



# The Hidden Life

*Adina Senft*

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## **The Hidden Life** Adina Senft

Emma Stolfus has never been courted or kissed, and now that she's 30, it has become her place as the unmarried daughter to look after her elderly mother. But in the dark hours when her mother is asleep, Emma writes letters and essays to Amish periodicals, short stories, and even a novel she's been working on for the last five years.

When a New York literary agent, Tyler West, takes an interest in her work, Emma secretly goes to meet him. When she returns, something about her is different-and the men of her Amish community take notice. But how can she settle for second best when her heart made its choice years ago-to a man she can never have? Only her friends, Amelia and Carrie, know the truth in her heart as they work together on their quilt ... and only they understand when an old tragedy comes to light that will either hurt or heal ... and reveal Emma's hidden life.

## **The Hidden Life Details**

Date : Published June 2012 by FaithWords (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780892968558

Author : Adina Senft

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Amish, Christian Fiction, Amish Fiction, Christian, Romance, Fiction

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# From Reader Review The Hidden Life for online ebook

## Christian Fiction Addiction says

I never thought I'd say this, but I loved *The Hidden Life* even more than the first book in the series, *The Wounded Heart*, and I gave that book rave reviews indeed! The reason? Emma Stoltzfus is simply one of my favorite characters to come along so far this year! She has a special knack for stumbling into trouble, skirting along the edge of what is acceptable in her Amish community, and refusing to live her life solely to please other's expectations of her. I loved the predicaments humble Emma suddenly found herself in, that after years of waiting to catch the eye of the perfect man while caring for her elderly parents, rumors are flying about not one, not two, but three men who seem intent on courting her! As with the first book, I found that this second installment in the series was a compelling read, written with sensitivity to the Amish culture, but also exploring some of the difficulties in living a plain life as well. Emma's dilemma is a unique one of how to use the gift God has clearly given her, the gift of writing, when her community frowns upon a woman's voice being heard in such a manner.

I loved the scene where Emma is considering whether she's ever truly listened to God in his attempts to guide her, where she contemplates "Had she really treated the Lord of Heaven the way people treated her? Asking for everything under the sun, but not listening for a reply? Maybe God had been ready to show her His will, and she'd been up and away to can bean pickles, or off to her typewriter, or going somewhere else to do goodness knows what, and His counsel had blown away on the wind she kicked up as she hustled hither and yon". These are words that leave me pondering how I listen (or don't) to God myself. Any book that can both entertain and leave me thinking is a book worth reading!

Adina Senft is quickly become one of my favourite writers of Amish fiction, and I look forward to the final book in the series, *The Tempted Soul*, coming in 2013. Senft's characters are beautifully developed, with original characters who will move you to both laugh and cry, and this story is one I plan on revisiting in the future. 5 out of 5 stars.

Book has been provided courtesy of the publisher, Faith Words, for the purposes of this unbiased review.

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## ILoveBooks says

In her Amish community, Emma Stoltzfus has nearly come to terms with her lot as an unmarried, never-been-kissed daughter who will care for the mother she loves in the Daadi Haus. Her long-term prospects are for life in the family farmhouse, helping her sister Karen take care of her growing family. Emma's *Hidden Life* helps her to survive the bleakness of her life without love and children. Gifted as a writer, few people in her community realize that Emma is the author of stories and letters in the Amish periodicals. Now, her novel, chosen as a finalist in a national contest, has attracted the attention of a New York literary agent. Besides the excitement of her book, she is helping to plan for a best friend's wedding; and suddenly, men in her community are trying to court her. However, Emma gave her heart to a man, who married another, many years before. Will Emma find love?

I've only read a couple of other stories set in the Amish community. Although they were all enjoyable, I really loved this story. The contrast between the Amish and the modern world added a unique viewpoint to the story; it added humor to situations too. The caring, easy friendship between Emma, Carrie, and Amelia, making their quilt and cupcakes, opens the story. Senft creatively inserts letters and a police report to provide

plot information. Emma's blunt speech coupled with her kind heart rewards readers with dialogue that looks beyond the surface. The impressions of New York that Emma relates put my own recent feelings about the city into words. Emma's prayers to listen more openly to God reminded me to ask for guidance. Reading more "sexy" romances is fun, but sometimes they feel too dirty, never uplifting. When Emma thinks that Grant's smile – as their eyes meet - is "a gift beyond price", it made my heart glad to think of my husband's smile.

Four and a Half Stars

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### **Donita Corman says**

This is a book that got better as it went on. I enjoyed it .

