



The Forgiven

Marta Perry

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When three women, all cousins, are given the task of sorting through the treasures of several generations of their Amish family, they each discover a story from the past that provides insights and inspiration for their own lives.

Central Pennsylvania, current day. Rebecca Fisher gladly accepted her husband Paul's dreams as her own, but now that he has passed away, she's struggling to raise two children and keep her home. Renting her stable to carpenter Matthew Byler offers a partial solution—even though Matthew has a troubled history, having sometimes failed to embrace Amish beliefs. As Matthew seeks to prove himself, Rebecca realizes how dependent she has become on others. Where can she find the courage to grow and change?

Lancaster County, 1941. As war threatens, Anna Esch pours her experiences into her diary. Her world seems to crumble as neighbors turn against the Amish and her love, Jacob, is sent to a camp far away for refusing to fight. She can't know, as she grows from a girl into a woman during a time of trouble and grief, that one day another Amish woman will gain strength from the words she writes and will learn that she, too, can become a keeper of the promise.

FIRST IN A NEW SERIES

The Forgiven Details

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From Reader Review The Forgiven for online ebook

Laura says

This book kept my attention from its beginning until the end. I love how the author used two different generations showing that decisions have to be faced no matter what era you live.

The Forgiven is the first book in the Keeper's of the Promise series featuring three Amish cousins and their struggle to preserve their family heritage it also points out that no matter what you believe in some things never change and what brings a family together is love, unhappiness, and a desire to kept them intact.

Current day in Pennsylvania Rebecca Fisher takes on the dreams of her husband now deceased as well as struggling with two children and using her home to non-Amish who wanted to experience life in a Amish household. She had also rented out her husband stable to Matthew who had returned to the village.

Looking back at Lancaster County, 1941. As war threatens, Anna Esch journal her experiences in a world where neighbors have turned against the Amish because of their belief of not going to war and killing. Jacob, the man she is planning to marry is sent to a camp far away for refusing to fight.

This book shows the struggles of both women at different times outsiders push to make them a part of the general non-Amish community that doesn't understand their way of life.

Kristin says

I have recently finished reading The Forgiven written by Marta Perry. I feel a bit guilty because I should have finished this book in the Fall when it was sent to me~~my apologizes Marta. However, every free moment I had, I would pick up this book and relish every quiet moment reading this inspiring story and connecting with each of the characters she developed in her story. I felt like I really knew the main character. I felt her pain, her agony, her grief, her struggles as she tried to care and provide for her children as a single mom. I admired her strength and her courage to go above and beyond what she thought she was capable of. And, I loved how she found love again despite the suffering she had endured.

This is an amazing story of courage, determination, compassion, love and faith. Watching how simple treasures from the past helps inspire and strengthen their faith and aids in strengthening family bonds.

I have to admit. I loved this book so very much and look forward to reading book 2 in the future. I highly recommend it to all who love books based on faith and books that are inspiring and encouraging.

Kristina says

The Forgiven by Marta Perry is the first book in the Keepers of the Promise series. Elizabeth Lapp is seventy-six years old and having some health problems. Elizabeth is going to move into her son's home, but first she needs to distribute her treasures and memories. Elizabeth has items stored in her attic that to her all have stories and are a part of the family's history. She has asked her three granddaughters, Rebecca, Judith, and Barbara (Barbie), to make sure the items go the correct family members. Each girl is to also get an item.

Rebecca loves the stories and history contained within the attic. Rebecca takes a dower chest with a journal in it from Anna Esch. The journal is written from 1941 through 1945. Rebecca starts reading the journal a little at a time.

Rebecca lost her husband Paul about eighteen months ago. She has two children: Katie (seven) and Josh (six). Rebecca is determined to keep her farm and stop relying on her family for help. When Matthew Byler asks to rent her new barn, Rebecca is reluctant to agree. The barn was built for her husband's dream of raising horses. Rebecca needs the money to help pay the mortgage that Paul took out to pay for the barn. Rebecca is also restarting the farm stay business that her husband had started. People stay at the house, get breakfast, and can learn how the farm operates. Some guests even help with the chores. Rebecca is shy and does not enjoy the farm stay, but she needs the income. Rebecca gets assistance from her cousin, Barbie who is very outgoing. Her brother also agrees to help.

