

the
STRUGGLE

WANDA &
BRUNSTETTER



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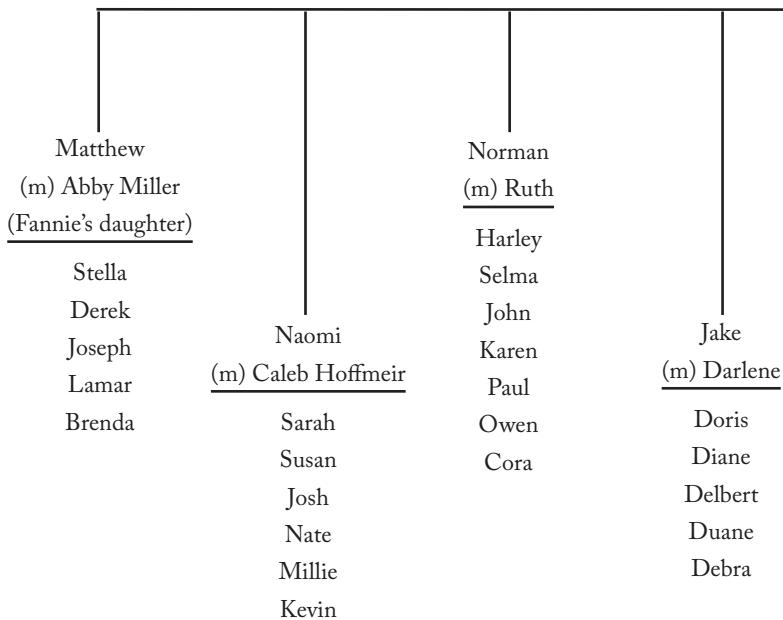
To Richard and Betty Miller, our dear Amish friends
who know what it's like to deal with the adjustment
of having family members move away.

*If ye forgive men their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

MATTHEW 6:14

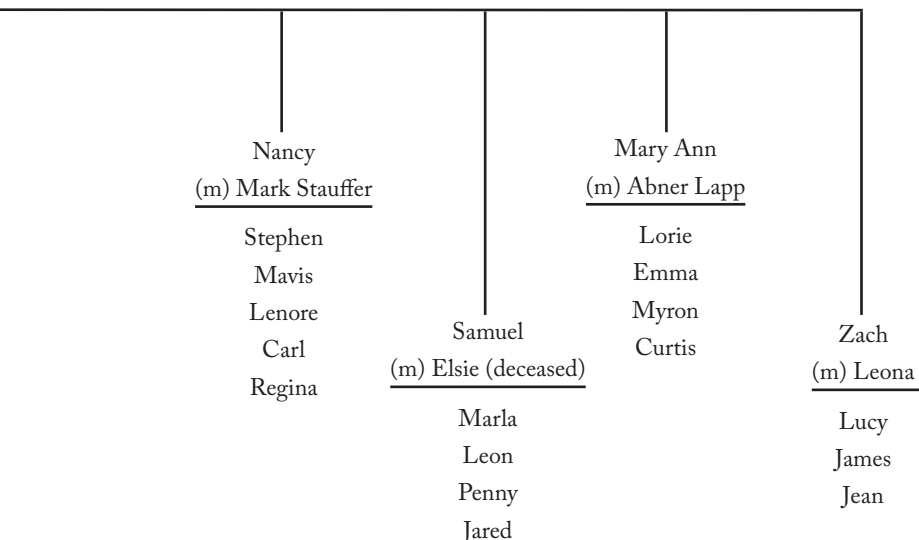
Fisher Family Tree

Abraham and Sarah (deceased) Fisher's Children

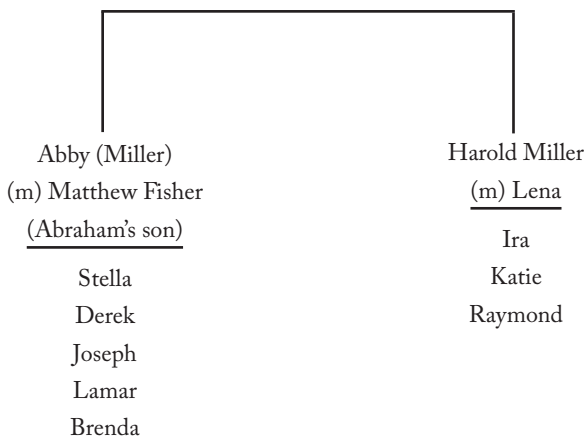


Abraham and Fannie Fisher's Children





Fannie's Children from Her First Marriage



CHAPTER I

Paradise, Pennsylvania

Timothy Fisher approached his parents' home with a feeling of dread. Good-byes never came easy, and knowing Mom disapproved of his decision to move to Kentucky made this good-bye even harder.

