



## Love Still Stands

*Kelly Irvin*

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Readers of Kelly Irvin's Bliss Creek Amish novels will be overjoyed to discover her new series for lovers of Amish fiction: The New Hope Amish. In the first installment, Love Still Stands, a group of dedicated families leaves Bliss Creek to establish a new community in Missouri. Among them is Bethel Graber, a beautiful young woman with a passion for teaching. But after being disabled in a terrible accident, overseeing a classroom is out of the question...and romance seems a long-lost dream.

Bethel begins physical therapy, determined to make a fresh start. But that won't be easy in the town of New Hope, where the locals seem anything but eager to welcome their new Amish neighbors. Amid growing intimidation from the community, Bethel must find the strength to face her many challenges and the faith to believe that God still has a plan--and a love--for her life.

## Love Still Stands Details

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Author : Kelly Irvin

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## From Reader Review Love Still Stands for online ebook

### Maryann Skaritka says

Amish schoolteacher Bethel Graber suffers a life changing injury during a storm at her school. Bethel joins her sister Leah's family and others as they move to New Hope, Missouri to establish a new Amish community.

Settling into life in a new community is not what anyone expected. They are met with prejudice by the townspeople who always seem cold, distant and unwelcoming. Many acts of vandalism and harm are inflicted on the Amish newcomers from the community.

Bethel tries to recover from her injuries by attending physical therapy sessions. There she meets Englischers and takes part in an emotional support group as well. She feels that these people understand her physical struggles and they get a glimpse into her faith as well.

Elijah Christner becomes her friend when he is asked to take her to these sessions. He is a single Amish man who is helping at his brothers farm.

Bethel is torn between getting well, wondering if she will find love, will that love be with Elijah and also dealing with Sean, a member of the support group.

Also in the book is the issue of Bethel's sister Leah's postpartum depression. Bethel tries to help her sister and Leah's husband Luke seems to not acknowledge there is a problem. Conflict over what help is needed and how to deal with this occurs in the story.

This book deals with many issues that you might not ordinarily think of when you read an Amish novel.

This book has lots of characters and families which I did find a little confusing at first. The author has included a family tree page in the beginning of the book.

I loved that Bethel had great faith and didn't blame God for her circumstances. She always tried to be better instead of bitter and make the best of her situation and never gave up.

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### Janet C says

Seven families leave Bliss Creek to start a new settlement in Missouri. The families welcome to New Hope is far from welcoming. The people of New Hope do not know anything about the Amish or have a desire to know these people that dress peculiar.

Bethel Graber, her sister Leah and Leah's husband Luke and 5 children were part of the new community. Bethel had been involved in a freak accident that ended her job as a teacher. She still needs physical therapy to ever hope to have normal movement again. Luke is called to Bishop for the new district.

There are many trials and tribulations for these seven families trying to settle in especially Bethel who needs to attend physical therapy in a town not anxious for Amish neighbors. This is a story of faith, endurance and

most of how love can bridge even the worst gap. God has a plan for each of us.

This is a good start for a new series.

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### **Jasmyne says**

This was a bit of a different Amish Romance for me. There were some new issues and complexities to the relationships that I really enjoyed. They made the characters seem far less fictional and much more like real people dealing with real life. There's also more than one relationship that needs a little help if it's going to be everything it should.

Bethel is our main character. Recovering from an accident, she needs physical therapy. Which, as you can imagine, causes conflicts with some of her beliefs. Water therapy, weight training, and stretching are all hard to do in Amish traditional clothing. I feel like the author handled this conflict beautifully, showing the delicate balance between tradition/beliefs and doing what's best for their community. Their way of finding a way to stay true to what they stand for, while at the same time giving Bethel the things she needs, was amazing.

On the side we have Bethel's sister and brother-in-law fighting a very hard battle against depression. Another delicate balancing act between having faith in God to see them through and doing what needs to be done to keep people well. While this storyline took the backseat to Bethel's, I feel like it was an important one and loved how it gave a face to an issue that many just don't understand.

The downfall to me was the stress between the new Amish community and their country town neighbors. It was just one thing too many and really just made the non-Amish neighbors seem like complete jerks (with the exception of one or two). It was over-stereotyping and I just didn't seem to enjoy that little bit of the story.

