

What Others Are Saying about Laura V. Hilton and *Awakened Love*...

There's nothing like the innocence of awakening love, and Laura Hilton has charmingly captured the feeling in this Amish love story. Katie and Abram are believable characters with realistic problems, and their struggles engage the reader, keeping her turning pages well into the night. Laura has crafted yet another story I can highly recommend to anyone who craves the experience of *Awakened Love*.

—Robin Bayne

Author of ten novels and novellas, including Carroll Award winner *The Artist's Granddaughter*

Laura Hilton has earned the right to be mentioned as a top author, and *Awakened Love* is proof. The story delivers a rich Amish backdrop, well-developed characters, suspense, action, and the thing that makes her an award-winning author in this genre: heart-pounding yet pure romance.

—Julie Arduini

Writer and speaker, juliearduini.com

Laura V. Hilton artfully weaves an Amish tapestry of love at first sight in this passionate vignette. As the threads of *Awakened Love* reveal untold family secrets, past indiscretions emerge, foreshadowing the future. Impressive, unpredictable, and breathtaking Amish fiction!

—Nancee Marchinowski

Book reviewer, <http://perspectivesbynancee.blogspot.com/>

Awakened Love is a love story and so much more. From stalkers to a secret adoption, Laura Hilton creates a tale that readers of Amish fiction will thoroughly enjoy.

—Beth Shriver

Author, *Annie's Truth* and *Grace Given*

Laura V. Hilton has once again created a wonderfully engrossing story that clearly shows how forgiveness, acceptance, and faith can bring love to its fullest potential.

—*Linda Maran*

Author, *Confronting the Bully of OCD*

I tried reading *Awakened Love* a chapter or two at a time, so I could make it last. However, today, I just could not make myself stop. Laura had me so deep in the story, cheering for the couple and crying with Katie, that I had to know how it ended. Some of the books I have read lately have gotten to be a chore, but this one was not. I enjoyed it from the first lines to the last word. I hope we can visit Webster County again with Laura.

—*Christine Simmons Bonner*

In this a wonderful, character-driven tale full of uncertainties and doubts, Ms. Hilton takes the story of a plain young Amish girl who is unsure of herself and turns it into a wonderful romance. I always look forward to Laura's books because I never know what is going to happen next.

—*Cindy Loven*

Book reviewer, cindylovenreviews.blogspot.com

Awakened Love



LAURA V. HILTON



WHITAKER
HOUSE

Publisher's Note:

This novel is a work of fiction. References to real events, organizations, or places are used in a fictional context. Any resemblances to actual persons, living or dead, are entirely coincidental.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

AWAKENED LOVE
The Amish of Webster County ~ Book Three

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<http://lighthouse-academy.blogspot.com>

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For the One who saved me.

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And in memory of my parents, Allan and Janice, and my uncle Loundy, and my grandmother Mertie, who talked about their Pennsylvania Amish heritage.

To God be the glory.

Glossary of Amish Terms and Phrases

<i>ach</i>	oh
<i>aent(i)</i>	aunt(ie)
<i>"Ain't so?"</i>	a phrase commonly used at the end of a sentence to invite agreement
<i>banns</i>	public announcement in church of a proposed marriage
<i>boppli</i>	baby or babies
<i>bu</i>	boy
<i>buwe</i>	boys
<i>daed</i>	dad
<i>danki</i>	thank you
<i>dawdi-haus</i>	a home built for grandparents to live in once they retire
<i>dochter</i>	daughter
<i>dummchen</i>	a ninny; a silly person
<i>ehemann</i>	husband
<i>Englisch</i>	non-Amish
<i>Englischer</i>	a non-Amish person
<i>frau</i>	wife
<i>grossmammi</i>	grandmother
<i>gut</i>	good
<i>haus</i>	house
<i>hinnersich</i>	backward
<i>"Ich liebe dich"</i>	"I love you"
<i>jah</i>	yes
<i>kapp</i>	prayer covering or cap
<i>kinner</i>	children

