

DOUBLE DUTCH PUBLISHING

THE READING ROOM · A FIELD GUIDE

The Underread

*How we find the books the internet forgot — and how to use
the rest of the house.*

DOUBLEDUTCHPUBLISHING.COM / THE-UNDERREAD

What is The Underread?

The Underread is a book-discovery engine with one stubborn purpose: to hand you a book you could not have found on your own.

Not the title every list is already shouting about — the one just underneath it. Quietly brilliant, strangely overlooked, waiting for exactly the right reader to walk past and notice.

Tell it what you love — a novel, a mood, a pair of favourite authors — and it reads your taste back to you, reaches into a hand-built library of overlooked books, and returns a short, personal shortlist. Every pick arrives with a line or two on *why* it's for you.

It's powered by AI, built on Claude. But it behaves less like an algorithm chasing your clicks and more like a well-read friend who leans across the table and says: *you have to read this.*

“Every recommendation should feel like a secret handed to you — not a billboard shouting at you.”

Why we built it

Discovery is broken. The same forty books get recommended to everyone, everywhere, forever — not because they're the best, but because they're already the biggest. Bestseller lists measure momentum, not merit. The result is a strange scarcity in the middle of abundance: millions of books, and somehow always the same ones.

Double Dutch is an independent press, and we exist for the overlooked — the debut that never got a marketing budget, the translated novel that never crossed an ocean, the backlist gem that quietly slipped out of print. The Underread is how we point a flashlight into that dark, generous middle.

There's a business reason too, and we'll say it plainly: we would rather earn your trust than sell it. We never take money to recommend a book. Nobody pays to appear. What you get is a genuine opinion — which is the entire point of the thing.

“Bestseller lists measure momentum, not merit.”

A well-read friend, at scale

There's no magic here — just careful design pointed at a single job: getting the right overlooked book into your hands.

1 You tell it your taste.

A few books you loved, a genre, a mood — whatever you can give it. More is better, but a single beloved title is plenty to start.

2 It reads between the lines.

Rather than matching keywords, it interprets what you actually respond to: voice, pacing, obsession, the particular feeling you're chasing.

3 It searches the library.

We've hand-built a collection of overlooked titles across every genre — the kind of books that reward a reader who goes looking.

4 It hands you a shortlist.

A handful of specific books, each with a short note on why it fits you — so you can decide in seconds, not hours.

What we refuse to do

A recommendation engine is only as good as the things it won't do for money. Here are ours, in writing.

No bestsellers as filler. If you'd already have found it in an airport bookshop, it undermines the whole promise. We aim for the genuine secret.

No pay-to-play. Authors and publishers cannot buy a recommendation, a review, or a nudge. Not now, not ever. Money flows from readers, never toward us from the reviewed.

No dark patterns. No hoarding your data, no manufactured urgency, no engagement traps. Read the pick, close the tab, go live your life.

No noise. One good book beats ten mediocre ones. We would always rather say less and mean it.

“We’d rather earn your trust than sell it.”

THE REST OF THE HOUSE

What to use the site for

The Underread is the front door. Here's everything else waiting inside — for the people who read, and the people who write.

For readers — find your next book, keep the habit

For writers — the tools we wish we'd had

For everyone — pull up a chair

Find your next book

Four ways in, depending on how much of a nudge you want.

The Underread

Your AI-powered secret-finder, and the heart of the whole house. Give it a book you love; get back one you've never heard of and won't forget.

What to Read Next

A quick quiz that reads your current mood and points you somewhere good — ideal for when you can't name what you want, only how you want to feel.

Themed Reading Lists

Hand-picked stacks built around a single feeling, place, or obsession. Curated by people, not trending charts.

How Long to Read

Enter a book and get an honest reading-time estimate before you commit — so a weekend read never turns into a three-month guilt trip.

Keep the habit

The small tools that turn a good find into a reading life.

The Shelf

A private, no-account tracker for what you're reading and what's next — saved right in your browser, owned entirely by you.

Translation Finder

Track down which translation of a classic is actually worth your time, before you accidentally read the dusty one.

Craft Notes from Our Editors

Short essays on how good books are built — structure, pacing, continuity — straight from the editing room. For readers who love to look under the hood.

*“One overlooked book in your inbox each week.
No noise, no bestsellers.”*

If you make the books

We're a press, so we built the tools we always wished we'd had.

Submission Guide

What we publish, what we don't, and exactly how to send it. No mystery, no gatekeeping theatre.

Comp-Title Finder

Find the "for readers of X and Y" titles that place your manuscript in the market — the paragraph every query letter needs.

Indie-Press Directory

A living map of independent presses worth querying across the English-speaking world, sorted by sensibility.

Library Outreach Kit

Ready-to-send letters — a reader request and a librarian pitch — to get a book onto library shelves.

Craft Notes

Structure, pacing, and continuity essays from our editors — as useful at the desk as they are on the couch.

Start here

You already did the first, best thing — you joined. Here's how to make the most of the room:

1 Run The Underread with a book you love.

Start with a favourite and see what it hands back. Then try a mood instead of a title.

2 Save your finds to The Shelf.

Keep the good ones somewhere that's yours — no account, no tracking.

3 Watch your inbox.

One overlooked book a week. No bestsellers, no noise, no billionaires.

If the room ever earns a place in your week, you can help keep the lights on as a Friend — a few dollars a month, and none of it goes to a billionaire. Big houses have shareholders; we have friends.

Welcome to the reading room.