

BEVERLY  
LEWIS

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*The*  
Betrayal



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# *Dedication*

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For

*Pamela Ronn,*

*my “shadow twin”*

*and wonderful-good friend.*

# *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*



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*October Song* • *Sanctuary\** • *The Sunroom*



*The Beverly Lewis Amish Heritage Cookbook*

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BEVERLY LEWIS, born in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country, fondly recalls her growing-up years. A keen interest in her mother's Plain family heritage has led Beverly to set many of her popular stories in Lancaster County.

A former schoolteacher and accomplished pianist, Beverly is a member of the National League of American Pen Women (the Pikes Peak branch), and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She is the 2003 recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award at Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri, and her blockbuster novel, *The Shunning*, recently won the Gold Book Award. Her bestselling novel *October Song* won the Silver Seal in the Benjamin Franklin Awards, and *The Postcard* and *Sanctuary*, (a collaboration with her husband, David) received Silver Angel Awards, as did her delightful picture book for all ages, *Annika's Secret Wish*. Beverly and her husband have three grown children and one grandchild and make their home in the Colorado foothills.





*August 9, 1947*

*Dear Jonas,*

*Honestly, you spoil me! I've saved up a whole handful of your letters, and only a few months have passed since you left for Ohio. It's all I can do to keep from running to the kitchen calendar yet again to count up the days till your visit for our baptism Sunday next month. How good of your bishop to permit you to join my church district. The Lord above is working all things out for us, ain't so?*

*Your latest letter arrived today in the mail, and I hurried out to the front porch and curled up in Mamma's wicker chair to read in private. I felt you were right there with me, Jonas. Just the two of us together again.*

*It's easy to see the many things you describe in Millersburg—the clapboard carpenter's shed where you're busy with the apprenticeship, the big brick house where you eat and sleep, even the bright faces of the little Mellinger children. How wonderful-good the Lord God has been to give you your*

heart's ambition, and I am truly happy for you . . . and for us.

Here in Gobbler's Knob (where you are sorely missed!), there isn't much news, except to say I know of four new babies in a short radius of miles. Even our English neighbors down the road have a new little one. Soon we're all going to Grasshopper Level to lay eyes on your twin baby sister and brother. I have to admit I don't know which I like better—feeding chickens and threshing grain, or bathing and playing with my sweet baby sister, almost three months old. Lydiann is so cuddly and cute, cooing and smiling at us. Dat laughs, saying I'm still his right-hand man. "Let Mamma and your sisters look after our wee one," he goes on. But surely he must know I won't be called Abram's Leah for too many more months now, though I haven't breathed a word. Still, I'm awful sure Mamma and Aunt Lizzie suspect we're a couple. Dat, too, if he'd but accept the truth of our love. Come autumn, the People will no longer think of me as my father's replacement for a son. For that I'm truly happy.

Oh, Jonas, are there other couples like us? In another village or town, hundreds of miles from here or just across the cornfield . . . are there two such close friends who also happen to be this much in love? Honestly, I can't imagine it.

I miss you, Jonas! You seem so far away. . . .

Leah held the letter in her hands, reading what she'd written thus far. Truly, she hesitated to share the one thing that hung most heavily in her mind. Yet Jonas wrote about everything under the sun in his letters, so why shouldn't she feel free to do the same? She didn't want to speak out of turn, though.

Should I tell Jonas about the unexpected visit yesterday from his father? she pondered.



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Truth was, Peter Mast had come rumbling into the barnyard in his market wagon like a house on fire. In short order, he and *Dat* had gone off to the high meadow for over an hour. Sure did seem awful strange, but when she asked Mamma about it, she was told not to worry her “little head.”

*What on earth?* she wondered. *What business does Cousin Peter have with Dat?*





## *Part One*



*The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,  
Protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.*

—William Wordsworth



*Never praise a sister to a sister,  
in the hope of your compliments  
reaching the proper ears.*

—Rudyard Kipling



## Chapter One

**D**og days. The residents of Gobbler's Knob had been complaining all summer about the sweltering, brooding sun. Its intensity reduced clear and babbling brooks to a muddy trickle, turning broccoli patches into yellow flower gardens. Meadowlarks scowled at the parched earth void of worms, while variegated red-and-white petunias dropped their ruffled petticoats, waiting for a summertime shower.