He stepped onto his parents' porch and turned, trying to memorize the scene before him. He liked the rolling hills and rich, fertile land here in Pennsylvania. As much as he hated to admit it, he did have a few misgivings about this move. He would miss working with Dad in the fields. And just thinking about the aroma of Mom's sticky buns made his mouth water. But it was time for a change, and Christian County, Kentucky, seemed like the place to go. After all, his twin brother, Titus, and half brother Samuel were doing quite well in Kentucky. He just hoped things would work out for him, too.

Shrugging his thoughts aside, Timothy opened the back door and stepped inside. Mom and Dad were sitting at the kitchen table, drinking coffee and eating sticky buns.

"*Guder Mariye,*" he said with a smile, trying to ignore his throbbing headache.

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“Mornin’.” Dad motioned to the coffeepot on the stove. “Help yourself to a cup of coffee. Oh, and don’t forget some of these,” he added, pushing the plate of sticky buns to the end of the table.

“I’ll get the coffee for you.” Mom started to rise from her seat, but Timothy shook his head.

“I can get the coffee, Mom, but I can’t stay long because I have some last-minute packing to do. Just wanted to see if there’s anything either of you needs me to do before I leave.”

Tears welled in Mom’s brown eyes. “Oh Timothy, I really wish you weren’t going. Isn’t there anything we can do to make you stay?”

Timothy poured himself a cup of coffee and took a seat at the table. “I’ve made up my mind about this, Mom. Samuel’s gotten really busy working for Allen Walters, and he’s finding a lot of paint jobs on his own, so he has enough work to hire me.”

“But you had work right here, helping your *daed* and painting for Zach.”

“I realize that, but Dad’s already hired someone else to work the fields, and Zach has other people working for him.” Timothy blew on his coffee and took a sip. “Besides, I’m not moving to Kentucky because I need a job. I’m moving to save my marriage.”

“Save your marriage?” Mom’s eyebrows furrowed. “If you ask me, taking Hannah away from her *mamm* is more likely to ruin your marriage than save it! Hannah and Sally are very close, and Hannah’s bound to resent you for separating them.”

“Calm down, Fannie.” Dad’s thick gray eyebrows pulled together as he placed his hand on Mom’s arm. “You’re gettin’ yourself all worked up, and it’s not good for your health.”

Her face flamed. “There’s nothing wrong with my health, Abraham.”

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“*Jah*, well, you may be healthy right now, but with you gettin’ so riled about Timothy moving, your blood pressure’s likely to go up.” He gave her arm a little pat. “Besides, if he thinks it’s best for them to move to Kentucky, then we should accept that and give him our blessing.”

Mom’s chin quivered. “B—but we’ve already lost two sons to Kentucky, and if Timothy goes, too, you never can tell who might be next. At the rate things are going, our whole family will be living in Kentucky, and we’ll be here all alone.”

Timothy’s gaze went to the ceiling. “You’re exaggerating, Mom. No one else has even mentioned moving to Kentucky.”

“That’s right,” Dad agreed. “They’re all involved in their businesses, most have their own homes, and everyone seems pretty well settled right here.”

“I thought Titus and Samuel were settled, too, but they ran off to Kentucky, and now they’ve talked Timothy into moving.” Mom sniffed, and Timothy knew she was struggling not to cry.

“They didn’t talk me into moving,” Timothy said, rubbing his forehead. “I made the decision myself because I’m sick of Hannah clinging to her mamm and ignoring me.” He huffed. “I’m hoping things will be better between us once we get moved and settled into a place of our own. Hannah will need a bit of time to adjust, of course, but once she does, I’m sure she’ll see that the move was a good thing.” He smiled at Mom, hoping to reassure her. “After we get a place of our own, you and Dad can come visit us. Please, Mom, it would mean a lot to know you understand my need to do this.”

