



**The Heirloom
by Beverly Lewis**

.....

Paperback ISBN: 978-0-7642-3756-0

\$17.99; 336 pp

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4934-4365-9

Release date: September 2023

Media Contact:

Karen Steele, Fiction Publicity Manager

(616) 676-9185 ext. 100

ksteele@bakerpublishinggroup.com



BETHANYHOUSE

**#1 Amish Fiction Author Comes Full Circle
with New Novel**

“This book serves as a reminder of why Lewis continues to top bestseller lists.”

—*Publishers Weekly* on *The Orchard*

Ada, Mich.—In 1997, Beverly Lewis introduced the world to her first adult Amish fiction series, THE HERITAGE OF LANCASTER COUNTY, which included *The Shunning*, *The Confession*, and *The Reckoning*. The series catapulted to the top of the charts. Lewis, a Lancaster County native, was quickly touted as an expert source in Amish tradition, and that first series launched a new fiction genre. Now, 26 years later, Lewis’s novels have sold more than 17 million copies worldwide. In addition, her novels have been reenacted on film and in live theater, and *The Confession Musical* has been adapted for the big screen and for UPtv. In Lewis’s newest narrative, *The Heirloom*, she comes full circle and offers a prequel that leads up to the eve of *The Shunning*. Lewis’s legion of fans will be thrilled to journey back to Lancaster County, particularly Hickory Hollow, for a heartwarming tale that explores themes of belonging, love, and life’s difficult transitions.

.....

When her widowed father remarries, nineteen-year-old Clara Bender is at a loss about what comes next for her. She is no longer needed to run the household. So when she comes across letters from her Mamma’s aunt Ella Mae Zook, she is eager to visit Hickory Hollow’s Wise Woman.

Meanwhile, Ella Mae is dealing with her own losses. With the passing of her husband, her grown children are ready to make sure she is resettled. But Ella Mae is in no hurry to leave the farmhouse that she and her husband shared for over five decades. She is also grappling with her role in the community as a widow. Once viewed as a caring and spiritually insightful counselor, Ella Mae feels she no longer has the capacity to offer much wisdom anymore.

As the summer days grow longer, Ella Mae and Clara find individual healing and purpose as they share their lives and their love for quilting. When Clara’s life is upended by an unexpected incident and a potential beau, Clara must decide where her heart truly belongs—back in her small Indiana hometown or in Hickory Hollow.



Get Connected:

Author

www.beverlylewis.com



BETHANYHOUSE

About the Author

Beverly Lewis, born in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country, has more than 17 million books in print. Her stories have been published in 12 languages and have regularly appeared on numerous bestseller lists, including the *New York Times* and *USA Today*. Beverly and her husband, David, live in Colorado, where they enjoy hiking, biking, making music, and spending time with their family.

PRAISE for Beverly Lewis's Novels:

“Best-selling Lewis presents a chaste and gentle romance that is focused as much on family relationships and the community as it is on the hopes of a young couple.”

—*Booklist on The Orchard*

“Bestseller Lewis returns with a resplendent tale of love, loss, and faith within the Amish community of Lancaster, Pa. . . . Lewis's fans are in for a treat.”

—*Publishers Weekly Starred Review on The Stone Wall*

“Lewis, writing in her gentle, heartwarming fashion, unveils likable characters amid a richly described Amish culture of faith, community, and tradition.”

—*Publishers Weekly on The Photograph*

“Fans of Lewis's work or Amish fiction in general will relish this heartwarming story of self-discovery, friendship, and the search for God's will.”

—*Publishers Weekly Starred Review on The Ebb Tide*

Interview Questions for Beverly Lewis *The Heirloom*

Please provide a brief summary of your newest novel, *The Heirloom*.

This generational story features two unique Amish women—one, a courting-age girl from Indiana, and the other, an aging widow living in Hickory Hollow, Pennsylvania. When Ella Mae Zook hosts her heartbroken grandniece for a visit, the two women blend their quilting expertise to restore an heirloom wedding quilt and, in the process, reveal hidden wounds and long-held secrets.

