

BEVERLY
LEWIS

The
Sacrifice



BETHANYHOUSE
PUBLISHERS

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

The Sacrifice
Copyright © 2004
Beverly Lewis

Cover design by Dan Thornberg

The portion of a poem cited in chapter thirty-four is as quoted in *A Joyous Heart* by Corrie Bender, published by Herald Press of Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, in 1994. The author of the poem is unknown.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Published by Bethany House Publishers
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438

Bethany House Publishers is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Printed in the United States of America

Paperback: ISBN-13: 978-0-7642-2872-8 ISBN-10: 0-7642-2872-2
Mass Market: ISBN-13: 978-0-7642-0484-5 ISBN-10: 0-7642-0484-X

Library of Congress has cataloged the hardcover edition as follows:

Lewis, Beverly, date-

The sacrifice / by Beverly Lewis.

p. cm. — (Abram's daughters ; 3)

ISBN 0-7642-2875-7 (hardcover : alk. paper) — ISBN 0-7642-2872-2 (pbk.) — ISBN 0-7642-2876-5 (large-print pbk.)

1. Lancaster County (Pa.)—Fiction. 2. Amish women—Fiction.
3. Young women—Fiction. 4. Sisters—Fiction. 5. Amish—Fiction.
I. Title II. Series: Lewis, Beverly, date. Abram's daughters ; 3.

PS3562.E9383S23 2004

813'.54—dc22

2003028149

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

Dedication

For

Jeannette Green,

wonderful friend and “sister.”

Beautiful in every way.

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

By Beverly Lewis

ABRAM'S DAUGHTERS

The Covenant • The Betrayal • The Sacrifice
The Prodigal • The Revelation



THE HERITAGE OF LANCASTER COUNTY

The Shunning • The Confession • The Reckoning



ANNIE'S PEOPLE

The Preacher's Daughter • The Englisher • The Brethren



THE COURTSHIP OF NELLIE FISHER

The Parting



The Postcard • The Crossroad



The Redemption of Sarah Cain

October Song • Sanctuary • The Sunroom*



The Beverly Lewis Amish Heritage Cookbook

www.BeverlyLewis.com

*with David Lewis

07C

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

BEVERLY LEWIS, born in Pennsylvania Amish country, fondly recalls her growing-up years. A keen interest in her mother's Plain family heritage has inspired Beverly to set a number of her popular stories in Amish Country, beginning with her inaugural novel, *The Shunning*.

A former schoolteacher and accomplished pianist, Beverly has written over eighty books for adults and children. Five of her blockbuster novels have received the Gold Book Award for sales over 500,000, and *The Brethren* has been nominated for a 2007 Christy Award.

Beverly and her husband, David, make their home in Colorado, where they enjoy hiking, biking, reading, writing, making music, and spending time with their three grandchildren.

Prologue

Summer 1949

Come June, the first song of the whippoorwill reminds me of berry picking . . . and bygone days. Although it has been over two years since Jonas Mast left for Ohio, I still wonder about him, along with my older sister, Sadie, and am able to pray for their happiness more readily than at first.

Especially now, at summer's onset, when strawberries are ripe and ready for pies and preserves, I think of Jonas. He loved strawberry-rhubarb pie like nobody's business, and both his mamma and mine made it for him with sugar *and* raw honey, so it was nothing short of wonderful-good. "Desserts are s'posed to be plenty sweet," Mamma has said for as long as I can remember. This, with her irresistible wide-eyed smile. These days Sadie is the one baking such delicious fruit pies for Jonas.

Now and again I feel almost numb for the way things turned out between Jonas, Sadie, and me. Close

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

as I was to each of them, it seems they should have cared enough to send some word early on—prior to Bishop Bontrager’s strict decree—offering an explanation. Anything would’ve been better than this dreadful silence. It’s the not knowing how things got so *verkehrt*—topsy-turvy—that causes the most frustration in me. The lack of word from Ohio confirms my worst fears. I expect even now Sadie probably wonders if I have any idea she is married to Jonas, or that I feel strongly she stole him away from me. How on earth does she live with herself?

I’m slowly accepting the split between my beau and me, since it would be wrong to pine for a man who belongs to another. Most folk just assume I’ve passed the worst of it and am moving on with life. They will never know truly, because I tend to go about things rather cheerfully . . . and, too, so much time has passed since that devastating autumn. It does still puzzle me, if I think on it, how one minute we were so happily planning our wedding, and then, clear out of the blue, a most peculiar letter arrived saying Jonas suspected Gideon Peachey of carrying a torch for me. Even though I promptly wrote to reassure him of my devotion and love, I never again heard from him. Downright baffling it is.

Of course, if Jonas were privy to my *present* friendship with Smithy Gid, he might have a little something to go on. But, back then, nothing was further from the truth. Fact was, my heart belonged wholly to Jonas, and nothing and no one could make me think otherwise.

