



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH LESLIE GOULD

### 1. *Adoring Addie* is the second novel in the COURTSHIPS OF LANCASTER COUNTY series, following *Courting Cate*. What inspired you to create the series?

When I was in graduate school, one of the assignments in my Shakespeare course was to retell plays in short story form. I wrote stories inspired by *Othello*, *A Winter's Tale*, *King Lear*, and several other plays and enjoyed every aspect of those assignments. When I started co-writing Amish fiction with Mindy Starns Clark a few years ago, I realized that Shakespeare's plays could easily be "retold" using Amish settings and characters. I loved the idea, and thankfully Bethany House did too. *Courting Cate*, inspired by *The Taming of the Shrew*, is the first in the series, and *Adoring Addie*, inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*, is the second. Writing the series has been an absolute delight.

### 2. Where has your research of the Amish led you?

I've spent time with Amish families in Pennsylvania and Indiana, read extensively about the history and present-day life of the Amish, and drawn on my travels to Switzerland, where the Amish originated and where I happen to have relatives. I also subscribe to several Amish publications and have contacts that answer my specific questions by old-fashioned letters. My four children all attended a Mennonite Church preschool, so I also have contacts available there to answer my questions, besides a dear friend who is Mennonite. I'm not an Amish scholar or expert, but like so many, I find the culture fascinating, and I've been blessed by the faith of the Amish people I've interviewed.

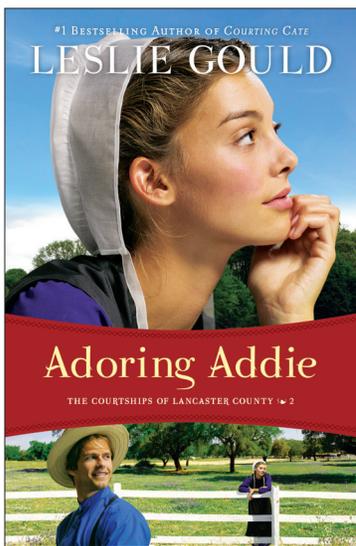
### 3. Besides the graduate class in Shakespeare, what else contributed to your interest in the Bard?

When I was a preschooler, my mother played records of Shakespeare's plays while she cleaned the house. I know I couldn't understand the plots, but I loved the cadence of the words. My mother also took me to my first Shakespeare play—*The Taming of the Shrew*—when I was in the third grade.

I enjoyed studying Shakespeare in high school and college, and soon after I graduated, I began working as the curator of a historical museum in Ashland, Oregon. I was fortunate to collaborate with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival on several projects, including both exhibits and presentations. My husband and I were also able to see plays at amazingly good prices while we were there, and we soaked up everything we could. I have a great appreciation for Shakespeare—especially the way he used language, his character development, and the emotional truths he weaves through his stories.

### 4. How have your readers responded to Amish novels inspired by Shakespeare's stories?

Faithful readers of Amish fiction have responded enthusiastically to the stories, while readers who don't usually read Amish novels have loved the Shakespeare threads. The plots are so familiar to readers, even if they haven't actually seen the corresponding plays, that they respond positively to the archetypes in the stories. I had readers who hadn't seen *The Taming of the Shrew* but had seen the movie *Ten Things I Hate About You*, rave about *Courting Cate* because of that connection. Shakespeare retellings are prevalent on the screen and in literature—and that definitely works to my advantage in these retellings too.



#### **Adoring Addie**

THE COURTSHIPS OF LANCASTER COUNTY #2

by Leslie Gould

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**5. What challenges did you face in writing *Adoring Addie*?**

One of the reasons that the Shakespeare stories work so well in an Amish setting is the shared patriarchal society. But that was also my biggest challenge. In Shakespeare's plays (and time), daughters were considered property and treated as objects. Nothing could be further from the truth in Amish communities. Daughters are protected and cherished. My challenge was to come up with an Amish father who had enough motivation to demand his daughter not marry the man she loved. I had to make him harsh, but redeemable. Stubborn, but somewhere deep inside, still loving.

It might seem the ending would have been my biggest challenge, but it wasn't. I immensely enjoyed altering it. For years now, every time I see a production of *Romeo and Juliet* my heart breaks again. When I was young, I loved the tragedy of it. But now, having experienced the hardships of life, I had few qualms about changing Shakespeare's ending.

**6. What surprised you the most in writing the story?**

Addie's mother, Laurel, surprised me the most. I've always been fascinated by the parents in *Romeo and Juliet* and what was behind the feud. Juliet's mother, Lady Capulet, has more stage time than Romeo's mother, and I often pondered what part she might have played in the rift between the two families. That thought became an integral part of the plot in *Adoring Addie*, but still Laurel surprised me with the details of the backstory.

**7. What's the meaning behind the title *Adoring Addie*?**

Addie is seemingly taken for granted by her family, and it's not until Jonathan (inspired by Romeo) comes along and loves her for who she is that she begins to see her value. But even more important than that, she begins to see God's love for her. For the first time in her life, she feels adored.

**8. What's next in the *COURTSHIPS OF LANCASTER COUNTY* series?**

*Minding Molly*, inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is the third book in the series and the one I'm currently working on. Instead of a demanding father, disobedient youths lost in the woods, and malevolent fairies, I have a desperate mother, Amish *Youngie* camping in the Poconos, and a beguiling toddler, plus a few fireflies thrown in. There's definitely a sense of whimsy to this one.