***The Heirloom* is the long-awaited prequel to *The Shunning*. Why did you choose to come full circle with your new novel?**

For more than a decade, I've been very curious about Ella Mae's courting-age years, including the tragedy that set her on course to becoming known as the Wise Woman. My stories must simmer in my heart, sometimes for years. So I asked myself what sort of young woman was she in her teens? How did her faith and Plain upbringing inform her choices? And . . . was this part of her life story ready to be told? Additionally, my readers have been pleading for more about this captivating and spirited Amish woman so beloved. As I do, I entrusted all that I know of Ella Mae to God and believed now was the right time for *The Heirloom*.

Your fans love Ella Mae Zook, Hickory Hollow's Wise Woman, and she has made appearances in a number of your novels. What life-altering event has recently occurred in her life?

She loved her husband dearly and now grieves deeply her loss, experiencing the anxiety and uncertainty of widowhood, while attempting to create new daily patterns.

Ella Mae is in a period of transition and is even questioning her purpose in the community. How does she come to terms with the new "normal" in her life?

By taking one small, courageous step at a time, and with the unexpected help of a providential summer visit from her grandniece Clara.

Nineteen-year-old Clara Bender has experienced her own set of losses. What motivates her to seek out the wisdom and companionship of Ella Mae?

Clara has discovered many personal letters to her Mamma from Aunt Ella Mae in Hickory Hollow. This unearthing stirs up a desire to meet the woman whose written words have touched Clara's broken heart in a dramatic way.

How do Clara and Ella Mae find healing in each other's presence?

At day's end, the two women work to restore the heirloom wedding quilt in Ella Mae's front room, a quilt that holds a tender love story all its own. As they stitch and repair, the two become aware of a growing bond, and slowly, gently, their warm connection begins to restore each wounded heart.

While in Hickory Hollow, a budding romance forms between Clara and a young man. But this new relationship comes with its own set of problems. Can you provide a hint of what these problems are?

Aaron's father and the bishop are concerned that Clara's Indiana Amish church district is far less traditional than Hickory Hollow's. Theirs emphasizes following rules, while Clara's upbringing underscores a personal relationship with Christ. And Clara's father is convinced she could fall back from her faith were she to marry and reside there. Pressure from both sides presents a quandary to Clara and her hope to become Aaron's bride.

This book is a great fit for anyone who has experienced grief or a time of transition. What other themes are found in *The Heirloom*?

Trusting God when obstacles loom large, the importance of connecting with like-minded believers on life's journey, and looking to God for His will in a life mate.

How has *The Heirloom* impacted your own life?

I've been planning this novel for years, and when I was given a 1911 heirloom quilt that belonged to my grandmother Ada (whose true-life story inspired *The Shunning*), I began to relive Katie Lapp's fictitious story . . . as well as my dear parents' passings seven-and-a-half years apart. I made countless notes and outlined the various fictional story lines that came to me, all the while juggling other writing deadlines. But Ella Mae kept interrupting me! Meanwhile, my readers were also clamoring for more about their favorite character. So as I contemplated Ella Mae's startling back story, along with young Clara's heartbreaking one, I began to "feel" the two characters' yearnings and struggles pulling them onto the pages of this novel . . . at long last.

***The Heirloom* will be enjoyed by Amish fiction fans. Could you share why your novel will also appeal to quilters?**

For quilters who have attempted the challenging task of restoring an heirloom quilt, this book will surely inspire, and perhaps even encourage a similar project. For quilters who love to create a new quilt "from scratch," *The Heirloom* will offer "aha" moments, as well as a real sense of familiarity, authenticity, and a measure of joy.

What do you hope readers will gain from reading *The Heirloom*?

For one thing, I hope they will be encouraged in their faith, my constant hope. Also, that they will finally discover Bishop John Beiler’s motivation for imposing the harsh treatment on Katie Lapp in *The Shunning*. Of course, there will be my trademark underpinning of peace—because of Jesus—in the midst of the story’s conflicts, twists, and turns.

How can readers connect with you?

I write a monthly newsletter available via a free subscription at <https://www.beverlylewis.com/engage/newsletter>. I am also active on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/officialbeverlylewis/>.

GUEST: Beverly Lewis, author

BOOK: *The Heirloom* (available September 2023, Bethany House)
