



Always, Rachel: The Letters of Rachel Carson and Dorothy Freeman, 1952-1964 - The Story of a Remarkable Friendship (Concord Library)

By Rachel Carson, Dorothy Freeman

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Rachel Carson's landmark book *Silent Spring* set the modern environmental movement in motion. This very special collection of letters from Rachel Carson to her Maine summer neighbor Dorothy Freeman offers an intimate, spellbinding look at Carson's private life and thoughts.

An intimate collection of letters from the woman who sparked the modern environmental movement.

"What is revealed in this selection of letters is the extraordinary, private person of Carson and her relationship with Freeman, the nature-loving, homebody friend of her later years. . . . It is not often that a collection of letters reveals character, emotional depth, personality, indeed intellect and talent, as well as a full biography might; these letters do all that."

-Doris Grumbach, *The New York Times Book Review*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Dorothy Freeman, a fan of environmental writer Rachel Carson, was also her best friend. The correspondence between them charts the growth of their long affection; it also offers much detail about Carson's concerns as a writer and scientific reporter, to say nothing of her misgivings about being anointed as one of the environmental movement's chief intellectual leaders. The letters are full of talk about birds, books, and the changing seasons. Fans of Carson--and of the forgotten art of correspondence--are sure to enjoy *Always, Rachel*.

From Publishers Weekly

Rachel Carson (1907-1964), author of *The Silent Spring*, has been celebrated as the pioneer of the modern environmental movement. Although she wrote no autobiography, she did leave letters, and those she exchanged--sometimes daily--with Dorothy Freeman, some 750 of which are collected here, are perhaps more satisfying than an account of her own life. In 1953, Carson became Freeman's summer neighbor on Southport Island, Me. The two discovered a shared love for the natural world--their descriptions of the arrival of spring or the song of a hermit thrush are lyrical--but their friendship quickly blossomed, as each realized she had found in the other a kindred spirit. To read this collection is like eavesdropping on an extended conversation that mixes the mundane events of the two women's family lives with details of Carson's research and writing and, later, her breast cancer. Readers will inevitably wonder about the nature of the women's relationship; editor Martha Freeman, Dorothy's granddaughter, believes that the correspondents' initial caution regarding the frankly romantic tone of their letters led them to destroy some. Whether the relationship was sexual, theirs was a deeply loving friendship, and reading their letters leaves a sense of wonder that they felt so free to give themselves this gift. "Never forget, dear one, how deeply I have loved you all these years," Carson wrote less than a year before her death. And if, as Carson believed, "immortality through memory is real," few who read these letters will forget these remarkable women and their even more remarkable bond. Photos. 25,000 first printing.

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From Library Journal

In 1952, after publishing *The Sea Around Us*, Carson struck up a unique friendship with Freeman that was to sustain both women until Carson's death in 1964. Although both were prolific letter writers, Carson's letters predominate here. Many of Freeman's letters and a fair number of Carson's may have been deliberately destroyed by mutual consent. Evidently, the two women were uneasy about their content being misinterpreted. The letters display an unusual intensity of feeling, which could easily lead outsiders to an assumption of a homosexual relationship were it not also clear that Freeman's husband and son and Carson's family participated in and supported this friendship. Editor Martha Freeman, Dorothy's granddaughter, provides valuable footnotes explaining references to people and events in the letters unfamiliar to readers. These notes are set in the outside page margins, alongside the related text of the letters, a feature readers will find enormously helpful. This correspondence provides insight into the creative process and a look into the daily lives of two intelligent, perceptive women whose family responsibilities were, at times, almost crushing. Carson's crowning achievement, *Silent Spring*, seems all the more significant for having been accomplished while she was struggling with the side effects of cancer treatment. An important book for academic libraries and those public libraries where readers interested in ecology continue to appreciate the beauty and power of Carson's books. --Laurie Tynan, Montgomery-Norristown P.L., Pa.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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