

**LETTERS
TO MY SON**

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Letters to My Son by Winifred James

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WINIFRED JAMES

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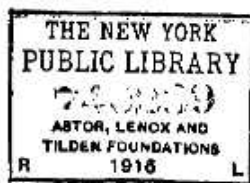
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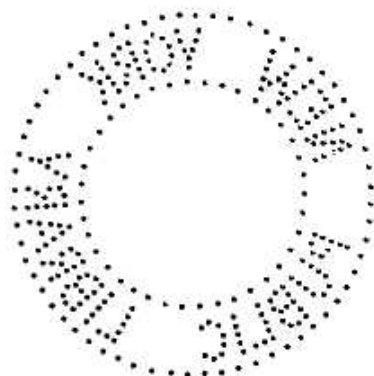
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LITTLE son, these letters are for you, so that if I should not live to see you grow up, if I should have to leave you before ever your eyes could look at me, or your voice cry to me, you should know how much I had loved you and longed for you, and you would be able to come to them for the comfort I would have given to you if I had lived.

And you *will* come to them, won't you, just as you would to me? And they shall comfort you as I would comfort you if I were really there — for indeed I shall always be 'really there,' my blessing, even though you may not be able to see me. When you're a baby, and

Preface

a boy, and a man; when you're good, and when you're bad; when you're victorious, and when you're defeated, I shall be near you, grieving for you in your sorrow, laughing with you in your joy, teaching you to know your mistakes and helping you to overcome them. You won't be your mother's own son unless you make a good many, and she will be so sorry for the birthday present she has given you, that if she did n't love you with every breath of her body, common decency would make her that she would have to share *that* burden.

There will be times, both as a child and as a man, when it will seem as if an end has come to everything, and there is not one person on earth who can help. It will not be true, for while life and reason last the end does not come. But when it happens, laddie, come away to me and we will talk it out together. We will be foolish together and wise

Preface

together and at last strong together, because when I was in the world it seemed as if there were no furnace that I did not tread, and even though it blistered and seared, yet it taught me to know all the pain — and all the joy — that the earth holds.

And remember that whatever I tell you will not be 'preaching.' I only speak as a man would if he were to say, 'Friend, the road is rough; take my staff and let it help you.' I would help you when you were perplexed or sorrowful, but I know that I cannot live your life for you and I do not want to. I want you to make your own and to make it well. But which ever way you make it I am waiting for you just the same; never forget that.

Oh, little thing, if your mammy has to leave you and by any chance gets to Heaven, they won't want her there very long! She'll always be leaning out of a top-storey window, trying to catch sight of her baby as he goes

Preface

out for his walk, or else forgetting to do her singing while she worries about his gaiters being long enough, or his vests warm enough. Heaven and earth will have changed places then and I shall be on the wrong side.

But I shall have had you all the beautiful time you were coming.

God bless you, little precious.

Contents

I. ON A DISCOVERY	1
II. ON SHOPPING FOR A VERY YOUNG MAN	17
III. ON DAY-DREAMS AND CRICKET	25
IV. ON LOVE AND A MISUNDER- STANDING	43
V. ON FATHERS AND MOTHERS	83
VI. ON ANGER	101
VII. ON RELIGION	111
VIII. ON RESPECTING THE BODY	129
IX. ON A HAIR-BRUSH	141
X. ON FEAR	149
XI. ON LIVING HEARTILY	161
XII. THE LAST	173