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

Not Smithy Gid, nor his sister Adah, my closest friend. Not even dear *Dat* and Mamma, though my father has long hoped Gid might one day win my affections.

With the revelation of Aunt Lizzie's secret to me—to Mary Ruth and Hannah, too—my father's and grandfather's health seems much improved and both Mamma and Aunt Lizzie have a new spring in their step, in spite of the vacant spot at the supper table. Sadie's absence is a constant source of worry, especially since she's been shunned from the Gobbler's Knob church. And *Dat* was right; the bishop—after a reasonable time—insisted Sadie's letters be returned unopened. It's no wonder she stopped writing along about Christmastime after leaving for Ohio. I wish to heavens I might've been allowed to read those things she wrote to us.

Some days it seems as if my sister has been away for years on end. But if that were true, I'd be thought of as a *maidel* by now, which I'm surely not. I am still only nineteen—a few years under the limit of the expected marrying age—though if Smithy Gid had his way, he and I would be hitched up already.

The berry patch calls to me even now as I help *Dat* with morning milking. Seems there's something nearly sacred about creeping along the mounded rows, the blissful buzz of nature in my ears, long runners tripping at my bare feet as the blistering sun stands high and haughty in the sky and the tin bucket steadily fills with

plump red fruit. Being out there alone with the birds and the strawberry plants, beneath the wide and blue heavenly canopy, soothes my soul and sets my world aright. At least for a time . . .



Part One



*What doth the Lord require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God?*

—Micah 6:8

Chapter One

The morning Mamma quietly announced her baby news, Leah hung back a bit, standing near the kitchen door, while her twin sisters, especially Mary Ruth, were overjoyed at Mamma's being in the family way again. Many of the Old Order viewed it as shameful to share such things with unmarried children, but both Mamma and Dat felt otherwise and didn't hesitate to include their four eldest daughters, though discreetly.

"Since Lydiann's a toddler and not so little anymore, it'll be fun to have a baby around again," declared Mary Ruth.

"And wonderful-*gut* for Lydiann to have a close-in-age brother or sister." Hannah's smile stretched from ear to ear as she seemingly took the news in her stride, much as Dat must surely have, too, when Mamma told him in private earlier.

Leah had suspected nothing of this from Dat,

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

although he'd had plenty of opportunity to say something during early-morning chores. Her father had never been one to speak of personal things; she knew this firsthand, because, for some time now, she had been asking for information relating to her own birth, to no avail. "For goodness' sake, Leah," he would say each time she brought it up, "be grateful the Good Lord made you healthy and strong, that you were born headfirst. What else wouldja care to know?"

But there were certain things she *did* ponder, such as who her first father might be. Lizzie, however, seemed unable to discuss the subject. *Is it too hard to dredge up the past?* Leah wondered. Or was Lizzie simply unwilling to bring it up for fear of implicating a member of the Hickory Hollow Amish church, miles away? There were also nagging questions concerning the day Leah was born in the Ebersol Cottage, but she couldn't bear to ask them of Lizzie.

Mary Ruth broke the stillness, glancing furtively at Leah as she said, "Maybe Dat will finally get a *real* son."

"Aw, pity's sake," Mamma said, shaking her head at Mary Ruth. She went to sit on the wooden bench next to the kitchen table, fanning herself with the hem of her long black apron. Her round face was flushed from the heat of the wood stove, where she had two strawberry pies baking.

"But . . . if the baby is a girl," Hannah spoke up, "there'll be less sewing to do."

Leah spoke at last. "Only if we get busy and make plenty of little afghans 'tween now and December.

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

Lydiann was a spring baby, don't forget."

At this Leah caught Mamma's sweet and gentle smile. "That's my Leah, always leaning toward the practical."

Mary Ruth continued to chatter, asking where Lydiann would sleep once the wee one came.

Quickly Hannah suggested, "Why, she can sleep with us. Ain't so, Mary Ruth?"

Mamma laughed at that. "I daresay there wouldn't be much sleeping goin' on. Not as wiggly as that one is!"

Leah turned and slipped outdoors, going to the hen house, where she scattered feed to the chickens. Inside, she leaned against the rickety wall, watching them peck the ground near her bare feet. "Honestly," she said right out, "I don't know whether to be happy or sad about a new baby."

The hens paid her no mind, but the lone rooster cocked his head and eyed her curiously. In all truth, she had forced a smile about Mamma expecting a little one come next Christmas. Here, with only the chickens for company, she recalled the months before two-year-old Lydiann came into the world. Mamma had been ever so tired . . . nauseated, too. At close to forty-five, she was not nearly as energetic and strong as in years past, but there *were* a good many women that age or older in the family who had no trouble birthing babies. Leah was glad her mother came from a long line of such women. Indeed, she was happy at the prospect of Dat's

having his first son should the baby turn out to be a boy.

