



The River

Beverly Lewis

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She looked once more at the dreaded river. Since Anna's death, it had been such a barrier...a place and a moment she could not seem to move past.

A line I can't move beyond...

The River

Tilly and Ruth, two formerly Amish sisters, are plagued by unresolved relationships when they reluctantly return to Lancaster County for their parents' landmark wedding anniversary. Since departing their Plain upbringing, Tilly has married an Englisher, but Ruth remains single and hasn't entirely forgotten her failed courtship with her Amish beau.

Past meets present as Tilly and Ruth yearn for acceptance and redemption. Can they face the future in the light of a past they can't undo?

The River Details

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Author : Beverly Lewis

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From Reader Review The River for online ebook

Barbara says

A very pleasing, yet different, Amish story, *The River* leads the reader on a journey dealing with guilt, forgiveness, how secrets affect relationships, discernment, and how our relationship with God may lead us in a different direction than someone else. When two sisters, Ruth and Tilly, decide to go back to visit the Amish community they left years ago, they attend their parents anniversary celebration not knowing the lasting effect it will have on both of their lives. I recommend this one highly.

Cathy says

After a run of dystopian, fantasy and WWII books, I was looking forward to the change of pace offered in *The River*. The premise of two sisters who had left the Amish way returning to their hometown could've been rife with the challenges they faced trying to balance the two worlds. Instead it was a glancing stroke of the paintbrush in a very surface treatment.

Everything that happened was incredibly convenient, to both the characters and the plot line. I would've expected more conflict from Ruth while she was trying to decide whether or not to return to the Amish life. Instead a simple name slip from Will and, boom, choice made for her. If that's all it took, then why bother having her debate at all? Clearly she wasn't really weighing the pros and cons, or even contemplating what she would truly be giving up on a personal level. It was all very weak.

Tilly's story was at least more believable in her personal demons, though again the resolution was pretty easily obtained. But since the entire book lacked working through conflict, I guess it was par for the course.

Overall, nothing terribly grand, but an interesting peek (if only it had been more than that) into the conflict an Amish woman turned English must face when visiting home.

Cyndi says

I have read quite a few Amish books and many by Beverly Lewis. I have enjoyed reading most of her books but this one was a chore to finish. I kept hoping it would get better which is why I read it one night -- albeit with alot of breaks.

It's a story about 2 Amish sisters who turned English several years before. It takes place in 1977 but I don't know why the author chose to state that as there were only a couple of references to the 70's that I remember. The older sister, Tilly, doesn't have a good relationship with her father and harbors guilt over her youngest sister's death. The younger sister, Ruth, apparently left the Amish when her beau decided to join a "wild bunch of Jamborees" and therefore wasn't fit to marry. The back story of youngest sister Anna's death was barely touched on. All 3 stories were resolved at the end in the last couple of chapters but they were resolved so quickly I was asking myself, "Huh? What the heck just happened?"

Not sure why this book was called, "The River" as it had nothing to do with a river and I think only 2 visits were made to said river because no one wanted to talk about Anna's death. Since the body was never found I was hoping she would turn up alive at the end as that would've made the book worth reading and a much

better ending.

Julia Knight says

I really liked this book it was very interesting and had a very good story line!

Janet C says

Tilly and Ruth, two sisters left the Amish faith and became Englisch because of family relationship issues. They are invited to come home to celebrate their parents anniversary. With reluctance they agree to return to Lancaster County for the family event. Tilly is now married and has 2 children of her own and Ruth is still single. Tillie left because she had a distant relationship with her daed and her sister Anna died in a river accident that Tillie still feels she could have prevented. Ruth had a failed courtship with an Amish boy and left to be with Tillie.

Will returning home heal both Tillie and Ruth and bring forgiveness and acceptance they both yearn for?

Alicia Ruggieri says

With her trademark simple depth, Beverly Lewis has penned another beautiful novel that I can highly recommend. THE RIVER wove seamlessly together an exploration of very real-to-life family relationships, how the past affects our present choices, and the great redemption of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Once you've read one Amish novel, you've read them all, right? :-) Not so with Beverly Lewis, thankfully! Though her characters often face very similar (superficially) decisions across the many books - usually, something to do with leaving/staying Amish, of course :-)) - Lewis often incorporates a theme unique to that specific book/series. I love how she does this, because even though her heroines find themselves in such similar situations, they learn and grow in the different ways unique to their characters. Particularly insightful and touching in this novel was the relationship between Tilly and Lester, her father. Lewis brought me right into Tilly's feelings of yearning yet frustration that Lester would not treat her in the way he treated his other children. The revelation as to why? Well, that was surprising but not out-of-place.

