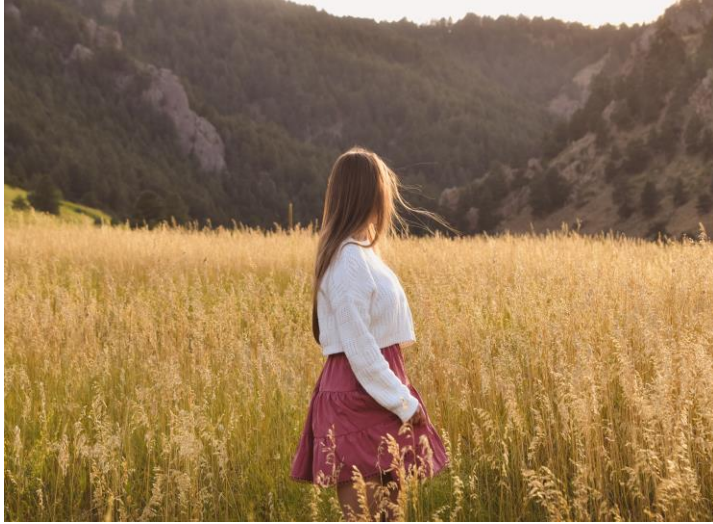


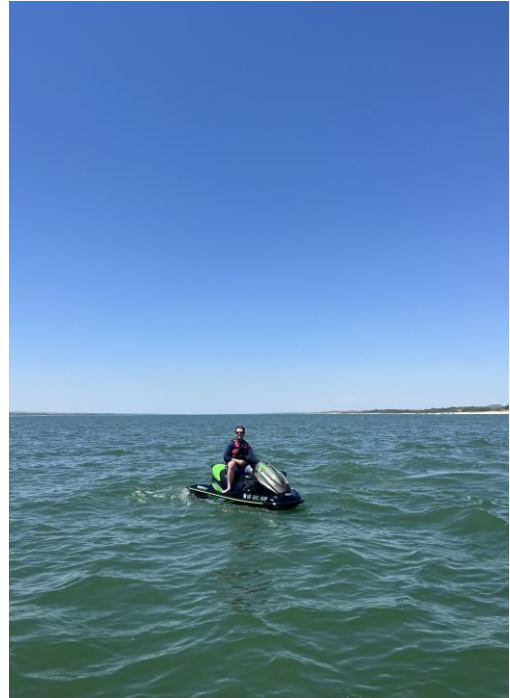
The Best
Letters That
Made Me
Who I Am



Letters are more than just memories stashed away in a box. They are pieces of people, moments, thoughts, and feelings, all written down and saved. Over the years, I have realized that the letters I have kept did not just remind me of my past, but they shaped who I am. They show me how I was loved, how I grew, and how I learned to love myself and others around me. This collection brings together the letters that matter most to me. Some are from childhood, some are from later in life.

They come from family, friends, and people who have become like family. Each one has taught me something different, and that is what it means to care for someone, how support can make a difference, and how words can carry power way beyond the letter. What makes these letters special is their honesty. They were not written to be published or to impress anyone. They were written for me, in moments that were personal and real. Reading them now, I can see the ways they have shaped my understanding of love, friendship, and connection. They remind me of the person I was at each stage of life and show me how far I have come. This book follows my life through these letters, starting with childhood, moving through teenage years, and into adulthood. Along the way, these letters show moments of growth, moments of care, and moments of joy. They are reminders that we are never truly alone, and that the people around us, even in small gestures and simple words, help shape who we are and who we become.

The first letter in this collection comes from my little brother when he was five and I was seven. It is a little handmade note, folded into its own paper envelope with a pink heart drawn on the front. Inside, in his messy handwriting, it simply says “I love you,” with another heart on the back. It is a small, simple message, but it holds so much meaning. Even at that young age, he wanted me to know how much he cared for me. There was no reason to write it other than to share his love, and that honesty makes it unforgettable. This letter reminds me of the bond we have always shared, one that does not need big words or gestures to be real. It is a snapshot of our childhood, an expression of love that has stayed with me over the years. Even now, reading it brings back memories of playing together, laughing together, and growing up side by side. That simple note is more than just paper; it is a piece of my childhood, a reminder that love can be expressed in the simplest ways, and that the people who know us best often show it in the smallest gestures.



The next letter in this collection is from my grandma, someone who has always held a special place in my life. This letter was a birthday card she sent me, written with her usual warmth and love. She wrote about how much she adores me and how excited she was to celebrate together, making me feel special and celebrated even from far away. What makes this letter so meaningful is the way it shows her personality perfectly, gentle, loving, and full of care. Even a few simple sentences from her can feel like a hug in word form. The card itself is soft and floral, feeling like a reflection of her, thoughtful and comforting. Reading it reminds me of all the moments we have had together and have shared over the years from my childhood to now. Her words are a reminder that love can be steady and constant, that some people in your life are always there, quietly supporting and encouraging you. This letter may be small, but it holds a lifetime of love. It reminds me of where I come from and who has helped shape me into the person I am today. My grandma’s handwriting, her choice of words, and the care she put into this card, make it something I will keep with me forever, a piece of the love she has always given me.

