



## **A Plain Leaving**

*Leslie Gould*

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## **A Plain Leaving** Leslie Gould **Gould Offers a New Amish Series in Idyllic Lancaster County**

At age twenty, Jessica Bachman left her two beloved sisters and her Amish community after clashing with the new bishop about her role in the family and the future of their farm. She tried to convince Silas Kemp, who'd been courting her for two years, to join her, but when he said no, she fled anyway.

Three years later, she returns home for the first time since leaving Lancaster to attend her father's funeral. Her arrival back revives all sorts of emotions--yearnings and sorrows alike. Jessica knows things will never return to how they were. But in seeing Silas again, she can't help but wonder what might have been.

Struggling to decide where her next step should take her, she learns the story of a Revolutionary War-era ancestor that echoes her own choices. Will Jessica leave her family and community forever, or is there peace and healing and love yet to come?

## **A Plain Leaving Details**

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Author : Leslie Gould

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## From Reader Review A Plain Leaving for online ebook

### **Kristi says**

To be honest I wasn't sure if I was going to like this book. I am so used to reading dual timeline stories from Leslie Gould and Mindy Starns Clark together that I couldn't imagine one written just by Leslie. I am so glad I was given the chance to read this book because it is well-written and is a fantastic story. This book is perfection!

I liked Jessica's story because it wasn't what is normally found in the Amish fiction genre. She has been shunned by her family and church yet she returns home when she receives the news that her father has died. Jessica faces much conflict with her family upon her return, and she finds comfort with her Aenti Suz. It is from this Suz that she learns Ruby's story.

Ruby's story is just as interesting as Jessica's and I was anxiously turning pages to find out what was happening to Ruby and the farm. I liked the friendship she built with Duncan since it was formed out of necessity yet gently turned into a genuine bond.

This book is written in both first person and third person. Jessica's story is told in the first person and at times almost had the feel of Jessica writing a letter to me letting me know what was going on in her life. Ruby's story is told in the third person and was more of a traditional story. I liked that the book was written this way as it made it really easy to keep the stories separated in my mind.

What I liked best about this book is it is full of characters who are flawed. I think people often think of the Amish as having no problems since they lead simple lives. Jessica's story shows that the Amish have just as much angst and turmoil in their lives as everyone else but maybe just not in the same way. Arden, Vi, and even Jessica's mom seemed cold and distant but as I read the story it was easy to understand why. On the other hand, Jessica's sister, Leisel, and her former beau, Silas, were friendly and warm. I liked these two characters and was hoping maybe there could be a second chance for Silas and Jessica.

This is easily one of the best books I've read in a long time. Two riveting stories with complex and genuine characters. This book is definitely one for the keeper shelf and one I highly recommend.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher and was not required to write a review. All opinions are mine.

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### **Kav says**

An emotionally sucker-punch kind of read....and I so love it when I really feel a story! In this case -- two stories, because this is a dual timeline plot which I didn't realize when I started reading but was a delightful surprise! I honestly don't know whose story I enjoyed more -- Jessica's or Ruby's.

Have to say I was consumed by righteous indignation over situations in Jessica's story. Living in relationship

isn't easy and family dynamics are complicated but no matter how you look at it, Jessica was hard done by. Gah! Honestly, there were moments when I said some very unkind things to certain characters. I bet you will too when you meet Mamm, Marie and Arden. But there's so much grace and wisdom and growth too. Which made me feel guilty over being so harsh...in fact I was as harsh to them as they were to Jessica which is totally ironic. And yes, I know I'm talking about fictional characters but I still apologized to them...well not to Arden if I'm truthful and maybe a bit grudgingly to Marie. Sigh. Clearly I needed the message of faith and forgiveness that Gould included in this compelling story.

And the American Revolution from the eyes of Jessica's Amish ancestors -- truly riveting. It's told by Jessica's Aenti Suz and that lady knows how to draw out a story with plenty of cliffhangers. A clever way to keep Jessica around longer than she planned. But both of us were clamoring for more every time Aenti Suz left off. I was as captivated by Ruby and her romantic dilemma as I was with Jessica's.

Two incredible, faith-filled stories twine together in a celebration of family, tradition and hope in the future.

