth Winder, 2013-04-16 I dreamed of New York, I am going there. On May 31, 1953, twenty-year-old Sylvia Plath arrived in New York City for a one-month stint at the intellectual fashion magazine *Mademoiselle* to be a guest editor for its prestigious annual college issue. Over the next twenty-six days, the bright, blond New England collegian lived at the Barbizon Hotel, attended Balanchine ballets, watched a game at Yankee Stadium, and danced at the West Side Tennis Club. She typed rejection letters to writers from *The New Yorker* and ate an entire bowl of caviar at an advertising luncheon. She stalked Dylan Thomas and fought off an aggressive diamond-wielding delegate from the United Nations. She took hot baths, had her hair done, and discovered her signature drink (vodka, no ice). Young, beautiful, and on the cusp of an advantageous career, she was supposed to be having the time of her life. Drawing on in-depth interviews with fellow guest editors whose memories infuse these pages, Elizabeth Winder reveals how these twenty-six days indelibly altered how Plath saw herself, her mother, her friendships, and her romantic relationships, and how this period shaped her emerging identity as a woman and as a writer. *Pain, Parties, Work*—the three words Plath used to describe that time—shows how Manhattan's alien atmosphere unleashed an anxiety that would stay with her for the rest of her all-too-short life. Thoughtful and illuminating, this captivating portrait invites us to see Sylvia Plath before *The Bell Jar*, before she became an icon—a young woman with everything to live for.

bell jar: The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath, 2002-07 Get your A in gear! They're today's most popular study guides-with everything you need to succeed in school. Written by Harvard students for students, since its inception SparkNotes(TM) has developed a loyal community of dedicated users and become a major education brand. Consumer demand has been so strong that the guides have expanded to over 150 titles. SparkNotes'(TM) motto is Smarter, Better, Faster because: - They feature the most current ideas and themes, written by experts. - They're easier to understand, because the same people who use them have also written them. - The clear writing style and edited content enables students to read through the material quickly, saving valuable time. And with everything covered--context; plot overview; character lists; themes, motifs, and symbols; summary and analysis, key facts; study questions and essay topics; and reviews and resources--you don't have to go anywhere else!

bell jar: Instructions for a Heatwave Maggie O'Farrell, 2023-08-15 From the award-winning author of *Hamnet* and *The Marriage Portrait*: a sweeping family drama where a father's disappearance forces three adult siblings to come together and confront what they really know about their past. London, 1976. In the thick of a record-breaking heatwave, Gretta Riordan's newly-retired husband has cleaned out his bank account and vanished. Now, for the first time in years, the three Riordan children are converging on their childhood home: Michael Francis, a history teacher whose marriage is failing; Monica, with two stepdaughters who despise her and an ugly secret that has driven a wedge between her and the little sister she once adored; and Aoife (pronounced EE-fah), the youngest, whose new life in Manhattan is elaborately arranged to conceal her illiteracy. As the siblings track down clues to their father's disappearance, they also navigate rocky pasts and long-held secrets. Their search ultimately brings them to their ancestral village in Ireland, where the truth of their family's past is revealed. Wise, lyrical, instantly engrossing, *Instructions for a Heatwave* is a richly satisfying page-turner from a writer of exceptional intelligence and grace.

bell jar: A Study Guide for Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar Gale, Cengage Learning, 2015-09-15 A Study Guide for Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs.