The next letter in my collection is from my childhood best friend, Amanda. We have been best friends since middle school, and even though we are far apart in college, our friendship has only grown stronger. She wrote this letter to me back in high school for a class assignment, but it became so much more than that. She wrote about how proud she was of me, how much our friendship had grown, and the ways we have shaped each other over the years. Her letter is handwritten on notebook paper with different colored hearts and doodles, which makes it feel playful but personal. You can see her personality, and it is like she is right there with me. The purpose of this letter is more than just words, it is about friendship, support, and shared memories that we have together. It shows the moments we grew up together and the ways we have always had each



other's backs. Reading Amanda's letter now reminds me that distance does not make real friendships fade. It reconnects me to younger versions of ourselves and all the laughs, secrets, and support that built our friendship that we have today. Because it is handwritten instead of a text, it feels permanent, it is something I can hold onto as a reminder of our friendship over the years. Amanda's letter shows me how friends can shape who we are. It is proof that people who know us from the start see sides of us we might not even notice, and their words can stick with us forever. In this collection, her letter represents the lasting power of friendship, the little ways people show they care, and the joy of having someone who truly knows and loves you.

The next letter in my collection is from my mom, and honestly, it might be one of the most meaningful letters I have. She gave me the best childhood I could have asked for and still teaches me lessons that shape who I am today. This letter is a birthday card she gave me on my twentieth birthday, my golden birthday, and inside, she wrote about everything she loves about me, how proud she is of me, and how much she believes in me. Reading it now feels just as special as the day I got it, maybe even more, because it reminds me of all the ways she has helped me grow. The card itself is bright, fun, and totally me, with my favorite artist, Taylor Swift, on the front. Her handwriting makes it feel personal, like she is right there talking to me. This letter is not just a birthday message, but it is a piece of her love and care and is something I can hold onto whenever I need it. It reminds me that I am seen, understood, and loved in a way only she could show me. This letter really shows what my relationship with my mom is all about, love, support, and encouragement. It reminds me that the person I am today, confident, thoughtful, and strong,



is because of her. Every time I read it, I feel her love, and it reminds me that no matter where I go or what I do, she is always in my corner.

The next letter in my collection is from my boyfriend, Carson. This one is extra special because it marks the beginning of a relationship that has become one of the most

meaningful parts of my life. He gave me this letter just a few months after we started dating, and it is a just because note about how happy I make him and how much our time together has meant so far. When I first read it, I felt loved, seen, and so understood, and reading it now, almost three years later, feels even more special and powerful. It is a reminder of how far we have come together and how our relationship has shaped me into the person I am today. The letter is handwritten, simple, and honest. It does not need big words or long paragraphs because the feeling behind it is what matters most. Every line reflects his thoughtfulness and care. The letter's function is to express his love to me and tell me that I matter to him, and it succeeds in a way that lasts forever. Beyond the words, it shows the start of a relationship built on understanding, trust, and growth. Reading this letter reminds me not only of Carson but also of the version of myself I was when he wrote it, the version just beginning to navigate love. It reflects how love can help shape someone's identity, showing us how someone else sees the best parts of ourselves, sometimes even before we can see them ourselves. Holding onto this letter feels like holding onto the very beginning of something so incredibly special, a love that has been a big part of who I am.