Book provided courtesy of Baker Publication and Graf-Martin Communications Inc.

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### **Kristina says**

A Plain Leaving by Leslie Gould is the first book in The Sisters of Lancaster County series. Jessica Bachman is at work when she receives a call from her sister, Leisel that their father has passed away. Jessica left their Amish community three years prior and is shunned (she was baptized when she left). She returns for the funeral and receives a less than warm welcome from her relatives. Jessica is filled with mixed feelings upon her return. She misses her home and family, but she still remembers why she left. Silas Kemp (courted Jessica for two years) works on the farm and Jessica realizes that her feelings for him have not faded. At their father's funeral, Arden (her older brother) has a heart attack. Jessica is the one person who can keep the farm running while he recovers (and he really does not want to ask for her help). While on the farm, Jessica spends time with her Aenti Suzanne who shares a special story with her about their ancestor, Ruby Bachman. When the time comes for Jessica to return to her home, will she want to leave or return to her roots?

A Plain Leaving was such a lovely story. I was drawn into the book from the very beginning. The characters are nicely developed. There are characters that readers will love and there are ones that you will love to hate (Arden, Marie, Bethel). In the face of such dislike, it can be hard to turn the other cheek. A Plain Leaving has a good pace, beautiful setting, and good writing. Leslie Gould managed to combine the two storylines (Jessica and Ruby's) into one pleasing book. Some of the themes in A Plain Leaving are love, hope, forgiveness, foolishness, choices, history, trusting in God and having faith. I appreciated the growth of the characters in the story. I am rating A Plain Leaving 5 out of 5 stars (I loved it). I did not want A Plain Leaving to end. It is an inspiring story. I am eager to read the next book in The Sisters of Lancaster County series.

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### **Neisa says**

What first caught my attention about this book was the switching between time periods. Sometimes, switching between two main characters can be frustrating. If I tend to like one character over the other, I

usually become bored with the book. However, in *A Plain Leaving*, the author did a wonderful job at keeping both main characters interesting and delightful. Ruby and Jessica both have a lot in common, even though they are from two different time periods. The author does a good job at drawing out their humanity through their actions and emotions as they both face hardships. As a reader, this was what really helped me connect with all the characters.

I am a sucker for historical fiction, I will just admit it here and now. Recently, I have noticed more historical Amish fiction being released, and I simply love it! The switch between time periods gives us a glimpse at what it was like for not just the first colonists but the first Amish communities to live in early America. The American Revolution was a favorite of mine in history class so I latched on to all the details and story line as her family faces the hardships that come with war. This book would be very educational to a young adult reader.

The relationships gave me mixed feelings. The way Jessica reacts to her family, when returning home, was written perfectly. In the past, I have read Amish fiction that just felt stale and unrealistic. In those books, the characters felt emotionless, and they would frustrate me to no end. I understand that in Amish culture they tend to be more respectful at times in who they are conversing with and not speak out of turn, but they are still human and still have thoughts and opinions. In *'A Plain Leaving'*, the author did what I have not seen as much in Amish fiction. She wrote bolder characters that actually spoke their feelings out and argued with family members. They shared feelings and talked out their differences that I commend her for doing. It really helped pull me into the story.

Now that being said, some relationships did feel over dramatized for lack of better word. As in, they just felt too much like a day time drama, but this was not all the time so it did not overwhelm the book too much. Sometimes I expected more out of her closest relatives, if they really grew up with her. The relationship that bothered me the most though was the one between her and Tom. It just felt so unrealistic at times. I understand that sometimes relationships just don't work out. However, when Tom would be doing things with the men or groups of the church, she would always be lonely and left at home. Most churches nowadays, at least the modern ones, tend to have activities for men and women. I would have expected her as an ex-Amish woman to jump in with these new people. That was what bothered me the most. The relationship just did not set well with me almost as if the character was not allowing herself to bond with the new church. It just felt awkward.

The ending did feel a little rushed, but I think the author was just trying to wrap things up. However, I was satisfied with the ending. Overall, I did enjoy the story line, and I think that Ruby's story was my favorite of the two. *A Plain Leaving* is the first book in *The Sisters of Lancaster County* series. I would love to read the second book someday, and I am happy to see that the author is continuing her theme of having the past mixed with modern characters. I would recommend this book to any Amish loving person that is looking for something different and new to read.

