

Finding Amelia

A short story based on the award-winning screenplay

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About "Finding Amelia"

The mystery and allure that surround Amelia Earhart still inspire many people to seek answers to her fate. Theories remain, and a few seem quite plausible because pieces of wreckage have been found that resemble her plane. But the most important link to solving Amelia's disappearance is...

"Finding Amelia."

This story is based on the award-winning screenplay and is set in the time frame of her disappearance, on the last leg of her circumnavigation of the globe. It's uncertain whether Amelia decided to perish with intention, or maybe not, or whether it was fate interceding with the image of Amelia as an aviator and celebrity.

"Finding Amelia" is an interpretation of several thoughts about what may have happened to her. Ultimately it comes down to each individual to make their own decision about this captivating person who disappeared from our sight, but not from our hearts and minds.

Chapter 1 – Charity Work

On a deep blue horizon off the northeast coast of Australia, a small, yellow, single-engine plane drifts upward into a clear sky. Inside is Roger Danvill, an Australian bush pilot. His dirty blonde hair rambles out from under his hat and lies on his shoulders. His steel blue eyes are fixed on the horizon and only shift away to quickly scan the rolling seas below.

In the distance, a small group of islands appears. Its only inhabitants are non-English-speaking natives who live out their lives surrounded by warm breezes, turquoise waters and a way of living that has little influence from modern society.

Roger has made this trip before, but this time is different. He's alone.

Any other time he'd be with his business partner and missionary, Jamey Carsen. Jamey speaks with the natives and tells them what items are being brought as part of a charity through a church he attends.

The flight itself isn't terribly long, but the island is small and has no modern amenities, including a paved runway. Aviators and passing ships overlook it as just a speck of trees surrounded by water.

To most, the island appears uninhabited. If you were stranded there, you'd never be found or heard from again. Its exterior seems stark, but its beauty is hidden and waits to be discovered.

As Roger brings his plane nearer to the island, he is surrounded by more than water. Fine red dust swirls around his cabin, the remnants of his departure from the dry, cracked, barren earth.

"Friggin' redders!" Roger says.

He waves his hat at the pesky bits of terra firma. They regroup, swing back around and land in his line of vision. His eyes water.

"This charity work ain't easy!"

Roger takes a few more feverish swings at the little red devils and rubs his eyes. He blinks until the tears flush the dirt away and he can see a clearing on the island ahead. About fifty feet of dirt is exposed.

"Ah! The runway!"

Roger circles the island, swoops down and brings his plane onto the rough, very short runway. A group of native men and women watch as the plane heads for the end of the strip. It swings around and spits out chunks of green flora as it overshoots the turn. Then it chugs thick black clouds of smoke from its exhaust pipes as it nears the natives.

The engine stops and the raucous entrance comes to an end. The natives are silent as Roger climbs out of the plane. His appearance is accompanied by the sound of waves crashing on a rocky outcropping nearby. He runs to the front of the plane, lifts the hood and looks at the smoldering engine.

"I need some charity," he says.

He lets the hood fall, and it trumpets his official arrival with a loud bang. He looks back at the natives. Nobody flinches. They all focus on Roger as he takes off his hat and bows. He mumbles to himself as he does.

"Jamey, you owe me for this."

Roger stands upright and flings his hat into the air. It lands directly on top of his head. He takes a step forward, opens his arms wide and smiles.

"Roger Danvill at your service, mates!"

A native elder steps forward and points back toward a banana-leafed hut that sits beneath two large palm trees. The towering trees bend over the hut and cover it like two protective parents.

The elder begins to walk toward the hut and motions for Roger to follow.

Chapter 2 – At First Glance

Roger and the elder stand outside the thickly leafed hut. They can't communicate with words, but a young native man steps forward and points at a brown, tattered jacket that hangs from a twisted, knotty branch.

"Not. Good," the young man says.

Roger walks over, removes the jacket from the branch and examines its torn and wrinkled shell. He looks at the faded label inside and tries to read it.

