



The Secret

Beverly Lewis

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In the seemingly ordinary Amish home of Grace Byler, secrets abound. Why does her mother weep in the night? Why does her father refuse to admit something is dreadfully wrong? Then, in one startling moment, everything Grace assumed she knew is shattered. Her mother's disappearance leaves Grace reeling and unable to keep her betrothal promise to her long-time beau. Left to pick up the pieces of her life, Grace questions all she has been taught about love, family, and commitment.

Heather Nelson is an English grad student, stunned by a doctor's diagnosis. Surely fate would not allow her father to lose his only daughter after the death of his wife a few years before. In denial and telling no one she is terminally ill, Heather travels to Lancaster County--the last place she and her mother had visited together. Will Heather find healing for body and spirit?

As the lives of four wounded souls begin to weave together like an Amish patchwork quilt, they each discover missing pieces of their life puzzles--and glimpse the merciful and loving hand of God.

The Secret Details

Date : Published May 1st 2009 by Bethany House Publishers (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN :

Author : Beverly Lewis

Format : Kindle Edition 365 pages

Genre : Amish, Christian Fiction, Fiction, Christian, Amish Fiction, Romance

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From Reader Review The Secret for online ebook

Wulfwyn says

I like Beverly Lewis. I have never been disappointed by her. I liked the characters in this book and the plots. I was surprised, (happily), by her portrayal of the men in the community. The book doesn't really "wrap up" as it is a series book so be prepared for that. The pace was a bit slow but for me that worked. I tend to read this genre after reading zombie books and I need the slow pace. haha. I like the values that are in the book and the way they hold up in today's world. Being a good person is something most people want to be. I do like how the author takes problems that can be viewed as society issues of the modern world and places them in the Amish community. I think sometimes we forget that those issues can be found in their community too. No one is perfect and these stories bring that to light. The author does an excellent job with keeping the values of that community in mind when solving the issues. I really like how she tends to show that we can each learn from the other and that neither world is horrible or perfect. I would recommend the book as a relaxing read.

Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says

About this book:

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Series: “Seasons of Grace” book #1

Spiritual Content- Psalm 42:8; Other Scriptures are quoted; Prayers are said & Blessings over food are said; Talks about God and His Will.

Negative Content- N/A

Sexual Content- A baby was/is born out of wedlock; Judah says Lettie and his love brought four kids.

- Grace Byler
- Heather Nelson

P.O.V. switches between them, Lettie, Judah, Jakob, Adah & Martin
362 pages

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It took me about half the book just to really get into the story, that's the only thing I didn't like out of this story. All throughout "The Secret" I kept trying to figure out who was who and who was married to who. But I got it. :)

Come back Monday for our countdown to see another review!

\*BFCG may (Read the review to see) recommend this book by this author. It does not mean I recommend all the books by this author.

### Janice says

I have read this in book form some years ago but have just re-read it on the Kindle

It is a really good book but you do need to read the series & in order to follow the story

Would recommend this book  
Hugs Janice

## Lorraine says

**SUMMARY:** In the seemingly ordinary Amish home of Grace Byler, secrets abound. Why does her mother weep in the night? Why does her father refuse to admit something is dreadfully wrong? Then, in one startling moment, everything Grace assumed she knew is shattered. Her mother's disappearance leaves Grace reeling and unable to keep her betrothal promise to her longtime beau. Left to pick up the pieces of her life, Grace questions all she has been taught about love, family, and commitment. Heather Nelson is an English grad student, stunned by a doctor's diagnosis. Surely fate would not allow her father to lose his only daughter after the death of his wife a few years before. In denial and telling no one she is terminally ill, Heather travels to Lancaster County the last place she and her mother had visited together. Will Heather find healing for body and spirit? As the lives of four wounded souls begin to weave together like an Amish patchwork quilt, they each discover missing pieces of their life puzzles and glimpse the merciful and loving hand of God.

