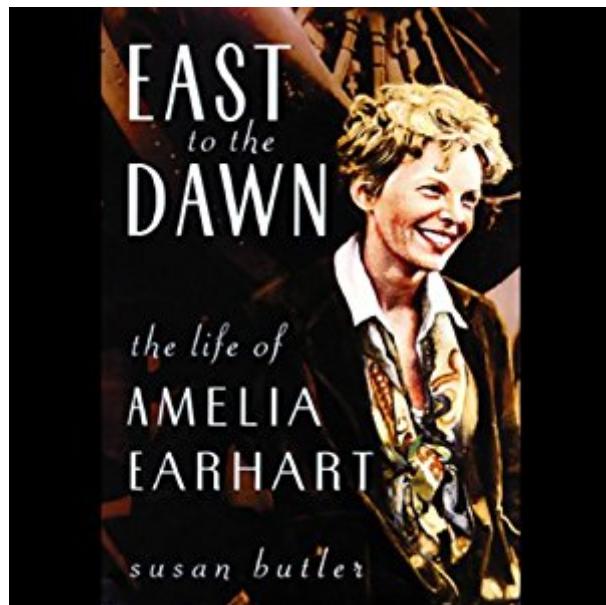


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# East To The Dawn: The Life Of Amelia Earhart



## **Synopsis**

Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) captured the hearts of America after becoming the first woman to fly across the Atlantic in 1928. Nine years later, her disappearance on an around-the-world flight brought her extraordinary life to an abrupt and mysterious end. Based on a decade of archival research through Earhart's letters, journals, and diaries, and drawing on interviews with the aviator's friends and relatives, *East to the Dawn* provides the most authoritative and richly textured account of both Earhart's record-setting aviation career and her personal life: her early years with her grandparents, her experiences as a nurse and social worker, her famous marriage to publisher George Putnam, and her secret affair with Gene Vidal, head of the Bureau of Air Commerce. As the *Los Angeles Times* raved, *East to the Dawn* is a "fully realized portrait of a truly remarkable woman." --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I grew up hearing bits and pieces about Amelia Earhart. There was always the slight inference that she may have been a lesbian and the stories about her possible capture by the Japanese. I found *EAST TO THE DAWN* illuminating and informative. The author makes Amelia much more of a feminist and political person than I had ever imagined. For example, I did not know about her friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt. But Amelia's friendship with Nancy Cook and Lorena Hitchcock and involvement in the Val Kil project made me think that there may have been some validity to the rumors about her life style. It's also interesting how much the government did for her on her flights.

The possible capture by the Japanese seems to me looking back in retrospect that it could be a form of very subtle anti Japanese propaganda. One of the previous reviewers commented that EAST TO THE DAWN finds no fault with Amelia - she was perfect in every way. Thinking about the book in retrospect, there is a lot of validity to that statement. But all in all the book gives a good view of women and their roles in society in the 1920's and 30's. It also give a whole new side of Amelia. As a result of this book I want to read more about Amelia. The author's conclusion that Amelia became bigger in death than she may have been in life is also valid but Amelia is one of those American icons that will live on and on because she died so young and under strange circumstances.

Ms. Butler's book, written more or less to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Earhart's birth and the 60th of her final flight, is a hagiography, almost without critical balance. Earhart's very real accomplishments as social pioneer and aviator are fully documented, but all too fulsomely presented. Apparently everything she did was brilliant, every man she attracted was a genius, every record-breaking flight a triumph. The author (descended from a flying contemporary of Amelia Earhart) claims to have spent ten years researching and writing this book. She would have done well to include more of the flip side of Amelia Earhart: the sometime publicity hound who spent more time in front of microphones and cameras instead of practicing her flying skills for the Bendix air races, for example. The book shows more competence in its accounts of the navigation and mechanical problems of early flyers, and here the account of Earhart's final flight is illuminating. There is a concise account of the farrago of radio navigation problems that led to the loss of the Lockheed 10 Electra and its crew. Also, the author rightly debunks the old theories of the flight's having been a mission to spy on the Japanese in the Pacific. After reading this book, you will know a lot more about a person of remarkable courage and class, who should be (and unfortunately is not) a model for the women's movement of today. The book does not treat her complexity with the depth it deserves, but the author's warmth and dedication to her subject are commendable.

A few years ago, when I first began reading and reviewing biographies, I came across an unfamiliar word I had to look up in the dictionary - "hagiography." The first definition said "a biography of Saints" and the second "a worshipful or idealizing biography." And this book is an excellent example of a hagiography, especially that second definition. Most people have heard of Amelia Earhart, famous aviatrix who vanished somewhere over the Pacific Ocean while attempting to fly around the world in 1937. I wasn't aware she was also a social worker and pioneer for women's rights. And parts of this book were interesting, such as her upbringing and efforts to reach new milestones of air

travel, and the book description claims to have previously unknown information. The account of her disappearance was interesting, and doesn't wander excessively far into unsubstantiated theories. But the tone of the book is far too worshipful. Ms. Butler paints an Amelia Earhart who was always a self-assured, unflappable, imperturbable, cool and collected woman in easy control of all aspects of her life; who never had doubts or second-thoughts, regrets or misgivings. She portrays her marital infidelity as courageous, strong, fearless, and even practical. She seems to take all quotes at face value rather than showing any healthy skepticism expected of a historian. She spends too much time discussing Earhart's genealogy while the ending feels a bit abrupt. And it all seems too much to believe. I'm not saying a biography has to expose dirt to be believable, but when the subject is portrayed as perfect it just doesn't feel realistic. In fact, reading between the lines, Earhart almost comes off as unpleasantly conceited and something of a celebrity press hound. Also, most of her flights seem mostly unremarkable. That may not be a fair conclusion, but a reader couldn't tell from this book. I'd rather learn about the struggles the person surmounted, personal and public, that makes their life and accomplishments worth reading about. I'd like to know the person was human. And this is too substantial of a book to invest time in (nearly 19 hours in audio book format) if it's not balanced or honest. If you're only interested in one Earhart biography like me, I recommend looking for a better one.

EAST TO THE DAWN not only gives the reader an incredibly detailed account of Amelia Earhart's life, but its presentation allows one to have a clear sense of the period, places and people of her life. From childhood in Kansas at the turn of the century, through an exciting adulthood which took her all over the world, you will feel that you are almost there. It is both informative and absorbing.

To simply call Earhart "lady Lindy" is dismissive of her accomplishments. In Susan Butler's wonderful book, you get a glimpse of the real person behind the image that was so carefully crafted by Amelia and GP Putnam. I was so caught up in the story I didn't want it to end. I knew it had to simply because of the circumstances of the disappearance. There are many theories about what happened to Amelia and her navigator, I don't think we will ever know the truth so it's fitting that the mystery continues to surround her and it preserves the legend of Amelia Earhart. Great Read if you are looking for a bio that is worthy of the subject.

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