"Let's see," he says. "Am. Leah. Aviation."

He holds the jacket close to his eyes, but the letters are too faded and torn to make out. He hangs it back on the branch and turns around. The elder is directly in front of him.

The elder points at the hut and speaks in broken English.

"Sick. Not good. Person."

Roger steps back and flicks the rim of his hat. He rubs his chin and looks from the elder to the hut that keeps being pointed at.

"Not good?" he says. "Bad."

The elder nods once.

Roger sighs and takes a pocket knife from his front pocket. It's decorated with red and blue stripes. He presses an unseen button on the side and it snaps open, showing a shiny, jagged blade.

"Bad," Roger says. "Must be an intruder."

As he starts toward the hut, the elder steps in front of him. The elder looks at the knife and nods.

"Sick. Person. Inside."

Roger raises the knife to his face and it suddenly snaps shut. He slips it back into his pocket and notices two native women walk into the hut. Their silhouettes move around inside as faded light dances through gaps in the wind-kissed banana leaves. He watches the two dark figures try to help someone stand up.

Roger walks cautiously to the entrance and looks in. The two women are holding someone between them.

"Still can't see," he says.

Inside, the women let the person sit back down on the bed. Roger takes a step in. The women notice him and shuffle their feet on the dirt floor as they walk toward him. Before he can get a good look at the person, he rubs his eyes and shakes his head, and the women escort him outside.

A group of natives stare at him as he comes out.

"That dust," Roger says. "It gets me every time."

The two women shake their heads, walk over to the elder and whisper something to him. Roger slowly reaches into his pocket and keeps his hand on his knife as he watches the elder's reaction.

The elder speaks to the man beside him. The man looks at Roger and begins to walk very slowly toward him, but stops halfway. He steps backward with a glassy-eyed stare.

Roger feels like the center of attention, and not in a good way.

The natives chatter among themselves and look in his direction. Feeling helpless and paranoid is never a good combination, but Roger is in that place. He whips out his knife, flicks the blade open and gives fair warning.

"Don't mess with the Aussie!"

He puts the knife in his mouth, clamps down on it and raises his clenched fists near his face.

Someone politely taps him on the shoulder.

He turns around so fast that the knife flies out of his mouth, sails through the air and lands in a thicket of lush island plants. It makes a hasty escape, and Roger can't do anything about it.

"Dammit!"

As soon as he turns his head back, someone falls onto him. There's no time to defend himself. He hugs them as they both fall to the ground.

"Blimey!"

Chapter 3 – Tell Me Your Story

Roger's sudden introduction to the person inside the hut comes with an unexpected fall to the ground. As he opens his eyes, he is surprised to see a woman lying on top of him. The moment is short-lived. No sooner has she fallen on him than two helpful women pick her up and escort her back toward the hut.

Roger props himself up on his elbows and watches. At the entrance the women stop and guide her in a slow, deliberate circle so she faces him.

"A girl," Roger says. "At first I thought she was a boy."

He can see her even though the sun is forced into submission by the canopy of palm trees over the hut. He notices her short, curly, unkempt hair and her high cheekbones. She's thin and has scratches on her face. She could easily be a castaway, judging by the way her clothing is torn.

"You got some nicks on ya."

Roger stands up and brushes himself off. He looks at the brown jacket that dangles from the branch, then back at the woman.

"You a pilot?"

She looks at the jacket and hangs her head. She answers in a barely audible voice, as if talking to herself.

"No. I'm not."

She lifts her head and looks at Roger. She barely nods, which contradicts her words and confirms his suspicion.

"Well," Roger says, "that's an aviator's jacket."

She looks back at the jacket and whispers a name.

"Fred."

"Fred? Who's Fred?"

She keeps staring at the jacket. She doesn't realize Roger is now only a few inches from her. He studies her as she stares, and he pieces together more than he could ever have expected.

