

*NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
**J.T. ELLISON**



**Gratitude attitude, a new paperback, and tasty breads**

**November 2019 Newsletter**  
**Vol. 212**

Hello GentleReader,



Writing is such a privilege.

Right now, I'm sitting in my office, upstairs in my house. There is a cat sleeping next to me under the throw, one small paw sticking out, flexing as she dreams of mother's milk. Another snoozes at my feet, her gray fur as smooth as the velvet footstool she sleeps upon. Night has fallen. These strange early nights in the first several days after the time change are so startling. I get lost in my work, and it feels wrong to see blackness outside my windows. It makes me want to nest, to cook warm, nourishing foods, to light a fire and open a bottle of wine and read. But that's not in service to my story. I have at least another hour of writing ahead before I can perform these homely chores. I am drafting hard, living in the story, dreaming about the characters. I am on deadline.

It's a four-letter word, deadline. It's a word we can utter among our brethren and receive compassionate murmurs of comfort. They know. They understand.

Deadline means cricks in necks, weight gain, fear and frustration, cramped wrists, ignored phone calls and texts and emails, forgotten obligations. Deadline means you—the friend, the spouse, the parent, the sibling, yes, even sometimes the child—will come second, or third, or fourth on the list of importance, because nothing, nothing, is more important than getting the story done on time. (Dogs, I feel, are the exception to these inattentions; nothing helps a writer on deadline more than a long walk.) Even if you're given our meager attention, it will be like conversing with a ghost. We might be there in the room with you physically, might even be looking at you, but mentally, we are elsewhere. We are in the story. We are living and breathing the life of our characters, not our own. We are creating.

What a gift this is, this transcendence into another world. The idea that we can remove ourselves from the life around us and retreat into a land of make believe, get lost in a world we create out of whole cloth, excites me. Even non-fiction writers are able to escape into the lands they are creating, though theirs might not have fire-breathing dragons or pirate ships or spies lurking in the dark.

As stressful and difficult as this time in the book's life cycle is, I am grateful for every moment. I do this for me, yes. But I also do this for you. Thank you for being a part of my world. I'm grateful for you.

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## ☒ **Want a Sneek Peek of Good Girls Lie?**

**December 30** will be here in the blink of an eye and the positive reviews are rolling in. [Publishers Weekly gave it a coveted starred review](#) and said: "A high-tension thriller...Alternating points of view raise the suspense, blurring the lines between what's true and false...Ellison keeps readers guessing throughout."

**Booklist** had this to say: "An intriguing plot, featuring a final twist, shows what can happen when hidden truths are revealed."

And one of my favorite book reviewers, Abby at [Crime By The Book](#), wrote an incredible analysis of the story and characters. "GOOD GIRLS LIE is a superb psychological thriller...a deliciously dark, wickedly plotted suspense story...with drama, secret societies, cliques, illicit affairs, manipulation, and, of course, murder, and it's the sort of book you never want to end." There's nothing cooler than when a reader "gets" your book. If you're not already following Abby's blog and Instagram, do be sure to check her out.

Now for the fun part. Who wants to read an exclusive excerpt of GOOD GIRLS LIE?