Matthew has returned to the community after being away for many years. He is helping out his aunt and uncle since his cousin, Isiah Byler left home unexpectedly. Matthew wants to start his own furniture making business in the barn he is renting from Rebecca. He slowly gets to know Rebecca and her family. Matthew has something in his past that he is not proud of and does not think he is good enough for Rebecca. Rebecca needs to decide if she can move on from Paul and start to love again.

The Forgiven is a lovely book. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I give *The Forgiven* 5 out of 5 stars. I enjoyed how the book would give us glimpses into the past. While Rebecca read the journal, we got a glimpse of what the Amish went through during World War II. The Amish do not believe in fighting and were conscientious objectors. This is the same with the Quakers and Shaker communities. At the same time the journal helped Rebecca. It provided her with insight and helped her to get over her grief. *The Forgiven* is one of those books that you continue to think about after you are done reading it.

Pam Scott says

This was my first time to read a book that had Amish characters. I appreciated the glossary of Pennsylvania Dutch words and phrases, which I used several times. The book had action so it held my attention. I got involved with the storyline and the characters. I would recommend it for anyone who is looking for a good storyline. This is book one of the *Keepers of the Promise* series so I'll look forward to reading the next one in the series.

Lyn says

The Forgiven is not the first novel I've read by award-winning author Marta Perry so I wasn't surprised at how well written and thought-provoking the story was.

Marta Perry knows what she's doing in creating characters that spring to life within the pages of her novel. One doesn't need to be Amish to face the problems that young widow Rebecca Fisher and Matthew, the prodigal nephew, do.

Juxtapositioned to the present is the old family story of Anna Esch and her sweetheart Jacob facing the challenges of being Amish during WWII.

As Rebecca reads of Anna's struggles to keep faith in a tumultuous time, she finds the strength to face the challenges of single parenthood and making her own way.

I received an Advanced Reading Copy of this novel from the author who is a friend. **HOWEVER**, my review is honest. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading Amish or inspirational fiction

Jo Ann says

I always relish the chance to read another of Marta Perry's Amish books, and this one was especially wonderful. I was instantly drawn into the story because of the compelling characters and their issues. The dual stories set in the present and during World War II made it impossible for me to put down the book once I started reading it. I had to know how the stories of Rebecca and Matt as well as Anna and Jacob were resolved. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who loves Amish stories as well as anyone who enjoys books about characters who struggle to overcome life's greatest challenges. These characters will touch your heart. I look forward to the next books in this series. *The Keepers of the Promise* will have a place on my keeper shelf.

Pam Graber says

This book was like getting a two-fer deal. There were two stories - one present day and one set during WWII.

Rebecca Lapp Fisher has been leaning heavily on her father and brothers ever since her husband died two years ago. When her father suffers a heart attack, she realizes what her dependence is costing him and begins to look at ways to help herself. When her banker comes calling on top of this, she learns that sticking her head in the sand since her husband's death has only dug her family a deeper hole. When Matthew Byler asks to rent the stable her husband had built before his death, she sees it as a partial solution to her problem.

Matt is looked on with suspicion by the Amish community. He has recently returned to the faith after several years of living in the "Englisch" world. He works as a carpenter with his uncle, taking his cousin's place since that cousin "jumped the fence." He rents Rebecca's stable to pursue his love of furniture making. Matt sees Rebecca's struggles but the suspicion of the community prevents him from stepping in to show his support. It doesn't prevent him from falling for Rebecca, though.

Can Matt and Rebecca overcome their families' objections and find a way into each other's hearts?

For me, the secondary story of Anna Esch and her "come calling friend" Jacob Lapp was equally engrossing. I knew some of the history of the Amish church's CO status in World War II but this book brought home to me, again, what a huge conflict it was for both families and communities. As Rebecca reads Anna's journal from that turbulent time, she begins to see that she has gifts and strengths of her own to rely on.

This book was an excellent read and I would definitely recommend it to both romance readers and WWII

history buffs. Perry is spot on with the community reactions to conscientious objectors. By WWII, CPS was offered as an alternative to going to war but COs were still considered cowards. People didn't see that taking that stand was often more difficult and took as much bravery than going to the front lines. (In our community, a young man was hung for taking that stand in WWI. He didn't die but carried the scars on his neck for the rest of his life.)

J.C. Morrows says

What a WONDERFUL story! A page in and I was HOOKED! WOW!

