



## A Little Bit of Charm

*Mary Ellis*

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## A Little Bit of Charm Mary Ellis

A Little Bit of Charm, the third book in bestselling author Mary Ellis's New Beginnings series, is about fresh starts...and how faith in God and His perfect plans provide the peace and joy all long for.

After the death of her parents and then watching both of her older sisters find happiness in homes of their own with husbands who adore them, Rachel King yearns for a new beginning. Her cousin Sarah lives near a thoroughbred stable in Kentucky, and working around beautiful horses is Rachel's dream come true. She leaves Lancaster County to find a job at Twelve Elms Stables and believes God has answered her prayers.

And then she meets Jake, an attractive and charming Englisch man. At first she refuses to go out with him, but he eventually convinces her to give him a chance. When Amish men who also wish to date Rachel start encountering strange mishaps, she wonders if Jake is really who he seems to be.

What does a young woman do when her heart is pulled in two directions?

## A Little Bit of Charm Details

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Author : Mary Ellis

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# **From Reader Review A Little Bit of Charm for online ebook**

## **Ibjoy1953 Hannabass says**

### **MY THOUGHTS ON THIS BOOK**

With her older sisters married and having a home of their own, Rachel King's life was a pretty lonely one. She lives with her cousin Sarah, after losing their parents to a horrible house fire. When a job became available at Twelve Elms Stables, this was a dream come true for Rachel. She now lives in a little Amish community called Charm, Kentucky, but Rachel wasn't expecting to be 'charmed' by the Englisch stable owner like she was. But what could become of a relationship between a Baptist and an Amish? Mary Ellis does a fantastic job of giving readers a heartwarming and entertaining Amish story that will not only charm you, but have you wishing you were there in this little Amish community.

I didn't read the first two books in this series, but I sure did enjoy A Little Bit of Charm! I fell in love with the characters in this story early into reading this book. Ms. Ellis has a way of making you feel like you are living in the story with the characters. There are a lot of twists and turns that will take you by surprise, because of the relationship between these two interesting characters. What happens with this Englisch and Amish couple? You will find out in this wonderful Amish story by Mary Ellis.

I received this book from Harvest House to read and review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 55.

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## **ANNETTE says**

Charming story but, a little slow with long chapters for me. Lots of horse information in the story .Power in prayer and God is always with you.

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## **Brenda says**

New beginnings are often hard to predict, but after the death of her parents in a housefire change is all that twenty year old Rachel King can think about. It's hard to leave her younger sister Beth and grandparents behind in PA but decides to head to Kentucky to live with her aunt Sarah in the hopes of fulfilling her dream of working with horses. When she lands a job giving tours at Twelve Elms Stables, she couldn't be happier, and soon finds herself in a friendship with Jake Brady the owners son, but soon that friendship turns into something more.

There are so many things taking place in "A Little Bit of Charm" by Mary Ellis, that made it an interesting read. I found the story of Rachel compelling, I could totally understand why she wanted to get away from the place where her parents died. The fact that she was Amish, although she was still in her rumspringa, and decides to go live with her aunt Sarah, who was an Old Order Mennonite made this story a bit different. It was interesting to see the differences in the beliefs, but also the similarities. Another unique aspect of this

story was that it takes place in Kentucky, not the typical "Amish" setting. I found the storyline that revolves around race horses, the stables along with the general workings of the farm provided an added layer to the overall story, I felt like I really got an accurate glimpse of a working horse farm! Jake Brady wasn't the typical male lead for an Amish romance either, because he was English. I was a bit surprised at the relationship that developed between him and Rachel, and that kept me reading to find out what would happen. A sub plot about a child contracting Polio and how Donna Cline an agent from the county health department undertakes the daunting task of trying to convince the Plain community to vaccinate their children added another layer to the plot. While "A Little Bit of Charm" is the third book in The New Beginning Series it can be read as a stand alone work. Fans of "Amish" fiction may be a bit disappointed because this book focuses on a Mennonite community, although the main character Rachel is Amish. Ms. Ellis writes a compelling story that allows us to feel the characters struggles as they wrestle with choices to be made. An added bonus with this story are the recipes that the author includes.

