



## Return to Grace

*Karen Harper*

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**Return to Grace** Karen Harper

***Return to Home Valley with book two in Karen Harper's fan-favorite romantic suspense series***

Hannah Esh fled the Home Valley community with a broken heart, throwing herself into her dreams of a singing career, instead. Then, on a whim, she brings four new friends to the graveyard near her family's home for a midnight party on Halloween. But when shots are fired and one of her friends is killed, Hannah is pulled back into the world of her past.

The investigation into the shooting uncovers deeply buried secrets that shock the peaceful village to its core. Determined to prove her value to the community she left behind, Hannah attempts to bridge two cultures, working closely with handsome, arrogant FBI agent Linc Armstrong and her former betrothed, Seth Lantz, now widowed with a young daughter.

Caught between Seth and Linc, between old and new, Hannah must choose her future. Unless a killer, bent on secrecy, chooses it for her.

## Return to Grace Details

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Author : Karen Harper

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## From Reader Review Return to Grace for online ebook

### Carol Erhardt says

Being a great fan of Karen Harper's books, I couldn't wait to read the first two books in this series. This book opens with a shocker and the suspense carries through to the end. As always, Karen's characters are wonderfully developed and the story is fast-paced making the reader stay up late at night to find out what happens next.

Hannah Esh left her Amish roots to seek a singing career after her fiance had to marry another woman because he had gotten her pregnant. Reeling from the hurt, she has stayed away from her family although she could return because she left before she had become a member of the church. Late at night, she and three friends visit a graveyard not far from her Amish home. Suddenly shots ring out. One boy is killed, another boy and a girl are injured, as well as Hannah.

Hannah returns to her parents' home to recuperate and to be the liaison for the FBI agent with her "people." In short time, it appears someone is trying to kill Hannah. Seth, the man she'd once planned to marry, is now a widower. He still loves Hannah and wants her to return and give him another chance. But Linc, the FBI agent, has designs on her, too. And he promises to get her a singing audition once the crime is solved.

With danger drawing closer, Hannah is torn between her desire to pursue a singing career and her desire for Seth...the man she has always loved. But someone wants her dead, so she may not live long enough to make a decision.

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### Christa says

I enjoyed this story set in an Amish community. Hannah Esh was a very interesting main character whose life had taken a sharp turn from her Amish roots. Her life veered away from the course she had planned when she was betrayed by the man she loved and hoped to marry. I liked Hannah and thought that she turned out to be a much stronger person than she was portrayed in the beginning in the cemetery with her Goth friends. I liked Hannah's friends Sarah and Ella, although their roles in the story were fairly small. I also became attached to Sheriff Freeman and Rae-Lynn. I enjoyed Linc Armstrong's role in the story, but had a difficult time warming up to Seth. I felt that there was never a satisfactory explanation given for Seth's betrayal of Hannah. He said he made "a mistake," but I never felt enough remorse from him to feel certain that he would ever stay faithful.

Hannah Esh and her Goth friends decide to party in an Amish Cemetery close to her family home on Halloween. A shooting occurs and one of Hannah's friends is dead, while she and another are injured. The FBI is called in to investigate, and it is soon discovered that a few graves in the cemetery contain an extra body. Hannah's brush with danger and injury have brought her back to the family fold, at least temporarily. As she becomes accustomed to the Amish community again, she must also confront her remaining feelings for Seth, the man who was not faithful to her. His betrayal is what drove her from her home and to the Goth lifestyle. It soon becomes clear that danger is still rampant in the Amish village, and Hannah tries to help unravel who is behind both the shooting and the extra bodies in the cemetery.

This was a very interesting book. I enjoyed the storyline and was kept guessing through much of the book. I

suspected several different characters at different points in the book. I liked Hannah's character and found her to be a sympathetic heroine. I wasn't so pleased with Seth. I never developed much attachment to Seth's character due to his prior treatment of Hannah. When she came back, his devotion and loyalty to Hannah just weren't believable enough for me. I did enjoy the setting of this story, and look forward to more by this author. I appreciated the opportunity to read and review this ARC through Netgalley.

