



Letters of the Century: America 1900-1999

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"Immediate and evocative, letters witness and fasten history, catching events as they happen," write Lisa Grunwald and Stephen J. Adler in their introduction to this remarkable book. In more than 400 letters from both famous figures and ordinary citizens, **Letters of the Century** encapsulates the people and places, events and trends that shaped our nation during the last 100 years.

Here is Mark Twain's hilarious letter of complaint to the head of Western Union, an ecstatic letter from a young Charlie Chaplin upon receiving his first movie contract, Einstein's letter to Franklin Roosevelt warning about atomic warfare, Mark Rudd's "generation gap" letter to the president of Columbia University during the student riots of the 60s, and a letter from young Bill Gates imploring hobbyists not to share software so that innovators can make some money...

In these pages, our century's most celebrated figures become everyday people and everyday people become part of history. Here is a veteran's wrenching letter left at the Vietnam Wall, a poignant correspondence between two women trying to become mothers, a heart-breaking letter from an AIDS sufferer telling his parents how he wants to be buried, an indignant e-mail from a PC user to his on-line server...

"Letters," write Grunwald and Adler, "give history a voice." Arranged chronologically by decade, illustrated with over 100 photographs, **Letters of the Century** creates an extraordinary chronicle of our history, through the voices of the men and women who have lived its greatest moments.

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