REVIEW: I read so many Amish books when I first started reading Christian fiction and became bored with them because they were so formulaic. I have to say this takes me back to my boredom. I finished the book

this morning and asked myself: how did I manage to finish this as it moved at an "Amish buggy pace" and the characters certainly didn't capture my attention. Also as the first book in the series it didn't finish any of the storylines so again wondered why I read it. Beverly Lewis has some outstanding books but didn't find this one at the same level.

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### **Brenda says**

It was hard to get into this story. As a fan of Beverly Lewis I have to admit this is not her best book series. It has all the great Amish lifestyles that I am used to, with a few changes, like gas ranges, living within walking distance of the Englishers, telephones are not hard to find, though they are not in every home, one is in a shanty and a few businesses have them.

The story is about a young girl, Grace, who notices her mom acting strange, living the home in the middle of the night. The strange behavior culminates to a pivotal moment, night of Grace's 20th birthday, after everyone is asleep, Grace's mom Lettie, calls for a cab and leaves!

The story revolves around the painful aftermath of Lettie leaving, the scandal rocks the little Amish community. So many things happen, from Grace breaking her engagement to her Father Judah collapsing from exhaustion. Rumors about another man start floating around and the family must deal with this as well as the pain of missing Lettie, especially Grace, who now has to take over as "mom" in several ways, mostly the cooking and cleaning, but that is on top of her chores.

Also there is a English girl, Heather, who decides to spend 3 months in Amish country after finding out she has cancer. Will her search for a natural cure be found there?

Lettie travels to Ohio in search of her first love Samuel, she has something she needs to tell him and she walked away from her family to do so. It's a secret that leaves the reader stunned.

Lettie misses her family and doubts her reasons for leaving, even though she feels the need to make this journey. She comes of as someone very pained, but also very selfish, she is thinking of her pain, not the pain she left to her 4 children and her husband, who refuses to go find her because he wants her to come back on her own, because she loves him..

I am looking forward to seeing how this plays out in book two of the series

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### **Margaret Chind says**

I am taking out the book mark at page 265. I just cannot continue. Nothing pleasant has happened so far in the entire more than two hundred and fifty pages minus one paragraph. Many things are going on, yet every single one is depressing with no reprieve. I have read a handful of reviews so far that love the story and the presentation of the Amish lives through the novel. This book for me just is not happening.

In the past, I have read several titles by Beverly Lewis and loved them. This one is just dull and bland and I cannot continue it. There are too many dozens of books to be read. I spent three days and more pages and effort than I should have. Some already have, and some will love this book, but I do not and I do not recommend it. It could turn around, but you need some relief in the hours of depression and pain and this so far has not had it.

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## Anne says

While this genre was definitely a new experience for me, it reminded me a lot of my mother's old teenage books about young women in the first half of the 20th century: religious lives in remote villages, houses without electricity, household chores filling up most of the day.

It felt like a warm bath of donkey milk, even though donkeys were about the only farm animals that weren't mentioned in the book. I loved reading it before going to bed, because of the simplistic coziness that Amish life apparently has to offer. Fantasizing about making my own quilt and going to sleep under it during a harsh winter.

I'm not a very religious person, so those aspects didn't really appeal that much to me, yet I have to say I DID feel morally virtuous while reading it. Lord knows (no pun intended)!

Now as for the story in itself, 300 pages of waiting for a secret to be revealed and then it turns out to be something meh. Like, come on, I was expecting a bloodsucking goat cult-something, but maybe that says more about what I'm generally reading about than anything else. Either way, the ending sucked. Big time. You focus the entire story on this thing and then at first, you get a dull explanation, followed by...the Acknowledgements. Wait, WHAT?! It's a thriller?! With the biggest mystery being of equal excitement as my dog's farts?!

I really hoped to give this one at least 3 stars, because:

1. The previously mentioned feeling of coziness
2. The writing style, which was very catchy and kept me going even though nothing happened
3. The abundance of food references: I think pretty much 98% of the total number of pages has some sort of homemade delicacy involved, which just made me go YUM! Eating chocolate waffles under my homemade quilt!