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### **A Book Vacation says**

This mystery novel drops the reader right into the middle of the action as Hannah and her goth friends decide to spend Halloween in an Amish graveyard near her childhood home. Yet, unbeknownst to her, the graveyard on which she treads holds more than just the dead buried there, leading to an intense murder mystery as Hannah and her friends become victims of a graveyard shooting. As the investigation unfolds, Hannah is forced to move back home to her Amish roots, facing the same situations and people she ran away from so long ago, including the man who broke her heart.

Return to Grace is an intense mystery novel that had me captivated from the very first page. I love novels about the Amish way of life, and when these stories are combined with that of a mystery, one of my favorite genres, I am eager to read them. Like Marta Perry, Harper weave's an intricate tale of murder, love, and betrayal within the Amish countryside, juxtaposing the quiet Amish life with the hustle and bustle of the fast-paced city as Hannah's community is drawn into the public's eye due to the violence she survived in the graveyard.

Hannah is a complex character, torn between what is "right" and what she wants. Though she's donned the gothic lifestyle to replace that which she has lost, she hasn't truly given up her past. Her struggle is very vivid and real, extremely believable, and I couldn't help but be drawn in by her, rooting for her all the way. She has many difficult choices to make, including whether to stay and join the church, marrying Amish, or go back out into the world—should she survive the murderer on the loose. Harper's cast of complex characters throughout this novel were extremely well written and I enjoyed them all, especially the characters of Seth and Linc as they both vied for Hannah's attention, offering her different pieces of the world that she yearns after.

To read my full review upon release (2/21/12):

<http://bookvacations.wordpress.com/20...>

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### **Lynne Young says**

I really enjoyed this book 2 in the Home Valley Amish series. Right from the first chapter the book takes off with suspense, fear, confusion and regret.

Hannah Esh left her Amish community to become a recording star and wound up with a couple of goth friends who decide partying in an Amish cemetery is a fun thing to do. Well, when shots ring out the fun comes to a screeching halt. And who shows up to help? Hannah's ex boyfriend. Not what, or who she thought she needed. What transpires is a book full of twists and turns, lots of suspicion, forgiveness, and a

little competition between Seth Lantz, the ex boyfriend and Linc Armstrong, the FBI agent in charge of the investigation.

I really enjoyed this book. Ms. Harper does a wonderful job of keeping the suspense high and making the story a page turner. I cannot wait for Book 3! I highly recommend this book. The outcome will surprise you.

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### **Babs says**

Although fictional I learned a bit more about the Amish community

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### **Rhonda says**

Return to Grace by Karen Harper

5 STARS

I was really into this story. I believe this was second book in this series. Now I want to go back and read the first book.

Hannah Esh has left her amish home a few years back after a fight with her father the Bishop and after her long term boyfriend who told her he got someone else pregnant and was going to marry her.

Hannah was back with friends on halloween they all are goth and are at a amish cemetary after they had broke in a closed corn maze. A couple of her friends where dancing around the cemetary and drinking and it just happened it was on Seth's wife grave. Hannah was upset and homesick when all of a sudden shots where fired at them. Kevin was dead and tiffany shot and then she realized she was shot.

While she was on her cell to 911 Seth heard screaming and loud music as he was going home from hunting and even recongized Hannah voice talking.

Seth quickly found Hannah and wrapped her wrist to stop the bleeding and then stopped Tiffany's bleeding with pleasure bandage.

The Bishop and his wife did not live far from the cemetary and when they found out Hannah was wounded her mom got in the ambulance with her. Hannah thought she could die after seeing her parents and Seth.

While Hannah was in the hospital her mom stayed with her. They were going to take her home with them. The sheriff and FBI were waiting to talk to her about the night.

Hannah was so a shamed about the trouble she brought home to her family.

FBI agent Link was interested in Hannah. So was Seth he never stopped loving her and felt guilty in his part why she left to go out into the world.

This was full of drama finding dead bodies and people where disappearing.

Hannah was trying to solve who killed her friend. Seth was trying to find out what was happening and trying to protect Hannah.