Mom sighed. “If you’re determined to go, I guess I can’t stop you, but I don’t have to like it.”

Timothy smiled when Dad gave him a wink. Mom would eventually come to grips with the move—especially when she

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saw how much happier he and Hannah would be. He just hoped Hannah would see that, too.



Hannah stood at the kitchen sink, hands shaking and eyes brimming with tears. She could hardly believe her husband was making them move to Kentucky. She couldn't stand the thought of leaving her family—especially Mom. Hannah and her mother had always been close, but Timothy was jealous of the time they spent together. He wanted her all to himself—that's why he'd decided they should move to Kentucky. She wished she could convince Timothy to change his mind, but he wouldn't budge.

She sniffed and swiped at the tears running down her cheeks. "It's not fair! I shouldn't be forced to move from my home that I love to a place I'm sure I will hate! I can't believe my own husband is putting me through this!"

Hannah jumped when the back door banged shut. She grabbed a dish towel and quickly dried her tears. If it was Timothy, she couldn't let him know she'd been crying. It would only cause another disagreement like the one they'd had earlier this morning, and they sure didn't need any more of those. Timothy didn't like it when she cried and had often accused her of using her tears to get what she wanted.

When Hannah was sure all traces of tears were gone, she turned and was surprised to see her mother standing near the kitchen table. Hannah breathed a sigh of relief. "Oh Mom, it's you. I'm so glad it's not Timothy."

"Are you okay? Your eyes look red and puffy." Mom's pale blue eyes revealed the depth of her concern.

Hannah swallowed a couple of times, unsure of her voice.

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"I . . . I don't want to move. Just the thought of it makes me feel ill. I want to stay right here in Lancaster County."

Mom stepped up to Hannah and gathered her into her arms. "I wish you didn't have to move, either, but Timothy's your husband, which means your place is with him." She gently patted Hannah's back. "Your daed and I will miss you, but we'll come to visit as soon as you get settled in."

"But that probably won't be for some time." Hannah nearly choked on the sob rising in her throat. "We'll be staying with Timothy's brother Samuel until we get a place of our own, and I—I'm not sure how that's going to work out."

"I understand your concerns. From what you've told me, Samuel has a lot on his hands, having four *kinner* to raise and all. He'll no doubt appreciate your help."

Hannah stiffened. "Do you think Samuel will expect me to watch the children while he's at work?"

"Maybe. It would mean he wouldn't have to pay anyone else to watch them—unless, of course, he decides to pay you."

"It's my understanding that Esther Beiler's been watching them, but I suppose that could change with me living there."

Mom pulled out a chair at the table and took a seat. "You'll just have to wait and see, but hopefully it'll all work out."

Hannah wasn't sure about that. She hadn't planned on taking care of four more children. "Moving to a strange place and being around people she isn't used to seeing will be difficult for Mindy. My little girl is going to need my attention more than ever."

"That's true. It will be an adjustment. But Mindy's young, and I'm sure she'll quickly adapt to her new surroundings," Mom said.

Hannah sighed. She didn't think anything about their

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move to Kentucky would work, and to be honest, she hoped it wouldn't, because if things went badly, Timothy might see the light and move back to Pennsylvania where they belonged.

CHAPTER 2

Lexington, Kentucky

Hannah shifted on the seat, trying to find a comfortable position. After tearful good-byes to their families last night, she, Timothy, and Mindy had left home at four this morning and spent the last ten hours on the road. The few hours of sleep Hannah had managed to get while riding in Charles Thomas's van had done little to relieve her fatigue and nothing to soften the pain of leaving Pennsylvania.

Why couldn't Timothy understand the closeness she and Mom felt? Didn't he care about anyone's needs but his own? When they'd first gotten married, he'd said he loved her and wanted to spend the rest of his life making her happy. Apparently he'd lied about that. Maybe he'd told her what she wanted to hear so she would agree to marry him. He probably only wanted a wife to cook, clean, and give him children, because he sure didn't seem to care about her wants or needs—or for that matter, what was important to her. Hannah's inner voice told her this wasn't true, but somehow it just felt better to think so.