Sadly, the ending, but also the last quarter of the book where I ALMOST started skimming my way through to some actiony bits, made me unable to give it more than an 'OK'. Still, if you like reading about the Amish lifestyle or want something in which absolutely nothing happens, so you can read it before going to bed, this is the book for you.

### EDIT 7/7/2014:

I realised I was being too harsh last night on the part of 'nothing happens'. Even though it wasn't very eventful, stuff did happen and I noticed this morning that I was wondering where the Heather-storyline would take us in the next book. And who Grace is going to end up with. So who knows, maybe I'm going to read part 2 some day when I'm out of other books to read.

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## Rachel Brand says

Although Beverly Lewis was one of the first Amish authors I read, back in 2009, I haven't been terribly impressed with her latest books (The Fiddler & The Bridesmaid) and was a little unsure about reading this one. Until I started reading, I wasn't sure if Beverly's standards were slipping, or if I just no longer enjoyed

her style of writing.

Thankfully, *The Secret* was more well well-written and compelling than some of Beverly's more recent novels. It bore all the trademarks of her earlier works--secrets hidden for decades, dysfunctional families, unrequited love, interfering ministers. The best way I can think to describe this book is that it's "typical Beverly Lewis", which was encouraging after my last two disappointing reads from her.

That said, I didn't love this book. While it was a quick and easy read that sucked me in and made me wonder what the hidden secret was, it didn't have that extra factor that pushed it into the "loved it" category. It was well-written, with a little bit of suspense and plenty of intriguing characters, and I definitely enjoyed this book and will be moving on to the next instalment in the series soon. But I just didn't love it. I'm not sure if it was missing anything, or if my taste has just changed enough that Beverly Lewis is no longer one of my favourite authors.

If you're looking for a typical Beverly Lewis novel, this one will definitely satisfy. It definitely kept my attention and made for an intriguing, compelling read. I'm looking forward to finding out what happens next in the series. 3.5\*

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### **Amanda says**

*The Secret* by Beverly Lewis is the first Amish fiction book I've read. I've been interested in the Amish lifestyle since I was a kid and it was interesting to get a glimpse of day-to-day life in Lancaster County by reading this book.

Since I read for pleasure, I tend to enjoy books that give me a happy feeling inside. This book deals with a mother abandoning her family (temporarily?) because of a secret she's kept from even her closest friends, two broken engagements and a young girl receiving a cancer diagnoses less than two years after her mother passed away from the same disease. I held out for a happy ending but I was disappointed to learn I would have to read the next two books for any glimpse of happiness. It wasn't quite the pick-me-up I looking for and it's not worth the \$20-ish dollars it would cost to purchase the next two books to see what happens next.

This book is free on the Amazon Kindle as of the date of this review.

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### **Tasha enderby says**

Okay so I am an Amish nut, I just love the simplicity and the pensylvania dutch they speak. Now that I live in Germany sounding out the words in the book is so much easier and I reconize a few and that makes it fun to relate to. This story was unlike any other I have read of Beverly Lewis, the secrets of a mother leave her family lost and abandoned as she searches for a child she gave up for adoption. This is a story of how love is not a feeling but a choice and you can choose to be happy where God has put you even if the feelings of love never come. I needed message in my heart and I needed to face some questions the mother in this book faces like, could I really leave my family in search of who I am? I can't wait to read the second book I am sure it answers all the questions left opened.

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## **Lynda says**

Having just finished a trilogy by Beverly Lewis prior to starting this book, I was ready for the end that isn't an ending. If I did not have the next two books, I would most unhappy to have to WAIT to find out what is going to happen.

As usual, I enjoy her writing. You don't find "typos", misused words, poor grammar, etc. in Beverly Lewis' books.

This story has multiple major characters. But since it takes three full books to fully tell the story, we as readers are given lots of opportunities to learn each character. Do we know of anyone close to us that NEVER really says much? Never says "I love you" or "thank you"? If you do, does it ever feel like that if you disappeared it wouldn't matter much? That's our "father" character. Turns out he feels deeply -- but no one would ever know it. Including his wife.