bell jar: The Diving Bell and the Butterfly Jean-Dominique Bauby, 2008-03-06 A triumphant memoir by the former editor-in-chief of French Elle that reveals an indomitable spirit and celebrates the liberating power of consciousness. In 1995, Jean-Dominique Bauby was the editor-in-chief of French Elle, the father of two young children, a 44-year-old man known and loved for his wit, his style, and his impassioned approach to life. By the end of the year he was also the victim of a rare kind of stroke to the brainstem. After 20 days in a coma, Bauby awoke into a body which had all but stopped working: only his left eye functioned, allowing him to see and, by blinking it, to make clear that his mind was unimpaired. Almost miraculously, he was soon able to express himself in the richest detail: dictating a word at a time, blinking to select each letter as the alphabet was recited to him slowly, over and over again. In the same way, he was able eventually to compose this extraordinary book. By turns wistful, mischievous, angry, and witty, Bauby bears witness to his determination to live as fully in his mind as he had been able to do in his body. He explains the joy, and deep sadness, of seeing his children and of hearing his aged father's voice on the phone. In magical sequences, he imagines traveling to other places and times and of lying next to the woman he loves. Fed only intravenously, he imagines preparing and tasting the full flavor of delectable dishes. Again and again he returns to an inexhaustible reservoir of sensations, keeping in touch with himself and the life around him. Jean-Dominique Bauby died two days after the French publication of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. This book is a lasting testament to his life.

bell jar: *The Bell Jar* Sylvia Plath, 2022-10-04 I felt very still and empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo. Sylvia Plath's groundbreaking semi-autobiographical novel offers an intimate, honest and often wrenching glimpse into mental illness. *The Bell Jar* broke the boundaries between fiction and reality and helped cement Sylvia Plath's place as an enduring feminist icon. Celebrated for its darkly humorous, razor sharp portrait of 1950s society, it continues to resonate with readers today as testament to the universal human struggle to claim one's rightful place in the world. A special illustrated edition - the second book in our collection of illustrated Faber classics.

bell jar: *The Bell Jar (Unabridged)* Sylvia Plath, 2018-12-21 This eBook edition of *The Bell Jar (Unabridged)* has been formatted to the highest digital standards and adjusted for readability on all devices. Esther Greenwood, a young woman from the suburbs of Boston, gains a summer internship at a prominent magazine in New York City, under editor Jay Cee; however, Esther is neither stimulated nor excited by either the big city or the glamorous culture and lifestyle that girls her age are expected to idolize and emulate. She instead finds her experience to be frightening and disorienting. From hereafter her mental state keeps deteriorating until she starts feeling helpless as if being kept inside a glass bell jar! *The Bell Jar* is the only novel written by the American writer and poet Sylvia Plath. Originally published under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas in 1963, the novel is semi-autobiographical, with the names of places and people changed. The book is often regarded as a roman à clef because the protagonist's descent into mental illness parallels Plath's own experiences with what may have been clinical depression or bipolar II disorder. Plath died by suicide a month after its first UK publication. The novel was published under Plath's name for the first time in 1967 and was not published in the United States until 1971, in accordance with the wishes of both Plath's husband, Ted Hughes, and her mother.

bell jar: **The Barnabus Project** Eric Fan, Terry Fan, Devin Fan, 2020-10-06 In a world built for Perfect Pets, Barnabus is a Failed Project, half mouse, half elephant, kept out of sight until his dreams of freedom lead him and his misfit friends on a perilous adventure. A stunning picture book from international bestsellers The Fan Brothers, joined by their brother Devin Fan.

bell jar: *Belzhar* Meg Wolitzer, 2014-10-09 I was sent here because of a boy. His name was Reeve Maxfield, and I loved him and then he died, and almost a year passed and no one knew what to do with me. A group of emotionally fragile, highly intelligent teenagers gather at a therapeutic boarding school where they are mysteriously picked for 'Special Topics in English'. Here, they are tasked with studying Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and keeping a journal. Each time the teens write in their diaries they are transported to a miraculous other world called Belzhar, a world where they are

no longer haunted by their trauma and grief - and each begins to tell their own story. From internationally bestselling author Meg Wolitzer, and published by John Green's editor, Belzharis a breathtaking and surprising story about first love, deep sorrow, and the power of acceptance. Entertainment Weekly's YA book of 2014 TIME Magazine's Top Ten YA of 2014 Kobo's best of 2014 Amazon's best books of 2014 'A story about what it means to lose someone, or something, you love. Twice.' Kirkus Reviews 'A welcome attack on continuing to live in the past at the expense of the present...Dry humour accompanies each journey in this readable novel, already selling well in America and deservedly so' Independent 'Breathtaking' Glamourmagazine 'Wolitzer has imagined a world for young readers that celebrates the sacred, transcendent power of reading and writing' New York Times 'An engaging fable about literature's healing power' Financial Times

bell jar: Ariel Sylvia Plath, 2014-10-21 A brilliant collection of poetry by Sylvia Plath, one of America's most famous and significant female authors. It is characterized by deep, psychological introspection paired with ambiguous scenes and narratives. This edition restores Plath's selection and order of poems, eschewing her husband's revisions in favour of the author's pure, unmodified vision. Random House of Canada is proud to bring you classic works of literature in ebook form, with the highest quality production values. Find more today and rediscover books you never knew you loved.

