

*When
Grace
Sings*

Kim Vogel
A NOVEL
Sawyer

*When
Grace
Sings*

BOOKS BY KIM VOGEL SAWYER

What Once Was Lost

The Grace That Leads Us Home

Echoes of Mercy

Just As I Am

Through the Deep Waters

THE ZIMMERMAN RESTORATION TRILOGY

When Mercy Rains

When Grace Sings

*When
Grace
Sings*

Kim Vogel
A NOVEL
Sawyer

The Zimmerman Restoration Trilogy, Book 2



WATERBROOK
PRESS

WHEN GRACE SINGS

PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS

12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

All Scripture quotations or paraphrases are taken from the King James Version or the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

The characters and events in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to actual persons or events is coincidental.

Trade Paperback ISBN 978-0-307-73133-3

eBook ISBN 978-0-307-73134-0

Copyright © 2015 by Kim Vogel Sawyer

Cover design and photography by Kelly L. Howard

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC, New York, a Penguin Random House Company.

WATERBROOK and its deer colophon are registered trademarks of Random House LLC.

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file with the Library of Congress.

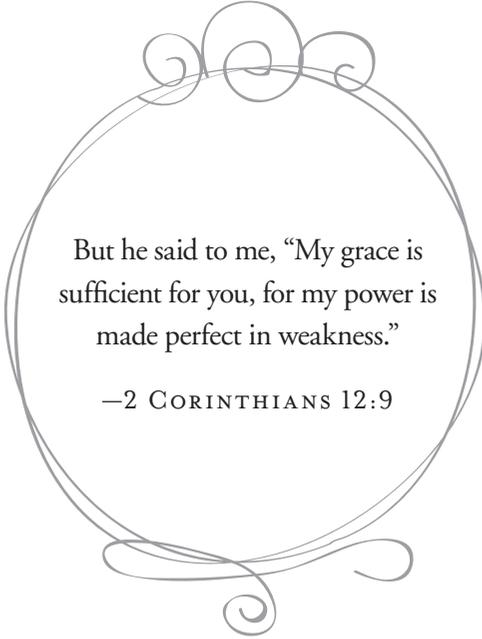
Printed in the United States of America

2015—First Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For Kendall Grace,
with love and prayers for you to rest in His strength
and seek His will always*





But he said to me, “My grace is
sufficient for you, for my power is
made perfect in weakness.”

—2 CORINTHIANS 12:9



Chapter 1

Chicago, Illinois
Early September

Briley Forrester

A folded newspaper slammed onto the corner of Briley's desk. His fingers left the keyboard with a jolt, and he sent a scowl in the direction of the person who'd interrupted his focus. He cleared the frown quickly when he recognized his boss. He leaned back in his squeaky chair and forced a light chuckle.

"Did you skip your morning coffee, Len? You look a little tense." Or maybe he needed a hair from the dog that bit him. Len's red, watery eyes and drooping jowls spoke of too much imbibing last night. A habit many of his coworkers practiced, but one Briley had been wise enough to avoid establishing. Aunt Myrt had never approved of drunkenness.

"What I need is a story that'll break us out of our rut and put us on top again." Len perched on the edge of Briley's desk. His bald head shone under the harsh fluorescent lights. He folded his arms over the chest of his rumpled plaid shirt and blew out a noisy breath. The man must be bothered. Rarely did he show up to the *Real Scoop* office in anything other than a crisply ironed shirt and bold tie. He glowered at the newspaper lying half on, half off the desk. "Look at the headline. Look what sells papers these days."

Briley picked up the copy of the *Illinois Times* and unfolded it. A photograph of an Amish barn raising filled a quarter of the front page, and the lead article read “Plain Living Brings Joy and Peace.” While Briley scanned the article about the increased yearly tourism in Amish-Mennonite communities, Len continued to bluster.

“You gotta be kidding me. Driving a buggy, wearing pants with suspenders, living in a house without a television or microwave—that’s supposed to make a person happy? It’s nothing but a bunch of hooley.”

Briley set the paper aside. “So let ’em have their moment in the sun. What’s it to you?”

Len’s frown deepened. “They irk me, that’s what. Ever gotten stuck behind one of their tractors on the highway? What’re they doing anyway, driving their farm implements where only cars are supposed to be? And don’t get me started on what their horses leave behind in parking lots. Disgusting.” Len snatched up the newspaper and glared at the black-and-white image. “Look at ’em in their *Little House on the Prairie* clothes and Tom Sawyer straw hats, climbing all over that barn frame. This is news? But it’s the hottest story on Internet search sites this morning. I don’t understand it . . .”