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### **Lisa says**

Shelley Adina writes two kinds of fiction: steampunk (which I'm dying to try now) and Amish. The latter she writes under the name Adina Senft. I recently read *The Hidden Life*, the second book in her Amish Quilt series, and I have to be honest, this might be my favorite among Amish fiction. (Oh, how I hate to play favorites with books. That's like picking a favorite child!) The characters had such depth and a realness about them that I felt like I could stop by and visit. And I laughed. Like out loud. These characters were fun and had personality, something that is often lacking among Amish characters I've read. Yes, they live a different lifestyle than us, but they're people after all. I appreciated the lightness of their conversations, as well as the seriousness of the situations they faced. I also found the pace of the dialogue and writing mimicked the natural speech patterns of Lancaster County. It felt like what I hear almost daily around here. I would read more Amish fiction if it was all written like this.

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### **Holly (2 Kids and Tired) says**

Gifted at writing, Emma writes letters and essays for Amish magazines and no one knows about it. After writing a novel, she enters it into a contest and a New York literary agent takes an interest in it. Emma has never dated, and feels destined to be the unmarried daughter who cares for her mother and helps with her sisters' children. Then, when the man Emma has always had a crush on is recently widowed and begins showing her attention, she is torn between finding the love she has always wanted and having her writing published for an English audience. Women are to be seen, but not heard, at least in Emma's Amish world and she isn't sure she can have it all.

I enjoyed reading Emma's story after meeting her in *A Wounded Heart*. I find the Amish world fascinating and this was a delightful novel. I look forward to Carrie's story. A sequel to *A Wounded Heart*, the story stands alone fairly well, although it's always better to read a series in order.

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### **Michelle says**

Emma Stolfus is by no means your typical Amish woman. She is an unmarried thirty year old who harbors

a secret passion for writing. Emma has dutifully taken care of her ailing mother always wondering when her time will come to marry and have a family. Feelings of jealousy often rise up when she sees how happy her two best friends Amelia and Carrie are. Having a family of her own is all she has ever wanted and it is hard for her not to feel resentment at times. Writing is her escape and soothes her soul. Emma secretly enters a writing contest just to see if she has what it takes. She is not even sure why she entered and is not expecting to win. Although she doesn't win the big prize, Emma receives a letter from a literary agent who expresses some interest in her writing. He invites her to New York for a meeting about being published. Having a book published is a no-no in her community but she is intrigued by the offer. Throwing caution to the wind Emma boards a train for the Big Apple and heads towards a new chapter in her life.....

I absolutely loved The Hidden Life! Nothing is as enjoyable as feeling the same way the characters do throughout the story and believing that you are mixed into the same world. I felt this way throughout the book because the characters are so relatable and interesting. As you turn the pages, the book consumes you, engulfing you in between the lines of this wonderland of simplicity. This is why I read Amish fiction....to get away from the hustle and bustle of the world and see the simpler side of life. Now don't get me wrong The Hidden Life is full of conflict, romance, and drama! Overall I felt Adina captured the Amish way of life with fine detail. Be prepared to become an even bigger fan of Adina's after you read this book and you will be eagerly anticipating the next installment The Tempted Soul just like me!

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### **Carolina Montague says**

I loved the depiction of Amish life and the anguish Emma experiences when she confronts unrequited love, having to hide her talent, yet loving her community, and how the author balances the close family relationships with the utter disregard of the outside world when an Amish woman who left her community to follow a man disappeared one night and he did not even look for her. This is an extreme case - when people disappear, there is usually some kind of looking for them, but it made a jarring contrast that had me thinking about the control some communities exert, the costs of that kind of stricture, and the benefits when an underpinning of Grace is there.

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### **Lisa Johnson says**

Title: The Hidden Life (Amish Quilt Book #2)

Author: Adina Senft

Pages: 336

Year: 2012

Publisher: FaithWords

My rating is 4 out of 5 stars.

In this sequel to The Wounded Soul, the author focuses on the character named Emma Stolzhus. Emma is a single woman who has dedicated her life to caring for her parents in their later years. After the passing of her father, Emma focuses on her mother. What Emma is surprised by is the shared views, stance and closeness she develops with her mother.

While Emma would love nothing more than to get married and have her own family, seeing it become a reality in her life is another matter. Since Emma was a young woman, her heart has yearned for one man named Grant. Grant is unavailable now and readers will enjoy reading his journey as well as the captivating ending to Emma's tale.

I highly recommend Adina Senft's books as they include patterns for quilt lovers, great stories to capture the hearts of the audience and a book easily enjoyed in a couple of hours. While the author herself has never been Amish, her knowledge of the communities spills out in her stories and brings a reality to the plot, theme and players in her books.

Read *The Wounded Soul* and then *The Hidden Life* as that will aid in understanding the background and prior happenings in the lives of the three women that are written about in the series. The final book in the series is *The Tempted Soul* and that will also be reviewed and shared with readers.

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### **Catherine says**

*The Hidden Life* is the second book in *The Amish Quilt* series by Adina Senft. Characters from the first book, as well as some storylines, carry over into this book, so I was glad that I recently read book one prior to this book.

I didn't enjoy this book as much as I did the first. This book focuses on Emma, a 30 year old Amish woman who has never married and has some independent ways of thinking and behaving. But, for all of her independence, she feels less valued because she has never been a wife or mother.