\*\*I voluntarily read a review copy of this book\*\*

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### **Lynn says**

This was a good, safe, easy read. Nothing at all objectionable, but still enough tension to make it interesting.

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### **Erin says**

A book about family, community, patience, and forgiveness. A group of families have decided to move to a new established community in Missouri. Since the Amish are very peaceful people, they don't understand why the people in the community don't like them, and continue to vandalize their property. Bethel Graber, one of the girls that had moved to Missouri is a young woman who puts God first and lives her life according to Amish Law. She has a passion for teaching, but since the accident that left her unable to walk without crutches, she is not able to oversee a classroom. While Bethel struggles with patience in the slow process of recovery, she begins to meet people of the community. At first they make fun of her but begin to slowly

learn what a sweet and caring woman she is.

This is a very sweet book. I really enjoyed reading about Bethel's family and I felt as though I were on the farm with them. Elijah is a strong and willful man who is afraid of rejection which his mixed signals really confuse Bethel. The author is knowledgeable about the Amish way of life and it is well shown through this book. I love the fact that Luke is respectful and welcoming to the English who are nothing but rude to him. He shows the true meaning of forgiveness. I really enjoyed this book and would be interested in reading more by this author.

I received a copy of this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

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### **D.J. says**

What would you do if you moved all your belongings to another town to start over — only to find the house vandalized — and no one welcomed you . . . this is just what happens when Bethel Graber's brother Luke moves his family to a new town.

In the last book of The Bliss Creek Amish series, Luke had decided to move his family to the new settlement, along with several other families. I love how The New Hope Amish series begins where the other stopped . . . as if almost no time at all has passed.

Unfortunately, Luke and his family aren't welcomed with loving arms by the community. Just the opposite, in fact. Even the sheriff pretty much tells them to "go back where they belong."

What a predicament!

Kelly Irvin does an amazing job creating a new series, yet making it seem like the first series is continuing on . . . and we get to keep some of the characters from the first series that we've grown to love, plus add a few we aren't quite certain we're going to like — or not.

Will the Amish of Bliss Creek survive in New Hope? Who knows! Will Bethany ever be able to overcome her disabilities? Well, if you want to find out, pick up a copy of Love Still Stands and read it. If you've read The Bliss Creek Amish series, it'll be like "coming home again."

Happy reading!

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### **J.C. Morrows says**

Bravo for Kelly Irvin! A Great book! A Great read!

Kelly Irvin tackled several very difficult issues in "Love Still Stands" and she handled them all beautifully. I won't go into so many details that I give the plot away but this book shows us just how human the Amish are and, for me, that makes the book so much more interesting.

Our world seems to have a view of the Amish community that is somewhat skewed – by a lack of knowledge and a feeling of intimidation.

I feel that, far too often, people do not see the Amish as normal or human and I feel that is due in a large part to seeing all that they give up for their faith.

The thing that people do not seem to understand is that, to them, it is not too much. To the Amish, it is not a struggle to give up electricity or vehicles. They are used to that kind of life. And I feel that Kelly shows us a lot of that in this book.

The English people of New Hope do not understand the Amish...at all - but I really feel that a large part of their dislike is rooted in intimidation.

To an outsider it would seem impossible that someone could happily live without electricity or a car but to the Amish, it's what they have always known.

So, they don't see it as giving up anything. They see it as normal.

There are several other issues that Kelly tackles in the book and she handles them with grace and skill, showing us that these issues are just as much a part of the Amish life as our own.

I really enjoy watching Bethel as she struggles to get better. Not that I get a kick out of watching how hard it all is for her – I enjoy watching her determination and strength. She does not just sit around, content to wallow in self-pity. She goes after healing and there is a lot of hard work involved.

I also greatly enjoy seeing her faith in God and how strong it is. As much as she accepts God's will for her life, she is still determined to do everything she can to get better. And I am also relieved to see how Kelly shows the struggle this is for the new community. It's not a normal type of thing for them and Kelly shows us this in the way their bishop struggles with decisions about her treatment and how the other members of the community react to it. There are several things about Kelly's rehabilitation that affect their entire community and Kelly has handled that amazingly well. And everything she has written rings absolutely true to me. She has clearly done her research and done it well.

