



Her Heart's Desire:

by Shelley Shepard Gray
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Journey to Pinecraft, Florida, with New York Times Bestselling Author Shelley Shepard Gray

Shelley Shepherd Gray has enchanted readers with her expertly crafted tales about the Amish. In her heartwarming series starter, *Her Heart's Desire*, Gray spins a tender narrative that explores what happens when we allow our pasts to define our futures.

Mary Margaret Miller has always felt like a wallflower in her community. For just once in her life, she would like to leave her home behind for a new adventure and an opportunity to come out of her shell. She boards the bus to Pinecraft, Florida, for a two week vacation hoping that this break will offer a much-needed change. When a chance meeting brings new friends plus a handsome and charming carpenter, Mary begins to imagine a whole new life in Florida. But will it all disappear once vacation ends?

Jayson Raber is smitten with Mary right from the start, but he already has responsibilities back home in Kentucky—including a girl he's supposed to marry. Will Jayson's secrets keep them both from their hearts' true longings?

Her Heart's Desire, book one in the A Season in Pinecraft series, is a moving story about friendship, romance, and new beginnings.



About the Author:

Shelley Shepard Gray is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of more than 100 books. Two-time winner of the HOLT Medallion and a Carol Award finalist, Gray lives in Ohio, where she writes full-time, bakes too much, and can often be found walking her dachshunds on her town's bike trail.

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Shelley Shepard Gray

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Praise for *Her Heart's Desire*:

“When Mary Margaret Miller needs an escape from her small Amish community, she takes a vacation to Pinecraft, Florida, and is surprised to not only find true friends but also meet a handsome and charming Amish carpenter. *Her Heart's Desire* is a tender journey that explores friendship, heartbreak, second chances, forgiveness, and finding true love. Shelley Shepard Gray highlights that God's grace and mercy is with us even when we're certain we're alone and don't fit in with our community. Fans of Amish fiction will be hooked on page one and won't stop reading until they reach the end!”

—Amy Clipston, bestselling author of *Building a Future*

“Childhood scars can stick around for a very long time. Healing those emotional wounds sets the tone in *Her Heart's Desire* by Shelley Shepard Gray. First in the A Season in Pinecraft series, *Her Heart's Desire* is full of endearing characters with insecurities and trust issues, each one lifted to a better place through hope, faith, and, of course, love. This entertaining tale of repaired friendships and kindled romances will delight readers.”

—Suzanne Woods Fisher, bestselling author of *A Season on the Wind*

“*Her Heart's Desire*, Shelley Shepard Gray's latest novel, is destined to delight lovers of her sweet Amish romances. Set in beautiful Pinecraft, Florida, the story of three young Amish women who see themselves as wallflowers is a new take on the ‘mean girls’ theme popular in mainstream films and books. Watching these women blossom and gain confidence in their newfound friendships offers hope to any of us who have experienced the loneliness of being on the outside looking in. Gray gives her readers the additional gift of not one but two lovely romances. A sweet read!”

—Kelly Irvin, bestselling author of *Love's Dwelling*



Her Heart's Desire

Sample Interview Questions for Shelley Shepard Gray

Can you please provide a brief summary of your new novel, *Her Heart's Desire*?

When Mary Margaret Miller heads south on a Pioneer Trails bus for a two-weeks' break in Pinecraft, her only goal is to see the beach, read a few books, and plan her future. The last thing she expects to do is find three best friends, fall in love with a man from Kentucky, or reunite with someone from her past. Along the way, Mary Margaret learns that while the Lord's plans are greater than she has ever imagined, they also aren't very easy to accomplish. It takes time, patience, and the realization that even the greatest desires can be obtained, if one believes that it's possible.

***Her Heart's Desire* is the first book in the A Season in Pinecraft series. How many books will be part of your new series?**

There are three books in this series. *Her Heart's Desire*, *Her Only Wish*, and *Her Secret Hope*.

What is the connecting element for all of the books in this series?

There are two connecting elements for this series. The first is the most obvious, all three novels take place during vacations in Pinecraft! The second connection is how I developed the series from the very start—a series about three “wallflowers” who meet on a bus trip, become fast friends, and learn to love themselves while they also fall in love with three special heroes.

What was the inspiration for the A Season in Pinecraft series and what makes this series stand out from the other books you've written?

While I've written many Amish series, I feel this series is special because each heroine isn't just looking for love and romance, she's also learning to accept her own special gifts. I love that the heroine of each book doesn't set out looking for a husband. She's hoping to do something for herself. I'm extremely fond of these three wallflowers.

When readers hear about the Amish, they often think of the communities based in Pennsylvania or Indiana. Why did you set your new series in Pinecraft, Florida, and when was the first community established in this area?

One thing I love to do in my novels is show just how varied the Amish community really is. There are a great number of Amish in the United States, and several more communities in other parts of the world. In addition, there are several different types of Amish—from the very conservative Swartzentruber Amish to the far more progressive Beachy Amish. There is even a large Amish group in southern Kentucky called the Electric Amish. My favorite thing about setting novels in Pinecraft is that all of these different, varied groups converge in one place. It's the only place in the world where this happens. As a writer, the possibilities for stories set here are endless.

You recently visited Pinecraft, Florida. Did you learn anything new about the area and the Amish community that you included in your new novel?

My most recent trip to Pinecraft was my sixth or seventh time to visit the area. I noticed that the area has gotten bigger and that more and more people are visiting Pinecraft with their children or even stopping in Pinecraft before heading on a cruise ship!

Your female protagonist, Mary Margaret Miller, considers herself a wallflower in her community and longs to escape for a change of scene. Can you please tell readers a little more about Mary and her background?

I loosely based Mary Margaret on something one of my daughter's friends said back when they were in high school. She said that it was impossible to ever have a fresh start, because many of the kids who graduated high school had first met each other in kindergarten or first grade.

So, Mary Margaret has an embarrassing moment in her past that seems to follow her around in her hometown. She goes to Pinecraft to escape it. Of course, what Mary Margaret eventually learns is that she not only has to accept her past but make peace with it before she can find happiness.

I love to write novels featuring characters who just happen to be Amish. I feel Mary Margaret's insecurities—and some of the problems she had living in a small town—might be something readers of any type of background could relate to.

***Her Heart's Desire* has an underlying theme of not allowing our pasts to define our futures. Can you tell us a little more about how this theme comes into play in the lives of your protagonists?**

All of the protagonists learn to make peace with themselves and their pasts in order to be able to move on and find love.

Are there any other lessons you hope readers will gain from reading *Her Heart's Desire*?

I simply hope readers will enjoy the novel, root for Mary Margaret and Jayson, and feel a little like they're on a vacation in Florida themselves.

What do you love most about writing Amish fiction?

Since I live so close to Holmes County, the largest population of Amish in the world, I love to show my love for the Amish communities in my writing. I also enjoy incorporating the Amish sense of community and deep faith in my books.

How can readers connect with you?

I'm currently active on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. I have a private Facebook group (Shelley Shepard Gray's Buggy Bunch) where I post book information about five days a week. I have a website that gives more information about myself and my books. I send out an electronic newsletter several times a year. However, my favorite way to connect with readers is to travel as much as I can and meet them in

person. I love to visit libraries, chat with the patrons, and get to know readers face to face. You can often find me planning my next library visit!