

Amelia Earhart

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corded during that ghostly interview, with Mr. Putnam's notations concerning some of the answers:

Voice: . . . Fred was not at fault. It unavoidable.

Putnam: Were they killed instantly?

Voice: No.

Putnam: Were you on the plane a long time?

Voice: No. on a reef . . .

Putnam: What direction from Howland?

Voice: Almost directly north. (There are no islands north of Howland.)

Putnam: Is it Kingman Reef?

Voice: Near there. There are Navy planes flying near there now. (This is November. The Navy search ended in July.)

Putnam: What will they find?

Voice: They will find wreckage, in the water, near the island. (Nothing was ever found.)

Putnam: What did Fred Noonan call his wife?

Voice: Fred wants you to tell B. that it was not his fault . . . He is living. (Evasive answer.)

Putnam: Who is living? Noonan?

Voice: He is not dead. He wanted you to know there is no death . . . Maitland. He is here.

Putnam: Is Kingsford-Smith there?

Voice: Yes. Maitland and Kingsford-Smith.

Putnam: Wiley Post? And Will Rogers?

Voice: Yes. Yes. Amelia is among a lot of friends.

Putnam: What about her mother?

Voice: She has not given up hope. (That was true.)

Putnam: Can you ascertain from Amelia what word she used in addressing me? Does the name begin with the letter "K"?

Voice: No, "P."

Putnam: This is important; I want to get this right.

Voice: Pug. Pug or Pugsy. (AE actually gave me a nickname similar to this, although only one or two intimate friends knew it.)

Putnam: What was it that Amelia always carried that she didn't take this time and left with me?

Voice: Her bracelet. (This is true. No one knew but myself.)

Putnam: What country did the bracelet come from?

Voice: Africa. (Only AE and I knew that.)

Putnam: What would she like me to do with the bracelet?

Voice: Keep it. You gave it to her, so you keep it.

Putnam: Will any of Amelia's things, like her watch, ever be found?

Voice: No. Parts of the plane.

Putnam: Will you ask Amelia, please, if she had the Seagraves watch.

Voice: She did not. (Wrong. She did have it.)

Putnam: Where is her will?

Voice: In the safe-deposit box. With the watch. (Wrong.)

Putnam: Ask Amelia if she knows anything about the trip I am contemplating.

Voice: Yes. That is very good. By all means go. (I was planning a cruise. I did go later.)

The seance ended as abruptly as it had begun and George Putnam went home to ponder another mystery. He has had other brushes with the occult in the long months since. Things have happened that defy the laws of nature and common sense and, at the same time, are ridiculous and an insult to intelligence. There was the woman in Los Angeles who dreamed that Mr. Putnam came to her home and showed her a bulky manuscript.

"It looked like the bound proofs of a book," she wrote. "You rifled the pages and I saw the number on the last one. Have you written a story about Miss Earhart, and is it about 266 pages long?"

Mr. Putnam had not. But some months later, when he finished compiling a draft of Amelia Earhart's book, "Last Flight"—it was exactly 266 pages. Was this the power of suggestion? Perhaps. . . .

There was the group of four college women in San Francisco who had long scoffed at psychic phenomena until they sat down one night to "play" with an ouija board. That venture resulted in some 10,000 words of dialogue between them and an invisible power which moved the wooden finger in the name of Amelia Earhart. The board spelled out a vast amount of technical aviation information that required an expert to explain—information that the women admitted was far beyond their understanding. Not one of them had ever flown a plane.

They wrote to Mr. Putnam with a sense of chagrin and foolishness. "At the expense of typing ourselves as a few crazy cranks," one said, "we are sending this material to you. We are ordinarily sensible people who found a game turning into something frightening and mysterious. I wish we knew the answer. . . ."

George Putnam replied, and his answer was indicative of the position he took when the first telegram came, the opinion he still holds today:

"I gather that you regard such manifestations much as I do. That is, with open mindedness and tempered curiosity. Long ago I became convinced, as did Miss Earhart, that there is much on the borderland of things psychic about which we understand little or nothing. We were both always ready 'to be shown.' I have had an extraordinary amount of this kind of communication for many months, coming from sincere people with no axe to grind, no favors to ask. I have told them what I am telling you: I honestly do not know how to explain these things. . . ."

END