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## **Vicky Sluiter says**

Author Leslie Gould deals with the age old question, can you go home again? She also tackles modern day issues such as fracking and well contamination. A dual story, current day and Revolutionary War, the stories are tied together very well and it was fun to read both.

The characters are real and well developed with human flaws, fears, and triumphs. Some of the characters are so lovable, while others make you want to shake them for their attitudes. It's certainly not a boring book! And surprisingly, the ending(s) aren't all neatly tied up. That causes me to look forward to Book 2.

I received a complimentary copy of this book, but was not required to leave a review.

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### **Ann says**

When Jessica Bachmann left her Amish family, she made a new life for herself in the English world. She knew she couldn't return after turning her back on her family and her faith. But life has a way of rearranging people's plans.

Her father dies unexpectedly, and she decides to brave the shunning she knows she will face in order to mourn the man who has been a loving guide throughout her life. What she hadn't expected was the recurrence of feelings she once had for Silas Kemp.

Fortunately, she has an ally amongst the cold shoulders she receives—her Aunt Suz. To pass the time, and to encourage Jessica, her aunt begins telling her a tale of early Bachmann history in the years prior to the American Revolution. The story of Rebecca Bachmann is woven into *A Plain Leaving*, so the novel moves between modern day Amish life and the early Amish settlers on their land. Leslie Gould has drawn these two stories together to build the framework for *A Plain Leaving*.

I must confess a preference for historical fiction, and found the pre-Revolution sections fascinating. Not to say that Jessica's dilemma isn't equally interesting—I had no idea of the lengths the Amish would go to when they shun someone. Even Jessica's immediate family treat her coldly.

You will have to read *A Plain Leaving* for yourself to learn how the story ends. I promise you, you'll be glad you did.

My thanks to the author and Bethany House for my review copy.

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### **Susan says**

*A Plain Leaving*

Leslie Gould

Received from the publisher

*A PLAIN LEAVING* is the first book in the Sisters of Lancaster County. It is not your usual Amish story and it held my interest from the very first page until the last. *A PLAIN LEAVING* is all about the Bachman family and the story spans centuries. The family farm has been in Lancaster County for hundreds of years and the history of it will take your breath away.

Jessica left her Amish roots three years ago, is completely shunned by her family and is returning home

because her father has just passed away. She knows her family will not be happy to see her but she owes it to her Dat to go. While she is there, she hopes to convince her older brother not to go ahead with the fracking company that he wants to sell the family farm to. She stays at her Aunt Suz's house and while there, Suz tells her the story of Ruby Bachman.

Ruby's story takes place during the Revolutionary War and it shows that even though Ruby and Jessica lived over one hundred years apart, they face some of the same challenges. All of the characters have flaws and I really like how Leslie Gould shows the reader that The Amish, while living plain lives, still have problems and drama. A PLAIN LEAVING is filled with twists and turns and had me totally invested in all of the characters and their troubles.

A PLAIN LEAVING is filled with love, family, forgiveness, history, hope, and faith. Ruby and Jessica both have some by choices and hard decisions to make and they will break the reader's hearts. Even though Jessica now has an Englisch boyfriend, she still feels a strong pull towards Silas, the Amish man she left behind. Will Jessica stay in her childhood home or will she go back to her Englisch life? You have to give A PLAIN LEAVING a try to find out! My emotions were all over the place while reading about the tough choices Jessica and Ruby had to make and I found myself cheering both of them on, hoping they would find their happy places. Leslie Gould truly knows how to pull her readers in and never lets them go! I can not wait to continue with this series.

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## **Nancee says**

Jessica was shunned after leaving her Amish roots for a new experience in the Englisch world. The death of her father brought her home where life with her family was difficult as a result of her shunning. Her family showed her no mercy, aside from her Amish aunt who shared the Revolutionary War history of her ancestors and the farmland left to successive family members. This compelling story of Ruby's life revealed a wealth of information helpful to Jessica. Jessica and Ruby's lives paralleled one another with their interwoven connections.