I was given this ebook to read in exchange of honest review from Netgalley.

02/28/2012 PUB Harlequin HarlequinMira

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### **Dale Harcombe says**

three and a half stars. I have probably only read about two novels before to do with Amish, so it was interesting to learn more of their way of life. I was surprised they would wear colours like emerald green and sky blue as mentioned in this novel. Not sure why but guess I had thought they stuck to more sombre

colours. That aside, I enjoyed this story of Hannah Esh, daughter of the bishop who has fled the Amish way of life to pursue a singing career. Yet now she is back with her Goth friends and ends up in the Amish graveyard for a midnight party. When Kevin one of her friends is killed and Hannah and others are shot at, Hannah finds refuge back with her parents.

Yet Hannah cannot let the FBI agent or their sheriff do their job without her trying to help. Her former betrothed Seth who broke her heart when he got Lena pregnant and married her instead, only serves to complicate matters more. Hannah finds herself constantly pulled between the promise of a singing career and a life in the world or returning to her Amish roots. Meanwhile it appears someone is out to kill her and anyone else who gets in the way.

This is a good read with plenty of action and a few twists and turns and yet I didn't find this as engrossing as I expected. Maybe that was me, as I was struggling with headaches and not feeling well at the time, or maybe it was that I just found the story a little unbelievable at times, although I liked the character of Hannah. I hadn't read the first book in this series but hardly thought it mattered as it is easy to pick up what went before. While I liked the title, I tend to think it gave too much away.

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### **Alyssa White says**

This mystery held a very different concept than what your mind is trying to process and I liked it. The two male love interests were interesting, one I loved in the beginning and disliked in the end and the other visa versa. I love how the author allows you to view from different characters in the story but keeps things flowing, it is wonderful.

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### **Lynda says**

"Return to Grace" by Karen Harper is second in the Home Valley (Amish mystery) series. I like her mystery books as each is unique and this one certainly has a twist you won't suspect. Of course, there is the Amish couple who we hope get together.

What keeps this book from being 5 stars is some sexual scenes that I don't enjoy & didn't feel necessary for an *Amish-centric* book. Of course, I've seen other reviewers dock a writer because there aren't *enough* such scenes.

Okay -- others may be quicker to guess the culprit in this book but I found there were enough "suspects" that kept me going until almost the very end. Of course, I felt so brilliant finding out that I was right. :-)

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### **Maureen Timerman says**

This is the second book in the Home Valley series, and I'm thrilled there will be another!

I didn't want this book to end, and yet I did so I could find out "who". Karen is such a great author and the twist and turns this book takes is so captivating! Thoroughly enjoyed this.

The story starts in an Amish graveyard, with some Goth friends of Hannah Esh, who has jumped the fence and gone English. She was in "Love" with Seth Lanz, who ended up having to marry someone else.

Now she is wishing she could go home, looking from the cemetery at her old home. She doesn't like her

friends being in the sacred ground of the cemetery, when shots ring out...her friend Kevin is hit and so is she. You will wonder why someone would shoot people, the Amish are Pacifists so who would have done it? There appears on the horizon a bunch of suspects, some who are appearing quite innocent and others you believe, really could have done it. Through it all you will wonder if Hannah will return to the world or return to her family and roots. Thank you Karen Harper....excellent book!!

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I received this book through Netgalley and the Publisher Mira, and was not required to give a positive review.

### **Amber Read says**

I wanted to read this book because I'm a big fan of Karen Harper and amish country. I basically live in the heart of it and it's really interesting to me. Throw in a murder mystery and we've got a good book, in my opinion. I really liked the main character Hannah because although she was raised in the amish way, she had to strike out on her own. I feel like she learned a lot about herself and what kind of woman she was. When she gets pushed back into Amish life you see a lot of the "worldly" mind set stick with her while she is still respectful to her family and friends. This book has a lot of really good mystery and surrounding drama. Hannah is being pursued by her old come calling friend, Seth. Plus she has a F.B.I agent who might have some interest as well. Not to mention there is a lot going on with the murder and mystery surrounding that. There is a lot of good development with the characters surrounding Hannah as well. This is a good book if you're looking for something to do on a snowy February night.