Reviewed for Readersfavorite.com

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## **Mercedes Cordero says**

This story broke my heart constantly and consistently in a sweet, beautiful way. Jake's yearning for Rachel is painful to read as their love is forbidden: she is Amish, he is an Englisher, and not a very Christian Englisher. But to see him so in love and crazy about her was heartbreaking. Part of me wanted to root for him, and part of me was afraid to do so because I didn't want to get too attached knowing that in the end, they might not get together. And that is the reason why A Little Bit of Charm is the first novel in quite some time that has made me want to skip ahead just to see if they ended up together. But I didn't.

At first I thought that Jake fell for Rachel too hard too fast. He was practically in love with her at first sight, which made the romance less subtle. It all seemed too abrupt at first. But the author started developing their relationship from there and, once past that initial bump, it grew on me. But as nice and sweet as the romance is, and as funny and enjoyable as Rachel's Amish suitors were, as well as the situations they were in, this is more Rachel's story than Rachel and her suitor's story.

Rachel is discovering who she is, who she wants to become, God's will for her life, and where does she belong. And it's a beautiful journey filled with self-doubt, foolish mistakes (on her and Jake's part) that turned to be wonderful moves in the right direction even if the path taken seems wrong. It's a true testament of how God works even through our missteps to lead us right to where He wants us to be.

We also get a nice glimpse into a great family relationship with the Bradys, and particularly a wonderful relationship between Jake and his sister Jessie. There is a beautiful scene between them that brought tears to my eyes. A nice testament of sibling love, support and grace.

The story, however, is not without flaws. What could have been a great story with a nice flow was routinely interrupted with the story of Donna, a Health Department worker concerned for the safety of the Amish and Mennonite community due to a bout of polio and their resistance to vaccination. Although it is something different (and a real concern) I never saw the point or real connection to everything else until the very end. It did not play an important part in advancing the story, which made it feel more like a filler.

Also, there are scenes and conversations important to the story and to Rachel's development that I thought were meaningful but the author omitted them or glossed over them. It made the story uneventful and lacking

in the excitement and action that Love Comes to Paradise (the second book of the series) had. But the author did a great job of taking what could be called predictable by typical romantic story standards and turning it into a story that strays from the norm in typical Amish romances.

This is the third book in the series but it can be read as a stand alone. It's a touching story about growing up, trusting God and growing in our relationship with Him. A wonderful look at grace, mercy and contentment over pride.

\*I received a copy of this book from the publishers through The Christian Manifesto in exchange of an honest review.

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### **Debra Joy says**

Am so glad I came across this author this year. I have enjoyed all three books and loved the different paths each sister took. A little bit of charm was my favorite of the three as the ending was not what I expected. I love when a book can surprise me, especially a good surprise. My only dislike is that there is no more books in this series.. I'm imagining what becomes of baby sister Beth.

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### **Lis K says**

I had never read a book by this author before so I didn't know what to expect but I was pretty surprised by the humor laced throughout this book. Rachel King is a very likable young woman, trying to find her way in the world after the unexpected death of her parents. Jake Brady is also trying to find his way in the world, putting all his effort and money towards raising a Kentucky Derby winner. They both like each other but the Amish vs. the Englisch world is a major hurdle between them. I really liked Rachel and the Amish/Old Mennonite people, they were very blunt and funny in their own way. I didn't like Jake as much through the first half because he was kind of impatient, selfish, and angry at times with his family. However, with Rachel (and the blind children), he was very sweet, attentive, and patient. He seemed to have low self-confidence in his ability to get a girlfriend yet he was pretty confident in his pursuit of Rachel. It was hard to figure him out. In the end he redeemed himself when he realized what's really important (God) and not important (money). I liked the couple together, they really complement each other. I liked the subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, humor (e.g., Rachel and her continuous dread of the chickens!). I wasn't sure if the whole subplot with the polio case/vaccination issue was necessary. I didn't feel it added much to the story unless it was to teach more about how the Amish/Old Mennonite population wrestle with the issue of vaccinations. I don't read much Amish fiction so I'm not an expert on this issue. This was the 3rd book in the series but it didn't seem necessary to have read the first 2 books. I would read another book by this author because the humor and the characters drew me in.