Current issues enter the picture, such as shunning, family dysfunction, personal loss and relationships, fracking on Amish land, and the future of Jessica's family property. Not your usual Amish story, the author adds so much depth to this compelling story with its rich historical detailing, descriptive landscape and characterizations.

Written with strong insight into the Amish community and well researched information regarding the Revolutionary war, Leslie Gould has created one of her best achievements in her literary career. It was difficult to see this story come to its conclusion. I highly recommend "A Plain Leaving" for its wealth of family dynamics and personal developments!

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book with no expectations for a positive review. All expressed opinions are my own.

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## **Edward Arrington says**

The first book in The Sisters of Lancaster County series already has me wanting to read more. Leslie Gould masterfully shares a story of a young Amish woman who enjoys outdoor chores far more than the typical inside chores of other Amish women. Her half-brother who does not like farm work and would rather sell off the farm or lease the land to someone for other uses stirs up trouble for her to the point she feels she must leave. After three years away, she gets word that her father has died and returns for his funeral. How can she survive even a few days in a house where she is no longer wanted? Even though she has a new boyfriend where she works, why is it so difficult to see her former Amish boyfriend with another young woman? How can she make it through the funeral when family and others will not allow her the opportunity to grieve her loss? What is she supposed to do when her half-brother who caused so much trouble for her and seems to hate everything about her has a serious heart attack before they can finish burying her father? The bright spot in her life through all of this is when she visits her Aunt Suzanne and is told a cautionary tale about an early ancestor who lived during the Revolutionary War and faces some circumstances that are vaguely similar to her own. Jessica has some major decisions to make as her heart and soul are so unsettled about every aspect of her life. Will the cautionary tale give her any guidance? That is for you to decide. I received a copy of this book from the author. This is my honest review. All opinions are strictly my own.

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## **Mary Jackson \_TheMaryReader says**

This was not your typical Amish fiction book. Well let me say it like this, it was not the same ole story written. This is a fresh story.

Gould has taken it to a whole new level.

An Amish book talking about fracking, on Amish land, you are going to love this book. Wait until you hear the whole story.

I loved Jessica and Amos the most oh and Aunt Suz.

This was my eye opening Amish book of the year. It has shown me that Amish can be written with new eyes and their are still fresh stories to be read.

So if you have given up on reading Amish books because they are all the same thing rewritten. You have to read A Plain Leaving you will be pleasantly surprised and you will be left wanting more.

I gave this book 5 stars and I HIGHLY recommend this book.

The Mary Reader received this book from the publisher for review. A favorable review was not required and all views expressed are our own.

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## **Karla says**

This first book in "The Sisters of Lancaster County" series starts off with a BANG!!! Each time I pick up a book by this author , I am amazed at the depth of the characters and the uniqueness of the plot. This book



grabbed me from the first page and I found it very difficult to put down!

The characters are so realistic and well described that you are drawn into their lives in such a way that you feel every struggle and challenge, as well as their joys and successes. I easily identified with Jessica and she became my best friend. I walked with her along her rocky path of life. What a roller coaster ride we had!! Leslie has the unique talent of creating Amish individuals who have flaws just as you and I have. They may be the Plain People but they are not exempt from the problems of everyday life. Their way of dealing with them are what makes them different.

The plot is one that is complicated and actually has two stories woven into one. As I usually am not fond of books written in the first person, I was slightly shocked to find that I found this tale an easy one to read. Unexpected twists and turns shock the reader at every turn of the page. Trials and turmoil stressed the importance of loyalty, forgiveness and love that is indeed unconditional. That old annoying feeling of jealousy rises its ugly head from time to time. An underlying theme of hope and courage in tough times shines through as the story progresses.

If you wish to read a book that has a totally different look at the life of the Amish, then this is for you!! Far from your typical Amish Genre book!!

Definitely a five star book! Can hardly wait for book two in this series! Congratulations, Leslie, on a magnificent creation!!!

This book was received as a gift. The thoughts and opinions expressed are honest and my own.

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### **Pam Pavkov says**

A Plain Leaving is the first book in Leslie Gould's new series The Sisters of Lancaster County. This book caught my attention from the first page and continued to do so thru out the entire book. I loved the storyline and also the secondary storyline immensely. The characters chosen by the author were very authentic in the way they handle family and stressful situations.