Now it wasn't much of a stretch for me to IMAGINE why Lettie takes off with no warning and only a note to her daughter. She leaves during lambing season -- and their income is from sheep. I hope to find out if I'm right in Book 2, "The Telling". (Later edited... "The Telling" is #3.

Then there's the daughter -- a nice Amish woman who is 21 or is just turning 21. That's almost "old maid". She steps up to taking care of the family & the home when mom takes off. I do wish I liked her a bit better.

Then there is an English woman named Heather who sees a doctor and does not get good news. She is still reeling from her mother's death & now...

Heather ends up in Amish country. She of course will have interactions with Lettie's family.

I dare not say much because I do not want to post any spoilers. Thus far I'm enjoying this series. As long as you understand you will not be reading one book but three to get the entire story -- it's quite a good book.

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## **Tarmia says**

This is a genre I have never read before (apart from a Jodi Picoult novel, *Plain Truth*). It pulled me in from the beginning but the pay-off was anti-climatic. I had a lot of unanswered questions, but I suppose I will just have to read the rest of the story!

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## **Holly (2 Kids and Tired) says**

The first book in the *Seasons of Grace* series. I loved Beverly Lewis' *Daughters of Abram* series. So, I had high hopes for this one, and while I didn't hate it, I didn't love it. Like the title states, this is a novel full of secrets and questions.

The story revolves around the Byler family. Mother Lettie is haunted by secrets from her past, father Judah struggles with his wife's discontent and is unable to do anything about it, daughter Grace worries for her family and wishes for her own marriage. A young Englisher, Heather, comes to Amish country to get away



from her own terminal diagnosis.

Lettie's depression and regret cause her to leave her family behind as she searches for answers. Grace tries to pick up the pieces and keep her family together as they move through their own anger and frustration at Lettie's abandonment. Grace is recently betrothed, but finds herself doubting her decision to marry Henry. Here as in most Lewis novels, we learn about the ways and beliefs of the Amish people. The brethren of this novel were much more compassionate than those in some of her others.

This book started out slowly and, at one point, I was tempted to simply start skimming so I could review it and move on to other books. However, I am glad I read the whole thing: the characters are fairly well developed and, for the most part, likable. I am curious as to how Heather's story will play out, because she seemed to be dropped into the book with no point or purpose. I do want to read the rest of the series.

I wish I could give it 2 1/2 stars.

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### **Debbie Phillips says**

Very good. Took me longer to read than I would have liked. I have been lazy about reading this summer. The story was very well written and certainly held my attention, when I took the time to read it. The characters were endearing and I felt for them in their grief and troubles.

Favorite quote...

"I'm here, Lord, because I'm weary of my bitterness. And I want to ask forgiveness." She paused. " No that ain't quite right..."

She struggled against every bit of frustration pent up inside her. "I want to forgive my Mamma," she said, lifting her eyes. In her mind, she saw again her mother hustling away from her with the bulky suitcase, filled with nearly every bit of clothing she owned. "I'm askin' you to carry away my anger, Lord. And the resentment I feel every time I think of that awful moment."

She was weeping now, unable to stop. "I'm sorry for the ugly feelings I've kept inside me, nurturin' them." Stopping her prayer, she went to lean against the sheep fence. "Oh, Mamma, I don't understand why you had to go. But with God's help, I won't tend this bitter root in me any longer." (pg 325)

I understand the bitterness. I have some in my heart and God has slowly been using his word and recent books I have read to let me know how I can let go of that bitterness and trust him with it. I pray some day soon it will be totally gone as I learn anew to forgive those who deeply hurt me.

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### **Robin says**

I enjoyed this book. Although Beverly Lewis is a well-known author, I had never read her work before. The Secret is about an Amish family. In fact, that is why I picked it up. Their lifestyle draws me. The mother leaves her home because of a secret that happened twenty-four years earlier. Ms. Lewis keeps the suspense building until the very end, then she never finishes the story.

This is the first book in this series with these characters, etc. I assume that it will continue in the next book of the series. I would pick it up if I run into it, but could live if I didn't know how she ended The Secret. It's

kind of enjoyable to "wonder" about endings...