"You're that pilot," he says. "You're Amelia Earhart."

She turns and looks at him. She manages a smile despite the weakness and pain in her body.

"Well, I'll be damned. You're alive."

Her voice is raspy, but she gives the only answer that's appropriate.

"Barely."

The two women guide Amelia back inside and Roger follows. The light is dim and the air is hazy from the dusty floor. She lies down on the bed. Roger kneels beside her and rubs his eyes.

"You've got to tell me your story."

The two women stand close by and watch him. Amelia closes her eyes and speaks softly.

"I can't now. Too tired. Ask Fred."

Roger looks at the women.

"Fred? Who's Fred?"

Their blank expressions give way to movement. They walk over, help Roger to his feet and tug him away from Amelia. He goes along and walks out with them.

Outside, Roger heads for his plane, opens a side door and pulls out a box. He takes out a newspaper. On the front page is a picture of Amelia in an aviator's jacket and neatly pressed slacks, waving in front of a plane. Her short, curly hair frames an engaging smile that radiates charisma.

"That's her, alright."

He reads the article and glances back at the hut now and then.

"Amelia Earhart. First woman to circumnavigate the globe. Accompanied by Fred--"

He stops and sighs.

"Fred. Fred Noonan. Accomplished navigator will be with Amelia as she defeats the world record for circumnavigation."

He folds the paper, puts it back in the box and closes the door. He rests a hand on the plane for a moment, takes off his hat, scratches his head and looks at the hat before putting it back on.

"Defeats the world record? Journalists and their words."

Roger walks back to the hut and sits next to the entrance. He looks out at the turquoise water that hovers above the coral reef. Children playfully kick at the waves that tumble into shore. Their mothers sit in a group, preparing food in handmade bowls and keeping a watchful eye on them. The men have dispersed. Some get into canoes and paddle through the surf to a shallow reef, where they dive into the sparkling water and resurface with the evening's meal.

"It's not so bad here," Roger says.

He pulls his hat over his eyes and drifts off to sleep while the children's laughter and the soft crashing of the waves intertwine.

The sun edges closer to the horizon and its orange tip casts a soft glow over the ocean, painting it with broad strokes. Roger wakes from his nap and sits next to Amelia by the shoreline. Her arms are folded over her knees and her feet are buried in the sand. He looks at her tattered clothes and the patches of brown from dried blood. Amelia looks at him and slowly shakes her head.

"Tell me your story," Roger says. "How'd you end up here?"

Amelia looks back out at the orange and blue skies on the horizon. She takes a deep breath and exhales. She stays quiet for a while, watching the waves and the seagulls that bob up and down on the currents. When she speaks, her voice is weak, but not as raspy as it was.

"I don't know. Maybe if I had worn an apron instead of that jacket, I wouldn't be here."

"The apron?"

"I remember certain things. Like paintings on a cave wall. They're faded, but still there."

Her comments seem disjointed to Roger, but as the evening goes on and she shares her thoughts, he understands what she's telling him. He remembers that after surviving a plane crash, her speech and memory can't be unaffected.

Chapter 4 – Nursing, Banjos and Planes

Amelia explains her story to Roger the best she can. The moments in her life that haven't left her memory are the cornerstones that created her identity and fame. She sits on the soft sand beside him and shares the ones she can recall with clarity.

"It was in Northampton," she says. "At Pidge's house."

"What's a Pidge?"

Amelia coughs and laughs, but manages to answer.

"Pidge was my sister, Muriel. I always called her that, even over her disapproval. She's the one who suggested I go to an air show."

The Toronto air show was Amelia's first experience of airplanes, thrilling stunts and eccentric pilots. Before she attended, she was a nurse. She had contracted pneumonia while caring for the sick patients who were beginning to fill the hospital.

It was also at this time that Amelia was diagnosed with a chronic sinus condition. It gave her severe headaches, and she underwent surgical procedures when the infection swelled. In photos taken after an operation, she'd wear a scarf or bandage to cover a small drainage tube placed in her cheek. The condition followed her the rest of her life and lessened her enjoyment of flying.