Worse still, evening hours gave only temporary pause, as did the dead of night if a faint breeze found its way through open farmhouse windows, bringing momentary relief to restless sleepers. Afternoons were nearly unbearable and had been now for weeks, June twelfth having hit the record high at ninety-seven degrees.

Abram and Ida Ebersol's farmhouse stood at the edge of a great woods as a shelter against the withering heat. The grazing and farmland surrounding the house had a warm and genial scent, heightened by the high temperatures. Abram's seven acres and the neighboring farmland were an enticing sanctuary for a variety of God's smaller creatures—squirrels,

birds, chipmunks, and field mice, the latter a good enough reason to tolerate a dozen barn cats.

Not far from the barnyard, hummocks of coarse, panicked grass bordered the mule road near the outhouse, and a well-worn path cut through a high green meadow leading to the log house of Ida's *maidel* sister, Lizzie Brenneman.

Ida, midlife mother to nearly three-month-old Lydiann, along with four teenage girls—Sadie, Leah, and twins Hannah and Mary Ruth—found a welcome reprieve this day in the dampness of the cold cellar beneath the large upstairs kitchen, where Sadie and Hannah were busy sweeping the cement floor, redding up in general. Abram had sent Leah indoors along about three-thirty for a break from the beastly heat. Ida was glad to have plenty of help wiping down the wooden shelves, making ready for a year's worth of canned goods—eight hundred quarts of fruits and vegetables—once the growing season was past. Working together, they lined up dozens of quarts of strawberry preserves and about the same of green beans and peas, seventeen quarts of peaches thus far, and thirty-six quarts of pickles, sweet and dill. Some of the recent canning had been done with Aunt Lizzie's help, as well as that of their close neighbors—the smithy's wife, Miriam Peachey, and daughters, Adah and Dorcas.

The Ebersol girls took their time organizing the jars, not at all eager to head upstairs before long and make supper in the sultry kitchen.

"I daresay this is the hottest summer we've had in years," Mamma remarked.

"And not only here," Leah added. "The heat hasn't let up in Ohio, neither."

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Mary Ruth mopped her fair brow. “Your beau must be keepin’ you well informed of the weather in Millersburg, *jah?*”

To this Hannah grinned. “We could set the clock by Jonas’s letters. Ain’t so, Leah?”

Leah, seventeen in two months, couldn’t help but smile and much too broadly at that. Dear, dear Jonas. What a wonderful-good letter writer he was, sending word nearly three times a week or so. This had surprised her, really . . . but Mamma always said it was most important for the young man to do the wooing, either by letters or in person. So Jonas was well thought of in Mamma’s eyes at least. Not so much Dat’s. No, her father held fast to his enduring hope of Leah’s marrying the blacksmith’s twenty-year-old son, Gideon Peachey—nicknamed Smithy Gid—next farm over.

Sadie stepped back as if to survey her neat row of quart-sized tomato soup jars. “Writin’ to Cousin Jonas about the weather can’t be all *that* interesting, now, can it?” she said, eyeing Leah.

“We write ’bout lots of things. . . .” Leah tried to explain, sensing one of Sadie’s moods.

“Why’d he have to go all the way out to Ohio for his apprenticeship, anyway?” Sadie asked.

Mamma looked up just then, her earnest blue eyes intent on her eldest. “Aw, Sadie, you know the reason,” she said.

Sadie’s apologetic smile looked forced, and she turned back to her work.

The subject of Jonas and his letters was dropped. Mamma’s swift reprimand was followed by silence, and then Leah gave a long, audible sigh.

Yet Leah felt no animosity, what with Sadie seemingly

miserable all the time. Sadie was never-ending blue and seemed as shriveled in her soul as the ground was parched. If only the practice of *rumschpringe*—the carefree, sometimes wild years before baptism—had been abolished by Bishop Bontrager years ago. A group of angry parents had wished to force his hand to call an end to the foolishness, but to no avail. Unchecked, Sadie had allowed a fancy English boy to steal her virtue. *Poor, dear Sadie*. If she could, Leah would cradle her sister's splintered soul and hand it over to the Mender of broken hearts, the Lord Jesus.

She offered a silent prayer for her sister and continued to work side by side with Mamma. Soon she found herself day-dreaming about her wedding, thinking ahead to which sisters she might ask to be in her bridal party and whom she and Mamma would ask to be their kitchen helpers. Selecting the hostlers—the young men who would oversee the parking of buggies and the care of the horses—was the groom's decision.

