



## Darling Alicia

### The Love Letters of Alicia Kaner and Stephen Merrett

Edited by Vernee Samuel

A collection of enchanting love letters written between 1966–67 by Stephen Merrett, a young British academic based in Delhi and Alicia Kaner, an Argentinian student. The reader is swept along as they flirt, fight and fall in love on the page. The letters also offer a witty and perceptive insight into politics, culture and family life in India, Argentina and Britain.

The letters were originally adapted by Vernee Samuel into a radio drama, *Darling Alicia*, which was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in July 2006 and repeated in October 2007. She has now edited the book.

When Alicia and Steve first met in Buenos Aires, she was engaged and he was in the midst of a love affair with a local girl. They fell for each other straight away but neither was prepared to make the first move because Steve was about to leave Argentina for good. Within a couple of months, he had left to take up a research post in India. But they could not forget each other and, a few months later, in May 1966, they managed to make contact.

For the next year and a half Alicia and Steve wrote long and passionate letters to each other, she from Argentina and he from India and then London. The letters chart the highs and lows of their relationship. At the same time Alicia records the rise of the Argentine military, the tragic death of her step-mother and her father's turmoil at the prospect of losing his daughter. Steve describes his journeys across India as well as his curious circle of friends and colleagues in Delhi.

When Steve returns home in 1967, they finally agree that Alicia should fly half way round the world to discover if the magic of the letters is matched by the reality of life together. Even then, Alicia is impeded by bureaucratic madness... will she ever make it to London and into Steve's arms?

*"So full of love, truth and wit"*  
- Sir Derek Jacobi

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