As Amelia sits with Roger, she goes on with her recollection of her time as a nurse and her recovery at her sister's house.

"The nursing was fine, until I became ill. Then I became the patient and was soon bedridden. I was fortunate my sister was nearby. I stayed at her house until I felt much better."

"I see," Roger says. "A nurse? And you ended up flying planes."

"It came a bit later, but yes. I also learned to play the banjo while I was at my sister's house. Her husband taught me a few things."

"Well, there's more to you than meets the eye, isn't there?"

Roger winks. Amelia goes silent and stares out at the ocean. She watches the birds fly above the rolling waves and circle, tilting their heads down to see what food they can grab.

"I think there's more to most everyone if you give them a chance," she says.

She begins to breathe heavily. Roger watches with her as the gray and white seagulls dive toward the water's surface and swoop back up, clutching small fish in their beaks or tight in their feet.

"The birds remind me of the antics of the first planes I saw."

Roger pieces together the story from her hesitant speech.

"So the pilots were a bit on the crazy side."

"Yes, but they were kind. They all offered to give me a ride."

The air show was full of memorable moments. Daring fly-bys came so close to the crowds that people had to duck or fall to the ground as the planes screamed past within inches. Planes landed in disastrous bounces and dug into the soil, flinging dirt at spectators who lingered too close. Sometimes the front end tipped forward after an uncontrolled landing and the propeller spun into the earth and chewed up the sod like a weasel chasing its prey.

The men and their flying machines were a new kind of entertainment, and Amelia was consumed by the sights, the sounds and even the smell of the fuel. The smoke-belching engines sometimes burst into orange and red flames after a perilous landing, when a plane crashed into a tree, a building or even another plane as it taxied down a muddy, trench-ridden runway.

One moment she remembers is a fly-by of her own.

Roger looks back at his plane. Amelia tries to turn her head to look at it, but she has to stop. Her neck muscles won't let her.

"I've never had an engine fire," Roger says, "but then again, I've never run into another plane. Or a building. I think flying is safer than driving a car, though."

Amelia smiles.

"I used to think that. I don't know about it now."

Roger glances at her scarred legs and tattered clothing.

"Well, you've got some damn good reasons to feel that way."

Amelia lifts an arm and slowly twists it to look at the scratches.

"I also have these."

Roger looks at the long scratches on her arms and nods in agreement. Then his eyes drift down to her neck. Amelia puts a hand over the spot she knows he's looking at.

"That's not from flying."

Roger hangs his head and looks out at the rolling blue waves topped with frothy sea foam. He stands up, walks to the shoreline and kneels. He waits for the ocean to carry more foam into his cupped hands, then scoops up some of the white, bubbly surface and walks back. He kneels in front of Amelia and holds out his hands.

"Here. This will help with the nicks."

Amelia raises one side of her pants and Roger places some of the foam on her leg. He watches the bubbles silently pop and disappear. He jumps up, scurries back to the shoreline and scoops up more of the medicinal white bubbles.

Amelia keeps her hand over her neck as he returns and offers her more of the foam. She looks at it as it begins to dissipate in his hands.

"That won't help my neck."

Roger keeps his hands cupped around what remains of the delicate, airy substance.

"Can't hurt."

Amelia removes her hand from her neck, takes some of the foam and delicately places it there.

"Can't help."

"You're a feisty one."

"I've heard that before."

Roger sits down next to her. They sit quietly together and watch the sun set on the horizon and fill the sky with orange and red, signaling its evening retreat.

Chapter 5 – Frank and Neta

After a restful night, lulled to sleep by the evening breeze and the gently crashing surf, Amelia wakes with renewed energy. She slowly stands and takes small steps toward the entrance of her hut.

"I need to see light," she says.