Jonas had written that he wanted to talk over plans for their wedding day when he returned for baptism; he also wanted to spend a good part of that weekend with her, and her alone. But on the following Monday he must return to Ohio to complete his carpentry apprenticeship, “just till apple-pickin’ time.” His father's orchard was too enormous not to have Jonas's help, come October. And then it wouldn't be long after the harvest and they'd be married. Leah knew their wedding would fall on either a Tuesday or Thursday in November or early December, the official wedding season in Lancaster County. She and Mamma would be deciding fairly soon on the actual date, though since Jonas didn't know precisely when he'd be returning home for good, she had to wait



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to discuss it with him. Secretly she hoped he would agree to choose an earlier rather than a later date.

As for missing Jonas, the past months had been nearly unbearable. She drank in his letters and answered them quickly, doing the proper thing and waiting till he wrote to her each time. It was painful for her, knowing she'd rejected his idea to spend the summer in close proximity to him out in Holmes County—a way to avoid the dreaded long-distance courtship. But for Sadie's sake, Leah had stayed put in Gobbler's Knob, wanting to offer consolation after the birth and death of her sister's premature baby. In all truth, she had believed Sadie needed her more than Jonas.

But Jonas had been disappointed, and she knew it by the unmistakable sadness in his usually shining eyes. She had told him her mother needed help with the new baby, the main excuse she'd given. Dismayed, he pressed her repeatedly to reconsider. The hardest part was not being able to share her real reason with him. Had Jonas known the truth, he would have been soundly stunned. At least he might have understood why she felt she ought to stay behind, which had nothing to do with being too shy to live and work in a strange town, as she assumed he might think. Most of all, she hoped he hadn't mistakenly believed her father had talked her out of going.

Today Leah was most eager to continue writing her letter the minute she completed chores, hoping to slip away again to her bedroom for a bit of privacy. When she considered how awful hot the upstairs had been these days, she thought she might take herself off to the coolness of the woods, stationery and pen in hand. If not today, then tomorrow for sure.

No one knew it, but here lately she'd been writing to Jonas in the forest. Before her beau had left town, she would never have thought of venturing into the deepest part, only going as far as Aunt Lizzie's house. But she liked being alone with the trees, her pen on the paper, the soft breezes whispering her name . . . and Jonas's.

Growing up, she'd heard the tales of folk becoming disoriented in the leafy maze of undergrowth and the dark burrow of trees. Still, she was determined to go, delighting in being surrounded by all of nature. There a place of solitude awaited her away from her sisters' prying eyes, as well as a place to dream of Jonas. She had sometimes wondered where Sadie and her worldly beau had run off to many times last year before Sadie sadly found herself with child. But when Leah searched the woods, she encountered only tangled brushwood and nearly impassable areas where black tree roots and thick shrubbery caused her bare feet to stumble.

Both she and Sadie had not forgotten what it felt like as little girls to scamper up to Aunt Lizzie's for a playful picnic in her secluded backyard. Thanks to her, they were shown dazzling violets amid sward and stone, demanding attention by the mere look on their floral faces . . . and were given a friendly peep into a robin's comfy nest—"but not *too* close," Aunt Lizzie would whisper. All this and more during such daytime adventures.

But never had Lizzie recommended the girls explore the expanse of woods on their own. In fact, she'd turned ashen on at least one occasion when seven-year-old Leah wondered aloud concerning the things so oft repeated. "Ach, you mustn't think of wandering in there alone," Lizzie had replied

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quickly. Sadie, at the innocent age of nine, had trembled a bit, Leah recalled, her older sister's blue eyes turning a peculiar grayish green. And later Leah had vowed to Sadie she was content never to find out "what awful frightening things are hiding in them there wicked woods!"

Now Leah sometimes wondered if maybe Sadie truly *had* believed the scary tales and taken them to heart, she might not have ended up the ruined young woman she was. At the tender age of nineteen.



At the evening meal Dat sat at the head of the long kitchen table, with doting Mamma to his left. Fourteen-year-old Hannah noticed his brown hair was beginning to gray, bangs cropped straight across his forehead and rounded in a bowl shape around the ears and neck. He wore black work pants, a short-sleeved green shirt, and black suspenders, though his summer straw hat likely hung on a wooden peg in the screened-in porch.