<i>kum</i>	come
<i>maidal</i>	an unmarried woman
<i>mamm</i>	mom
<i>maud</i>	maid/housekeeper
<i>morgen</i>	morning
<i>nacht</i>	night
<i>naerfich</i>	nervous
<i>nein</i>	no
<i>onkel</i>	uncle
<i>Ordnung</i>	the rules by which an Amish community lives rumschpringe “running around time,” a period of adolescence after which Amish teens choose either to be baptized in the Amish church or to leave the community
<i>sohn</i>	son
<i>“Was ist letz?”</i>	“What is it?”
<i>welkum</i>	welcome

Chapter 1

*T*oday I met the bu I'm gonna marry..." Patsy Swartz's singsongy voice was too chipper. Bracing herself for an afternoon with the bubbly girl, Katie Detweiler climbed out of her daed's buggy and turned to lift the cooler from the back. Her not-exactly-a-friend bounced up beside her, still singing away.

Katie's heart ached with a stab of envy.

Would she ever marry?

Daed snorted, in apparent disbelief. "Bye, Katie-girl. Have fun at the frolic." He clicked at the horse and then pulled the buggy around the circle drive.

"The new bu in town!" Patsy squealed, as if Katie had asked. "He is sooooo cute! I'm going to marry him. I'm thinking Valentine's Day. Will you stand up with me? I'm asking Mandy, too."

Marriage? The new bu in town? Why was she the last to know these things? Katie hadn't even known that Patsy had a beau. Wait—she didn't. Just yesterday, she was bemoaning the lack of interesting men in her life.

Katie shook her head, trying to clear her thoughts. "Stand up with you? On Valentine's Day? Jah, I can do that. What new bu in town?"

Patsy huffed. "Where have you been, Katie? There is a world outside that bed-and-breakfast, ain't so?"

"When did you two meet? You didn't mention him yesterday." She adjusted her grip on the cooler handles and started toward the haus.

"He's visiting the Grabers....a cousin or something. He's here, right over—ach, I see Mandy! I'll tell you about him later." She turned away and glanced over her shoulder. "You're still standing up with me. Valentine's Day. Write that down, Katie."

Patsy ran across the driveway to where Mandy Hershberger stood by the open barn doors.

Valentine's Day? Was Patsy serious? Most weddings happened between November and January—never February, when the fields need to be prepared for planting. And wouldn't the bishop have some reservations about Patsy's marrying a man she'd known for, what, half an hour?

Valentine's Day was still a long ways off. It was only August. And Patsy probably would've moved on three times by then.

But he was here, this mystery man Patsy planned to wed? Katie turned around and scanned the buwe playing volleyball, looking for a face she didn't recognize. She didn't see anyone new. Or maybe he just didn't stand out. Patsy? Getting married? If Katie knew her at all, she'd be promised to this new bu in a short time. What Patsy wanted, she usually got. Even if they ended up calling it quits several weeks into the relationship.

Katie sighed. It'd be nice if someone noticed her. And wanted her as a permanent part of his future.

She headed for the haus to deliver the food. A long row of tables was set up inside the kitchen, already piled full. Katie set the cooler down next to the door, opened the lid, and took out a plate of chocolate chip cookies. She carried them to the table and set them down among the other desserts, then stepped back and surveyed the array of cookies and fried pies. Maybe she should've made something else besides cookies.

But Daed wouldn't mind if she brought the entire plateful back home again.

"Hi, Katie." Micah Graber's mamm, Lizzie, came into the room. "Glad you made it. Micah's playing volleyball, if you want to join in. His cousin Abram is visiting from Indiana." She smiled. "I'm sure you'll want an introduction."

Katie wasn't so sure, except maybe to see what Patsy found so special about this mystery man. It was probably nothing more than that she hadn't yet been courted by him, since she had gone with almost every other bu in the district.

Oops. That was unkind. Katie found a smile. "Danki. I'll find Micah." Later. Their paths would probably cross sometime that afternoon. He usually made a point to say hi to her.

Katie went to get the rest of the food out of her cooler when the door burst open. She gazed into knock-'em-dead blue eyes belonging to the most handsome someone she'd never seen. She stared at the stranger, her mouth open.

He raked his fingers through his brown hair, dislodging his straw hat, and backed up. "Micah sent me to get the coolers and the big picnic jugs."

Lizzie Graber laughed. "Ach, you walked right past them. They're out on the porch."

His eyes met Katie's again, and he nodded in greeting. Her heart pounded so loud, she worried he'd hear it. "Sorry, Aenti Lizzie. Don't know what I was thinking." He shook his head and backed out of the room, his gaze still locked on Katie, then turned and shut the door.

