

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
J.T. ELLISON



In like a lion, out like a lamb—and a title reveal!

March 2020 Newsletter

Vol. 215

Hello GentleReader,



Greetings from Chez Ellison. I hope this missive finds you healthy, happy, and well-read. March came roaring in like a lion this year, and the metaphor was especially apt in Nashville. But we, and the world, are persevering.

Life in these strange, uncertain times is all about finding comfort. Whether that means outings with family or friends, a nice bottle of wine, a cup of tea, a run, a good meal, a cozy blanket, a good long soak, or (for me, natch) a good book, I hereby give you permission to do whatever you need to feel better in this moment. Self-care goes a long way towards allowing you to care for those around you.

Since we've all been encouraged to stay home, we introverts have you covered. Is there anything better than a quiet evening with a good book? A crackling fire, the scribble of pen on paper, sitting snug and warm against a rainy night escaping into another world... yes, this is the perfect scenario for me. Which is why I've been so happy to find [these videos of ancient libraries by New](#)

[Bliss](#). They've become my writing soundtrack, and my evening reading soundtrack as well. What genius! There are a number of different scenes, including several literary environs, such as Gandalf's library and the Gryffindor common room at Hogwarts.

With this as my backdrop, I spent most of February hunkered down working on the new book. It's not finished yet, but it is coming together. Enough so that I'm finally ready to share the title with you. Drumroll.... The standalone novel that will be out next February is called...

HER DARK LIES

In keeping with the spirit of "I don't want to reveal too much too soon so as not to ruin the magic of the process," I will give you this tiny teaser: it's about a swanky destination wedding on an isolated Italian island that goes horribly wrong. Think fortress villas and storms and windswept cliffs and an artist marrying into a very public family who has many, many secrets.

It strikes me as I write this that thematically, this is my standalone milieu: X meets Y and it goes horribly wrong. Hmm, that's the underlying theme for the Taylor and Sam books, as well. Good to know I have a formula.

But back to HER DARK LIES. The cover is magnificent, and as soon as I'm allowed, I will share it. I am seeing glimmers of what might happen at the end, though I don't know the exact ending just yet. It's very much still in the creation stage. A few weeks ago, when Mary Kubica was here in town, I had to pause our conversation on the Parnassus bookstore stage to make a note about a scene that had popped into my head. Something she said about building relatable characters triggered a very visual scene. I'm so often asked how I come up with my ideas...trust me when I say the audience saw how that works firsthand. I never know when inspiration strikes.

And yes, Mary will get a credit in the acknowledgments because now I know what I'm driving toward. That little flash is building into the big finale...

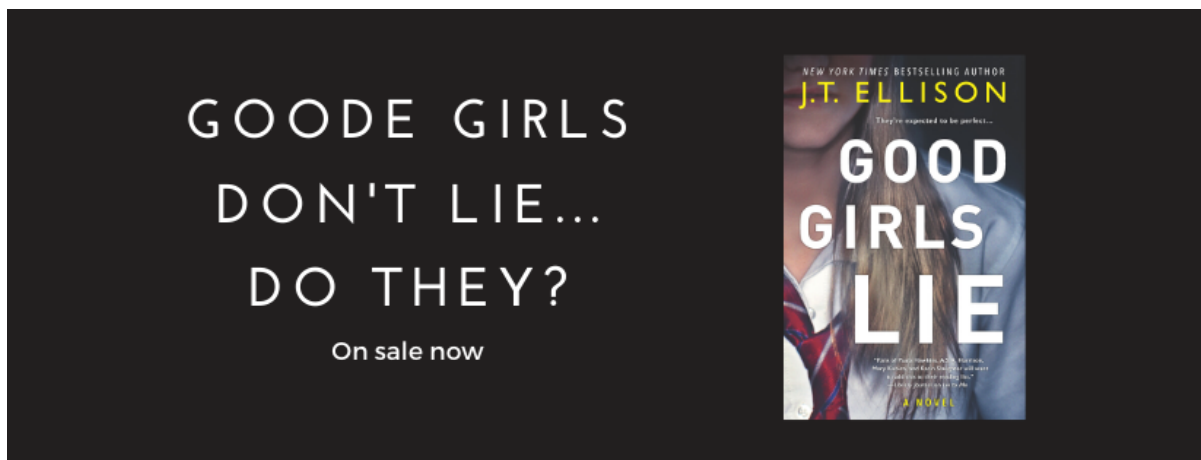
☒ The Nashville Tornado

On a much more sober note, as many of you know, Nashville and its surrounding counties were hit by a devastating tornado March 2. We're all still reeling. So many have lost their homes, their businesses, their pets, and, terribly, their loved ones. If you'd like to donate, every little bit helps. Check out [The Community](#)

[Foundation](#), [Nashville Humane Society](#), [Community Resource Center](#), and [Hands On Nashville](#) for more information.

In one of those weird life imitates art coincidences, [FIELD OF GRAVES](#), the Taylor Jackson prequel, has a plotline dealing with a tornado going through downtown. That was written years ago in response to the last tornado that hit us, in 1998. Still, I think I need to write a book in which all the characters win the lottery.

☒ ICYMI – Good Girls Lie Roundup



It's hard to believe [GOOD GIRLS LIE](#) has been out in the world for two months! Its success is all because of you—buying the book, coming to see me on tour, sharing it with your friends, leaving ratings and reviews, [adding it to your Goodreads shelves](#), requesting it from your libraries, has made a huge difference. So thank you!

Speaking of libraries, I spent a day at the Public Library Association (PLA) conference in Nashville signing copies. I met so many fabulous librarians. Be sure to reach out to your local library and make sure they have a copy in stock for me, okay?

