



Daybreak: The Days of Redemption Series, Book One

Shelley Shepard Gray

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In this close-knit Amish family, nothing is as perfect as it seems . . .

When Viola Keim starts working at a nearby Mennonite retirement home, she strikes up an unlikely friendship with resident Atle, whose only living relative, son Edward, is living as a missionary in Nicaragua. Viola understands the importance of mission work, but she can't imagine leaving her father in the hands of strangers. Even though her family is New Order Amish, it's not the Amish way, and though she doesn't know Ed, she judges him for abandoning his father.

But when Ed surprises his father with a visit, Viola and Ed both discover an attraction they never expected. Despite her feelings, choosing Ed would mean moving to a far-off country and leaving her family behind. She can't do that. Her twin sister, Elsie, is going blind and will need someone to care for her all her life. Her family is reeling with the recent discovery that her grandmother hid her past as an *Englischer*. Her father seems forgetful and distracted—and to be harboring some secrets of his own.

Does Viola dare leave them all behind and forge her own life? Or will family ties mean her one chance at love slips away?

Daybreak: The Days of Redemption Series, Book One Details

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From Reader Review Daybreak: The Days of Redemption Series, Book One for online ebook

Kathy Apple says

Didn't finish. This is more "romance" than "Amish" and not my thing. It seemed to be well written but I was looking for more Amish "culture".

Tanya says

its just ok. not much of an Amish feel to this one.

Debbie says

I liked the theme/title throughout the book and in the end. I really like this author's style of writing.

Bekah says

This was my second book by this author and it was so very good! I read Snowfall, a Christmas novella within this series back in 2015. I was introduced to the Keim family when reading the Christmas story and was intrigued and definitely wanted to read the actual series, as the novella takes place after the first three books.

What I Liked: This book centered on several different viewpoints, which can get kind of tricky, but this author did an excellent job with it and I didn't get confused at all. This book's main character was Viola Keim, who works at an assisted living facility for the elderly Amish and Mennonite. Viola loves her job and the residents there, and when a son of one of the residents comes home from being a missionary in a foreign country, Viola is reluctantly attracted to this man whom she believes to have deserted his father to serve in the mission field. But she discovers she has judged his character too quickly and learns a valuable lesson throughout this book.

The other side plots were all interesting and added "spice" to the story that I really liked. The characters learn some important lessons, and at the end of this book there was still plenty of room for them to learn and grow more in their relationships with God and with each other. It made me want to dive into the 2nd book to see how things are resolved!

What I Didn't Like: I couldn't necessarily think of anything that stood out to me that I really didn't like.

I give this book 5 stars for the strong messages and lessons in this story and for how well written it was. It held my attention from the very first to the last.

Julie says

Read for a library challenge. Didn't realize Amish Romance was a genre category.

Susan says

Great start to a wonderful series. Fortunately I have the second book and will start today. I've also pre ordered the third. This was refreshing on so many levels. The Keim's have had too many grievous secrets for too long. As the secrets start coming out things really get interesting. I loved hearing about Edward's mission work and his call to serve. All of the characters are special and well developed. The romances, the old and new are superb as well. I read all that I can find by this author. She's so talented!

Donna says

I just found a new series by one my favorite authors. This one is the first in the series and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Set in Berlin, OH in the heart of Amish country, it had some interesting characters and situations. Looking forward to going on with the series.

Janice says

I read this on the kindle

This is the 1st in a series

The book is good I enjoyed it of course while it sort of finished the main story it leaves lots of questions which as you read the rest of the series I guess will be answered having started on the 2nd a bit more is told about the family & all the secrets that is hidden

I think this book is one that if you aren't going to read the series it's not worth reading as you will be left not knowing what happens I do have the 3 in the series plus the 4th book which is a Christmas one so I will be reading all one after the other

Amy says

Solid 3 stars, wanted to like it even more but some things got on my nerves...a couple of characters, actually... But my favorite character is Edward and I liked Viola, of course. The story had some different situations than what you might think you would find in a book with Amish folk, :). And that's why I liked it, but at times it seemed a little too clean, it could have been a little longer and gone a little deeper. But overall, it was a good read and I will read the next book at some point :).

Melody Kitchens says

Just meh. I read a lot of the Amish books, but this one I just didn't much like. Maybe it's because there are so many story lines, each with a different main character, but I just didn't click with any of them or really want to find out what happened. Viola and Ed's story is, I guess, the main one, but it almost felt like it was wrote by Disney. They fall madly in love after two weeks of knowing each other? So much in love that she is willing to drop her whole life and join him in Belize on mission work? Especially after they hated each other when they first met and then continuously got on each other's nerves. No thanks. Let's leave that kind of ridiculous romance up to old Walt. The other stories were more likable because they were more real. I liked both, the crappy grandparents that realize to late in life that they sucked as parents and grandparents, and the undercover alcoholic father. I'm not sure if I'll read any more of the series, I guess I should to see what happens to the characters, but right now the desire to is just not that great.

Kathleen (Kat) Smith says

What if everything you ever believed about your upbringing and the life your parents had lived was nothing but a lie? What would that make you think about all the decisions you've made that were called wrong when instead they could have been right, if only the true were allowed to shine through? Now you have the premise behind the latest novel from Shelley Shepard Gray in her new series *The Days of Redemption*. In the first book, *Daybreak* we are introduced to the residents of Daybreak Retirement Home where Viola Keim has been working in Mennonite community. Even though she herself isn't a Mennonite, but a New Order Amish, she finds herself wondering just how children can abandon their parents to live out the rest of their lives in the care of strangers instead of living at home with them.

