



Levi's Will

W. Dale Cramer

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Will flees his Old Order community at the age of 19, leaving behind a pregnant girlfriend and all things Amish. He begins a new life, joining the army and later marrying and having two sons of his own. But his life and his new family are tainted by the hidden sins of his past. Hoping to patch things up with his father, Will takes his new family to meet the old one. *Levi's Will* is the haunting story of a fallen man seeking to build a bridge across three generations

Levi's Will Details

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Author : W. Dale Cramer

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From Reader Review Levi's Will for online ebook

Lynn Spencer says

I'm a fairly eclectic reader (just check my Goodreads account for proof of that), so when confronted with a theme calling on me to pick out something completely different, I found myself at a bit of a loss. I decided to go with the "outside my comfort zone" side of things, and I picked up **Levi's Will** by W. Dale Cramer. I read plenty of inspirationals, but I have often been candid about Amish books just not being my thing. I only had this 2005 novel in the TBR because a couple bloggers I respect had praised it to the skies. Having read it, I now see why.

The book opens on an Amish farm in the 1940s as 19 year old Will Mullett flees his father's home together with his younger brother Tobe. The two eventually find their way south from Ohio, where they end up taking on various manual labor jobs to support themselves. Early on, we learn that Will has fled not only the Amish religion and way of life, but also an impending marriage. The young woman he was courting is now pregnant and Will is expected to marry her. Knowing this makes Will a more morally ambiguous and complicated hero than we normally find in inspirational fiction, watching him grow and grapple with larger questions of faith, morality, and identity makes this book a real standout.

So, what goes on in this book? Well, we follow Will from the 1940s to the 1980s as he escapes Amish society and gradually finds his way in the world. Given the time period, he is confronted right away with the realities of World War II. As an Amishman, no one would expect him to fight. However, as he takes on an "Englisher" identity, his existence in civilian life looks more and more unusual, and the pressure to go against the pacifism he was raised with and to join the military forms one of his first major inner conflicts.

This is a partial review. You can find the complete text at All About Romance:
<http://www.likesbooks.com/blog/?p=19106>

Lynn says

My most important piece of advice. BE SURE TO READ THE AFTERWORD WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED THIS BOOK!!!

I don't always read forewords and afterwords when reading a book. If you skip the afterword, you will be missing a really important part of this book.

This book is loosely based on factual events. It is the story of a young Amish man who runs away from his family and community. He leaves behind a bitter father and a pregnant girl. After a brief stint in the army he spends the next forty years searching for understanding and forgiveness.

One of my favorite quotes from the book..."He begins to see that every man's failure dips its roots into the previous generation and drops its seeds into the next."

Sarah says

If you're looking for a good book to read, but are turned off by the fact that this features Amish characters, don't be! Instead of the usual bland-as-bread romances, this is a fresh take on a tired story. Will runs away at 19 from his father's Amish community and creates a new life for himself, eventually marrying and having two children. Eventually, the two halves of his life intersect and it forces him to come clean about it.

This is a captivating story unlike anything else. It takes tired cliches: illegitimate children, rebellion from an Amish lifestyle, the resultant banishment, reconciliation with family, etc. and presents them in a new way that is excellently written.

The book flips back and forth between 1985 (written in present-tense) and different points in Will's life (written in past-tense) and that's the only part that is a bit confusing. Otherwise, it's amazing.

Shari Larsen says

In 1943, Will Mullett leaves his pacifist Amish community and his domineering father to find a new life. He joins the military, marries, and starts his own family. He can't completely leave his roots behind him though, and after years of estrangement from his father, discovers he doesn't want to. Levi is slow to accept the return of his prodigal son, and Will's frustration with trying to earn his father's forgiveness affects his relationship with his own two sons, especially younger son Riley. It's not until Riley's life is hanging in the balance does Will begin to truly understand his father.

I really enjoyed this story. I've read quite a bit of Amish themed fiction, but this is not your typical story in this genre; it's not one of those that is all "fluff and romance"; in fact, there is barely any romance in this story at all; instead, it is a story that focuses on family relationships, especially that of father and son. Many of the issues that are touched on in this story could apply to any family in any culture, not just the Amish.

Kimberly says

As a general rule, I steer clear of Christian fiction. For the Amish, however, I will make an exception. I've always been fascinated by them, and curious about the stories of people who have experienced both the world as the Amish believe it to be, and how we "English" believe it to be.

I really enjoyed this novel--Cramer's writing is gentle and he weaves Will's story beautifully. This is the kind of book that works well as a long read over a few days or even a week or two. Sometimes that kind of book gets passed up for a book that you just can't put down, but there's something to be said for this kind of thoughtful book as well.

As someone who remains ambivalent about Christianity, I appreciated the light touch in this book. There's no preaching, no heavy-handed message. Just one simple one that rang very true to me: God loves us no matter what, and our ability to love others unconditionally is how we come to understand that. From reading other reviews I gather that this is a theme in Cramer's writing, so I will definitely be looking into reading his other books.

C. says

A surprising eye-opener on how the Amish practice of "bundling" can be used to "entrap" Amish teens into joining the church because of pregnancy!

Dan says

A great story. I loved that it was based on the life of the author's father. I found myself reading lots of sections to my wife, because of the humor that was woven into this sincere "prodigal son" story.

Lola says

Levi is the head of an Ohio Amish family. He's stern, unyielding, & very strict. Not being able to live with his father any longer, Will leaves while everyone is asleep. He's 19. He jumps into a train's cattle car where a hobo is already riding. The hobo advises him, if he doesn't want to be found he should never give his real name or trust anybody. He puts on "Englisher" clothes & changes from his bowl haircut to something more commonly seen.