I like the character of Emma, but the storyline in this book was not all that strong for me. The author does a nice job of conveying the sense of community and faith present in Amish communities. But, the book moved a bit too slowly and I never felt that engaged. It was "ok". Part of the book contains a romance, and I just did not find this romantic storyline to be very warm or romantic, to be honest. It felt very one-sided.

There is a third book in the series, and I think I'll still give that a try.

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### **Natalie says**

Wow! Great characters. Great plot. Typical setting, but everything else makes up for it. Highly recommended.

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### **Susan says**

Adina Senft's *The Hidden Life* is the middle book in an Amish trilogy, but it can be read just as well as a standalone.

I was immediately intrigued by the heroine's problem -- her pain at being overlooked by the only man she's ever loved who is now married. How does a person in that religious culture deal with the huge temptation to dwell on her feelings for this man? The heroine's voice drew me in: she is a Plain person who is extremely plain-spoken and rather plain-featured, at least in her own eyes. :-) She states her views so bluntly that at times I worried about what reaction she would get.

Senft does an amazing job at characterization -- every character's voice, name, and physique is unique and suits that person perfectly. I especially enjoyed the heroine's Germanic syntax contrasted with her wannabe literary agent's more colloquial use of English.

There is a nice balance of narrative and dialogue, complete with the world building Senft does so well. Her descriptions of Amish life don't bog down the story, but serve as a fascinating framework by which the plot moves forward. For example, although a wedding scene is shown in detail, it's the continuous interactions and feelings and mishaps of the characters that bring it to life.

I don't typically read Amish fiction, but I think such readers will go crazy over this story. I think readers like me who don't read Amish fiction may still enjoy it for the heroine's various conflicts with herself, and the Amish tradition.

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### **Sara says**

The first book in the 'Amish Quilt' series focused on Amelia, but this second offering follows Emma and her bumpy path to find true love. I liked Amelia in the first book, but I think I actually liked Emma even more. She kind of walks along the edge of what is considered acceptable for a good Amish women with her writing and her ability to sometimes say too much or to say it bluntly. I liked the fact that Emma realized that God had given her the gift of writing and that she needed to use it, even if those in authority might frown upon it.

I also liked Grant Weaver in this book, but since the story is only told from Emma's point of view, I didn't really get to know him as well as I might have liked. Since this is an Amish community, there are, of course, a lot of secondary characters to keep up with. Emma's sister Karen was maddening, I thought, but it was really neat to see how well Emma handled herself in response to her prickly sister. It made me think about how I would sometimes do better to hold my tongue around certain people.

Read my complete review here: <http://shoopettesbookreviews.blogspot...>

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### **Melissa Lee says**

In Adina Senft's Amish Quilt series readers follow the lives of three best friends, living in a small Amish community in Pennsylvania.

In this second book of the series *The Hidden Life*, we follow Emma Stolzhus, caregiver to her ailing mother and considered an old spinster at the age of just 30.

Living under such strict rules of her amish community, there are somethings that aren't proper for a woman. Two such examples Emma has kept hidden; her talent for writing and her love for a married man. However these secrets won't be kept silent for long and Emma's quite existence is about to change.

This is my first time reading Amish fiction and it certainly won't be the last. I couldn't put this book down. The characters were likeable and I find learning about different lifestyles to be very interesting. Although drastically different from my own life, it was refreshing to see the Amish portrayed in a positive light, rather than the negative one reality television has been showing recently. Not every Amish person wants to break free from the church and although this was a work of fiction it does show that people can be content with living the old order lifestyle.

Most specifically women, as portrayed in this series.

Although I found the ending to be a bit abrupt, it did tie up all the loose ends. I am very much looking forward to reading the first book in the series centered around Amelia and the third which follows Carrie.

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### **Sarah says**

amazing the book keeps you going. I like how the author used a simple thing that would not really be a big deal to us to show how it would effect the Amish life. I also like how each character gave of themself to help another. I think we now a days forget to do so and we tend to missing the blessing. The biggest thing that got me was LISTEN sometimes we just go and go and forget to stop and listen really really listen and through out the book the author makes a point to let this known in a subtle way. I can not wait to read more and if you enjoy reading the amish way then this book will be a wonderful read for you if you never read amish or rather not try this book I think you will enjoy it

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### **Janice says**

I read this on the Kindle

This is the 1st book i read by this author & i really enjoyed it i will be getting the 1st & 3rd ones in this series for sure

I loved how Emma's Mum is there for her even with her needing care I think if i had Karen for a sister i would have told her to poke out i guess that why i would never be a Good Amish Woman lol

The storyline & that Emma ha wrote a novel makes you want to read it & i like Tyler in this even if he is an Englisher yet some of the Amish Men are not so nice as him

If you get a chance to read this book do so i got it because it was on a special at the time i am so pleased i did well worth it

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