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### **Natalie says**

This is good. I really enjoyed it. I will miss the series if it's over. Highly recommended if you've read the other two.

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## Deborah says

A Little Bit of Charm, the third book in bestselling author Mary Ellis's New Beginnings series, is about fresh starts...and how faith in God and His perfect plans provide the peace and joy all long for.

After the death of her parents and then watching both of her older sisters find happiness in homes of their own with husbands who adore them, Rachel King yearns for a new beginning. Her cousin Sarah lives near a thoroughbred stable in Kentucky, and working around beautiful horses is Rachel's dream come true. She leaves Lancaster County to find a job at Twelve Elms Stables and believes God has answered her prayers.

And then she meets Jake, an attractive and charming Englisch man. At first she refuses to go out with him, but he eventually convinces her to give him a chance. When Amish men who also wish to date Rachel start encountering strange mishaps, she wonders if Jake is really who he seems to be.

What does a young woman do when her heart is pulled in two directions?

My Review:

The over-used story line of Amish-girl-meets-Englischer-boy never fails to amuse and captivate my attention, this novel was no exception. While I was pleased with the entertainment value, the overall character development, and the Amish setting, there were a couple things that I just couldn't get past.

First, what is an Amish girl doing riding horses in Englisch clothes and hanging out with her boss? Young Amish teenagers can run around all they like (or so it is portrayed in novels) but I can't see how hanging out with your male boss as a single young woman is just okay with everyone, no questions asked.

Second, I love learning new things in the books I read. But the glaring inaccuracies about how horses are trained, etc, was bad enough that even I knew better. I appreciate Ellis's original idea of putting an Amish girl on a horse farm. But sometimes even the most epic plans fail, and it just didn't work. Ellis's writing was wonderful as always, however, with great characters/personalities throughout.

Lastly, I was confused by the nurse trying to get the children vaccinated against polio. I was quite in the dark what that was about, and I couldn't find a reason why that was included. My final conclusion is that as I did not read the first two books, it is altogether possible I missed some vital information along the way. Four out of five stars because Ellis still made a disaster plot entertaining and an interesting story.

This book was provided by the publisher for free in exchange for an honest review.

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## Emma says

A Little Bit of Charm by Mary Ellis

the third book in bestselling author Mary Ellis's New Beginnings series, is about fresh starts...and how faith in God and His perfect plans provide the peace and joy all long for. After the death of her parents and then watching both of her older sisters find happiness in homes of their own with husbands who adore them,

Rachel King yearns for a new beginning. Her cousin Sarah lives near a thoroughbred stable in Kentucky, and working around beautiful horses is Rachel's dream come true. She leaves Lancaster County to find a job at Twelve Elms Stables and believes God has answered her prayers. And then she meets Jake, an attractive and charming Englisch man. At first she refuses to go out with him, but he eventually convinces her to give him a chance. When Amish men who also wish to date Rachel start encountering strange mishaps, she wonders if Jake is really who he seems to be. What does a young woman do when her heart is pulled in two directions? What are some of the factors contributing to Rachel's decision to date Jake?

There is no decision in life without consequences. In what ways will Rachel's life change if she follows her heart?

I highly recommend reading this book. A Little Bit of Charm by Mary Ellis is a wonderful well written 5 stars book.

I am looking forward to reading more books by Mary.

A Plain Man by Mary Ellis (Apr 1, 2014).