He joins the army, gets married, & has two sons.

Years later he returns to Ohio to see his family. He's told that they thought he was dead. That is all his father says to him, nothing more. He has been "banned" by the church community & is being "shunned". He's not allowed to sit at the family table. He has to sit alone in a corner of the kitchen at a card table.

When he ran away at 19, he left a pregnant girlfriend behind. The mother died & the child is being raised by Will's sister as if she was her own & is unaware that Will is her father.

It is interesting how Will suffers & tries to rectify his sins to be accepted back into the family & community.

The book tells of the three generations of males & how the sins of the fathers have affected the lives of the sons.

I enjoyed all 583 pages of this large print paperback book.

Karen says

This did not compare to the other books I've read by Dale Cramer. Very depressing for me and just wanted to hurry up and finish the book so I could return it to the library. Struggle b/w father and son, sin, forgiveness.

Joleen says

So... a couple weeks ago I read a W. Dale Cramer book called Sutter's Cross. Then I went on to read 2 or 3 more books I don't even remember because Sutter's Cross totally eclipses them. So I thought... I'll read another of Mr. Cramer's books. I just finished Levi's Will... and again, I'm so impressed. I love this man's writing. As soon as I finish this review I'm starting Summer of Light.

What I didn't know as I read Levi's Will is that it is greatly based upon his father's life. An Amish boy, finding himself in trouble, runs away, eventually joining the army. He lived for many years under the ban from his community and always lived as a non-Amish raising a family the same.

I don't want to give away much of the story, so suffice it to say that I did not want to put this book down. I'm glad for the times I had to drive somewhere, or clean the kitchen that I have a Kindle that will read to me, so I didn't have to stop the story.

Mr. Cramer has a unique way of describing a scene, or person, or event that tickles anyone's imagination. Sometimes I had to laugh out loud in an empty house because the scene depicted was done so well. AND... I just love when books are also at least partly true.

Read this book. It is FASCINATING.

Okay, now I off to read Summer of Light.

<http://www.amazon.com/Summer-Light-W-....>

Anna says

I picked this book up for 50 cents at a thrift store thinking, "what have I got to lose". As it was published by Bethany Publishers, I knew it would have a religious bend to it, and generally I avoid this genre. However, much to my surprise, I enjoyed this book a lot. It was well written I thought, and had a exciting and entertaining plot line with enough real life issues thrown in to make it a credible tale. I really felt empathy with and for the main character, having left my own religious "community" as a young adult(although not in such dramatic circumstances or from the same type of community, but from one with similar fundamentalist teachings) I will seek out another of this author's books as I did enjoy his style.

Nora St Laurent says

This story is told through Will's point of view. Will experiences dramatic things in his young Amish life that change his view of the world. He runs away from the Amish life style and his family. He embraces the English world. In the meantime meets a woman and marries. Will's wife very much wants to meet Will's family but Will is not ready to go back to all that. Will's wife insists after they have children that they need to meet. Will does go back to his Amish family and has to deal with his father Levi and his will for his son. Which is basically all about how he has been shunned. It was fascinating to read an Amish story from a man's point of view. I loved this book.

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Advertising”

Nora St Laurent

TBCN Where Book Fun Begins www.bookfun.org

The Book Club Network blog www.psalm516.blogspot.com

Book Fun Magazine www.bookfunmagazine.com

Sue Kelly-Kohlman says

Wow! The story of how a Amish boy runs away from home and starts another life compounded with secrets about his past life is woven so well that the reader understands his plight and how it affects his English family and his Amish family. The author weaves together details from both worlds and the choices the boy makes throughout his life so that we end up learning about the south, the Amish, the army, life as a workingman the list goes on from one generation to another. We learn that decisions have consequences that are far reaching, no matter what life style we choose. Also that family ties, or lack of them, reverberates through the generations. I will read more from W. Dale Cramer!

Mandi says

Easy read, wonderful story...I didn't want it to end!

LadyCalico says

Although this book touched me personally, it would not be everyone's favorite. I was into Amish books for awhile, having moved from PA to SC and being very homesick, I read them by the ton. This is my favorite of all those Amish books since it was the only one NOT told from the female point of view about star-crossed romances and family secrets magically resolved. It had more depth, character, and realism and felt as if I was reading a real man's autobiography instead of just fiction.

Joyce Peak says

This book is more than just an older Amish family and life in that world, but it is basically a story about forgiveness on intergenerational lines. The good and bad of the ways of his childhood and the good and bad about his father's shunning, are inter-connected in the shunning of his own son Riley.

Shirley Gregory says

This was a thoughtful story of the Amish tradition, family dynamics and struggles, and the coming of Faith in God. It is told from the heart of the central character without a preaching style. The backdrop is the

historical period from World War II, through the Korean War until after the Vietnamese war. It was uplifting yet realistic. Well worth being noted as a “good read.”

Kathryn says

I have a deep love of good Novels. This is one of the best ones I've ever read. This says a lot. Its a believable story because its based in the truth. This was an uncommon Amish Novel. Very good and I will no doubt read it many times in the future. And I've found a new author to read everything written by.

Lorraine says

I have read other Dale Cramer books that I liked, but this one was just so slow moving that I couldn't get into it. I gave up after 100 pages.

Annie says

After having read the first Paradox Valley series, I was looking forward to reading this book (I didn't realize until later that this is book two in this second series). Even with one of my favorite narrators, George Guidall, this has been so incredibly boring. I give three stars to this book. (1) Author's superb writing skills, (2) narrator's wonderful performance, and (3) overall impression.