This is a wonderful story of life and the struggles that come with it. It is also a reminder to us that Faith is often the only thing we have to cling to in this tumultuous world.

I thank God that this genre exists. It is so refreshing to pick up a book and know that there is nothing nasty or inappropriate between the pages and it is a tremendous boon to my own faith to see how such a strong people handle their own sometimes-difficult life.

Now I just have to go back and read Kelly's Bliss Creek series.

Oh and... fair warning, some might find it difficult to get into the story. I did at first. But it didn't take long at all for the story and the characters to hook me good. It's a GREAT story!

Disclaimer: I received this book free in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Cheri Swalwell says**

I had the privilege of reading Kelly Irvin's newest book, Love Stands Still, in her new series, The New Hope Series. What a great introduction to a new community and yet a chance to reconnect with old friends. In one sense she picks up where we left off before which I love (I love being part of her communities); yet, she starts new adventures, meets new friends, and draws me even closer to God in the process.

Ms. Irvin has a gift of digging deeper, peeling back even more layers from the family I have grown to love and endearing them even closer to my heart. I absolutely love the men in the Shirack family. Luke has grown in maturity since book #1, To Love and to Cherish, that introduced me to the Shirack family. I also love how she writes about the men that the Shirack women fall in love with. These are men filled with integrity, grace, and compassion - all traits that are very manly and very much admired. They aren't perfect; yet they live a life of dedication to their faith, their families, and their community.

I certainly couldn't put the story down once I started reading it. Not only do I love each person in the community but the storyline was so interesting it kept me turning the pages long after I should have been sleeping.

Ms. Irvin has a special gift of making me want more long after I've turned the last page; yet, satisfying my love of feeling as though the story has reached a conclusion. I absolutely love the authenticity Ms. Irvin gives her characters in their relationship with God. It's a nice blending of respect for God's laws borne out of a desire to have a close relationship with their Father.

I can't wait to read the next book in this series. As always, Ms. Irvin's books linger in my mind long after I've turned the last page. I can't wait to see what new adventure the Shirack family and their surrounding community will encounter next.

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## **Deborah says**

Readers of Kelly Irvin's Bliss Creek Amish novels will be overjoyed to discover her new series for lovers of Amish fiction: The New Hope Amish. In the first installment, Love Still Stands, a group of dedicated families leaves Bliss Creek to establish a new community in Missouri. Among them is Bethel Graber, a beautiful young woman with a passion for teaching. But after being disabled in a terrible accident, overseeing a classroom is out of the question...and romance seems a long-lost dream.

Bethel begins physical therapy, determined to make a fresh start. But that won't be easy in the town of New Hope, where the locals seem anything but eager to welcome their new Amish neighbors. Amid growing intimidation from the community, Bethel must find the strength to face her many challenges and the faith to believe that God still has a plan--and a love--for her life.

My Review:

While this book was not a feel-good, fuzzy/happily ever after type of Amish read, the characters and story are real to life. Not everything has a happy ending, and not everyone finds a pot of gold at the bottom of the rainbow. (Realistically, none of us do.) I have not read Irvin's first series, but based on my research, this is a

continuation of the stories told in that set.

Bethel and Elijah are quite likable, and I felt so bad for Bethel as she tries to adjust to her new life. Luke and Leah had some serious issues going on in their lives as well, and it was with Luke I sympathized the most. He tried so hard to understand Leah and be there for her. Leah deals with depression and other problems, and throughout the book, life never stops for any of them. Overall, the best part of the book for me was that it was a new Amish settlement in the Midwest, and I thoroughly enjoyed the story. Looking forward to more!

This book was provided by the publisher for free in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Natalie says**

Really good. Highly recommend if you enjoyed The Bliss Creek Amish series. Cannot wait for the next book.