Lizzie laughed again. "Those buwe are all the same. They see a pretty girl and have to kum check her out."

Pretty? Lizzie believed he'd kum inside because he thought she was pretty? But he hadn't stayed long enough to say hi. Or to ask her name. Not that it mattered. She probably would've been tongue-tied, anyway. Katie straightened, willing her heart rate to return to normal. A gut-looking bu she didn't

know. Micah's cousin. He must be Patsy's...whatever she'd call him. Maybe "her intended," since she'd said she wanted to marry him. So, why did it matter what he thought?

It didn't.

Her insides deflated like a popped balloon.

Katie studied the dessert selection again. Disappointingly, other than the chips in her cookies, there wasn't any chocolate in sight—unless some of the fried pies were filled with the delicious comfort.



Abram Hilty shut the door behind him and took a deep breath to calm his pulse. He hadn't even talked to the girl in the kitchen, didn't know the sound of her voice, but there was something about her that his heart had recognized.

"She's pretty, jah?" Micah hoisted a cooler in his arms and started down the steps.

"Very." Abram lifted one of the big yellow picnic jugs and fell into step beside him. "And you can't get her to pay attention to you?"

Micah shook his head. "Nein. Not at all. But her best friend, Janna Kauffman, told me Katie's really shy. Maybe I'll offer to drive her home tonight. Her daed dropped her off."

Abram chuckled. "You do that. I'll ask her out, too, and tell her how wunderbaar you are. Between the two of us, we'll get her talking." That would at least give him an opportunity to spend time with her.

Micah raised his eyebrows. "You'd do that for me?"

"That, and I'm currently between girls." Abram winked. "I told Marianna I want a break." Sort of. He did owe her some sort of explanation for his silence. After all, they'd been practically engaged—and he'd essentially stood her up.

Of course, he hadn't revealed where he'd gone. Instead, he'd left a vague note: "Need some time off. Sorry."

In hindsight, *Ouch*. But she'd been hounding him to make a commitment, dropping hints he couldn't help but get. He could do worse, he'd supposed. And yet he'd fled. He needed to think. And that was impossible with her bringing him lunch every day, staying to eat with him, and getting into his buggy after every singing and frolic—without his even asking.

He shook his head. What else could he have done?

"What if she falls in love with you, not me?" Micah's forehead creased as his eyebrows drew together. "I mean, talking me up is kind of cliché." He snickered. "And it usually works in reverse."

Abram shrugged. He wouldn't complain if it did. "How could she not fall in love with you, with me singing your praises?" Of course, he'd try hard not to sing his own. Not that he had much to sing about. He frowned. How long before he was found out?

Micah set the cooler on the ground next to a table with some stacks of paper cups, then straightened. "I'll go say hi to her, then, while you get the other picnic jug."

"Works for me." Abram set the picnic jug down on the table, then reached for a cup, held it under the spigot, and pressed the handle for a splash of iced tea.

"Hi, Abram," cooed a feminine voice.

Abram cringed. *Not another pushy female*. He looked up at not one but two girls—a redhead he'd seen earlier that day, who beamed at him, and another with reddish-brown hair. He preferred Katie and her dark blonde hair.

"Welkum to Missouri!" said the redhead. "I'm Patsy Swartz, and this is Mandy Hershberger."

He found a smile. "Nice to meet you. If you'll excuse me, I need to get the other—"

Micah punched his arm. "I'll get it, after I greet Katie. You stay here and talk."

"Danki, cousin"—Abram hoped the girls wouldn't pick up on his sarcastic tone—"but I'll get the jug myself."



"May I borrow a pair of tongs?" Katie asked Lizzie Graber. "I need to mix up the taco salad I brought."

"Of course." Lizzie slid a pan of brownies into the oven and then retrieved the utensil from a drawer.

"Danki."

Lizzie opened the refrigerator, took out a can of 7-Up, and popped the top. "I need to go check on Emily. She isn't feeling well." She poured the fizzy liquid into a glass.

"Sorry to hear that." She liked Micah's little sister.

"When the brownies are done, would you take them out, please?"

"Jah."

"Danki." Lizzie left the room.