Before eating they all bowed heads simultaneously as the memorized prayer was silently given by each Ebersol family member, except baby Lydiann, who was nestled in Mamma's pleasingly ample arms.

*O Lord God heavenly Father, bless us and these thy gifts, which we shall accept from thy tender goodness and grace. Give us food and drink also for our souls unto life eternal, and make us partakers of thy heavenly table through Jesus Christ, thy Son. Amen.*

Following the supper blessing, they silently prayed the Lord's Prayer.

Meanwhile, Hannah tried to imagine how the arranged seating pattern might look once Leah was married. She worried her twin also might not remain under Dat's roof much longer, not if she stayed true to her hope of higher education. How Mary Ruth would pull off such a thing, Hannah didn't know, especially now with Elias Stoltzfus making eyes at her.

She gazed at her sisters just now, from youngest to eldest. The table *would* look mighty bare with only five of them present, counting Dat, Mamma and baby, Sadie, and herself. It wouldn't be long till Lydiann could sit in a high chair scooted up close. That would help round things out a bit . . . that and if Mamma were to have another baby or two. Anything was possible, she assumed, since Mamma was approaching forty-three. Not too terribly old for childbearing, because on the Brenneman side of the family, there were plenty of women in the family way clear into their late forties—some even into the early fifties. So who was to say just how many more Ebersol children the Lord God might see fit to send along? Honestly, she wouldn't mind if there were a few more little sisters or brothers, and Mary Ruth would be delighted, too; her twin was ever so fond of wee ones and all.

This made Hannah wonder how many children young and handsome Ezra Stoltzfus might want to have with his wife someday. She could only hope that, at nearly sixteen, he might find her as fetching as she thought *he* was. Here lately she was mighty sure he had taken more of a shine to her, which was right fine. Of course, now, he'd have to be the one to pursue her once she turned courting age. She wouldn't be

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flirting her way into a boy's heart like some girls. Besides, she wasn't interested in attracting a beau that way. She wanted a husband who appreciated her femininity, a man who would love her for herself, for *who* she was, not for attractiveness alone.



Hours after supper, alone in their bedroom, Leah offered to brush Sadie's waist-length hair. "I could make loose braids if you want," she said.

Sadie nodded halfheartedly, seemingly preoccupied. Leah tried not to stare as Sadie settled down on a chair near the mirrored dresser. Yet her sister looked strangely different. Sadie's flaxen locks tumbled down over her slender back and shoulders, and the glow from the single oil lamp atop the dresser cast an ivory hue on her normally pale cheeks, making them appear even more ashen. A shadow of herself.

Standing behind Sadie, she brushed out the tangles from the long workday, then finger combed through the silken hair, watching tenderly all the while in the mirror. Sadie's fragile throat and chin were silhouetted in the lamp's light, her downcast eyes giving her countenance an expression of pure grief.

Truly, Leah wanted to spend time with Sadie tonight, though it meant postponing the rest of her letter to Jonas. Tomorrow she would finish writing her long letter to him—head up to the woods to share her heart on paper.

She and Sadie had dressed for bed rather quickly,

accompanied by their usual comments, speaking in quiet tones of the ordinary events of the day, of having especially enjoyed Mamma's supper of barbecued chicken, scalloped potatoes with cheese sauce, fried cucumbers, lima beans, and lemon bars with homemade ice cream for dessert.

But now this look of open despair on Sadie's face caused Leah to say softly, "I think about him, too."

"Who?" Sadie whispered, turning to look up at her.

"Your baby . . . my own little nephew gone to heaven." Leah's throat tightened at the memory.

"You do, sister?"

"Oh, ever so much."

Neither of them spoke for a time, then Leah said, "What must it be like for you, Sadie? Ach, I can't imagine your grief."

Sadie was lost in her own world again. She moaned softly, leaning her head back for a moment. "I would've let him sleep right here, ya know, in a little cradle in this very room," she whispered. "I would have wanted to raise him like a little brother to all of us—you, Hannah, and Mary Ruth. Lydiann, too."

If Sadie's baby *had* lived, the disgrace on the Ebersol name would have been immense. But Sadie didn't need to be reminded of that at the moment.

Gently finishing up with her sister's hair, Leah began brushing her own, letting it hang long and loose, down past her waist. But quickly Sadie reached for the brush and said, "Here, it's *your* turn, Leah. Let me . . ."