bell jar: Season of Youth Jerome Hamilton Buckley, 1974

bell jar: Winter Trees Sylvia Plath, 2017-10-03 The poems in Winter Trees were written in the last nine months of Sylvia Plath's life, and form part of the group from which the Ariel poems were chosen. They reveal the poet at the height of her creative powers, exhibiting the startling imagery and dramatic play for which she became known. Published posthumously in 1971, this valuable collection finds its place alongside The Colossus and Ariel in the oeuvre of a singular talent. 'Nearly all the poems here have the familiar Plath daring, the same feel of bits of frightened, vibrant, indignant consciousness translated instantly into words and images that blend close, experienced horror and icy, sardonic control.' New Statesman 'A book that anyone seriously interested in poetry now must have . . . Sylvia Plath's immense gift is evident throughout.' Guardian

bell jar: Sylvia and Ted Emma Tennant, 2001-05-12 A fictional re-creation of the turbulent courtship, marriage, and separation of poets Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes. In intense, dramatic prose, Emma Tennant unfolds a story of passion, conflict, and betrayal. Creating a series of unforgettable images she reconstructs the twentieth century's most famous literary love affair and the tempestuous triangle between Hughes, Plath, and Assia Wevill. Filled with mounting suspense and lurking danger, Sylvia and Ted is a tale that culminates in tragedy, leaving in its wake a hundred unanswered questions. Tennant was drawn to the subject partly as a result of her past relationship with Hughes -- and because of the legs that surround him and the two women who loved him. Though imaginative fiction, her novel vividly evokes the social and literary circles in which Plath and Hughes traveled and with the complexities, needs, and desires of three talented yet tortured people whose story continues to capture the imagination of readers.

bell jar: Crossing the Water Sylvia Plath, 2017-10-03 Crossing the Water and Winter Trees contain the poems written during the exceptionally creative period of the last years of Sylvia Plath's life. Published posthumously in 1971, they add a startling counterpoint to Ariel, the volume that made her reputation. Readers will recognise some of her most celebrated poems - 'Childless Woman', 'Mirror', 'Insomniac' - while discovering those still overlooked, including her radio play Three Women. These two extraordinary volumes find their place alongside The Colossus and Ariel in the oeuvre of a singular talent. 'Nearly all the poems here have the familiar Plath daring, the same feel of bits of frightened, vibrant, indignant consciousness translated instantly into words and images that blend close, experienced horror and icy, sardonic control.' Alan Brownjohn, New Statesman

bell jar: The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath, 2018-07-29 This carefully crafted ebook: The Bell Jar is formatted for your eReader with a functional and detailed table of contents. Esther Greenwood, a young woman from the suburbs of Boston, gains a summer internship at a prominent magazine in

New York City, under editor Jay Cee; however, Esther is neither stimulated nor excited by either the big city or the glamorous culture and lifestyle that girls her age are expected to idolize and emulate. She instead finds her experience to be frightening and disorienting. From hereafter her mental state keeps deteriorating until she starts feeling helpless as if being kept inside a glass bell jar! The Bell Jar is the only novel written by the American writer and poet Sylvia Plath. Originally published under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas in 1963, the novel is semi-autobiographical, with the names of places and people changed. The book is often regarded as a roman à clef because the protagonist's descent into mental illness parallels Plath's own experiences with what may have been clinical depression or bipolar II disorder. Plath died by suicide a month after its first UK publication. The novel was published under Plath's name for the first time in 1967 and was not published in the United States until 1971, in accordance with the wishes of both Plath's husband, Ted Hughes, and her mother.