Katie looked around. Maybe she could find some other way to assist. Helping would give her an excuse not to socialize. An alternative to standing beside the barn, ignored.

At this point of her life, she was part of the scenery, the part no one looked at. Patsy said it was because she was too quiet. Because she wouldn't cross the room to talk to any of the buwe; she waited for them to kum talk to her. And they wouldn't. They had enough girls willing to chase them that they didn't need to pursue the quiet ones.

If that was the case, she'd be alone forever. A painful thought.

But her best friend, Janna, had said that if a bu really liked her, it would be obvious, because he'd be hanging around. Janna should know. Her beau, Troy Troyer, hung around her plenty, and he'd even started baptism classes, so he could join the church—for her.

Abram's handsome face flashed in her mind. His heart-stopping grin. His easy confidence.

Nein. She wouldn't think of this—of him. It meant nothing. He was in Patsy's sights.

Katie opened her cooler and lifted out the salad bowl and a big bag of Fritos. She always waited to add the chips so that they wouldn't get soggy before the salad was served.

Katie set the bowl down on the table and tugged on the top of the Frito bag to open it. A warm breath tickled her ear. *Abram?* Her heart jumped, and her hands jerked in opposite directions, ripping the bag and sending Fritos high in the air. A few of the chips landed where they were supposed to, in the taco salad, but most of them now decorated the floor and the savory dishes nearby, including the egg salad sandwiches Patsy always brought.

Katie's face burned. She spun around, the almost-empty bag clasped in her hands.

"I didn't mean to scare you," Micah said. He stood too close. Why couldn't it have been Abram breathing in her ear? Admittedly, the end result would've been the same.

A chatter of voices neared outside, and feet tromped on the porch. The latch clicked on the door, and the hinges squeaked. Katie resisted the urge to run from the room. It seemed everyone was coming inside to witness her humiliation. Abram entered, followed by Patsy and Mandy and a dozen or so others. Everyone looked at her.

"I was hoping you'd be here," Micah continued.

There was someone who'd wanted to see her? Some member of the male species? Katie stared at him in shock.

Patsy came over to the table and started picking Fritos off of her sandwiches. The hard kick to the shin she gave Katie was all it took to find her voice.

"Ach, I scare easy. It's okay, really."

She had spoken to a *bu*. Using multisyllabic words. Would miracles never cease?

Patsy shook her head, evidently disappointed in her attempt at conversation. If only she would step in and speak on her behalf. But nein luck. With another shake of her head, Patsy dumped the Fritos in the trash and joined the group of females huddled around Abram. His harem.

Katie frowned. She didn't want to compete with so many for the minute possibility of a relationship with a man. Maybe it'd be better to find someone steady who paid attention to her alone. She glanced at Micah. He stared at her as if she'd sprouted antlers. Okay, maybe that wasn't the kind of attention she wanted.

"Janna told me you're shy. She told me not to give up on you. I'd like to get to know you better. Are you seeing someone?" He lowered his voice. "Maybe I could give you a ride home today. We could stop for a milkshake."

A milkshake? Was he kidding? Katie glanced at the table, laden with the usual assortment of cookies and fried pies. Brownies still baked in the oven. With all these treats, who in his right mind would offer that incentive?

He hadn't given her a chance to answer the courting question before asking her out. Maybe he figured that someone as tongue-tied as she couldn't possibly have a beau.

Still, Katie didn't know how to answer his questions. Would it be easier to talk just one-on-one? Daed would encourage her to accept a ride from him. If that meant downing a milkshake, too, then so be it. She swallowed. "A milkshake sounds gut."

He grinned. "I'll look for you afterward. Sorry about your chips. I hope I didn't ruin your"—he glanced at the bowl—"salad." He turned away and started talking to Natalie Wagler. At least she could carry on her side of the conversation.

Katie frowned. Were there books available for this disorder? She needed to check at the library. See if they had

a section called “Basic Communication with the Opposite Sex.”

A buggy ride with a man who wasn’t Daed.... Sighing, she glanced at Abram. His attention seemed to be focused on Patsy, whose hand rested on his upper arm. Katie swallowed and turned away. Micah wasn’t the Mr. Right of her imagination. But maybe he was the Mr. Right of her reality.

Her very first date. Excitement washed over her.

Maybe her life was about to change.