Heading out of the hen house toward the barnyard, Leah was suddenly aware of Smithy Gid calling to her from the brink of the cornfield. "*Wie geht's*, Leah. Do ya have a minute?"

Out of habit, she glanced toward the back door, curious if Mamma or one of the twins was observing her with Gid, who was not only breathless from running, but his eyes were strangely aglow. "What is it?" she asked.

He grinned down at her. "I've got a whole new litter of German shepherd pups, and I think there's another dog Abram—your pop—might just take a shinin' to."

It was common knowledge Dat wanted a third dog, after having purchased from Gid his second German shepherd, Blackie, well over a year ago. "With a houseful of women folk, another male dog might be worth thinkin' about. 'Least I won't be so outnumbered anymore," he'd said that very morning, chuckling heartily.

She walked alongside Gid to the barn, listening as he described the various puppies' coloring.

"Does Dat know about the recent pups?" she asked.

"He oughta, 'cause I ain't been talkin' to myself all these weeks." They both laughed at that; then Gid added, "I believe Abram's just waitin' for the gut word."

She felt her cheeks warm. "Then you best be tellin' him."

His eyes lit up. “Well, now, I wanted to tell you, Leah.”

She held her breath, scared he might take this opportunity to say more, then alone this way.

And he did, too . . . at least started to. “I’ve been wantin’ to ask ya something.”

She took a small step back. In fact, she had been inching away from him, romantically at least, her whole life long, and for all good reason. She had always loved her second cousin Jonas, though she had made a conscious effort to bury her bitter sadness, hiding it from her family and especially from Smithy Gid, who remained a right good friend as he’d always been—even more so lately. Yet Leah shuddered at the thought of Gid showing kindness to her out of mere pity. Surely their friendship was more special than that. But she had no intention of leading him on just because he was clearly fond of her.

Ach, she groaned inwardly, wishing someone—*anyone*—might come flying into the barn. But no one did, and not even the barn doves, high in the rafters, made a sound as the smithy’s son reached for her hand. “Uh, Gid . . .” What she really wanted to tell him was *please don’t say another word*, but the words got trapped in her throat. She knew all too well the ache of rejection, and the way his eyes were intent on hers just now, it would be downright unkind to hurt him.

He was still holding her hand as the slow creaking of the windmill behind the barn broke the stillness. “Adah and her beau are going for supper in Strasburg

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

next Saturday night. I thought it might be fun if you and I rode along.”

No two ways about it, *riding along* simply meant double courting and Gid knew it. Sighing, she gently pulled her hand away, staring down at her toes. *What should I say?*

“If you want to talk it over with Adah, I don’t mind.” His words were like thin reeds in a swamp compared to his usual self-assured manner. Inside, Smithy Gid was most likely standing on tiptoes. Furthermore, she suspected he had been ever so eager to spend an evening with her for quite some time, hoping to double up with her first cousin Sam Ebersol, Uncle Jesse’s youngest son, along with Gid’s sister Adah. But Leah also knew Gid wouldn’t be asking her twice. If she didn’t give her answer now, she’d have to seek him out in the next day or so. Because at twenty-two—three years her elder—Smithy Gid was to be treated with the respect he deserved.

“I’ll think on it.” She trembled, afraid he might take her reply as a *maybe*.

Truth be told, she figured he was working his way to ask her to go “for steady,” and right soon. To be true to herself, she knew she ought to refuse. Yet looking on the bright side, allowing Gid to court her would convince the People, especially Mamma and Aunt Lizzie, that she’d regained her balance, so to speak, that her shattered heart was on the mend. Wasn’t it about time for that, anyway? Jonas was happy with someone else; why shouldn’t *she* marry, as well? And, too, it had been

ingrained in her all her days that to follow the Lord God's will for her life, she must marry and bear many children, as many as the Good Lord saw fit to give her and her future husband.

One thing was sure, Leah enjoyed her barn chats with Gid while pitching hay to the field mules or redding up the haymow for summertime Preaching services. It was downright pleasant to have a young man of Gid's reputation thinking of her as a good friend. Other times, she almost wished he might fix his gaze on a girl whose heart was truly available, like, for instance, any number of her cousins—dozens of Ebersols to choose from in Gobbler's Knob alone.

Naturally Gid wanted to marry well before his sister Adah. Even his youngest sister, Dorcas, was seeing someone seriously, or so Adah had confided in Leah recently. A knotty problem for Gid, being the eldest of the family and the only son and still unmarried, though it was clear thus far he'd set his cap for no one other than Leah.

Daily this weighed heavily on her mind, especially because Smithy Gid was such a fine young man. Why should she forfeit having a family of her own just because things between her and Jonas had fizzled? She could simply marry the farm boy who'd waited for her all these years, couldn't she?