In case you're interested, [here is a roundup](#) of the book's reviews, essays, and interviews. And if you haven't gotten your copy yet, what are you waiting for?

I NEED TO READ THIS BOOK!

☒What I'm Reading



THE THIRD TO DIE by Allison Brennan

This book is riveting, terrifying, and simply fantastic. Allison Brennan ratchets up the tension to the breaking point with her new FBI MRT team chasing a devious killer. This is classic crime fiction at its best. With deep characterizations and a truly scary villain driving the twisted plot, this is the start of a brilliant new series from the queen of the thriller. If you like Taylor and Sam, you will love this.

THE OTHER MRS by Mary Kubica

I've been a big fan of Mary Kubica for ages, and I feel like *THE OTHER MRS.* is a leap forward for her, both in style and structure. This is a remarkable book, insidious and dark and elegantly plotted, with a wonderful ending that I just didn't see coming. I know many of you are fans of Mary's—what is your favorite book of hers? And if you've already read it—OMG, right??? This one's going to be brilliant on the screen, Netflix is making it into a movie.

BEHIND EVERY LIE by Christina McDonald

I absolutely loved this book. Following the great *THE NIGHT OLIVIA FELL*, Christina McDonald has crafted a wild story with all the great suspense elements—murder; intrigue; amnesia; deep, dark secrets—and a blistering pace to boot. I snarfed *BEHIND EVERY LIE* down in two sittings, and find it highly recommendable. It's hard to talk too much about the story without ruining it so y'all just trust me, okay?

MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO SOMEONE by Lori Gottlieb

I believe books find us at the exactly right time in our lives to benefit/enjoy them.

This one is no exception. I'd been resistant to the idea of reading about a therapist going to therapy, but late one night when I couldn't sleep, I downloaded a sample and tore through the opening pages, highlighting starting on page two. This is a smart, witty, touching memoir that reads more like a mystery novel, with excellent pacing and an intriguing cast of characters. Life-changing.

☒ What I Found Interesting This Month

[The 11 Best Hotels for Book Lovers.](#) Let's go! I've actually stayed in several of these, including the Sheraton in Edinburgh which is as divine as they say. The rooftop hydro pool is insane.

[How to Make Balanced Non-Alcoholic Cocktails, According to Bartenders.](#) For my fellow Dry January (February, March, Always) peeps... some seriously cool combos. I'm missing several of these fun bases in my bar but will be adding them soon.

[Why Ebook Subscription Services Will Finally Succeed In The Coming Decade.](#) Very interesting... have you ever used a subscription service for books?

[A bookstore in Canada is filled with adorable foster kittens that customers can adopt.](#) Best bookstore ever! Though my minions might not agree, they like my library better.

[Everything You Wanted to Know About Book Sales \(But Were Afraid to Ask\).](#) This is a great behind-the-scenes, nuts-and-bolts primer on how the publishing world works, from how books are bought and sold to how they are accounted for. Great for readers and writers alike.

☒ A WORD ON WORDS

Season 5 of A WORD ON WORDS kicked off with a trip to the dark side in [my interview with the superb Jeremy Finley in The Dark Above.](#)

Mary Laura Philpott sat down with [Ann Patchett in The Dutch House](#), [Oyinkan Braithwaite in My Sister, The Serial Killer](#), and [Richard Russo in Chances Are...](#)

Lots more to come from this season... and as always, #KeepReading!

I WANT TO WATCH!

March's Recipe: Cauliflower Bread



Since spring is near to springing, all I've been thinking about is...cookbooks. Well, and how to end HER DARK LIES, of course, but I've been thinking about food. How personal it is, from what you love, to if you cook or eat out, to the recipe adaptations you have to make if you have allergies or health issues. How sustainable it is. What we as an interconnected society would do without a ready food supply, and the freedom to make the choices we do. How to build this year's garden, what to plant, what to supplement from the stores. Food is life. It is as much an expression of our personalities as our choice of books.

As a celiac with a spouse who is allergic to soy, food is not only sustenance for my family, but it can be dangerous, as well. When I open my pantry, I have to make a number of choices, most often, what can I substitute in this recipe to make it healthy, safe, and tasty? Lately, I've been toying with the idea of pulling together all of the [recipes](#) I've recommended over the years into an actual cookbook. Let me know if that's something you'd like to see.

With this in mind, here's a recipe for a divine cauliflower and almond flour bread that is incredible for grilled cheese, bruschetta, or simply dipping in sauces. I might try this recipe as a breadstick, I imagine that would be yummy. The batter can also be used as a breading for mozzarella sticks... what better way to get

veggies into the kiddos? It's rich and garlicky and so delicious.

BRING ON THE GARLIC BREAD!

You can find all of my recipes [here](#). And if you want some wine to go with the meals, [The Wine Vixen](#) has you covered.

That's all for now! I'm off to create something fun and spooky for you. Plant some bulbs, fill those bird-feeders, and if you're in the city, take a walk around the block and look at the trees, and I'll see you next month. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

peace and hugs,



PS: Do you get my blog posts in your inbox? Sign up for as it releases (usually once or twice a week) or as a weekly digest. Or take it as an RSS feed. We aim to please. ☒

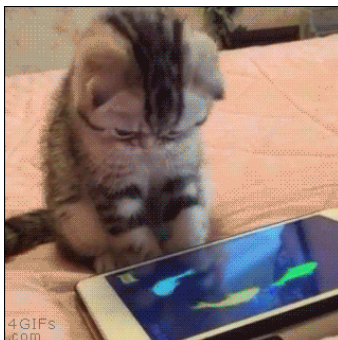
RIGHT AWAY

WEEKLY

RSS FEED

Are you still here?

Here's a kitten for your troubles.



Did you like this month's newsletter? Share it with a friend!



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