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### **Jessika says**

I've always been a fan of Amish fiction. For me, sometimes it's nice to take a step back and read something just slow and simple, but entertaining. I really enjoyed *The Secret*. I've read Beverly Lewis before, so I sort of knew what to expect, but I have to say, I enjoyed this one the most out of any of hers I've read. There were plenty of times that I didn't want to put this one down.

I loved how simple and charming this tale was, while still offering insight into the Amish way of life. I'm not saying that the Amish lifestyle is for me, but I actually found myself relating to one of the modern characters in the book, Heather, as she still admired their slow lifestyle. Sometimes, I think we all could use a gentle reminder to slow down and just find joy in the simple pleasures of life. And for me, Beverly Lewis's books do that.

The only thing here that I wasn't a big fan of was the fact that the ending seemed kind of abrupt. Now, my library has all of the books in this series, so it's not a big deal for me to go pick up the next ones, and I plan on doing so. I just wish there would have been more conclusion here. On that same note, I think Beverly Lewis tends to do this with her book series, almost as if each book is just a part of one big long book, if that makes sense.

Overall, I enjoyed it, and I'm definitely going to continue the series, as well as continue reading her books.

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### **Maureen DeLuca says**

For me, more of a 2.5 - I was interested in the Amish part of the book- Being a huge fan of Linda Castillo who writes the Kate Burkholder series - which by the way -that series is FANTASTIC - I highly recommend you picking up that series starting with book number 1 , *Sworn to Silence* . This series, for me, not that great- I do have the second book in this series here- I might pick it up to see if it gets any better.

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### **Rachelle says**

This book is the first of a trilogy. I accidentally read the 1st and 3rd books and skipped the 2nd and I didn't miss a thing. Really. The plot is very slow moving and definitely could have been done in one book instead of 3. That being said, the slow pace kind of makes one feel like they are right there in the Amish community sitting on the porch, taking slow walks or making jam with your neighbors. Cozy, gentle, soothing and a bit boring.

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### **Staci says**

Reading a Beverly Lewis book is like being welcomed back home with open arms from all of your loved ones. Her writing is simple but beautiful. She depicts the Amish and Mennonite community in a very

favorable light, but she also shows us that they too, are human and have their flaws. She makes me savor those times in my life when I actually slow down and listen to the world around me. This morning I was sitting on my back steps, reading a book, and just enjoying the sun on my face. While doing that I closed my eyes and really tried to concentrate on the sounds around me. Did you know that there must be hundreds of different bird tweets? That is what reading one of her books will do for you...make you stop, listen, and savor the sweet, simple things in life. Of all of her books, this one is my favorite to date. I love that the story this time around is centered around the mother, Grace and her secret that she's hiding from her family. Having a secret in an Amish community is so much different than in the English world, believe me. Do we have to worry about being shunned? Nope. For the first time ever, I actually feel compassion for the father figure in the Amish family. In the past I've always felt that they were too controlling, and too rigid, but I feel Lewis has concentrated on showing us that Amish men can be vulnerable and can love with all of their hearts. If you haven't read a Beverly Lewis book because you think they may be preachy or such, please disregard that and just try one. Try this book and read it with an open heart and mind. I'm sure if you do, you'll be back for the second and third. And not only that, you too may find yourself closing your eyes and savoring all the beauty that our world has to offer.

Before I sign off I want to leave you with a passage that made me feel such empathy for Judah, the husband.

*Judah stood at the footboard and stared at Lettie's side of the bed, his eyes lingering on her pillow. How long had it been since they'd held each other? Turning, he reached for the Good Book, bearing its weight to his chair near the bureau. He sat with a groan. Opening to the Proverbs, he read: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."*

p. 278

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## **Jerry says**

### **A Quickie Review**

It's no question that Amish stories are the most popular genre of Christian fiction. Beverly Lewis, who has written countless volumes about the Plains people, does well once again with *The Secret*, which is the start of yet another series. Fans of Amish fiction will find plenty to like about this one.

**Score: 4/5**

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