Outside, she hears Roger. He's talking to someone, but it can't be the natives because he's speaking English. She looks to her left and sees him standing next to his plane, holding a mic and speaking to someone, somewhere. His voice is distant, but she picks up fragments. She begins to walk toward him. He notices, waves and smiles.

Amelia stands a few feet away as he talks into the mic.

"Yeah, that's right," Roger says. "I'll be here another day or so. Engine problems."

A warbled voice answers, but Amelia can't make it out. She approaches with slow, deliberate steps. Roger watches her with concern as he speaks into the crackling, static-filled mic.

"Must go. Gotta save the battery. 10-4."

A muffled voice bounces back. "Copy that."

Roger tosses the mic into the plane and shuts the door. He goes straight to Amelia and wraps an arm around her just as her legs become too weak to hold her. He guides her to a nearby clearing and settles her onto a soft patch of fluorescent blue and green moss.

"Here ya go, missy," he says. "And don't worry. It's not wet. I sat in it earlier."

He steps in front of her, turns around and bends slightly to show a wet spot on the seat of his pants.

"I soaked it up for ya."

He stands up straight and turns to find Amelia smiling and quietly chuckling. She tries to say thank you but can't for laughing.

"You're welcome!"

She puts a hand over her neck and speaks in a sweet, clear tone. For the first time, Roger hears her voice as it really is.

"Thank you, sir!"

Roger tilts his head.

"Your voice is clear. Must've been the sea foam."

He sits down next to her. They both look at his plane. It sits in the sun, and the yellow seems to ignite something in Amelia.

"It's a beautiful plane."

Roger watches her gaze lovingly at the little yellow plane.

"She's a bit dirty, actually," he says, "but as they say, beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

He looks at his plane just as Amelia starts talking again. She takes her hand from her neck and points at it.

"My first flight."

Roger looks confused. He passes glances between the plane and Amelia and notices tears streaming down her face.

"I can get you outta here."

Amelia shakes her head.

"No."

"But you're crying. You want to leave."

She keeps shaking her head and wipes the tears away. Her sorrow isn't easy to hide.

"No. I can't go back. It'd be worse."

She snuffles and exhales before she goes on. Roger is a bit bewildered as she jumps from one subject to another. He understands that the ordeal she's lived through has left internal scars as well as external ones.

"That plane," she says. "It was the time I flew in a plane."

Roger looks at her with total concentration.

"I see. Your first flight. Yeah, mate, that's always magical."

Amelia nods and looks him in the eyes.

"Yes. Magical. Frank and Neta. They gave me the gift of flying."

She breaks her stare and looks at his plane.

"Frank took me up in his plane. My father was there. He paid so much money for me to take that flight. It was almost all the money he had at that time."

She sniffles and wipes a tear from her cheek, but she goes on despite the sadness that has filled her mind and heart. Her voice loses its clear tone and drops to a painfully soft whisper as she holds back her sorrow.

"We flew over the ocean. The beach. It was incredible. I could taste the salt in the air. People waved as we flew over them. It was glorious."

Roger's head bobs up and down in big movements.

"Magical."

Amelia turns to look at him. His steel blue eyes pierce her thoughts and wipe away her sorrow. For a moment she talks clearly.

"Yes. Magical."

She clears her throat and looks away.

"And then there was Neta."

Her voice turns raspy and brittle.

"She was so patient."

Roger's ability to seize the moment and inject humor has arrived.

"Neta? What's a neta?"

Amelia smiles and speaks briefly, her voice weak. She rubs her neck as she talks.

"Anita. Neta for short."

"Anita, Neta. Got it."

He stands up and holds out a hand. She takes it and pulls herself up, and they begin to walk away. She looks back at the little yellow plane and stops.

"It's like a canary."

Roger looks back at his plane.

"Yeah. A dirty one."

Roger helps Amelia back to her hut so she can rest. After he settles her in bed, he listens to her explain how important Frank and Neta were to her flying.

