

*Who the*  
BISHOP KNOWS

*Vannetta Chapman*



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

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Published in association with the literary agency of The Steve Laube Agency, LLC, 24 W. Camelback Rd. A-635, Phoenix, Arizona 85013.

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## WHO THE BISHOP KNOWS

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

[www.harvesthousepublishers.com](http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com)

ISBN 978-0-7369-6651-1 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-6652-8 (eBook)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Chapman, Vannetta, author.

Title: Who the bishop knows / Vannetta Chapman.

Description: Eugene, Oregon : Harvest House Publishers, 2018. | Series: The Amish bishop mysteries ; 3

Identifiers: LCCN 2017036958 (print) | LCCN 2017040453 (ebook) | ISBN 9780736966528 (ebook) | ISBN 9780736966511 (softcover)

Subjects: LCSH: Amish--Fiction. | Clergy--Fiction. |

Murder--Investigation--Fiction. | BISAC: FICTION / Christian / Suspense. | FICTION / Christian / Romance. | GSAFD: Christian fiction. | Mystery fiction.

Classification: LCC PS3603.H3744 (ebook) | LCC PS3603.H3744 W495 2018 (print) | DDC 813/.6--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017036958>

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**Printed in the United States of America**

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 / LB-GL / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For the fine folks of the Texas Hill Country*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is dedicated to the residents of the Texas Hill Country—where two lanes are still plenty, and it’s commonplace to find yourself driving behind a cattle or horse or sheep trailer. Ten years ago my husband and I left the big-city lights of Dallas and moved to small-town Texas. We found the people friendly and the sunsets long. We rediscovered games of 42, the thrill of nature, and the fun of high school sports. In other words, we rediscovered our roots. Thank you for that.

I’d also like to once again thank the Harvest House staff, who have been a dream to work with through the last 12 books. My agent, Steve Laube, is a continual source of wisdom and humor, plus he answers emails promptly. My pre-readers, Kristy Kreymer and Janet Murphy, are incredibly talented and encouraging. I love you both.

My husband, Bobby, is unbelievably patient with me while I’m “in the cave.” My mom takes care of post office runs and animal care when I’m away. And my son reminds me I need to occasionally take an afternoon off and go see a movie. You all help me keep it together, and I love you more than I can say.

*Who the Bishop Knows* is my twentieth full-length novel and the last in the Amish Bishop Mysteries. I hope you’ve enjoyed this journey into the Colorado Amish. With every book I write about the Amish, I discover new things about their community, their lifestyle, and what we have in common—which is what reading and writing are really about.

And finally, “Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).

*Suffering passes, while love is eternal.  
That's a gift that you have received from God.  
Don't waste it.*

LAURA INGALLS WILDER



*We have different gifts, according to the grace  
given to each of us.*

ROMANS 12:6



# One

*San Luis Valley, Colorado*  
*July 27*

**B**ishop Henry Lapp ordered two hot dogs, two bags of chips, and one large drink. He waited for his purchases somewhat impatiently, having received his change and hoping he wouldn't miss the last of the local amateur events. Local boys were competing—even Amish boys—and he wanted to be in the stands to cheer them on.

He was thinking of that, of how the Amish and the *Englisch* so often stood together as one community, when the unmistakable crack of a rifle rang out.

“Rodeo clown?” the woman behind him asked.

“Sounded like the real thing.” This from the teen working the hot dog counter at the Ski Hi Stampede, Colorado's oldest pro rodeo.

Then the screaming started.

Henry dropped the napkins he was holding, turned toward the stands, and took off at a sprint toward his seat. In the back of his mind, he needed to reach Emma, but that was ridiculous. Who would shoot Emma? Who would shoot anyone at a rodeo?

A river of people poured from the arena stands.

“Someone has a rifle!”

“Get out of my way!”

“Call the cops! Has anyone called the cops?”

Henry pushed against the crowd, dodging to the left and right, fully

realizing he was headed the wrong direction but knowing he had no choice. He had the sensation that everything was moving too fast. At the same time he seemed to be stuck in slow motion. He turned the corner into the arena, his heart pounding and sweat trickling down his back. Emma was still in the stands where he'd left her, surrounded by her family, who had huddled up like a high school football team. The bleachers were more than half empty now, though they'd been packed to capacity five minutes before.

Henry rushed up the stands, pausing only long enough to make eye contact with Emma, to assure himself she was uninjured.

Once he reached their row, he turned to stare at the tragedy before them. Around the arena stood cowboys and cowgirls, young and old, *Englisch* and Amish. Henry allowed his gaze to slide past them, toward the middle of the arena, where a young man lay motionless in the dirt as medical personnel rushed toward him.

"Who is it?" Henry asked, breathless from his dash up the stands.

"Jeremiah Schwartz." Clyde scowled at the ever-growing crowd gathering in the center of the arena.

Jeremiah had been competing in rodeos since he was a lad of sixteen. Now he was nineteen. Technically, he was visiting from Goshen to help his widowed grandmother with her farm chores for the summer, but everyone knew his passion was steer wrestling. The real reason he came was the chance to compete in the 97th Annual Ski Hi Stampede.