Thank goodness we have every book of her Pleasant Valley novels! I won't have to hunt them down to read them all. Of course we don't have every book of hers but I'm going to be on the lookout!

And so should you!

Marta Perry is a masterful storyteller and she will pull you right in!

Wonderful story! Intriguing history! Excellent characters!

Just an all-around GREAT book!

Now I'm chomping at the bit to get my hands on the next one! LOL!

Susan Meissner nailed it when she said "Skillfully weaves the past and the present in a heart-stirring tale."

DO NOT miss this book and do not miss any of her others! As delightful an author as Marta Perry is, I can not imagine even one of her books not being just as fantastic a read!

And it's not just the writing I love. The very idea of someone storing up memories from the family's past to share – well, not enough of us do that. And even among the ones who do, not enough of them get around to bringing the rest of the family in on their history.

And making the focus of the story an Amish family – perfect! Who better to show holding on to their precious family history!

READ IT!

patricia says

The Forgiven was a very good read. Marta Perry is starting a new series. Matthew has returned to his Amish community and Rebecca is still hurting over the death of her husband. She discovers her own dreams and

Matthew is working on his. He needs to forgive himself and his family needs to forgive him. His secret comes out to Rebecca. She is helping her grandmother with her house clearing and reads a diary written by Anna. Anna is a young woman of the World War II era and it is a story in part how this was handled by the Amish

Lynn Grier says

The Forgiven by Marta Perry will keep you going as it did me from the beginning to the end. Rebecca Fisher sorting out family treasures comes across a diary of Anna Esch written in 1941. While struggling to keep her home going after her husband passes she is drawn into reading Anna's diary. You will want to read this book to see both generations come together nicely to bring strength and courage to grow and change.

This is the first book of a series "Keepers of the Promise". Will "The Forgiven" be a keeper on your shelf? You bet! and will want more. I absolutely loved this book and can't wait to continue on with the series. Awesome read and truly a 5 star.

This ARC copy was given to me for my honest opinion. Thank you Marta for the chance to read your book. You rock!

Sophia says

It has been a number of years since I picked up a romance featuring the Amish life and I was particularly attracted to this one because it was actually two stories in one. This one was set in modern times, but through the device of a diary, there is also a story tucked in about what it was like during WWII as well. I'm not an expert, but I felt completely immersed in the gentle, appealing story that was parts romance and parts character development set against the backdrop of a Central Pennsylvania Amish community.

This is the first of a trio of books about three cousins with three very different circumstances who are sorting through their grandmother's things and each comes away with something from the past that helps them get a handle on the present. First to get her story is still grieving widow, Rebecca Fisher. Rebecca's husband died of cancer just on the cusp of fulfilling his dreams to run a bed & breakfast style affair with their farm during the summer months and the begin raising farm draft horses. Paul is gone over a year and now Rebecca must figure out how to pay the mortgage on all the things he set in motion. One welcome and yet not so welcome source of income is allowing Matt Byler to rent the never used stables that Paul built for his horse breeding dream as a woodworking shop. Another source is to put aside her fears and doubts and continue opening the farm to guests. Each change is rough because it is a step toward something new and away from her past with Paul. Rebecca must figure out if she has what it takes to go on without him since she was utterly dependent on him while he was alive and whether she can embrace whatever this is with Matt who thinks he is not a safe bet. With all that she faces, the diary of a woman from her family's past living through the tough times of WWII give her insight into her own life in modern times.

Matt Byler kicked up his heels as a teen leaving his Amish faith to live out in the world only to find trouble and misery because he was not one that was meant to leave. Coming back is rough because he still struggles with the anger and temper that led him astray in the first place. But his cousin left his family behind like he was following in Matt's shoes leaving Matt's uncle, aunt and girl cousin in a bind. Matt figures he can help his uncle with the work load and support the family as just one step toward redemption. He feels the

suspicion his return as engendered, but oddly, Rebecca Fisher looks on him with admiration for what he is doing. He doesn't feel comfortable with her praise so he slowly shares examples from his past of how unworthy he is. Meanwhile, he has to do something about his attraction to a woman who is clearly still not ready to move on from her husband.