She watched Smithy Gid walk back through the cornfield, holding her breath and not knowing for sure the right answer to his invitation. *I'll ask Mamma what to do*, she thought and headed out the barn door.

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.



Leah found Mamma in the potting shed, fanning herself. "Another hot day, ain't?"

To this her mother nodded, and Leah began to share her uncertainty. "Smithy Gid invited me to go ridin' with him, Mamma. What do you think 'bout that—if you were me, I mean?"

Mamma moved the potting soil around in the earthen jar before speaking. She stopped her work and looked at Leah with a fond expression. "Seems to me if you care the least at all for him, why not see where it leads? He's a right nice young man."

"'Tis easy to see Dat thinks so," Leah offered. She wouldn't ask for a comparison between Gid and Jonas; Mamma had made it known years ago how fond she was of Jonas.

"Far as I can tell, Gid's been sweet on you for a long time."

She thought on that. "Honestly there are times I think it *would* be fun to go somewhere with Gid, at least with another couple along."

Mamma's blue eyes grew more serious, and she set about cleaning the potting soil off the wooden work counter with a hand brush and dustpan. "Sometimes I wonder if you care for Gid simply because his sister is your dearest friend. Have you ever considered that?"

"Adah has little to do with Gid's and my friendship," Leah said quickly. The smithy's son had happily befriended her during her darkest days. They had even

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

gone walking at dusk several times, but mostly their conversations took place in the cow pasture. She worried if allowing herself to warm to his winning smile might in some way betray the depth of love she'd had for Jonas.

"Just so Gid understands where your heart is," Mamma said.

Light streamed in through the windows, casting sunny beams onto the linoleum floor.

Where your heart is . . .

Leah sighed. "Whatever do you mean?"

Mamma sat tall and still, her gaze intent on Leah. "I think you know, dear. Deep within you, a voice is whispering what you should or should not do."

"I can't come right out and tell Smithy Gid that I don't love him as a beau, can I? How cruel that would be."

"You might say instead you think of him as a close brother."

Knowing Gid as she did, if she revealed this truth, he might take it as a challenge to try harder still to win her. "Oh, Mamma, I don't know what to say, honest I don't."

"Then say nothing . . . until you're sure. The Lord will give you the right words when the time comes. God holds the future in His hands . . . always remember this."

Mamma was as wise as any woman she knew—Mamma and Aunt Lizzie both. She thanked the Lord above for allowing her to grow up close to such women,

Beverly Lewis, *The Sacrifice*

Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, © 2004. Used by permission.

though if she'd had her druthers, she would have preferred to know early on that Lizzie Brenneman was the woman who'd birthed her. But to dwell on this was futile.

Mamma's words nudged her back to the present. "Why not ask Adah how *she* thinks her brother might react."

"I've thought of that, but I can't bring myself to open my mouth and say what I oughta."

Mamma frowned momentarily. "That's not the Leah I know."

Leah forced a smile. Maybe what Mamma was trying to say was *Don't settle for a Gideon Peachey if your heart longs for a Jonas Mast*.

Still, she refused to let Mamma or anyone see the depth of bewilderment that plagued her. It was as if her feet had sprouted long tendrils, like the runners that sometimes tripped her in the berry patch, making it impossible to move forward, tangling her way, keeping her from progressing on the path of her life.

"Are you afraid I'll never marry . . . if I pass up Gid's affection?" she asked suddenly.

"Not afraid, really," Mamma replied. "Just awful sorry if you're not happy in your choice of a husband. 'Tis better to be a contented maidel—like your aunt Lizzie—than a miserable wife, ya know."

Leah had heard similar remarks at the quilting frolics she and her twin sisters attended with Mamma; seemed there was an overabundance of spontaneous advice from the women folk nowadays. But the overall

bent of Amish life, at least for a woman, was to marry and have a large family. Anything less was a departure from what the People expected.

All of a sudden she felt overcome with fatigue. The potting shed had trapped the hot air, and she longed for the cool mossy green of the shaded front yard.

Politely she offered to help Mamma with the rest of her planting, but her mother shook her head.

"Go and have yourself some time alone," she said. "Goodness knows, you must need a rest."

Leah kissed Mamma's cheek and walked around the southeast side of the house, admiring the clear pink hydrangea bushes flourishing there. She sat on the ground and rested in the shadow of an ancient maple, daydreaming that Jonas had never, ever left Gobbler's Knob for his carpentry apprenticeship in Ohio.

Everything would be so different now. . . .

Yet she refused to give in to her emotions. Something as innocent as a daydream was wrong, she knew. Jonas belonged to Sadie now, and she to him.

"God holds the future in His hands." Mamma's confident words echoed in her mind.

Mosquitoes began to bite her ankles, and the sound of the noontime dinner bell prompted her to rouse herself and paste on yet another pleasant face. Leah rose and trudged toward the house.