



## Love Letters to the Dead: A Novel

By Ava Dellaira

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### Love Letters to the Dead: A Novel By Ava Dellaira

It begins as an assignment for English class: Write a letter to a dead person. Laurel chooses Kurt Cobain because her sister, May, loved him. And he died young, just like May did. Soon, Laurel has a notebook full of letters to people like Janis Joplin, Amy Winehouse, Amelia Earhart, Heath Ledger, and more -- though she never gives a single one of them to her teacher. She writes about starting high school, navigating new friendships, falling in love for the first time, learning to live with her splintering family. And, finally, about the abuse she suffered while May was supposed to be looking out for her. Only then, once Laurel has written down the truth about what happened to herself, can she truly begin to accept what happened to May. And only when Laurel has begun to see her sister as the person she was -- lovely and amazing and deeply flawed -- can she begin to discover her own path in this stunning debut from Ava Dellaira, *Love Letters to the Dead*.

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## Love Letters to the Dead: A Novel By Ava Dellaira Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—Debut author Dellaira's heart-wrenching epistolary novel begins with Laurel's freshman assignment to write a letter to a dead person. She starts with a missive to Kurt Cobain, who had been a favorite of her recently deceased older sister, May. Gradually, through the teen's letters to other dead celebrities (Janis Joplin, Amelia Earhart, River Phoenix, and more), readers will begin to piece together the history of her splintered family life, including her parents' divorce and mother's virtual abandonment following May's unexplained death. Laurel is devastatingly, emotionally fragile, but she makes friends at her new high school and even starts to develop a serious love interest. Her misconstrued hero-worship of May gradually evolves into a deeper understanding of her beloved sister's strengths and many imperfections. Beautifully written, although a bit choppy in sections, particularly regarding the dead addressees' lives, this powerful novel deftly illustrates the concept that writing is an especially valuable form of healing for those dealing with overwhelming pain and grief. Best for teens who enjoyed Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (MTV, 1999).—Susan Riley, Mamaroneck Public Library, NY

From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* The assignment: write a letter to someone who is dead. Laurel falls into this classroom task deeper than she could have ever imagined, writing to deceased stars like Kurt Cobain, Amelia Earhart, Judy Garland, River Phoenix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Amy Winehouse, and others whose lives ended as abruptly as Laurel's older sister's did. Her methodology expands beyond simply writing to the dead. Rather, she researches each recipient, learning about their lives in order to make each letter relatable to the intended party. These quite savvy letters become Laurel's way of working through her emotions as she begins high school, makes new friends, deals with a crumbling family, falls in love, and continues to grieve for the loss of her sister. With the help of her fantasy correspondence, she is able to find common ground, express herself, and eventually discover the messages and lessons of the deceased addressee's lives—as well as her own. Well paced and cleverly plotted, this debut uses a fresh, new voice to tell a sometimes sad, sometimes edgy, but always compelling narrative. Fans of Sarah Dessen and Jenny Han, get ready. Grades 7-10. -- Jeanne Fredriksen

Review

“Reminiscent of Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, this is powerfully emotional stuff.” ?*BCCB*

“Dellaira's characters are authentically conceived and beautifully drawn.” ?*The Horn Book*

“Best for teens who enjoyed Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.” ?*School Library Journal*

“Laurel and her friends' struggles and hard-won successes are poignant, and seeing Laurel begin to forgive herself and May is extremely moving.” ?*Publishers Weekly*

“I simply loved this book. *Love Letters to the Dead* is more than a stunning debut. It is the announcement of a bold new literary voice.” ?*Stephen Chbosky, author of The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

“A brilliant story about the courage it takes to keep living after your world falls apart. A heart-wrenching celebration of love and friendship and family.” ?*Laurie Halse Anderson, author of Speak*

“With beautiful observations of where life can take us, from grieving to celebrating, disappointment to

wonder, LOVE LETTERS TO THE DEAD is a love letter to living.” ?*Jay Asher, author of 13 Reasons Why*

“Dear Ava Dellaira: Your book broke my heart, and pieced it back together. As with Kurt, Janis, Amelia and the others who are gone but still somehow here, LOVE LETTERS TO THE DEAD leaves an indelible mark.” ?*Gayle Forman, author of If I Stay*

“As wondrous--and as fearless--as a shooting star.” ?*Lauren Myracle, author, The Winnie Years*

“Riveting, captivating, utterly disarming. I could not put this book down! LOVE LETTERS TO THE DEAD is like discovering a shoebox full of notes addressed to someone else. I read fast, afraid I'd be caught peeking at something I wasn't ever supposed to see. A voyeuristic delight!” ?*Siobhan Vivian, author of The List*

“Effective and satisfyingly heartbreaking.” ?*Kirkus Reviews*

"Well paced and cleverly plotted, this debut uses a fresh, new voice to tell a sometimes sad, sometimes edgy, but always compelling narrative. Fans of Sarah Dessen and Jenny Han, get ready." ?*Booklist, starred review*

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### **From reader reviews:**

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#### **David Myers:**

People live in this new day of lifestyle always try to and must have the extra time or they will get wide range of stress from both everyday life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not really a huge robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to you actually of course your answer may

unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, the book you have read is actually Love Letters to the Dead: A Novel.

**Ashley Robinette:**

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book mainly book entitled Love Letters to the Dead: A Novel your mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a guide then become one application form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get just before. The Love Letters to the Dead: A Novel giving you a different experience more than blown away the mind but also giving you useful data for your better life in this particular era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished reading it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

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