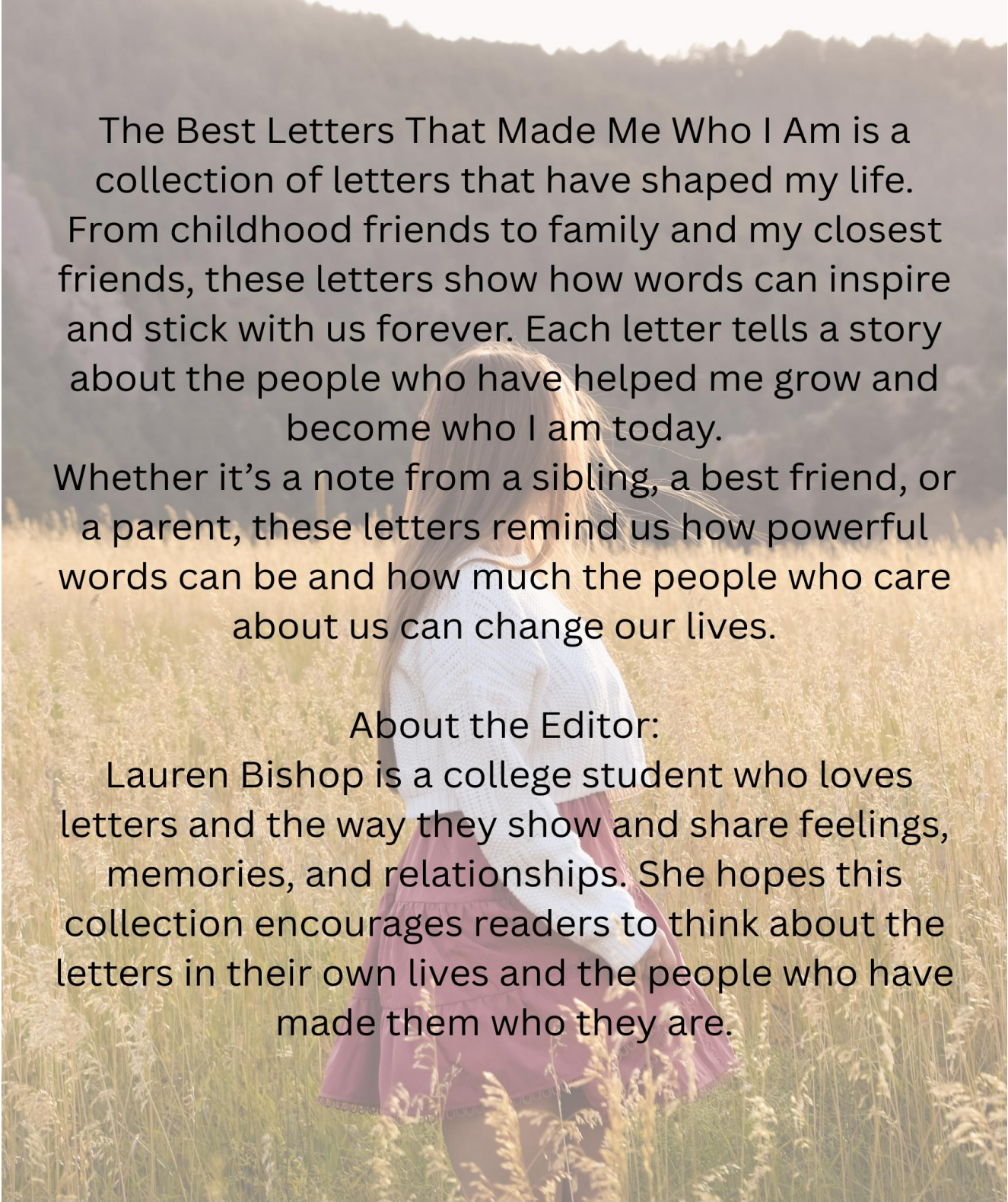
The last letter in my collection is from my absolute best friend, Tymberlynn. We met by chance our first year of college as roommates, and what started as a random pairing quickly became one of the most important and special relationships of my life. This letter was a birthday note from my birthday this year, and it is, without question, the most thoughtful, meaningful, and impactful letter I have ever received. In the middle of her letter, Tymber wrote to me, *“You taught me that friendship is less like a battle and more like the closest thing you can get to heaven on earth. You taught me how to love myself when before you I did not know I could.”* Reading this, I felt truly seen in a way I had never experienced before. Her words do not just recognize and celebrate our friendship, but they recognize the ways we have grown together, the support we have given each

other, and the love that has shaped both of us. Holding this letter, I am reminded not just of Tymberlynn, but of the best version of myself, the one I am when I feel fully supported, fully loved, and fully seen. It reflects how meaningful people can leave marks on our lives forever through their words, and how those words can become part of our story. More than any other letter in my collection, this one really shows what letters can do, carry love and understanding across, and reminding us of the people who make us who we are.

As I look back on this collection, each letter stands out not just for the words on the page of the letters, but for the people behind them and the moments we have shared together. From my earliest memories with my brother, to the laughter and loyalty of my childhood friend Amanda, to the wisdom and love of my grandma and mom, and finally to the deep bonds I share with



Carson and Tymberlynn, each letter tells a story of connection, growth, and love. These letters have shaped who I am, reminding me of the people who have guided, challenged, and supported me. They show the ways words can show and share moments, feelings, and relationships, across time. These letters to me are more than just messages on paper; but they are reflections of the people I have become and the relationships that have mattered most. In the end, this collection is a celebration of connection, the letters themselves are small pieces of time, saved carefully, that together form the story of my life and the people who make me who I am. I hope any reader finds the same joy and inspiration that I have, and that they are reminded of the letters and people in their own lives that have left a forever mark.



The Best Letters That Made Me Who I Am is a collection of letters that have shaped my life. From childhood friends to family and my closest friends, these letters show how words can inspire and stick with us forever. Each letter tells a story about the people who have helped me grow and become who I am today. Whether it's a note from a sibling, a best friend, or a parent, these letters remind us how powerful words can be and how much the people who care about us can change our lives.

About the Editor:

Lauren Bishop is a college student who loves letters and the way they show and share feelings, memories, and relationships. She hopes this collection encourages readers to think about the letters in their own lives and the people who have made them who they are.