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### **Abbie says**

Love Still Stands is the first book of the spin-off series following The Bliss Creek Amish. We follow Luke and his wife Leah as they move along with Bethel who is Leah's sister to New Hope Missouri. A few other families have moved as well as they plan to start a new settlement. Bethel is still recovering from the tornado that left her badly injured. She now has to figure out what God wants for her as she is not married and can no longer be a school teacher due to her injuries.

Elijah has also moved to New Hope and after years of taking care of his parents he is now helping his brother farm and hoping to start a family of his own if he can find a wife. Bethel fears she can't be a whole wife and does not want Elijah to feel sorry for her. Can they overcome the past to face a brighter tomorrow?

In the Bliss Creek series we see and hear a lot from Luke and Leah but we don't really get to know them. In this book as we follow Bethel and Elijah we also get to know Luke as he gets a voice in this book for the first time. Leah did not have a voice but through Luke we start to understand her and shed some light on her behavior. The first series was kind of dark and sad and this book starts out that way but by the end it feels happier over all.

What I liked: I really liked that we finally get to hear from Luke and learn more about Leah and why she is such an unhappy person. Both Bethel and Elijah are quite likable and I was cheering for Bethel to understand that even though her legs are not working right she still has a lot to offer and would make a good wife.

What I did not like: This was a good book but it's still on the dark side. Not as bad as the first series so far but not a touchy-feely kind of read. Not a bad thing at all but not everyone likes books that feel so real to life.

Overall this was a good book. It deals with a lot of hard issues such as prejudice and depression and the road of recovery after an accident. Even though there were some tough subjects the book did a good job of being upbeat and the ending left me happy with how it turned out. I would strongly suggest you read the Bliss Creek series first as they follow each other and it will make it easier to understand the characters and how they are related etc..

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### **Cindy says**

We join some of the folks from Bliss Creek as they start their new life in The New Hope Amish community. If you read the first series (Bliss Creek) you will recognize and remember many of the characters. I enjoyed the book very much. While I am not a huge fan of continuing novels, I do enjoy meeting up with familiar characters. This is not a continuing novel, it will stand alone, but it does help to understand what is going on if you have read the Bliss Creek books.

I did find myself having to go back and read sections over again, because there are so many characters it can get a bit confusing. That being said, I enjoyed the book, and cried my way through it. There should be a tissue warning at the beginning. My heart broke as Leah dealt with the unknown issues and depression she was dealing with due to postpartum depression. My heart broke for Luke, who tried to understand his wife and balance the responsibilities of being the new bishop for The New Hope community. I wanted to shake Bethel at times, and at times I cried as she tried to figure out what she wanted from life, and what she felt like God wanted from her. This book will make you eager for the next installment of The New Hope Amish. A great story, with a beautiful ending. 4 stars! This book was provided for review purposes only, no payment was received for this review.

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### **Rhonda says**

#### **4 STARS**

This is a brand new series that Kelly Irvin wrote. It's a spinoff of Bliss Creek Amish novels. Which I have not read. But I would like to read more books by Kelly on how much I liked Love Still Stands. Love Still Stands deals with some real issues of postpartum depression, also the struggle with physical therapy.

This group of Amish decided to settle in Missouri where they could buy lots of farm land. They get to their new homes and find that vandals were their first. In Luke and Leah's new home every window was broken and they tried to burn it down from inside, spray painted all over the walls. Made sure they were unwelcomed. The Sheriff when he got their was not helpful but warned them they were not welcomed.

Leah is not happy person. She has 5 children under 10 and did not want to leave Kansas. She is not happy with her sister's health problems. Won't let her do things that she can and is rude to her.

Bethel is a school teacher or was when she got hurt when a storm tore it apart. The doctor did not think she would be able to walk again. She walks with crutches only. She wants to go back to teaching but can't till she gets better. She needs physical therapy. Then maybe her dream of getting married someday and having her own family will happen.

Elijah is helping his family with the move and working on Luke's farm for now. He volunteers to take Bethel into her physical therapy and runs errands for supplies while he waits to drive her back. On the first day they almost get hit by a car. Elijah spent the last 5 years taking care of his parents. He wants his own family soon.

Their is a lot of unwelcome to the Amish moving into town. Some is quite dangerous. They forgive those that cause them ill. Their is a lot of work to do to get their community started. New leaders are chosen. Some

are not happy with it but they are willing to do the work they are called to.