Roger learns that Frank Hawks and Anita "Neta" Snook were very influential in Amelia's early flying days. She took her first flight in Frank's plane, and soon after she found Neta.

Amelia was also smitten with Frank's flight jacket and couldn't wait to get one just like it. Something about the faded, worn, wrinkled jacket appealed to her, and she soon went and bought one. She slept in it for many days to give it the same worn texture Frank's had.

Neta became her best friend. She was the patient flight instructor Amelia needed, and she showed her everything required for a solo flight and a pilot's license.

If it hadn't been for Frank and Neta, Amelia may never have flown a plane at all.

Amelia was eager to fly as soon as she had her license. She bought her own plane after working several jobs as a teacher, social worker, waitress and even a secretary. She was a very intelligent person and could do just about anything she set her mind to, but nothing in her life gave her more joy than flying. She was a competitive flyer as well. She entered many cross-country races and won several competitions, which led to her notoriety and later her fame as a female aviator who broke and set several records.

Chapter 6 – The Canary

Amelia goes on with her recollections while she rests in the banana-leafed hut. Roger sits cross-legged on the floor beside her and asks one question that makes her smile and seems to cure her at the same time. Her voice turns crisp and clear, almost childlike with enthusiasm.

"So, what's this canary?" he asks.

"My beloved plane! It was yellow, like yours, and it was my favorite thing in the whole world!"

She explains that it was the first plane she bought, and she flew it while setting several records. It was a bright yellow Kinner Airster she named "The Canary." It was reliable, sturdy and able to fly long distances.

"I flew her in competitions. Nobody could beat her."

"I bet you made some enemies."

Amelia turns on her side and slowly shakes her head.

"Maybe, but they could never catch us."

Roger laughs loudly enough that some native women rush into the hut.

"We've got an audience," he says.

Amelia looks at the concerned women as they begin to scowl at Roger.

"I'm used to that."

Roger looks at the angry women, then back at Amelia, and grimaces.

"I don't speak their language, but I know what they're thinking."

The women walk over and lead him out of the hut. He pokes his head back in and sees Amelia sitting up on the side of her bed.

"I'm not joking, but the natives are restless!"

A hand lands on his shoulder and pulls him back outside. He stands facing the women who escorted him out. One shakes her head and waves a finger in the air.

Roger looks back at the hut, then at the woman with the finger. He points at himself, then at the hut, just as Amelia walks out.

"Naw! No way, mates!"

Two native women walk over and help Amelia sit down next to a palm tree. One by one the whole group of women sits near her. They all stare at Roger.

"I think they think I'm pursuing you," Roger says. "You know, the wolf chasing the helpless lamb."

Amelia looks at the stern, protective women, then at Roger, and smiles.

"Like you said, you don't need to speak their language."

Roger keeps a safe distance.

"Okay, the canary was your plane, but what happened to it?"

Amelia closes her eyes and thinks.

"G.P."

"G.P.?"

She takes a deep breath and exhales. She opens her eyes, blinks several times, then closes them again. She breathes in and out once more before she talks, eyes still shut.

"I can't remember. Did he sell it? No. I did."

She slowly opens her eyes and looks at him.

"I sold it, and then I went back East. From what I remember, that's when G.P. entered my life. Things got more hectic for me after that."

Roger steps toward her, but one large native woman stands up and he decides to sit down where he is. He crosses his legs and rests his head in his hands.

"This might be as close as I get for a while."

Amelia looks at the towering woman beside her. The woman snarls at Roger, then smiles gleefully at Amelia. She gives Roger one more defensive look and sits back down.

"That's how G.P. was," Amelia says. "Sometimes. If I let him."

Roger shakes his head.

"Who's G.P.?"

She exhales again before she speaks.

"G.P. was George. George Putnam. My business partner."

Roger gets a doubtful smirk.

"Your business partner? You mean husband, right?"

"Now you're asking too many questions."

"Husband."