The plot of this one gently meanders through as it tells the story of two people struggling and coming into their own. There is a nice bit of plot and character development which kept me really vested in Rebecca and Matt's story particularly Rebecca's. Rebecca moving on from her sorrow and discovering through several challenges the woman she is meant to be was probably my favorite part of the story along with the sessions with her wise grandmother. She connects with the other story heroine, Ana, from the past. Matt had inner struggles to contain his temper and his fears that he didn't belong in the only world he wanted to be in as well as learning that he is worthy of forgiveness. All of them were so personable and I enjoyed their individual stories as well as their connection with each other.

Several themes made this a strong story that not only affected my emotions, but my thoughts too. Ana's story gives the fascinating and tragic details of what it was like for conscientious objectors and even the fear of anything different that added hardship to the people of the past that I hadn't really thought about. I also thought it was interesting that though I don't embrace the Amish faith that it was interesting that some things are just the same no matter who you are or what you believe like family being there for each other, prodigals that break a family's heart, grief, and cherishing and preserving the family heritage. There was a mild inspirational message about forgiveness and accepting the bad with the good, but it was organic to the story and worked well.

The romance is understated and very sweet. I liked the two of them for each other and as the reader I was allowed to see it develop long before the two actually involved did. This worked because both had a lot of personal stuff to work through before they were ready for a relationship. I am a sucker for a guy courting a family (even if he doesn't realize that is what he is doing) so I found the scenes involving Matt with Rebecca and the two children just adorable.

The only tiny disappointment was that I felt the ending came fast. I wanted to know what the deal was with Isaiah, did Simon throw over the odious Mary Ann, and I wanted maybe a bit more with Rebecca and Matt after their romance resolved. Maybe these will be picked up in book two which goes on with Judith's story. I will definitely be continuing on.

To wrap it up, this was a fortuitous pick to reunite with the Amish Romance niche. I thoroughly enjoyed this author's writing, the captivating characters, the authentic backdrop, plotting and feel that managed both a lighter, upbeat tone while telling the story of two moderately damaged people becoming whole. Lovers of Amish Romance, Inspiration Romance and even Sweet Contemporary/Historical Romances should probably give this one a peek.

My thanks to Penguin Group for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Crissy says

Rebecca is helping her grandmother can to prep a move. Her cousins are to help but this book is all about Rebecca. My guess is since this is book one we will meet the other girls in more detail then. Rebecca is busy dealing with so much, helping her grandmother, the story she found in the diary, and adjusting to

motherhood as a widow.

Matthew is recently returned to the community and is trying to fit in and make a place for himself.

Both of them needed to learn forgiveness and not towards others but towards themselves.

Rebecca found most of what she needed in the diaries she was reading. Matthew found that sharing his story was his first step.

Looking forward to finding the other books.

Kate says

I really liked how the stories were told: how Rebecca reading Anna's journal brought Anna and Jacob's story to the 'forefront' at the appropriate times, and how Rebecca and Matt's story played out because of what Rebecca read about Anna.

I enjoyed the characters in this novel: especially Rebecca and Matthew. Neither of them were portrayed as perfect, and I liked how they were each able to help the other realise that they needed to do some work to become who God wanted them to be.

I liked how we were introduced to the other 2 women who will each have their own book as well. I was pretty fed up with Barbie at first, but really grew to love her. Judith was always a bit of a mystery to me, and I'm looking forward to learning her story in the next book of the series!

VampAmber says

Ohhhhhhhh, this book was so good. I absolutely loved it, every page of it. When I first started it, I was afraid that the two stories were going to make it a bit hard to follow, but it ended up being the exact opposite: they grew together, helping each other out while being their own story. I definitely want to read more of Marta Perry's books, now. If they're even half as good as this one, I'm already sold. The characters seem so real, like I've known them for years. It was just amazing from start to end.

Kristine Morgan says

Marta Perry is one of my favorite authors of Amish fiction. Her books draw one in and make you feel a part of the Amish community and her newest book the Forgiven does not disappoint. Rebecca Fisher is a young widow with 2 young children. She was protected by her husband and now that he is gone, she is struggling with providing for her children. While helping to clean out her Grandmother's attic she comes across Anna Esch's diary. Can she find help from another time?

Matthew Byler rents a building from Rebecca for his furniture building. He has ghosts in his past also. Can he learn to forgive himself?

The theme of the Forgiven is of course forgiveness. Not only do we need to forgive each other, but also ourselves. If we humble ourselves and ask G-d's forgiveness, it will be given.

I really enjoyed this first book in the Keepers of The Promise and look forward to book two...The Rescued coming in June of 2015.