Romance on the River (Civil War Heroines)

The Quaker and the Rebel (Civil War Heroines, book 1)

An Amish Miracle

The New Beginnings Series

Living in Harmony (The New Beginnings Series) by Mary Ellis

Love Comes to Paradise (The New Beginnings Series) by Mary Ellis

A Little Bit of Charm: 3 (The New Beginnings Series)

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## Rachel Brand says

Following the tragic death of her parents, Rachel King remained with her grandparents and younger sister in Pennsylvania while her two older sisters forged new lives for themselves in Maine and Missouri. Although she longs to settle down and marry, she doesn't feel comfortable attending singings and courting local Amish men when she can't shake the memories of the fire that took her parents' lives. In desperate need of a change of location, Rachel sets out to visit a Mennonite relative in Kentucky. Although she tells her family she doesn't plan to stay long, secretly she hopes she can start over in Kentucky and begin her life anew. Her cousin, Sarah, is grateful for the help around her chicken farm, but Rachel has never been a big fan of chickens. She soon secures a part-time job giving tours at a local English horse farm. Since she was a young girl, she's adored horses, but she may have bitten off more than she can chew when it comes to the owner's son.

Jake Brady has high ambitions for his family's horse farm, but he knows his plans will cost them a lot of money. Although his family trusts his good judgement and business skills, he still doesn't feel entirely satisfied with the risks he's making in order to create the most profitable race horse. With his sister returning to university and his mother being forced to put in more hours at her pharmacy, Jake doesn't see how they can keep the regular tours on the farm going. He doesn't expect his sister to hire a visiting Amish girl, nor does he anticipate falling head over heels for her. But as much as they come to care for each other, Jake doesn't know if their relationship will work out. Although he's attended church his whole life, Rachel's understanding of God and her faith is a mystery to him. And it may well be the stumbling block that keeps them apart...

I started this book with high hopes, as I've yet to read anything written by Mary Ellis that I haven't adored.

While *A Little Bit of Charm* didn't steal my heart quite as much as the previous two books in the New Beginnings series, it was just as sweet and nearly as unconventional as its predecessors.

My main worry when approaching this book was simply that the sections about horse farming would bore me. Unlike most women, I never had that "horse phase" that preteen girls go through, even though there was a riding stable on the edge of my village. I was pleased that the details about Rachel's job were woven realistically into the story and easy to understand, even for those of us who aren't horse fans. It was actually pretty interesting to learn about the work that goes into running a farm that not only stables horses, but trains them for races and runs tours and events. It's definitely an all-family affair, and I enjoyed getting to know Jake's family, especially his sisters. They may not be Amish, but this family was pretty close-knit.

One of the main appeals of the New Beginnings series is that each book takes place in a different state, and not one typically associated with the Amish. After reading so many books set in Pennsylvania and Ohio, it's been a pleasant change to visit Maine, Missouri and now Kentucky. Another unique aspect of this novel was the community in which Rachel resided, which is Old Order Mennonite. Although we aren't given a lecture on how different the Amish and Mennonites are, it was interesting to see the details between their lifestyles. For example, Rachel's cousin, Sarah, has electricity in her home, but she still prefers to dry her clothing outside, and they don't drive a car. I will admit that I struggled to warm up to Sarah. I know that she only wanted to protect Rachel from harm, but she was very overbearing and judgemental at times, especially considering that Rachel was an adult who she could have trusted to be make responsible decisions. The fact that the Amish and Mennonites don't seem to respect a grown woman as being an adult until she marries is something I don't think will ever sit well with me.

*A Little Bit of Charm* isn't just a romance novel. I think I'd also describe it as a "coming of age" story, as a large part of Rachel's struggle is in discovering where she belongs in the world, now that her parents are gone and her family is scattered across the country. I think this is a storyline that will speak to a lot of young people, especially Rachel's struggle to decide if she needs to follow the ways of her family (Amish or Mennonite) or if she can retain her faith and values without staying Plain.

Although Rachel's struggles were touching, they weren't quite as compelling or heart-wrenching as those in the previous novels in the series. I praised *Living in Harmony* for telling the story of what happens after the *Happily Ever After*, and *Love Comes to Paradise* for dealing with the topic of God's wrath and mercy, as well as its realistic depiction of an Amish woman's struggle to remain pure. Rachel's journey of self-discovery is probably one a lot of readers can relate to, but it's definitely one that's been done before.