Her tone is curt, but her voice is clear even though the questions and Roger's implication stress her.

"No. He was my partner. Husbands are for women who want to be told what to do and how to think."

Roger backs away from the subject of George's role in Amelia's life.

"Okay. Got it."

Their friendly rapport has hit a snag, and Amelia stays silent for a while. Roger doesn't want to risk being tossed into the ocean by the large, protective native woman, so he excuses himself and walks down to the shoreline. He walks along the beach and rethinks his situation.

"G.P. bad," he says to himself. "Neta good. Canary good, and sad."

Amelia stares in his direction and speaks softly.

"G.P. business partner...and husband."

Roger keeps walking down the beach, picking up a stone now and then, looking at it and tossing it into the water. Amelia watches him stroll.

Eventually Roger returns and Amelia is allowed to sit with him by the shore, but the native women never let her out of their sight. She begins to explain another faded, but revisited, memory from her life.

"Now remember, you said you wanted to know my story."

"That's right, missy."

Roger glances behind him and sees a brutish-looking woman stand up, fold her arms and snarl at him.

"You better make it quick."

Chapter 7 – G.P.

The warm, salty waves brush over Amelia's feet as she tells Roger the bits of faded memory that cling to her mind. She rubs the side of her cheek and sighs.

"G.P. George. Mr. Putnam to most, but I always called him G.P."

"George Putnam? The publisher?" Roger says. "Well now, you were in some high-dollar circles, weren't you?"

Amelia digs her feet deeper into the damp sand, leans forward, scoops up some frothy sea foam and brushes it along one of her legs.

"He was. I just happened to be there. I didn't care much for the parties and such. We had a partnership, and it suited both our business needs."

"I see."

Roger doesn't press the husband issue. He learned earlier that it's the one subject to leave alone.

"So what was the partnership?" he asks. "Was it about you being famous, or was it about him publishing your books and such?"

Amelia is silent. She leans forward, scoops up more foam and rubs it on both legs. She looks straight ahead as she speaks.

"It was both, actually. He built my identity and used it to promote my books and create an image of a timid but swashbuckling aviator."

Roger watches her rub her scarred legs.

"Was it worth it?"

She stops caressing her legs and looks at him with a discerning glint.

"To him. Not me."

She leans back on her elbows, tosses her head back and looks at the sky. Then she looks at Roger and smiles.

"It wasn't all bad. I did get to meet the President and the Queen, and I was treated with great admiration everywhere I went."

Her life with George Putnam was a mutual alliance that created, built and kept up her image as a celebrity. Her life got more hectic with her growing notoriety. Everywhere she went, the cameras followed.

"It seemed every time I turned around I was being blinded by a cameraman. Being a celebrity isn't easy. I often became very weary from it."

Roger leans back on his elbows in the sand. They stay silent and watch children run down to the shoreline, wade carefully into the turquoise water, splash each other and run back out.

"They're lucky," Amelia says.

"How's that?"

She glances at Roger, then at the children.

"Nobody can find them here."

Roger looks at her. She looks back with an unannounced implication while the children's laughter rings between the beating rhythms of the surf.

Chapter 8 – Ireland, Hawaii and Miami

Roger and Amelia lie on the beach with their eyes closed. The waves and the children's laughter mingle and slowly fade.

A distant, constant buzzing starts. As it grows louder, it's easier to identify as a plane. Amelia sits up, wraps her arms around her knees and looks out at the horizon. Roger's hat is pulled over his face and he stays lying in the sand, but he answers her thoughts before she says a word.

"Yep. Probably looking for you."

Amelia watches a black speck in a clear, light blue sky buzz along the glimmering surface of the ocean.

"I'm fine."

Roger lifts his hat and looks at her.

"I bet you miss flying, though."

"I miss some of the people I met because of flying. I went to many places, but I can recall only a few."

Roger leans back and pulls his hat over his face.

"Like who, mate?"