He was Plain, but he hadn't yet joined the church. It was past time that he made that decision, and Henry had spoken about it on more than one occasion. Jeremiah was enjoying his *rumspringa*, or at least he had been up until a few minutes ago.

Emma's family looked on in alarm as the medical personnel attended to the young man.

Stephen and Thomas, Emma's youngest grandsons, pressed in close to their father. They were only eleven and twelve, and their expressions revealed shock mixed with a little fear.

Rachel grasped Clyde's hand and reached out to touch Emma. She was a good woman, and Emma had shared on several occasions that she thought of her as both a daughter-in-law and a friend.

Katie Ann stood frozen, eyes wide, both hands clasped over her mouth. At eighteen, she'd already seen too much death.

Silas, the oldest of Emma's grandchildren, bounded up the steps. "Sheriff Grayson is setting up a perimeter. No one's to leave the arena."

"Half of the people have already fled," Henry pointed out.

"Unless they're walking home, they won't get far. Monte Vista PD posted officers at the parking lot gates. No one in and no one out."

"Even buggies?" Clyde asked.

"*Ya*. Even buggies."

Emma made her way around her family, touching each of them as she did, and stopped next to Henry.

"You're okay?" he asked, though he knew she was. He could see she was, and yet his heart needed to hear her say so.

"*Ya*. Of course."

He clasped her hand in his, sending up a silent prayer of gratitude for this woman who had changed his life. She had brought back color and joy and laughter. She'd taught him to embrace his gift.

"Do you think you should go down there?" she asked.

"Not much I can do."

"Maybe not for Jeremiah, but..."

Henry didn't want to involve himself in this tragedy. Images of Betsy Troyer, Vernon Frey, and Sophia Brooks darted through his mind. He thought of himself and Emma and Sophia's sister huddled beneath the sand dunes as a killer stalked them. He didn't know if this was another murder, but he did know he'd rather not be involved.

"Too many people down there already." He understood better than most that they were looking at a crime scene that would need to be contained.

"Surely they would let you through."

"But what good could I do? The professionals are seeing to him."

"You could pray."

"Which we can do here."

But then he saw that Ruth Schwartz had almost made her way to the bottom of the stands, fighting the crowds, her hands in the air and her *kapp* strings flying behind her.

Henry looked at Ruth, glanced at Emma, and nodded his head. Jeremiah was Ruth's grandson. She shouldn't be dealing with this alone.

He picked his way back down the stands, circumvented the folks who were gawking by the railing, and walked up to the police officer who was intent on keeping people off the field.

"No one else is allowed out there. Sorry, Henry." Ricky Moore was the newest addition to the police force. A personable fellow, he had a sister married to a Mennonite pastor. He'd always been pleasant and agreeable to Henry, but he was trying to handle a crisis—one hand was on the butt of his gun, the other hovered near his radio. His expression, usually smiling, was grim, and his eyes continuously scanned the crowd.

Instead of arguing, Henry waited until Moore glanced his way again, and then he inclined his head toward Ruth Schwartz. The crowd of officers and first responders had parted for her, and she'd collapsed to the ground at Jeremiah's side. A wail that cut to Henry's bones pierced the evening.

"Is she one of your congregants?"

"She is."

Moore didn't hesitate, and Henry thought that said something about the man. He stepped aside and mumbled, "Try not to trample on any evidence."

## Two

Emma watched Henry as he stood next to the police officer, waiting to be let near Jeremiah's body.

"I can't believe this is happening again," Rachel murmured.

"Who would do such a thing?" Clyde asked, not expecting an answer. But Silas seemed to take the question seriously.

"Jeremiah was running with a rough crowd."

"*Englisch?*" Clyde raked his fingers through his beard, tugging the corners of his mouth down and into a frown.

"*Ya*, rodeo types."

"Do you know who would want to harm him, Silas?" The question flew from Emma's mouth before she considered whether she should ask such a thing with others standing so close. The last thing she wanted to do was start rumors while Jeremiah was lying on the ground.

"*Nein.*" Silas crossed his arms and stared at the growing presence on the field. "I can't imagine anyone wanting to do such a thing, being angry enough to do so. It's beyond me."

"It sounded like a rifle," Clyde said.

"How would anyone smuggle a rifle into an arena?" A heavy weight had settled on Emma's chest, along with an ache at the back of her throat. She wanted to sit down and weep. This was supposed to be a family outing, a night Jeremiah had looked forward to for many weeks. She knew that because Ruth had told her so. And now, once again, they were facing a tragedy. "Why would anyone do such a thing?"

"We've seen this before. Like with the Monte Vista arsonist." Katie

Ann didn't look at Emma, but she stepped closer and dropped her voice to a barely discernible whisper. "And Sophia's murderer."