There's no doubt that the romance between Jake and Rachel is sweet, but I do wish it had developed a little slower. Although Rachel is in her rumspringe at the start of the book, I still didn't completely buy that she'd spend time alone with Jake and consider dating him so soon after they met. As the novel progressed, I did warm up to their romance. It might not be the most remarkable one I've encountered, but it was encouraging to see the way that Rachel and Jake helped each other with their struggles. There's also a sub-plot about Jake's spiritual struggles. It was a nice change to read about someone who had grown up in a Christian family but never developed their own personal faith. So many Christian novels deal with people who tragically lose their faith, or never believed in God but suddenly see the light. Jake's story is probably typical of a lot of young men and women who just haven't made that step in forming their own personal relationship with Jesus, even if they believe in Him.

This book has a lot in it, and I realise that I've yet to touch on the sub-plot about the Plain community not believing in vaccinating their children against Polio, or Jake's desire to create a champion race horse, or even the other Plain boys who attempt to court Rachel. All of these sub-plots were interesting, but perhaps this



book tried to cover a little too much ground. As fascinating as it was to learn about Sarah's community's objections to vaccinations, sometimes the switch from a romantic scene to one about vaccinations and then on to one about horse-racing was a little confusing.

Although *A Little Bit of Charm* wasn't quite as unconventional as the previous books in the series, the ending certainly was. There were genuinely moments where I wasn't sure if Rachel and Jake could make their relationship work—even though, yes, it's a romance novel and it must have a happy ending—and it was this uncertainty that kept me turning the pages. Even if I didn't absolutely love this book, it was certainly compelling and contained many unique aspects. I'm hoping this won't be the last book in the New Beginnings series. Perhaps the youngest sister, Beth, is due for a story of her own?

Review title provided by Harvest House.

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### **Norma says**

In my honest opinion, this is a great love story and a struggle between strong Amish and Baptist belief. Rachel King, an Amish girl, always wanted to work with horses. Rachel left Pennsylvania, Lancaster County, after her parents were killed in a fire. She went to live with her cousin, a Mennonite, Sarah, and her husband Isaac Stoll, who lived near a Thoroughbred stable in Kentucky. Sarah and Isaac had a chicken farm, but Rachel and the chicken didn't get along! When Rachel went and applied for a job at the Twelve Elm, she got the job. They ask if there would be a problem with her wearing jeans and booties. Rachel said that there would be no problem because she was on her rumschprunge (that meant she had not joined the church yet) she already had a pair of jeans, but she would have to get a pair of booties. Jessie Brady, her boss, told her she had a pair if they fit. The first time that Jake Brady saw Rachel, he fell in love with her. He asked her out, but she told him she could only go out with Amish, Mennonite guys. As time went on, Rachel started having feelings for Jake Brady. Sarah tried to fix Rachel up with some Mennonite guy, but she didn't like any of them. Jake Brady asked Rachel to go to the Baptist church with him and she went. She enjoyed the service. They went out on dates. Rachel went to see the Bishop and talk to him about the difference between the Amish and Baptist? Didn't they all worship God Our Savior. Rachel ended up breaking up with Jake Brady, will those be able to get back together with the difference in their belief or will their love have to never be. You will have to read this wonderful love story to see if they get back together. Here hoping you read it. Because if you don't, you are missing out on a great book.

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### **Patricia Thompson says**

#### **Good, but not my type**

This book is put together well, but I had a hard time keeping interest. I am not a horse person. As I said, the book was put together well.

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### **Cheri Swalwell says**

I had the privilege of reading *A Little Bit of Charm*, book #3 in The New Beginning Series by Ms. Mary Ellis. Wow - I have so thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Amy and Nora, from book #1 and #2, and this

book about Rachel's journey was just as spectacular. I love how Ms. Ellis has created such unique personalities for each and every one of the sisters, as though they were a real family down the street where I live.

When I started reading this book, I was amazed how once again God did it. The theme of God being the great provider and looking to Him for wisdom was exactly what I needed at this particular time in my life. One of the struggles experienced in the book was mirrored in my personal life and it was such comfort to hear words of encouragement being spoken to fictional characters that applied to my own life. Just as God comes through in fiction, He comes through in real life as well. When we trust and obey, God works all things out for His good. It may not always look the way we think it will, but it definitely is the best solution.

