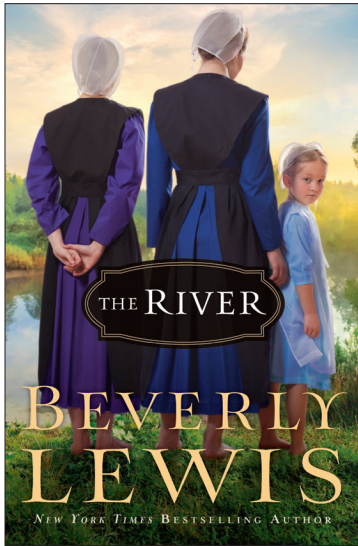


**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH BEVERLY LEWIS**



**The River**

by Beverly Lewis

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**1. What inspired *The River*?**

Two years ago, while preparing for the final shoot of the last installment of my documentary, “Glimpses of Lancaster County with Beverly Lewis,” we set up near the historic Hunsecker’s Mill Bridge. I walked down the grassy slope to the Conestoga River to review what I planned to say, when the rushing water captured my attention. In that powerful moment, Tilly’s dramatic story presented itself to me, and I knew I had to write *The River*, a story in which the river itself demanded a place among the cast of characters.

**2. Tell us a little about the premise for this novel.**

Tilly and Ruth are two formerly Old Order Amish sisters who have been living near each other in the English world—near the harbor in Rockport, Massachusetts. After years apart from their family, they return to Lancaster County for their parents’ landmark wedding anniversary, a visit they undertake with no small amount of trepidation. Each sister comes face to face with the unresolved relationships she left behind: Tilly with her father and two brothers, and Ruth with the beau who broke her heart...a heartbreak she might not be over even now.

I love writing about sisters, and the bond between Tilly and Ruth is a particularly deep and memorable one. I found a real satisfaction in creating their story, with its many redemptive threads.

**3. Many of your previous books have been part of a series. Why did you decide to make *The River* a stand-alone novel?**

It’s true that many of my prior series have been continuing sagas, but my most recent series, *HOME TO HICKORY HOLLOW*, is a collection of stand-alone novels tied together by the setting and some repeating secondary characters. My readers responded enthusiastically to those books and the idea of novels that could be read on their own or in any order. When the story for *The River* developed, I knew it required a unique setting of its own, one that didn’t fit under the *HOME TO HICKORY HOLLOW* umbrella—this book is set in the 1970s, for instance. I’m really looking forward to introducing readers to these new characters—and to beautiful Eden Valley, a place I was fond of as a child!

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

Well, I certainly never imagined any of this when my first Amish novel, *The Shunning*, was released in 1997. What a blessing! Only God has made my amazing writing journey possible. The best part is that so many readers write to say that they truly connect with my characters and that my novels speak directly to their hearts, sharing the truth of God’s abundant love for them. That is a tremendous source of joy to me. Even my Plain relatives and friends have been surprised and delighted by the interest in their culture and a simpler, less chaotic way of life.

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**5. In June you released your second writing collaboration with your husband, David Lewis, a contemporary novel entitled *Child of Mine*. What were some of the challenges and rewards of working together on that book?**

One of the greatest rewards was being able to brainstorm together—Dave brings a whole new level of life experience and ideas to the writing process, and it was really wonderful to have his perspective. (Who better than a pilot to write about a flight instructor, after all!) Of course, blending our individual writing styles proved a challenge, just as it would be for any two writers. It helped that Dave has been a “first reader” for my solo books for many years now. Also, while I love to write, I relish the role of editor, as well.

**6. What are you working on right now?**

Naturally I am busy at work on my next stand-alone novel, *The Love Letters*. Marlena Wenger has been sent to rural Brownstown, Pennsylvania, to assist her widowed Mennonite grandmother for the summer, a situation that takes her miles from her Old Order beau in Mifflinburg. Marlena’s responsibilities double when she also has to care for her infant niece, Angela Rose, after her older sister is in a terrible car accident. With her beloved beau so far away, Marlena turns to her grandmother’s neighbor Ellie Bitner and her family for friendship and assistance, a bond that brings them healing and hope through a most unexpected source. Look for that book on March 24, 2015.

**7. How can readers keep up with your latest news?**

Thanks to social media, there are many ways to stay in touch! To sign up for my free newsletter, readers can visit my Facebook fan page, [facebook.com/officialbeverlylewis](https://www.facebook.com/officialbeverlylewis), or my website, [beverlylewis.com](http://beverlylewis.com). The website also features regular updates, book excerpts, delicious Amish recipes, and news about my upcoming book tour, which will include library and bookstore events September 4–13 all over Pennsylvania, and with one stop in Maryland. I love meeting my readers and hearing their stories, as well!