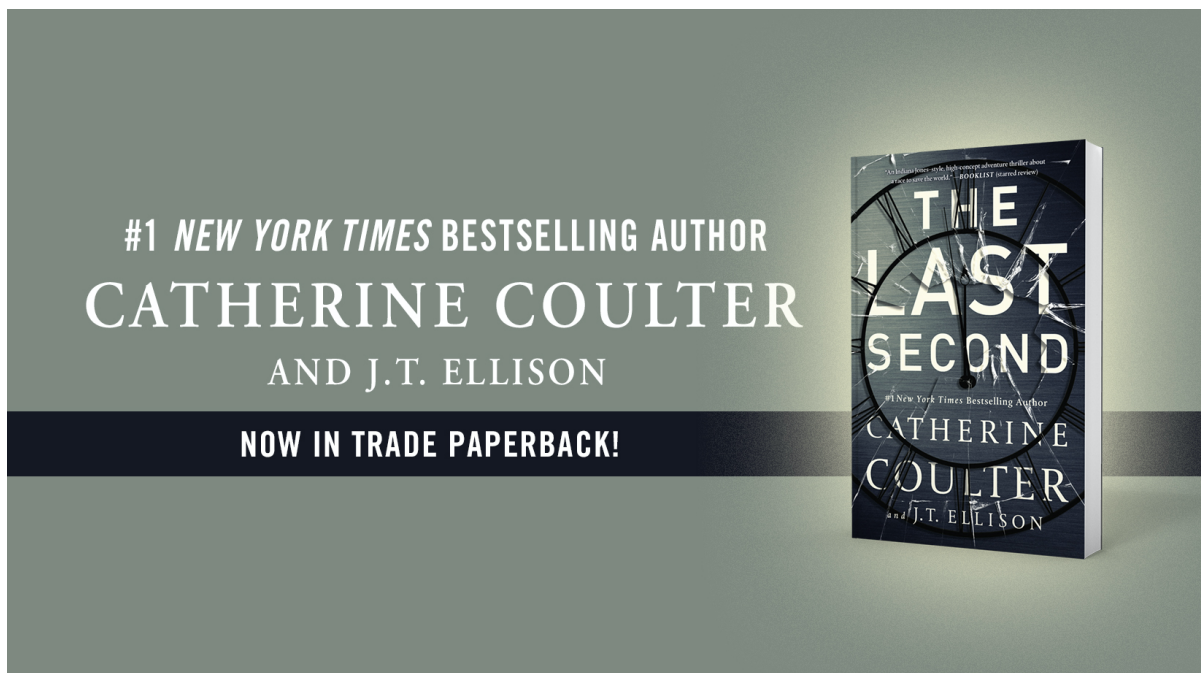
**GIMME THE SNEAK PEEK!**

## ☒ **A huge deal on TEAR ME APART!**

Can't wait until December for more? Today through 11/17, TEAR ME APART is on sale for only \$2.99! This is quite the deal and I hope you'll take full advantage of it.

**WHAT A DEAL!**

## ☒ **THE LAST SECOND paperback is here!**



THE LAST SECOND came out in paperback yesterday, and I love this cover! It's especially lovely in person. The way light shines on the shattered glass is

gorgeous. This is the final adventure for the Brit in the FBI series, pitting Nicholas and Mike against a former astronaut who may or may not be insane, but is definitely trying to reshape the world in her own image.

I NEED THE ONE

## What I'm Reading



It's been a fun reading month, with lots of different genres and delivery methods (the Koryta book was audio, and it was magnificent.)

### [NINTH HOUSE](#) by Leigh Bardugo

Sigh. The evening after I finished Leigh Bardugo's incredible novel, I sat down to read a new book and experienced an actual moment of grief that I was done with this one. What a brilliant world Bardugo has created. Smart, intricate, fearlessly crafted, this is an intellectual fantasy/horror novel that cements Bardugo firmly in the annals of the best storytellers of this generation. Immediately shoots into my top 3 books of 2019. Just incredible. ☹️☹️

### [IF SHE WAKES](#) by Michael Koryta

I just finished this amazing title from Michael Koryta on audio. The conceit of IF SHE WAKES—the main character in a coma—scared me off at first, but several people told me Koryta pulled it off, so I dove in. And holy cow. The story rocks along and has one of the scariest villains I've read in a long time. Think of a rattlesnake sheathed in the skin of an assassin. His female leads are fantastic,

heroic, leap off the page larger than life, and the intricate storyline is A+. There are also multiple points of view, all handled wonderfully. Just a superb book all the way around.

### **THE SECRETS WE KEPT by Lara Prescott**

The hype surrounding this book is so well-deserved. I'm a fan of anything lady spy, especially CIA, so I pounced the moment it came out, and it was so worth it. Elegantly written and realized, Prescott has done a fascinating moment in history justice. I had no idea about the backstory of Dr. Zhivago's long road to publication. Prescott presents all sides of the story, from Russian gulags to the swans of a D.C. summer, from the keen eye of multiple fascinating narrators. This is a get smart kind of book. (see what I did there?) I loved it!

### **THE FOUNTAINS OF SILENCE by Ruta Sepetys**

This intriguing look at 1950s Franco-era Spain was in turns enlightening, frustrating, and horrifying. Sepetys has a knack for using vivid characterization to tell the inside story of her chosen historical moment, and I was entranced by eighteen year old Daniel Matheison and his inamorata Ana Morena—star-crossed lovers who find themselves torn apart by the stringent rules of Franco's twisted reign. A subplot diving into the illegal adoption trade is at once fascinating and terribly sad. An impeccably researched story, Sepetys's unflinching account is well worth your time.

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## **The Latest From The Tao**



See my weekly ponderings and the articles and ideas I found fascinating this month, including “[Why I Always Visit Cemeteries While Traveling](#)” and a cool look at the history of deckled edges. Plus this incredibly important and exciting news:

[Hundreds of Episodes of A Word on Words Now Available Online.](#) The coolest news ever: the original, unsurpassable A WORD ON WORDS TV show with the late, great John Seigenthaler digitized and available for viewing. You can even watch the [episodes I appeared on](#) before I was a host! #keepreading

[TAKE ME TO THE TAO](#)

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[RIGHT AWAY](#)

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**November's Recipe: Banana Bread**





I don't know about you, but I almost always have a few bananas slip past their prime before I can eat them all. My favorite solution? Luscious Banana Bread. My favorite recipe is taken from the most well-thumbed cookbook on my shelf, [The Fannie Farmer Cookbook](#), and is easily modified for gluten free with King Arthur's one-for-one flour or almond flour.

BRING ON THE 'NANNERS

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That's it from me. I hope you enjoyed this month's newsletter, in its brand new fancy format and new delivery service, Mailerlite. Let me know what you think. I'm wishing all my American friends a blessed Happy Thanksgiving, and the rest of you a blessed transition to the depths of Autumn. Read a good book, run through a pile of leaves, try a new flavor of tea, and I'll see you next month.

peace and hugs,





## Are you still here?

Here's a kitten for your troubles.



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



### J.T. Ellison

P.O. Box 218453  
Nashville, TN 37221  
USA

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