bell jar: The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath, 2018-04-07 Sylvia Plath's shocking, realistic, and intensely emotional novel about a woman falling into the grip of insanity. Esther Greenwood is brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented, and successful, but slowly going under-maybe for the last time. In her acclaimed and enduring masterwork, Sylvia Plath brilliantly draws the reader into Esther's breakdown with such intensity that her insanity becomes palpably real, even rational-as accessible an experience as going to the movies. A deep penetration into the darkest and most harrowing corners of the human psyche, The Bell Jar is an extraordinary accomplishment and a haunting American classic. We are delighted to publish this classic book as part of our extensive Classic Library collection. Many of the books in our collection have been out of print for decades, and therefore have not been accessible to the general public. The aim of our publishing program is to facilitate rapid access to this vast reservoir of literature, and our view is that this is a significant literary work, which deserves to be brought back into print after many decades. The contents of the vast majority of titles in the Classic Library have been scanned from the original works. To ensure a high quality product, each title has been meticulously hand curated by our staff. Our philosophy has been guided by a desire to provide the reader with a book that is as close as possible to ownership of the original work. We hope that you will enjoy this wonderful classic work, and that for you it becomes an enriching experience.

bell jar: Zoo Time Howard Jacobson, 2013-01-01 The new novel from the author of The Finkler Question, winner of the Man Booker Prize 2010

bell jar: The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath Jo Gill, 2008-09-11 Sylvia Plath is widely recognized as one of the leading figures in twentieth-century Anglo-American literature and culture. Her work has constantly remained in print in the UK and US (and in numerous translated editions) since the appearance of her first collection in 1960. Plath's own writing has been supplemented over the decades by a wealth of critical and biographical material. The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath provides an authoritative and comprehensive guide to the poetry, prose and autobiographical writings of Sylvia Plath. It offers a critical overview of key readings, debates and issues from almost fifty years of Plath scholarship, draws attention to the historical, literary, national and gender contexts which frame her writing and presents informed and attentive readings of her own work. This accessibly written book will be of great use to students beginning their explorations of this important writer.

bell jar: The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath Sylvia Plath, 2007-12-18 The complete, uncensored journals of Sylvia Plath—essential reading for anyone who has been moved and fascinated by the poet's life and work. A genuine literary event.... Plath's journals contain marvels of discovery. —The New York Times Book Review Sylvia Plath's journals were originally published in 1982 in a heavily abridged version authorized by Plath's husband, Ted Hughes. This new edition is an exact and complete transcription of the diaries Plath kept during the last twelve years of her life. Sixty percent of the book is material that has never before been made public, more fully revealing the intensity of the poet's personal and literary struggles, and providing fresh insight into both her frequent desperation and the bravery with which she faced down her demons.

bell jar: The 100 Best Novels in English Robert McCrum, 2019-03-03 LITERARY

COMPANIONS, BOOK REVIEWS & GUIDES. Everybody loves a list but this is a list of major ambition: namely, to select the best 100 novels in the English language, published from the late 17th century to the present day. This list has been built up week by week in The Observer since September 2013, and selected by writer and Observer editor Robert McCrum. With a short critique on each book, this is a real delight for literary lovers.

bell jar: *Damn Delicious* Rhee, Chungah, 2016-09-06 The debut cookbook by the creator of the wildly popular blog Damn Delicious proves that quick and easy doesn't have to mean boring. Blogger Chungah Rhee has attracted millions of devoted fans with recipes that are undeniable 'keepers'-each one so simple, so easy, and so flavor-packed, that you reach for them busy night after busy night. In *Damn Delicious*, she shares exclusive new recipes as well as her most beloved dishes, all designed to bring fun and excitement into everyday cooking. From five-ingredient Mini Deep Dish Pizzas to no-fuss Sheet Pan Steak & Veggies and 20-minute Spaghetti Carbonara, the recipes will help even the most inexperienced cooks spend less time in the kitchen and more time around the table. Packed with quickie breakfasts, 30-minute skillet sprints, and speedy takeout copycats, this cookbook is guaranteed to inspire readers to whip up fast, healthy, homemade meals that are truly 'damn delicious!'