Jessica Bachmann's character was a strong-willed, independent young woman who has been estranged from her Amish family and community for over three years. When she received a call from her youngest sister at the passing of their Datt Jessica is drawn back home to Lancaster. When she arrives home she is openly welcomed by her youngest sister and her former beau but everyone else including her own mother were cold, rude, and unforgiving. In fact her Mother flat out orders her to leave. How does Jessica handle this?

When Aenti Suz learns of Jessica's arrival she rushes to her defense and tells the family she is welcomed to stay with her. It is during one of their talks over tea that Aenti Suz starts telling Jessica the story of an ancestor, Ruby Bachmann, that took place during Revolutionary War-era. This book flashes back to this story thru out the book and Jessica starts to weave Ruby and her story together. The descriptions of this story really draws you into the era and you can almost feel like you are right there with Ruby.

Both parts of this book let's the reader know how difficult choices can affect a person's life. I felt alot different emotions reading this book from an overwhelming urge to shake a few people to wanting to wrap my arms around some and hug them. This is a story that offers love, dislike, forgiveness, and faith. The path

that Jessica takes thru out the book is amazing.

I was not given a complimentary copy of this book to read and review. All the opinions s and statements expressed are solely my own based on this book. I have rated this book with five stars but wished I could have given it more. I will be recommending to all readers who enjoy the Amish genre along with historical genre.

Congratulations to Leslie Gould on writing such a fascinating book for her readers. I will be anticipating the release of book two in the future to continue following this amazing family.

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### **Gail Hollingsworth says**

This time split novel has to be one of Leslie Gould's best so far. The story of Jessica Bachmann in contemporary and Ruby Bachmann in the Revotinary War era was both heartbreaking and heartwarming. Jessica left her Amish community three years previously to live in the English world because of a terrible misunderstanding among her family members. She only comes back because she learns of her father's passing. Tensions are high, the shunning ban is in place, and nothing is the same as she remembers except for the farm land she loves.

Jessica's aunt tells her the story of Ruby in bits and pieces and Jessica begins to correlate their lives. Ruby is of a plain background as is her family. They are pacifists and don't believe in war. Most of her family leave for Canada to keep out of the war against the British, except for Ruby, her sick mother and her youngest brother. The struggles for Ruby are many and hard. A neighbor joins forces with her to preserve their farms. The parallels between the two young women are compelling. They both have "significant others" but question where their loyalty and love really rests. They are both searching for answers and a closer relationship with God.

I truly enjoyed reading Jessica's story and look forward to stories about the other two sisters.

I received a complimentary copy of this book through the author/publisher but was not required to write a review, positive or otherwise.

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### **Bonnie says**

Jessica Bachmann lived peacefully on her family farm until she clashed with the new bishop and her brother about her role in the family and the future of the family farm. She left and only returns when her father dies. She sees her once boyfriend and wonders what might have been. But, she discovers a far more important fact. Her brother Arden is pursuing hazardous fracking on the family's land. As Jessica wrestles with her next step, she learns the cautionary tale of a Revolutionary War-era ancestor who faced similar struggles. Will she leave her family or will it motivate her to fight for what she believes is right? This is the first installment of what is to be a series about the Bachman family.

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### **Maureen Timerman says**

An in-depth look into an Amish family, spanning centuries, from current time to revolutionary times, all on the same property in Lancaster area Pennsylvania.

There is so much pain here, and when the story opens we are brought to the farm because of the death of the

father. The author keeps us on our toes, and yes this is a family story, but it is also the lands story. Can relate to some that goes on here, living on a farm that has been in our family since 1855, and having been contacted about fracking.

The thought about destroying the land will make you cringe, and yes we are all human, no matter how we worship. The author has us thinking about the center of a family, and how easily it can be torn apart, and as we travel through the past, and way back we are going, and then the present, and a look at the future.

Tangled relationships here, and we have to get to the very end of the book for answers, and yes this is a real page-turner, I could not put it down before I knew how it ended.

I received this book through Bethany House Publishers and was not required to give a positive review.

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