



The Last Bride

HOME TO HICKORY HOLLOW
by Beverly Lewis

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH BEVERLY LEWIS

1. *The Last Bride* is the final book in your popular HOME TO HICKORY HOLLOW series. What makes this series different from your previous ones?

My prior series have been continuing sagas, whereas HOME TO HICKORY HOLLOW is really a collection of stand-alone novels. A common setting and some repeating characters tie the books together, yet each novel is a complete story that can be enjoyed in any order.

Like the other books in HOME TO HICKORY HOLLOW, *The Last Bride* returns readers to the setting of my very first Amish series, HERITAGE OF LANCASTER COUNTY, and brings back beloved characters, such as Hickory Hollow's Wise Woman, Ella Mae Zook—a longtime fan favorite!

2. Tell us a little about your main character in *The Last Bride*, Tessie Miller.

At nineteen, Tessie Ann Miller is the youngest of her Old Order parents' five daughters—and the only one yet to marry. She has her heart set on Marcus King, but their plan to wed is dashed when Tessie's father disapproves of the match. Tessie can't understand how her father can be so unreasonable, and she has no intention of following in her more passive older sister's Mandy's footsteps by marrying the man her father seems to have handpicked for her.

Tessie and Marcus impetuously take matters into their own hands, eloping to exchange their vows in the English world, hoping that, in time, they will be able to convince Tessie's father to accept their love. But that plan goes terribly awry, and Tessie is placed in a situation she never imagined...one that is going to take a lot of grace to get through.

3. What are some themes in *The Last Bride*?

Who hasn't been young and in love like Tessie? She and Marcus are also headstrong and impatient—they don't want to wait for "the right timing" but simply rush ahead and act based on their own strong feelings. It can be hard to wait on God and be receptive to the wisdom of others, but as both Tessie and Marcus learn, patience comes with wisdom and can protect us from hardships.

The same is also true for honesty: Being honest with ourselves and others can prevent a world of hurt...and when people accept us in spite of that, freely offering the love of Jesus (as Hickory Hollow character Ella Mae Zook so often does!), it is a healing balm for our wounds. We all need an Ella Mae Zook, I think!

4. Your books have been published in eleven languages, and you are a regular on the *New York Times* and other bestseller lists. What do you think of your widespread popularity?

Only God could have foreseen it! I surely never imagined such an enthusiastic reception from readers after my first Amish novel, *The Shunning*, was released in 1997. My Plain relatives and friends have been surprised and delighted as well. It is such a gift to be able to use story to share the truth of God's amazing love for us. Many of my readers have

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confided in me their desire for a simpler, less chaotic way of life—much about the Plain culture really resonates with them. Thousands have also written to say my novels seem to speak directly to their hearts. Only God's hand of blessing on my writing journey could make that possible, and I am ever grateful.

5. What are you working on right now?

It has been a very busy season here at the Lewis household! My husband, David, and I have been collaborating on *Child of Mine*, a contemporary novel that will release June 3 of this year. *Child of Mine* tells the story of Kelly Maines, a young woman who encounters unexpected romance—and complications of the heart—when she uncovers a promising lead in the search for her missing daughter. Naturally we couldn't resist having an Amish character, Laura Mast, to give my faithful readers a little taste of the world they so love, though I hope they will also be as won over by Kelly and this compelling cast of characters as I am!

I've also just completed my next stand-alone novel, *The River*, to be released September 2. Two formerly Old Order Amish sisters, Tilly and Ruth, must revisit long-harbored secrets and the people they left behind when they return home to Lancaster County for their parents' landmark wedding anniversary. I love writing about sister relationships, and the bond between Tilly and Ruth is a particularly deep and memorable one.

6. You certainly have a lot going on! How can readers keep up with your news?

To sign up for my free newsletter, readers can visit my website, www.beverlylewis.com, or my Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/officialbeverlylewis, where I answer questions related to my writing life and Amish culture. The website includes my monthly blog, book trailers and excerpts, authentic Amish recipes, fun photo galleries, and news about my upcoming Spring 2014 Book Tour, which will take me to library and bookstore events throughout Texas and Louisiana from April 2 to 12. Touring gives me a wonderful opportunity to connect with my readers. It's always a highlight of my writing life!