Ms. Ellis' writes characters and communities I wish I belonged too. They aren't perfect, but in their imperfections, they are entertaining, encouraging, hopeful, and enjoyable. I love how she reminds the reader we are all loved by God equally, whether living as Englishers or choosing to be set apart as Mennonite or Amish. She gave a great portrayal of all three different congregations working, fellowshiping, and mingling together peacefully while still maintaining their separate lifestyles. That gives hope for a world in which people can be accepting of each other while we worship the same God.

I can't wait to discover more about Beth, the last King sister, in book #4 as well as continue the journeys of Amy and John, Nora and Lewis, and now Rachel and her husband. I wasn't ready for the story to be over and I wasn't ready to say goodbye. I'm glad I have one more book to continue on with a family I have definitely grown to love. I have so enjoyed getting to know this family and their love for each other and most importantly, their love for God.

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## **D.J. says**

Oh, how I hate to see this series end...

After getting to know Amy and Nora, now we get to know Rachel. After losing their parents in a house fire, they've each grown and matured – and their journeys have taken them from Lancaster to Harmony, Maine... Paradise, Missouri... and Charm, Kentucky.

I'm hoping Mary will write another sequel with Beth, the youngest King daughter – it would also be a great time to catch us up on what's happening with Amy, Nora and Rachel, too.

Mary Ellis did such a fabulous job creating four unique individuals – and how each finds their faith, friends, and husbands. I'm not sure I would have thought of sending them to such different locations, but it certainly worked out perfectly for each one.

Amy may have not willingly chosen the colder climate, but she's happy in Maine; Nora is much happier in Paradise, with a climate much like the one she grew up knowing; Rachel is determined to settle in Kentucky, and is very happy in Charm.

I've said it before, but it bears repeating... I find myself wishing I could live amongst these families. But I can visit Amish and Mennonite friends in nearby communities and that's even better than reading about

them. My grandchildren often urge us to plan a visit – they enjoy their visits so much, they hate to leave.

Mary Ellis' books remind us that, while the Amish aren't perfect (as Nora would be quick to point out), they are trusting, caring, encouraging, supportive – something I've missed for much of my life. I appreciate being reminded that we are all loved by God. It doesn't seem to matter to Him if we're Amish, Mennonite or Christian (or on a different path).

If you enjoy reading Amish fiction, please don't miss this wonderful series!

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## **Laura says**

Title: A LITTLE BIT OF CHARM

Author: Mary Ellis

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Genre Amish Romance

Series: New Beginnings series

Rachel King has always wanted to work with horses, but when her handsome boss sweeps her off her feet, she starts to doubt everything in life, including her Amish faith. Horse breeder and trainer, Jake Brady dreams of winning the Kentucky Derby with his new colt. But how much is he willing to risk for a chance at fame and fortune? A Little Bit of Charm--a story about making choices that will last a lifetime.

A LITTLE BIT OF CHARM is the third book in Ms. Ellis' New Beginnings series. Fans of Amish fiction will want to read *Living in Harmony* and *Love Comes to Paradise* to find out how the two oldest girls found love and settled in a new location, finding new careers and making adjustments to different life-styles in different Amish settlements.

I enjoyed getting to know Rachel and Jake, and how they work with horses. I don't know much about the racing world, but I do know Kentucky is the perfect setting for this book as it is full of beautiful horses, farms, and race tracks.

There is a subplot regarding polio in this story that didn't really seem to fit in with Rachel and Jake's romance, but it was interesting to see the responses people had to vaccinations and why as the health worker made her rounds.

If you like Amish fiction, in this series, Ms. Ellis takes us to different communities in the country—from Maine, to Missouri, to Kentucky. I enjoyed “traveling” to these different locals and learning more about their differences.

The story was quiet, unassuming, and didn't demand attention. If you want a peaceful sort of book to read over the course of several days, Ms. Ellis' A LITTLE BIT OF CHARM is perfect.

4 stars. Available in paperback, hardcover, and ebook. 352 pages.