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She glanced at her precious daughter sleeping peacefully in the car seat beside her. Mindy resembled Hannah's mother in some ways. She had the same blond hair and pale blue eyes, but she had her daddy's nose and her mama's mouth. If they had more children, Hannah wondered what they would look like. Oh, how she wished for another baby. A little brother or sister for Mindy would be so nice. She thought about the miscarriage she'd had last year and wished once more that the baby had lived.

Seems like I never get what I want, Hannah thought bitterly. Makes me wonder why I even bother to pray.

Hannah's inner voice told her again that she shouldn't feel this way. Looking at Mindy, she knew how blessed she was to have such a special little girl.

She glanced toward the front of the van where Timothy sat talking to their driver. It made her feel sick to hear the excitement in Timothy's voice as he told Charles about the phone call he'd had with his twin brother, Titus, last night. Titus was married to Suzanne now, and Samuel and Esther would probably be married soon, as well. Both Samuel and Titus were happy living in Kentucky, but Hannah was certain she would never be happy there.

Hannah leaned her head against the window and closed her eyes as the need for sleep overtook her. She wished she could wake up and discover that this was all just a bad dream and find herself home in her own bed. But of course, that was just wishful thinking. At least for now, sleep was her only means to escape the dread that kept mounting the closer they got to their destination.



Timothy glanced at the backseat and was pleased to see that his wife and daughter were both sound asleep. They'd pushed

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hard all day, only stopping to get gas, eat, and take bathroom breaks. If all went well, they should be in Pembroke by this evening.

A sense of excitement welled in Timothy's soul. It would be good to see his brothers again, and he could hardly wait to start a new life in Kentucky, where he'd been told that land was cheaper and more abundant. Since their house in Pennsylvania had already sold, he had the money to begin building a home. The problem would be finding the time to build it, since he'd only be able to work on it when he wasn't painting with Samuel. Of course, it might be better if he could find a home that had already been built—maybe a place that needed some work and he could fix up in his spare time. Well, he'd decide about that once he'd had a chance to look around.

"How are you holding up?" Charles asked, running his fingers through his slightly thinning gray hair, while glancing over at Timothy. "Do you need to take a break?"

"Naw, I'm fine. Just anxious to get there is all."

Charles nodded. "I'm sure. It's been a long day, but we're making good time. According to my GPS, we should be in Pembroke by six-thirty or so, barring anything unforeseen."

"That sounds good. If I can borrow your cell phone, I'll call and leave a message for Samuel so he knows what time to expect us."

"Sure, no problem." Charles handed Timothy his phone.

Timothy dialed Samuel's number and was surprised when a young boy answered the phone. He hadn't expected anyone to be in the phone shanty.

"Hello. Who's this?" he asked.

"It's Leon. Who's this, and who are ya callin' for?"

"It's your uncle Timothy, and I'm calling to let your daed know that we're in Kentucky and should be at your place around six thirty."

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“Oh, good. Should I tell Esther to have supper ready then?”

“Is Esther there now?”

“Jah. *Daadi's* still at work, and Esther's here with me, Marla, Penny, and Jared.”

“Okay, will you let your daed know when he gets home from work what time to expect us? Oh, and if Esther doesn't mind holding supper till we get there, we'd surely appreciate it. It'll save us some time if we don't have to stop and eat somewhere.”

“Sure, no problem. I'll tell 'em both what you said.”

“*Danki*, Leon. See you soon.” Timothy hung up and put the phone back in the tray. “I think Esther will have supper waiting for us when we get there,” he said to Charles. “So we shouldn't have to stop again except if you need gas or someone needs a bathroom break.”

“Sounds good. Nothing like a good home-cooked meal to look forward to. Would you mind letting the other drivers know?”

“Don't mind a'tall.” Timothy called each of their drivers, who were transporting his family's belongings, then settled back and closed his eyes. If he slept awhile, the time would pass more quickly.

Just think, he told himself, in a few more hours, I'll be sitting in my brother's kitchen, sharing a meal and catching up on all his news. Sure hope I get to see Titus and Suzanne this evening, too. I can't wait to find out how they're doing.