Later, after Sadie had put out the lamp, they continued to talk softly in bed, though now about Mamma's plans to visit

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the Mast cousins soon. "I used to think it would be fun to have twins," Sadie said. "What about you?"

"If I could simply play with them all day, maybe so. But to cook and clean and garden, and everythin' else a mother must do, well . . . I just don't know how I'd manage."

"Oh, Leah, you're too practical, compared to me."

Leah had to smile at that. "I guess we *are* different that-away."

After a lull in their conversation, Sadie brought up the snide remark she'd made earlier in the day. "Honestly, I didn't mean to taunt you about writin' to Jonas," she said. "It was wrong of me."

"'Tis not such a bad thing to write about the weather, jah?"

Sadie lay still next to her. "I'm thinking a girl oughta write whatever she pleases to a beau."

*Whatever she pleases . . .*

Inwardly Leah sighed. Wasn't that Sadie's biggest problem? Doing whatever she pleased had nearly destroyed her young life.

In the past Leah and Sadie had been like two pole beans on a vine, growing up under the same roof together.

*What's happened to us?* she wondered. Tender moments like tonight's were few and far between.

Sadie rested her head on the feather pillow just so, being careful not to muss her pretty braids. Tomorrow her hair bun would be a fairly wavy one, something Mamma wouldn't take too kindly to. Neither would Dat if he happened to notice. But Leah's fingers and the gentle brush on her hair had

soothed her greatly. Sometimes it felt like old times, as if nothing had changed. A fond return to their friendlier days of sisterhood when they had shared every detail of each other's lives.

Her chin trembled and tears sprang to her eyes. Leah had always been a true and compassionate sister, but even more dear this summer. Forfeiting her own desire to spend time with Jonas, Leah had stayed home to comfort *her*.

Turning over, she fought hard to compose herself, lest she be heard sniffing again tonight. She did not pray her silent rote prayers. The desire to do so had long since left. She honestly believed the Lord God had seen fit to take away her tiny son instead of allowing her to love a baby conceived in sin, and the thought made her heart cold with aching.

Yet nearly every night—in a dream—she was with her own wee babe, who was ever so alive. And she and Derry were still desperately in love, sometimes even married, and always completely taken with their new little one, holding him . . . cooing baby talk at him.

Alas, upon waking each morning, Sadie was hit yet again with the ugly, hard truth. She had been punished for the sin of youthful lust. More than a hundred times she had recalled that hideous night, how Dr. Henry Schwartz had kindly said he would “take care” of the baby's remains. Now she regretted there was not even a small burial plot under the shade of ancient trees. Not a simple, respectable grave marker had been given her child, no grassy spot to visit in the People's cemetery, where she could grieve openly beneath a wide blue sky . . . where she could lie down under a tree and let her body rest hard against the earth. Her precious son had come into



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the world much too early, with “no breath in him,” as the doctor had sadly pronounced.

Sometimes during the daylight hours it almost seemed as if the birth itself had never occurred, though she lived with a gnawing emptiness that threatened to choke her. Not having a place to mark the date and the event made the memory of that dark April night oftentimes shift in her mind, even distort itself. Sadie was back and forth about the whole thing—some days she treasured the memory of her first love; at other times she despised Derry for what he’d done to her.

Often she would stop what she was doing, painfully aware of a newborn’s whimper. Was her imagination playing tricks? She would look around to see where her baby might be. Could Lydiann’s frequent crying trigger this? She didn’t know, yet the alarming sense that her baby still lived persisted no matter where she went these days—to Preaching service, to Adah and Dorcas Peachey’s house, or to any number of Ebersol and Mast cousins’ homes. The lingering feeling haunted her through every daylight hour, as acute as it was bewildering.

In spite of her depression, Sadie tried to look to the future, hoping someday she might have another baby to love, one whose father loved her enough to marry her in the first place. One with no connection to the Gobbler’s Knob grapevine and who had no inkling of her wild days. Yet to meet a nice, eligible Amishman like that she would have to leave home, abandoning everything dear to her. It would mean enduring the shun.

The only other choice she had was a kneeling repentance

*Beverly Lewis*

before the church brethren, but how could that ever solve her problems? It would never bring her baby back, nor Derry—neither one. Repenting could guarantee her only one thing: a lonely and miserable life.