Their is a lot of drama, lots of relationships, Lots of characters. Good Plot. It's a clean read. Not preachy just part of the story. I look forward to seeing more books set in New Hope.

I was given this ebook to read and asked to give honest review of it by Netgalley.

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### **Brenda says**

With "Love Still Stands" seven Amish families from Bliss Creek, Kansas decide to leave their home and start a new community in New Hope Missouri, thing is several of the people in New Hope aren't so open to outsiders and don't want the Amish to settle there. One of the people that hope for a new beginning is Bethel Graber. Bethel was injured in an accident, but hopes that physical therapy will help her regain what she lost so that she can help her older sister Leah with her children and go back to the job that she loves, teaching! Elijah Christner has also made the move to New Hope. He has spent the last five years of his life taking care of his parents, but now longs for a wife and family of his own, but he wonders if perhaps it might be to late. Will the town of New Hope allow their Amish neighbors to live in peace? What about Bethel and Elijah will they get the new beginning they long for?

When Bethel and her sister's family arrive at their home in New Hope only to find that it had been vandalized, I knew I was in for a unique "Amish" story. Unwelcome by several in the community the Amish don't let it deter them, and really do practice their faith, by showing kindness, hoping to eventually win the town over. Several interesting characters really make this story flow. We have Bethel, a young lady who always thought that her lot in life was to be a teacher, but now is faced with the fact that once the new school is built she will be replaced. Along with her physical injuries she also carries guilt, and while others have forgiven her, she finds it difficult to forgive herself. In the beginning I really thought her sister Leah was an awful, mean person, but as the story progresses my opinion of her changed. Along with interesting characters it was neat to see an Amish community come together, from building telephone shanties, to erecting one room schoolhouses I could really see it all come together. Fans of Amish fiction are going to love this story, but there is so much more to this story than just a typical Amish romance, it's a story that could really be about anyone because of the topics the author deals with such as postpartum depression, starting over in a new town, discrimination, disability, physical therapy, and divorce to name a few. A well written story with a few twists, interesting characters that share their faith as well as their struggles made this a page turning read for me!

reviewed for readersfavorite.com

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### **Casey says**

This is one of the most enjoyable Amish fictions I've read in a while. Irvin has really done a good job here with bringing these characters to life! The challenges and arguments that they had left me feeling frustrated, angry, excited, and happy right along with them. There are so many elements and struggles going on with this book that I really appreciated. It's nice to have a story rich with storylines.

I had my fingers crossed, unlike Luke's wife, that he would please please please become the bishop because I have never read a story where a main character was the head of the community. I've also never read a story where the Amish characters weren't so welcome where they had settled. I liked that as a subject matter because, as Christians, we're often told that we are going to have to expect to be treated and misunderstood like our Christ. Because we often read about well-established communities, or friendly neighbors, we don't often see the other side of that for the Amish in fiction. I found the stand off with the teenagers and Luke in the barn to be so inspirational. Instead of threatening and violence, Luke talks them down with kindness and even welcomes them to come inside his house. Of course they refuse, but I really got a lot from that - so often we're told to emulate Jesus and to remain in peace even when others have threatened or wronged you, but sometimes it's difficult to imagine exactly what that would be like.

I'll preface talking about Bethel by mentioning how much I like the name Bethel. This character is certainly flawed, but she comes with her own set of integrity and ability to withstand adversity. When her sister is downright unkind to her, Bethel does not lash out at her. She stands firm in her beliefs even when tempted with the friendship and understanding an outsider who so happens to also be attracted to her. She wavers and she makes mistakes because she is a flawed and relatable character, but what is so inspirational about her is how she picks up right where she left off and continues working to follow her Christian principles.

I got frustrated with her more than once as she struggled to overcome and heal herself. I didn't agree with her entirely in many ways and sometimes wished she had a more gentle and appreciative approach. I was really glad when she got her happily ever after and that things were righted with Luke and her sister too in the end.

This is a great read that I would recommend to any Amish fiction lover as both a fresh perspective and a rich storyline.

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