She finds herself particularly drawn to an elderly man named Atle Swartz who is wheelchair bound but is ornery as they come and lately only Viola can dish it back to him in a manner that creates a wonderful relationship despite the age difference. However when Atle shares the letters from his son volunteering in mission work in Nicaragua, she isn't pleased when Edward returns home to see his father. She has a hard time coming to terms between the differences in caring for aging parents and feels obligated to share her concerns with him. However it seems there might be more sparks there than just anger but can they work through their differences before Edward has to return to Nicaragua?

When Viola learns that even her own family has been hiding secrets of their own, it opens her up to the possibilities that not everything as it appears on the surface. She learns that her own mother was born English and have hidden the facts of their lives before marriage from their children. Now Viola's parents have to come to terms that what people think about them as the perfect family isn't really true and that those same standards they have placed on their children growing up has made life more difficult than they could have imagined. What implications will that have not only on their immediate family but in the Amish community as well? Will this new knowledge help Viola move towards having a softer heart towards Edward and his own father?

I received *Daybreak* by Shelley Shepard Gray compliments of Avon Inspired, a division of Harper Collins Publishers and Christian Fiction Blog Alliance for my honest review. Once again Shelley does an exceptional job at writing a series that defines some valuable lessons in between, about judging a book by its

cover! In this instance Viola is judgmental when it comes to how Edward deals with his father based on her own values in growing up Amish, but she doesn't understand what has motivated them to make the decision that worked for them. Much like how she has judged her own parents based on what she saw on the outside without really knowing the truth about their own pasts. I LOVED novels that offer a duality about them, incorporating an wonderful story with some valuable life lessons we can all relate to. I rate this one a wunderbar (wonderful in Amish) 5 out of 5 stars and can't wait for the next book Ray of Light in this heartwarming The Days of Redemption series. You get a teaser chapter at the end of this one!

Megan Rang says

A little slow in places but overall a good read.

Kimberly says

A brand new day brings new beginnings

This is book one in a series set in Holmes County Ohio and centered around an Amish community. I really like how Ms. Gray makes the characters "not perfect", but with family problems just like we all have. Sometimes the Amish genre is portrayed as an idealistic way of life, but this story helps the reader realize that the Amish are people that can have family problems just like everyone else - they just use their faith to work through those problems. Viola, one of the main characters, struggles to understand Ed's choice to be away from family and live as a missionary in another country. She reminds us that we usually end up with a wrong assessment of someone when we look at them through our own perception, instead of through God's eyes. The story has many characters that are easy to identify with and teach us how to work through life's trials with faith and family. The other books in this series focus on different characters in the same community of Amish, which always appeals to me because I hate saying goodbye to characters I have met in stories! Ms Gray's descriptive scenarios make you feel a part of the community and the lives of the characters. Her attention to detail and her accurate portrayal of the Amish is a reflection of the research she must put into every story. I look forward to many more stories from this talented author

Abigail says

This book reminded me of the series that kind of got me hooked on the Amish genre, Abram's Daughters by Beverly Lewis. I think because it had several plot points going on at once instead of just the typical romance. It wasn't nearly as much of a soap opera as Abram's daughters though.

Anyway, one of the things I found amusing about this book was that it takes place in Berlin, Ohio. Which is a real place. I used to live maybe 30 minutes away from there. It kind of made me laugh when the author would describe real places, but have the names changed. i.e. "Himmel's Cheese" was very obviously Heinz's Cheese. The other thing that cracked me up was that the book was taking place in January and the author talked about a huge busload of tourists coming to the cheese shop. My husband and I honeymooned in Amish country in January. No one goes to Amish country in January. (Which makes it the perfect time to go.)

These aren't really negatives, just things that were amusing. Overall, I enjoyed the book, however there was

one major, glaring thing that got to me. One main character, Ed, has recently returned from a two year mission in Nicaragua. Having been a missionary, it bothered me that the character of Ed didn't really act like a returning missionary. Coming back from a mission is super rough, there's a lot of reverse culture shock and whatnot involved. It can be very confusing for a very long time. Yet, Ed seemed rather unaffected by it. I feel like the author could've actually built up his inner turmoil about coming back and things a little more, leading to a better plot. But that's just me.

(view spoiler)

All in all, this was a pretty good entry in the Amish books I've read, just be warned that if you know a lot about missions it might bother you. Or you might be able to just let it go. In any case, I have the other two from the library and I'll probably read them since they are about Viola's siblings and it would be interesting to see what happens to them.

ETA: Also, what exactly does Viola *do* at the retirement home where she works? Because as far as I can tell she spends most of her time hanging out with the residents, playing cards and drinking coffee. Except for that one time she put toilet paper in a storage closet.

Busy says

What can I say- it's like a glass of warm milk. Goes down smooth, soothes and might make you a little sleepy. And not spicy at all.

I thought the character of the mother was realistic until the end, where...just nah. I mean this whole warm and fuzzy Amish world felt idealistic, but her development was too good to be true.