bell jar: Once Upon a Chef: Weeknight/Weekend Jennifer Segal, 2021-09-14 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • 70 quick-fix weeknight dinners and 30 luscious weekend recipes that make every day taste extra special, no matter how much time you have to spend in the kitchen—from the beloved bestselling author of *Once Upon a Chef*. “Jennifer’s recipes are healthy, approachable, and creative. I literally want to make everything from this cookbook!”—Gina Homolka, author of *The Skinnytaste Cookbook* Jennifer Segal, author of the blog and bestselling cookbook *Once Upon a Chef*, is known for her foolproof, updated spins on everyday classics. Meticulously tested and crafted with an eye toward both flavor and practicality, Jenn’s recipes hone in on exactly what you feel like making. Here she devotes whole chapters to fan favorites, from Marvelous Meatballs to Chicken Winners, and Breakfast for Dinner to Family Feasts. Whether you decide on sticky-sweet Barbecued Soy and Ginger Chicken Thighs; an enlightened and healthy-ish take on Turkey, Spinach & Cheese Meatballs; Chorizo-Style Burgers; or Brownie Pudding that comes together in under thirty minutes, Jenn has you covered.

bell jar: *Eileen* Ottessa Moshfegh, 2015-08-18 Now a major motion picture streaming on Hulu, starring Anne Hathaway and Thomasin McKenzie Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize “Eileen is a remarkable piece of writing, always dark and surprising, sometimes ugly and occasionally hilarious. Its first-person narrator is one of the strangest, most messed-up, most pathetic—and yet, in her own inimitable way, endearing—misfits I’ve encountered in fiction. Trust me, you have never read anything remotely like Eileen.” —Washington Post So here we are. My name was Eileen Dunlop. Now you know me. I was twenty-four years old then, and had a job that paid fifty-seven dollars a week as a kind of secretary at a private juvenile correctional facility for teenage boys. I think of it now as what it really was for all intents and purposes—a prison for boys. I will call it Moorehead. Delvin Moorehead was a terrible landlord I had years later, and so to use his name for such a place feels appropriate. In a week, I would run away from home and never go back. This is the story of how I disappeared. The Christmas season offers little cheer for Eileen Dunlop, an unassuming yet disturbed young woman trapped between her role as her alcoholic father’s caretaker in a home whose squalor is the talk of the neighborhood and a day job as a secretary at the boys’ prison, filled with its own quotidian horrors. Consumed by resentment and self-loathing, Eileen tempers her dreary days with perverse fantasies and dreams of escaping to the big city. In the meantime, she fills her nights and weekends with shoplifting, stalking a buff prison guard named Randy, and cleaning up her increasingly deranged father’s messes. When the bright, beautiful, and cheery Rebecca Saint John arrives on the scene as the new counselor at Moorehead, Eileen is enchanted and proves unable to resist what appears at first to be a miraculously budding friendship. In a Hitchcockian twist, her affection for Rebecca ultimately pulls her into complicity in a crime that surpasses her wildest imaginings. Played out against the snowy landscape of coastal New England in the days

leading up to Christmas, young Eileen's story is told from the gimlet-eyed perspective of the now much older narrator. Creepy, mesmerizing, and sublimely funny, in the tradition of Shirley Jackson and early Vladimir Nabokov, this powerful debut novel enthralls and shocks, and introduces one of the most original new voices in contemporary literature. Ottessa Moshfegh is also the author of *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, *Homesick for Another World: Stories*, and *McGlue*.