"Let's not assume the worst," Emma said, but even as she said it she knew the worst had happened. From their vantage point more than half-way up the stands, they could see Jeremiah. He hadn't moved since falling from the horse, since being shot from the horse. The steer he was supposed to have wrestled had been corralled in a far corner of the arena.

Stephen and Thomas were trying to be stoic, but they looked as if they might burst into tears at any moment.

"Katie Ann, maybe you could take the boys up a few rows and engage them in a game of I Spy." Katie Ann looked as if she were about to argue, so Emma stepped closer to her and said, "Maybe distract them away from the field."

"*Ya, gut* idea. Let's go to the top, boys. Maybe if we look hard enough we can see Cinnamon from there." The boys started talking about their buggy horse as they turned away, and Emma mouthed a *thank you* to Katie Ann.

When they were gone, Clyde motioned them into a tighter circle.

"Did any of you see anything?" he asked.

Rachel, Silas, and Emma all shook their heads.

"I was watching for Henry," Emma admitted. "He'd gone to get us both a hot dog."

Rachel hugged her arms around her body as if she were cold. "The boys were pestering me for money. I didn't realize anything had happened until I heard the screams."

"I was thinking about tomorrow, what I need to do at the farm." Clyde ran a hand up and around the back of his neck. "I wasn't really paying attention at all."

"Well, I was," Silas said. "Jeremiah had just come out of the gate. He was gaining on the steer when a shot rang out, and then he flipped backward off the horse. I remember thinking he could be trampled by the steer if it turned back toward him."

"He fell backward? You're sure?"

"*Ya*. The horse shot out from under him like an arrow from a bow." They all turned to stare at the horse, now being handled by two of the rodeo clowns.

Clyde's brow wrinkled as he looked back at the chutes and then toward the opposite side of the arena. "All right. So if he was coming out of the chutes from the northwest..."

"Then the shooter had to be to the southeast, or maybe a little more east if he wanted a straight shot as Jeremiah moved around the arena."

"And it happened just as the sun was setting, so the light wouldn't be a problem."

"Stop," Emma said. She couldn't stand one more minute of this sort of talk. "This isn't another mystery we're becoming involved in. This is a member of our church..."

"Actually, he hasn't joined yet," Silas said, reminding them.

"And he wouldn't join here anyway." Emma sank onto the bleacher, but her gaze remained on the field, on the calamity taking place there. "Ruth told me he planned to go back to Goshen at the end of the summer."

"Just trying to figure out what happened, *Mamm*." Clyde offered her a weak smile. "We're not trying to involve you in another mystery."

"*Gut*, because I'm done. I don't want another thing to do with the police unless it's thanking them for watching over our town." She sat down next to Rachel and finally echoed what her daughter-in-law had said a few minutes earlier, what had been running through her mind since the shot rang out. "This cannot be happening again."

"I'll go talk to some of the others. See if they've heard anything." Silas darted off toward a group of Amish teens.

"Um, *Mamm*." Clyde leaned forward, peering toward the crime scene. "Maybe you need to go down there."

"Me?"

"It looks like Henry's making his way to Ruth."

"Why would he need me?"

"She might respond better to a woman." The crowd had grown quieter as Ruth's wails seemed to increase in length and intensity.

Rachel supplied the obvious answer. "You'll soon be our bishop's wife, and poor Ruth doesn't have any other family here."

Ruth's husband passed after they moved to Monte Vista. Her closest friends were Nancy Kline and Franey Graber, two women with whom she'd opened a local bakery. Emma knew for a fact that Nancy and

Franey weren't there tonight—they were busy with extra baking for the crowds that flocked to the rodeo. The three hotels in Monte Vista were full for the entire week, and the restaurants struggled to feed everyone in a timely fashion. Bread 2 Go was making a killing.

Ruth Schwartz was indeed her friend, though they weren't as close as the three widows who ran the bakery were to each other. But Rachel had hit on the real reason she should be kneeling next to Ruth—Emma was about to become the bishop's wife.

She longed to be married to Henry Lapp.

They'd decided the year before to marry, which should have been simple at their age, but life had intervened. She'd had to travel back to Goshen to be with her sister, who'd undergone chemotherapy. Fortunately, her cancer was now in remission, and she seemed to be well on the road to recovery. Emma was glad to be of help, but she'd also been eager to be home, to move on to the next phase of her life. The past few months had been difficult for both her and Henry, but through their many letters she understood better what Henry needed in a spouse, what it meant to be a bishop's wife. She knew her family was right—she should go down and be by his side, to help Henry help Ruth.

She stood, smoothed out her apron, and threw a look back at Stephen, Thomas, and Katie Ann. The boys had their heads together and were pointing at something in the direction of the carnival. Katie Ann stood close beside them.

"We'll be fine," Rachel assured her.

Emma's heart sank as she made her way down the bleachers. When she'd nearly been killed the year before, she promised herself she would never again become involved in solving any type of crime or murder. But this was different. This was her friend weeping over the body of her grandson. She really had no choice at all.

She straightened her posture, raised her head, and walked toward the Monte Vista police officer, determined to find a way to comfort her friend.