



## Letters to Amelia

**Lindsay Zier-Vogel**

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Lindsay Zier-Vogel's debut novel *Letters to Amelia* explores love and grief through correspondence.

Just as Jamie, her boyfriend of seven years, leaves her, Grace, a Toronto library technician, receives a new work assignment. Without anyone else knowing it, she is to read and summarize a box of letters written between Amelia Earhart and her lover. The letters help to distract Grace from her loss. As she delves into her job, she opens up about her breakup to friends and family. She and Jamie reunite long enough for Grace to get pregnant; inspired by the passions that Amelia relates in her letters, Grace embraces the possibility of motherhood, undertaken in her own way.

Each of the book's short chapters functions like a snapshot, capturing familiar everyday moments and feelings. Their descriptions of work, downtime, and how Grace withholds painful news from coworkers and friends are visceral and immediate. Her conversations reveal the suspenseful gap between what she wants to say, and what she reveals only in her own letters back to Amelia. Grace's correspondence reveals a side of her that her friends aren't privy to, including her developing protectiveness toward her baby.

The novel evokes compassion for Amelia and Grace, who both struggle to share themselves with others. As Amelia's letters go public, Grace realizes that she's also feeling protective of Amelia's privacy; she resents the ways that the public judges and pigeonholes Amelia. Acting on her personal connection to the famous figure, she goes after the same joy that she learns that Amelia experienced, in a plane trip, alone.

An understated literary work with a historical underpinning, *Letters to Amelia* celebrates singular desires and pays homage to intimacy in the face of social scrutiny.

MARI CARLSON (September / October 2021)

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