At times, the story didn't move quickly, but it never dragged. The slower, moment-by-moment pace seemed entirely appropriate for this novel that takes place in 1970s Amish Eden Valley, set outside the fast-paced "English" world.

Fans of Lewis's will love this new story of entangled family relationships. I personally loved it and would recommend it to ages 12+ due to some (necessary) thematic elements, including drowning.

Linda Fifield says

Wonderful book about forgiveness for yourself as well as others....also a reminder to look beyond a persons

actions into their heart....you may be surprised at the heartache they carry

Kristi says

Invited back to their Amish parents house to celebrate their anniversary, sisters Tilly and Ruthie are hesitant to go. Both left their Amish roots behind and are living as English. Ruthie is more willing to go but dreads the fact she may run into her old beau Will. Tilly doesn't want to return because of the strained relationship with her father and some of her brothers. She also faces the return to the river where her younger sister drowned years ago. Facing their fears the two return home to Eden Road and their Amish family.

I found this story to be a bit on the heavy side. There are many conflicts in the book that the sisters have to deal with. I felt that at times the story didn't really move at a quick enough pace for me. The sisters return home and stay for five days but it seemed while reading that they were there for much longer. I didn't really care for the two sisters. I don't think they were dimensional enough. They just fell flat and seemed too bland.

There was a bit of a suspense in the book that centers on Tilly and the relationship she has with her father. I guessed the reason for this conflict before it was revealed. It did take me awhile to guess what the reason was. I did like this aspect of the story in that there was something to keep me reading and guessing.

I wasn't overly thrilled with the Ruthie/Will storyline. There story didn't really spark any emotion or sympathy in me. I really didn't care if they got back together or not.

I know life and families can be full of conflict and pain but I prefer to read stories on the lighter side. This book was just a bit too depressing for me and I wasn't really satisfied with the ending.

I received a free, advanced copy of this book in exchange for an honest review which I have given.

Cindy says

I think I probably enjoyed this book more than any of her latest books. But it took me a bit to really get into the story, probably 5 or 6 chapters. There were some very predictable parts, but there were some surprises. I have to say Tilly exasperated me to no end, I just wanted to help her find her way. I loved Ruth, she was a sweet, relatable character. I think one thing that I did take away from this book was the fact that so often we know that the Amish accept God's will as just that, but we don't see stories of the grief after the loss of a child and I think Ms. Lewis did a great job showing how the drowning of the youngest daughter changed the lives of the whole family. Well done, 4 stars from this reviewer, I think if it had grabbed me from page one this book would have been perfect.

This book was provided by Bethany House for reviews only, no payment was received for this review.

Kristin says

Suggested Age:13+ Genre:Amish Fiction, Christian Fiction

Note: There is one delicately written reference to rape. However it is so tastefully written that I didn't feel that my daughter couldn't handle reading this book.

Ruth and Tilly are sisters who have left the faith. Tilly left first and after she had her heart broken, Ruth followed. Though I read this whole book, I never fully got why Tilly was so dead set against her entire family. Even after I found out why...I just, I didn't get along with Tilly. Something about her just rubbed me wrong, perhaps her bitterness but I didn't enjoy her character.

After hearing that their father is ill and Ruth begs to return home for her parent's anniversary, Tilly is finally convinced to go spend some time with her parents. It's a difficult time for her as there are unresolved issues for her, guilt from her sister's death eating at her plus her dad's treatment of her.

As I mentioned earlier, Tilly was hard for me to bond with. Tilly had already married an Englisher, it was evident that she would not return to the Amish. However, I felt that she was pushy with Ruth's decision on whether she should return to the Amish or not. I felt like the character, Ruth, really should have had more of a voice. In the end I feel like Tilly was going to get her way, no matter what. The book was good, don't get me wrong. I just couldn't connect much with Tilly.

