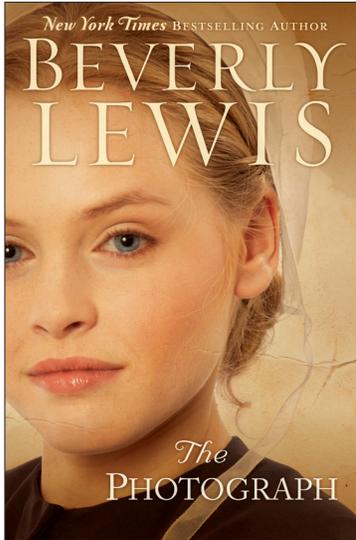




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH BEVERLY LEWIS



The Photograph
by Beverly Lewis

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1. *The Photograph* returns the reader to the setting of your bestselling novel *The River*. Why did you choose to revisit Eden Valley?

My childhood home was in the Amish farmland of that area, and I felt a yearning to step back and revisit that lovely rural place. The reappearance of characters from *The River*, such as Abner and Naomi Mast—and the glimpse of Tilly Lantz Barrows and her growing family—are some of the happy surprises that occurred as a result. Eva and Lily Esch’s fondness for *Little Women*, as well as their beloved Eskimo Spitz, Max—inspired by my own former pet—were other cherished connections to my growing-up years.

2. What inspired *The Photograph*?

For some time now, I’ve had an image in my mind of a young man opening a book and finding a photograph of a beautiful young Amishwoman tucked inside. There’s an inherent contrast between the girl’s chaste outward appearance and her rather bold expression, and of course any Amishman would immediately wonder about her story. What prompted her to take such a picture? Does she have any regrets? Where is she now? You’ll notice that my character Jed Stutzman has many of these same questions!

3. That sounds intriguing! Tell us a little more about Jed and the plot for *The Photograph*.

Amishman Jed Stutzman lives in Holmes County, Ohio, where he’s apprenticed as a buggy maker. Jed is sent to Lancaster County to learn more about the trade, and it’s while on the train there that he discovers the photograph.

Jed is essential to this story, but it’s twenty-year-old Eva Esch who is its heart. Eva lives with her two sisters in Eden Valley, Pennsylvania, in the farmhouse her brother has inherited from their parents. Life is already unsettled for Eva and her sisters when youngest sister, Lily, disappears. Then Jed shows up in Eden Valley with a photo of a Plain young woman. Eva feels drawn to him—but the woman in the forbidden photograph is no stranger at all. . . .

4. Eva Esch offers many kinds of homemade sweets in her candy shop. Do you have a particular favorite?

Oh, definitely the peanut butter balls, though taffy would be a close second. In fact, readers might want to keep a little chocolate on hand when they read this book!

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

Only God could have foreseen where this incredible writing journey has taken me! I am ever grateful for the popularity of my books, and I'm humbled by the opportunity to connect with so many wonderful readers around the world—story is a powerful way to share the truth of God's abundant grace and love. And I certainly never imagined any of this when my first Amish novel, *The Shunning*, was released in 1997. Even my Plain relatives and friends have been surprised and delighted by the interest in their simpler way of life.

6. Are you working on anything special right now?

My next stand-alone novel, *The Atonement*, will release on March 29, 2016, so I am presently very busy writing and getting to know my characters. At twenty-five, Lucy Flaud is haunted by the mistakes of her past and has given up any hope of marriage, instead focusing on volunteering. Yet no matter how hard Lucy strives, she feels uncertain she'll ever find redemption

Dale Wyeth, meanwhile, has a keen interest in learning to live off-grid. The young Englisher appreciates the self-sufficient ways of the Old Order Amish, and Lucy's father invites him to learn more about them with frequent visits to the family farm.

Lucy questions what Dale's being there might mean for her. Could God be testing her? Or is it possible that even the most unworthy heart—and two people from very different walks of life—can somehow find a new beginning?

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

Social media offers many wonderful ways to stay in touch! To sign up for my free newsletter, readers can visit my Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/officialbeverlylewis, or my website, www.beverlylewis.com. The website includes my monthly blog, book trailers and excerpts, authentic Amish recipes, fun photo galleries, and news about upcoming book tours. Touring gives me a great opportunity to connect with my readers at library and bookstore events. It's always a highlight of my writing life!