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### **Vicky says**

This story starts right off with a murder as the main character, Hannah, and her goth friends picnic in an Amish cemetery near her childhood home. Unknown to them, a shooter is hiding in the trees. One is killed and Hannah and a friend are injured. To recuperate, she moves back home with her Amish family. As the investigation unfolds, Hannah is forced to face the same situations and people she ran away, including the man who broke her heart. Hannah is a wonderfully complex character, torn between the world she knows, and the outside world where her dreams of being a singer lie.

The angst Hannah feels as she is torn between the two worlds is well written, as is the description of both worlds. What I had a problem with was the depiction of the sheriff. His "good-old-boy" language was a bit off-putting for me. Having grown up in Dutch country and with a relative who was the local cop, it struck me as a little too forced. I will say that she redeemed him by the end, but I was still a little put off by it.

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Still, except for a couple of little nits, this was a good story. The mystery is a decent one and the angst of Hannah very well done. If you like Amish mysteries, you'll really like this one. Definitely recommended for those who enjoy the genre.

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## **Beth says**

Hannah Esh decides to leave behind her Amish life and becomes goth to get as far from it as possible. One night, her goth friends decide to have some fun and have a Halloween graveyard party at the Amish cemetery. And that's where everything goes wrong.

The mystery was very good. I was kept guessing as to who the murderer was and why until the very end. I didn't like that it was set in Amish country though. I live near an Amish community in Indiana, and based on my experience, there were too many things that made me think, "The Amish don't do that! Or at least I don't think they do." Either the Ohio Amish are much more lax than in Indiana, or I think the author should have done some more research.

In the book, it says they have refrigerators and freezers on a small generator. Based on conversations I've had, the Amish don't do this. They would instead have an ice box.

It also made it sound like the telephone shacks are pretty common. I've rarely seen one. When I do, it's in an area where several houses can reach it.

Overall an interesting mystery, but somewhat unrealistic culturally.

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## **Charlene says**

Again, I rounded up the rating for this book from about 3.5 to 4.

This is the second of three books in Karen Harper's "Home Valley Amish" series. I would say it is crucial to read these books in order to be able to keep up with the characters who reappear.

The female lead, Hannah, left the Amish community when her fiance, Seth, betrayed her with another young woman. Hannah originally tried to make it as a musician, but she then became a Goth, about as far from Amish as it was possible to move. She had doubts about her choices and often would sneak back to visit her friend, Sarah, from Book One.

One again, there is a deadly mystery to solve. Several people in the community have been shot and/or killed, including "English" as well as Amish.

This smart, sharp heroine makes more than one really dumb dangerous move: while I was reading parts of the story, I kept thinking of the naive heroines of old gothic stories (no pun intended).

Seth's account of how he went astray is a big blank in the story, which makes the acceptance-rejection rules of the community seem much harder on the talented young women in Harper's stories so far. The other assumption made in the first two books has the featured Amish young women much more outspoken and independent than what seems to be realistic for Northeast Ohio. Of course, my direct contact with Amish people is limited but not absent entirely.

Now that I've read the first two books very quickly, I will read the third. I wish I could rave over these stories and recommend them more highly, but I also must say that the characters are interesting, whether accurately

portrayed or not.

Again, I did not figure out the villain(s) here. The revelatory scene was very, very short and not as well written as it could have been.

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### **Judy says**

I sort of read this book by accident. I was mistakenly told this was the April book for our book club. When I saw it was the second book in a series, I decided to read the first one before this. I went to the meeting having read only 100 pages or so, only to discover that the book for discussion was "Fall from Pride," the book I had read. But since I knew the characters and enjoy Karen Harper's writing, I decided to finish the book. It is light reading, but a good story with mystery and romance. I enjoy learning about the Amish life-style and traditions, and Harper writes with knowledge of the subject. I think I'll read more of Harper's books and recommend them as good light reading.

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