bell jar: *Good Morning, Mr. Mandela* Zelda la Grange, 2014-06-24 "In *Good Morning, Mr. Mandela*, Zelda la Grange recounts her remarkable life at the right hand of the man we both knew and loved. It's a tribute to both of them—to Madiba's eye for talent and his capacity for trust and to Zelda's courage to take on a great challenge and her capacity for growth. This story proves the power of making politics personal and is an important reminder of the lessons Madiba taught us all." —President Bill Clinton "President Nelson Mandela's choice of the young Afrikaner typist Zelda la Grange as his most trusted aide embodied his commitment to reconciliation in South Africa. She repaid his trust with loyalty and integrity. I have the highest regard for her." —Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu "Zelda la Grange has a singular perspective on Nelson Mandela, having served as his longtime personal aide, confidante and close friend. She is a dear friend to both of us and a touchstone to all of us who loved Madiba. Her story of their journey together demonstrates how a man who transformed an entire nation also had the power to transform the life of one extraordinary woman." —Morgan Freeman and Lori McCreary, actor, producer of *Invictus* A white Afrikaner, Zelda la Grange grew up in segregated South Africa, supporting the regime and the rules of apartheid. Her conservative family referred to the imprisoned Nelson Mandela as "a terrorist." Yet just a few years after his release and the end of apartheid, she would be traveling the world by Mr. Mandela's side, having grown to respect and cherish the man she would come to call Khulu, or "grandfather. *Good Morning, Mr. Mandela* tells the extraordinary story of how a young woman's life, beliefs, prejudices—everything she once believed—were utterly transformed by the man she had been taught was the enemy. It is the incredible journey of an awkward, terrified young secretary in her twenties who rose from a job in a government typing pool to become one of the president's most loyal and devoted associates. During his presidency she was one of his three private secretaries, and then became an aide-de-camp and spokesperson and managed his office in his retirement. Working and traveling by his side for almost two decades, La Grange found herself negotiating with celebrities and world leaders, all in the cause of supporting and caring for Mr. Mandela in his many roles. Here La Grange pays tribute to Nelson Mandela as she knew him—a teacher who gave her the most valuable lessons of her life. The Mr. Mandela we meet in these pages is a man who refused to be defined by his past, who forgave and respected all, but who was also frank, teasing, and direct. As he renewed his country, he also freed La Grange from a closed world of fear and mistrust, giving her life true meaning. "I was fearful of so much twenty years ago—of life, of black people, of this black man and the future of South Africa—and I now was no longer persuaded or influenced by mainstream fears. He not only liberated the black man but the white man, too." This is a book about love and second chances that honors the lasting and inspiring gifts of one of the great men of our time. It offers a rare intimate portrait of Nelson Mandela and his remarkable life as well as moving proof of the power we all have to change.

bell jar: *The Grief of Influence* Heather Clark, 2010-12-09 *The Grief of Influence* follows Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes through alternating periods of collaboration and competition, showing how each poet forged a voice both through and against the other's, and offering a new assessment of the twentieth century's most important poetic partnership.

bell jar: *Sounds from the Bell Jar* Gordon Claridge, Ruth Pryor, Gwen Watkins, 1990

bell jar: *The Goblin Emperor* Katherine Addison, 2014-04-01 A lush tale of deadly court intrigue and a modern classic of fantasy by Locus award winner and Hugo, Nebula, and World Fantasy Award finalist Katherine Addison Unbound Worlds 100 Best Fantasy Novels of All Time A Best Fantasy Novel of the Decade Pick for BookRiot Striking.—The New York Times The youngest, half-goblin son of the Emperor has lived his entire life in exile, distant from the Imperial Court and the deadly intrigue that suffuses it. But when his father and three half brothers in line for the throne

are killed in an accident, he has no choice but to take his place as the only surviving rightful heir. Entirely unschooled in the art of court politics, he has no friends, no advisors, and the sure knowledge that whoever assassinated his father and brothers could make an attempt on his life at any moment. Surrounded by sycophants eager to curry favor with the naïve new emperor, and overwhelmed by the burdens of his new life, he can trust nobody. Amid the swirl of plots to depose him, offers of arranged marriages, and the specter of the unknown conspirators who lurk in the shadows, he must quickly adjust to life as the Goblin Emperor. All the while, he is alone, and trying to find even a single friend . . . and hoping for the possibility of romance, yet also vigilant against the unseen enemies that threaten him, lest he lose his throne—or his life. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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