



Thrill of the Chaste: The Allure of Amish Romance Novels (Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies)

Valerie Weaver-Zercher

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Browse the inspirational fiction section of your local bookstore, and you will likely find cover after cover depicting virtuous young women cloaked in modest dresses and wearing a pensive or playful expression. They hover innocently above sun-drenched pastures or rustic country lanes, often with a horse-drawn buggy in the background or the occasional brawny stranger. Romance novels with Amish protagonists, such as the best-selling trailblazer *The Shunning* by Beverly Lewis, are becoming increasingly popular with a largely evangelical female audience. *Thrill of the Chaste* is the first book to analyze this growing trend in romance fiction and to place it into the context of contemporary literature, religion, and popular culture.

Valerie Weaver-Zercher combines research and interviews with devoted readers, publishers, and authors to produce a lively and provocative examination of the Amish romance novel. She discusses strategies that literary agents and booksellers use to drive the genre's popularity. By asking questions about authenticity, cultural appropriation, and commodification, *Thrill of the Chaste* also considers Amish fiction's effects on Amish and non-Amish audiences alike.

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