She rests on her elbows in the sparkling, powder-soft sand and closes her eyes.

"I met this charming gentleman when I landed in a field in Ireland. He was so kind. He marked the spot where my plane landed and asked if I had flown far."

Roger laughs, then asks a question that makes Amelia rethink her celebrity.

"He didn't know who you were?"

"I guess he didn't follow the news."

As they share her bits and pieces of memory, she touches on the two moments before her last flight from the United States.

"I don't know why I can recall certain moments with such clarity, and others wisp by like a speeding bird. I can barely catch a glimpse."

"It must be the important moments and people in your life that stick in your mind," Roger says. "Otherwise, why remember them, right?"

"Yes. I suppose you're right. When I flew to Hawaii and Miami there were many people I met, and I recall their faces, but not their names."

"Well, in that case it must be the moments that were special. But I'm sure someone stood out. There always is."

Amelia lies back in the sand with an arm over her face to shield her eyes from a blinding, boisterous sun. She speaks in a soft, thoughtful tone.

"Fred. He was with me all the way from Hawaii--"

Sensing something is wrong, Roger takes off his hat and sits up. Amelia exhales heavily a few times before she goes on.

"He was funny. Charming. He made the trip bearable. The others left after we left Miami. If they hadn't, they would be here."

Her memory of the flights to Hawaii and Miami comes in loose bits and pieces. They are tied to her fame and her mysterious disappearance from the eyes of people and cameras. She remembers the places, some of the people, and almost none of the names that went with them on that part of her journey.

Chapter 9 – Lost...and Found

Amelia and Roger have spent the day by the sea. The warm tropical air, the sand and the bubbling water on her skin have left Amelia rejuvenated, but ready for more rest.

On the way back, Roger stops at the thicket where his knife landed. He parts the leaves and finds it. He wipes the red and blue stripes clean on his pants, folds the blade shut and slips it into his pocket. Then he catches up to Amelia and they walk to her hut.

At the hut they stand for a moment and look at each other. Amelia looks past him at the two palm trees. At the base of the second one is a small ring of coral stones. Roger hadn't noticed them before.

"Fred is there," she says. "The women helped me."

Roger looks at the stones. He takes off his hat.

"I'm sorry."

She nods. She doesn't say anything else.

Roger puts his hat back on.

"I can still get you outta here."

Amelia shakes her head quickly.

"No. It'd be worse if I went back. It would be much, much worse."

Roger nods slowly.

"You know, they think you're lost."

She turns and looks at the ocean. The waves roll onto an empty, white sand shoreline. Without a word, she walks toward the water with a limp.

Roger follows close behind and stops at the water's edge. He watches her lower her head and look at her feet. She looks back at him and slowly, purposefully shakes her head. Then she begins to walk along the shoreline.

"I don't want to be found."

Roger watches her walk away. Seagulls land in the sand between them and begin to follow her from a few feet behind.

"I won't tell a soul."

Amelia stops and turns to look back. The seagulls stop their silent parade. She looks down at the curious birds, then back up at Roger, and continues her slow, solitary retreat from her former life.

The End.

About the Author

Von Kambro has written seven feature-length screenplays, all of which have earned recognition in Los Angeles, Houston, New York and Chicago. He has also written two other books based on his award-winning screenplays while living near the golden shores of Lake Michigan.

Finding Amelia. A short story based on the award-winning screenplay. It uses two characters to tell the story of Amelia Earhart and the key events in her life that made her the person the public loved, and has missed since she disappeared on the mysterious flight that would have been the crowning achievement of her career as an aviator.

In "Finding Amelia," she recalls the scattered moments left in her memory to an Australian bush pilot, Roger Danvill, who meets her while making a delivery to the remote island where she has been since her plane crashed into its rocky shoreline.

Bittersweet passages and thoughtful summaries highlight a story told from Amelia to the one person who could take her back to her fame and former lifestyle, but who instead promises to keep her disappearance a mystery for all time.