

Sarah's Garden

by Kelly Long

About the Book

Tucked into the majesty of Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains is a garden Sarah King has been nurturing for years. She never feels more alive than when she is alone with her thoughts and her Creator among the delicate rows of plants. But then duty calls her away from her beloved garden and into a world she knows little about.

Grant Williams, a handsome young veterinarian, has left the city to open a rural practice among the Amish. Within minutes of meeting shy but feisty Sarah King, he is captivated by her.

As their feelings grow for one another, Sarah insists they can never be together. Marrying Grant would mean being uprooted from her home, her family, and her community. Throughout the cold Pennsylvania winter, with her garden tucked away until spring, Sarah begins crafting a quilt that illustrates her pain. Can anything lasting blossom from a love that's forbidden?

Praise for the Book

“Kelly Long has hit it out of the park; Sarah's Garden is rich with Amish detail and an endearing romance. I highly recommend!

—**Beth Wiseman, best-selling author of *Plain Paradise***

Courtesy of Thomas Nelson

About the Author

Kelly Long is the author of *Sarah's Garden*, the first novel in the Patch of Heaven series. She was born and raised in the mountains of Northern Pennsylvania. She's been married for nearly 25 years and has five children.

Courtesy of Thomas Nelson

Author Interview

From Christianbook.com

What is your favorite Bible verse?

Exodus 18:18 (NASB) is my favorite—“*You will surely wear out...for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.*” This verse applies to parenting a child with autism, to writing, marriage, and all of my life.

Please tell us a bit about yourself.

I've been married to my best friend, my high school sweetheart, for nearly 25 years. I love to teach English, have joy in my children, and find true peace in the living aspect of God's Word. We live in Georgia.

What inspired you to write about the Amish?

I grew up around the Amish of North Central Pa., deep in the Allegheny Mountains. They are a people of rare work ethic, generosity, and regularly exemplify God's grace.

Do you have any connections with the Amish community?

I have a great reader/consultant who has a wonderful sense of humor and rare insight into human nature. He is a member of an Old Order Amish community and keeps me straight about all things Amish.

Is any part of Sarah's Garden factual?

Road-side stands packed with goodies, whoopee pies, quilts and things of nature are factual to where I grew up. Kitchen gardens, quilting through stages of life, and a deep appreciation for family are all factual as well.

How closely is Sarah's Garden based on your own life experiences?

At least 2/3rds of the book comes directly from my own memories of the Amish and the mountains.

How did you choose the location for the setting?

The location was simply where I grew up. Pennsylvania's North Central Amish communities represent both Amish and mountain or mountain valley peoples—and this is what I know best.

How long did Sarah's Garden take you to complete?

Writing the book itself took about 2 months, but rewrites took up just about equal time...so about four months altogether.

What is the symbolism for the title Sarah's Garden?

Sarah's Garden has layered meaning in its connecting of the Amish to the soil or nature, the art of planting through which they express themselves, the intimacy of a personal garden and what it means to share that with someone and the potential for abundant growth and new beginnings in life and relationships.

Do you have a favorite character in Sarah's Garden? Why?

I like Luke, Sarah's brother. He's a typical brother—says the wrong thing sometimes, loves his sister when he's aware of her, and ultimately has her best interests at heart.

How much research did Sarah's Garden take?

Researching the layout of a typical kitchen garden and its plants took the longest...probably a good two weeks of researching

What was the most interesting tidbit that you learned while writing Sarah's Garden?

I learned how the Amish covered hospital bills as a community instead of having individual insurance.

How many books will be in the Patch of Heaven series?

To date, there should be three.

What are some of the challenges you face as an author?

It's hard to be a mom to two special needs children and write. I need to go to a lot of therapy appointments and have to make myself write in snatches whenever I can.

What aspects of being a writer do you enjoy the most?

I like the potential that exists to connect with readers and maybe make their days go a little better or to possibly provide them with some insight or encouragement.

What writing clubs or organizations do you belong to?

I belong to the Writer's View and a private critique group in Marietta, Ga.

What were your favorite books as a child?

I loved a series of picture books about "Harry" the Cat, and I enjoyed Understood Betsy as well as All-of-a-Kind Family.

What is your writing style? (Do you outline? Write "by-the-seat-of-your-pants? Or somewhere in between?)

I mentally outline or play out the scene in my head like a movie then write it literally. I will also write in a non-linear fashion and do chapters ahead and then go back to catch up.

Do your characters begin to take on a life of their own as you write?

Frequently, yes they do. If they don't, then I feel the story isn't working well.

What other new projects do you have on the horizon?

I've finished two novellas with Beth Wiseman and Kathleen Fuller, A revised version of An Amish Christmas and An Amish Love. And, I'm due to finish the sequel to Sarah's Garden in mid-June 2011.

Who was the person who influenced you the most with your writing?

My sixth grade teacher, Bob Dwyer—still teaching. He made me see that writing is a process and work, not a muse-driven art.

What message would you like your readers to take from Sarah's Garden?

I'd like readers to know that the potential for renewal always exists with God.

What is your greatest achievement?

My magnum opus is being a mother.

What is your goal or mission as a writer?

I want to write to serve the Living God by bringing truth, darkness, and hope into the light of readers' minds?

What do you do to get away from it all?

There is no away. Once you sign on with God's crew, you don't get off the ship. Maybe you just take a swim now and then.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

I appreciate the chance to share with readers?

Courtesy of Christianbook.com, retrieved 2010

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does Sarah know that God is speaking to her and helping her make decisions in her life? How does God guide you in your own life?
2. John 5:16-18a says: “So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.’ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him;” Do you think Sarah broke the law of not working on the Sabbath when she helped Grant learn to set up his own garden? Was it perhaps an act of service?
3. What vulnerabilities does Grant experience due to the loss of his parents at a young age? How can personal loss ultimately produce strength in an individual?
4. How do cultural differences, like those between Sarah and Grant, make it difficult at times to form relationships or friendships?
5. How is Sarah’s quilting cathartic for her during this uncertain period in her life? Do you think being creative can help you solve difficult problems?
6. What keeps the Bustles “young at heart” despite their age? What are their secrets for living a happy and abundant life?
7. What is the meaning of community in the story? How does community extend beyond the boundaries of where people live or what they believe?
8. Why does Grant become Amish? Why does his conversion have to depend on more than just his love for Sarah?
9. How are the seasons of the gardens in the story reflective of the character’s lives? Why are the gardens, both Sarah’s and Grant’s symbolic of their love?
10. What are the hidden meanings of the various deer in the story—the one at the creek, the one on the road, and the one in Grant’s past?
11. Why does *Grossmuder* King get away with her attitude? How would you respond to someone like her?
12. Describe the relationship between Sarah and Luke. How do they function as both siblings and friends?
13. How does Sarah grow up and change throughout the story? How do these changes reflect in what she says and does?

Courtesy of Thomas Nelson