Of course, forgiveness and finding peace in Christ first and then the healing that follows was an overall theme, as in most of Mrs. Lewis' books. This was a quick read and very enjoyable.

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I received this book free from Beverly House Publishers. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own

Jen. says

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This story gripped me from the very first page. It's beautifully and vividly written, bringing Lancaster County to life. Definitely enjoyed and recommend to anyone who likes Amish stories. This is not a romance but a story of faith, family and forgiveness.

Kim says

Boring. I had to force myself to continue reading so I could write review. I have read and enjoyed other Beverly Lewis books - this one, not so much.

The story dragged on. The Ruth/Will story line had no guts - it too was boring, the whole book was boring!

And then to find out the real reason her father did not get along with her - I was like - wow really?! That is what you came up with? Really disappointing.

Dawn Teresa says

Originally published on my blog, *ReadLove*.

Sisters Tilly and Ruth each had different reasons for leaving their Amish community of Eden Valley. They weren't "expelled from Eden" or shunned. They left their home and their faith voluntarily. And they certainly never had any intention to return. So when they receive a letter from their brother inviting them back home for their parents' fortieth anniversary, they are reluctant to accept. Tilly, especially, isn't ready to go back and face the painful past she left behind. But when the sisters find that their father is seriously ailing, they grudgingly decide to make the trip back home. But what kind of trouble awaits in Eden Valley? And will they be able to face the painful memories of their past that still haunt them?

Beverly Lewis is prolific. Of the myriad books she's written, the majority have been titles that are part of a larger series. However, with *The River* she has written a standalone tale of two sisters who find that they can't move as independently into their futures as they had hoped without first coming to terms with their past.

I enjoyed getting to know Tilly and Ruth. Lewis does a wonderful job of painting a portrait of two sisters while lending each enough of her own spirit that readers get a good sense of them as separate individuals. *The River* is a nuanced, moving story that skillfully examines family relationships, guilt and shame, forgiveness, and acceptance. A little at a time, Lewis sheds light on the past and how it affects the present family dynamic, successfully allowing Tilly and Ruth (and her readers) to slowly reintegrate themselves into a now unfamiliar world. We are given ample time to get to know each of the women before going deeper into the past. This allows us a chance to connect with them so that we are invested enough to care about their feelings. Lewis does a great job of exploring family relationships and the difficulties and tensions therein. In fact, I would challenge you to read this book and not take stock of whatever animosities you may have been harboring. For I'm confident that in walking through Ruth's personal pain, you'll find healing for what ails your own heart. And for that reason alone, I heartily recommend *The River*.

Verdict: 4 of 5 Hearts. A Moving Story of Family and Forgiveness.

On the plus side, as a standalone novel *The River* is a good entry point into the work of Beverly Lewis. On the flip side, when you finish reading Tilly and Ruth's story, you'll be sorry that you'll not have another opportunity to visit with these special sisters.

*Disclosure of Material Connection: I would like to thank Bethany House for providing a copy of the book in exchange for my honest review. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Shari Larsen says

Tilly Barrows and Ruth Lantz are two formerly Amish sisters, who each left the community for different reasons. They are still plagued by unresolved issues when they are called back home by their eldest brother Melvin for their parent's anniversary.

Tilly is married and the mother of two twin girls, and she is nervous about facing their father again; she feels that she has never been good enough in his eyes, and that he blames her for the drowning death of her 5 year old sister Anna nine years ago.

Ruth is still unmarried, still smarting from a failed courtship with her first beau, Will Kauffman. When she sees him again, it stirs up old feelings, and she wonders if she should consider rejoining the community.

As Tilly and Ruth struggle to find redemption and forgiveness, Tilly learns a long buried family secret.

I really enjoyed this story; I have read quite a bit of Amish fiction, and Beverly Lewis is one of my favorite authors, and I think this is one of her best. What really made this one stand out for me was the fact that it was not a romance story like so many of this genre are, but instead the focus was on family relationships.

This book will not be released until September 2, 2014, but I received a free advance readers copy from Library Thing. The opinions expressed are entirely my own and I was not required to give it a good review, just an honest one.

Sue says

Really enjoyed this book something a little different as I do enjoy reading about the Amish way of life, thought the ending was predictable, but would still recommend!