A prickle inched itself up Briley’s spine. Could this be it—the idea that would take him from bit pieces in the middle of the tabloid to a front-page feature and byline? He tamped down his excitement. He couldn’t just blurt it out. Somehow he had to make it Len’s idea.

He rocked his chair on its creaky springs and assumed an unconcerned grin. “Aw, you know how people are about the Amish. Probably half the out-of-staters who come to Illinois take a drive through Amish country, gawk at the buggies and clothes flapping on the line and horses pulling plows, and buy a jar of apple butter. It makes ’em feel good to believe those folks in their homemade clothes and houses lit by lanterns have it all figured out.” He pretended to examine a small chip in his thumbnail. “Course, we know it’s hooley, like you said, but it’d be pretty hard to convince the general populace otherwise.”

Briley gnawed his thumbnail and watched Len out of the corner of his eye.

His boss was thinking—crunched brow, tapping foot, lips twitching around like a fly had gotten trapped in his mouth. But it might take a while for a coherent thought to form, considering the man's dip into a bottle last night. Although impatience nibbled at Briley, he refused to give vent to it. In his two years of working under Len's direction, he'd learned he couldn't push the man any more than he could push a rope. *Just let him reason it out.*

Bending over his keyboard again, Briley applied his fingertips to the keys and tried to tap out a few sentences about the scandal surrounding the selection of the new *American Idol* winner. He'd only managed to form a half-dozen words when Len blasted out a guffaw. Whaddaya know. He'd formed a thought. Briley hid a smile and looked up. "What?"

Len smacked Briley's desk with his open palm. "Hooey. All hooey. We know it, right? So let's make sure the world at large knows it."

Briley raised his eyebrows in what he hoped was an expression of surprise. "You mean, disprove the Plain-living-means-peaceful-living theory?"

"That's exactly what I mean." Len's red-rimmed eyes sparkled with fervor. He leaned in, resting his elbow on his knee and settling his intense gaze on Briley's face. "No one's ever tried to show the truth—the *real* truth—of living Plain. And I'm willing to bet you my Mercedes-Benz the truth is half those folks wearing bonnets and shoveling manure would rather be living in air-conditioned houses and popping frozen dinners in microwaves."

Briley laughed. "I'm happy with my Camaro, thanks, but it'd be interesting to pursue the story." He'd intended to let Len come up with the whole idea himself, but he couldn't hold back his thoughts. "Consider the trickle-down effect. We could put the visit-the-Amish tourism out of business, bringing those visitors back to the cities to frequent the museums and theaters and bars instead. Every big city near an Amish community would thank us."

Len's lips pursed, the furrows in his broad forehead deepening. "The problem is how to really prove the people living in those communities are dissatisfied with their simple existence. Nobody'd believe it without quotes from the Plain folks themselves. And you can't just ask them. They'd tell you they're

perfectly content.” He grimaced, shaking his head. “No, a person would have to live among them. Win their trust. Then he could authentically uncover the reality of living Plain.”

“*Live* among them?” Briley made a face. An intentionally distasteful face. “No reporter with a wife or kids is going to want to pack up and move to an Amish town for who-knows-how-long to make friends and dig up the truth.”

Len squinted an eye at Briley, as if taking aim. “You don’t have a wife or kids. You don’t even have a dog. Are you volunteering?”

Boy, it was hard to stay in his chair. Briley linked his hands behind his head and faked a yawn. “Well, you’re right about me not having anything holding me back. I suppose I could do it.”

Len smirked. “Your subtle act is a little too well done. I know you want this story. It’s one of those rare ones that can make a reporter in this business.”

Briley offered a sheepish grin. Maybe Len wasn’t as oblivious as Briley sometimes believed. But he kept a rein on his eagerness. Len could still hand the story to somebody else, leaving Briley looking the fool. “Okay. I confess, I’d like to do it.”

“You sure?” Len lost the teasing look. “This could be the dirtiest dirt the *Real Scoop* has dug up to date. It’ll take real focus. Cunning. Pulling the wool over people’s eyes. In other words, finding a way to *fit in* so you have access to the real dirt. You aren’t exactly known for fitting in.”

Len would never know how much anger his last comment stirred, because Briley was well practiced in hiding his true feelings. But the emotion roared through his gut and sent heat from his midsection to his extremities. He clenched his fists on the back of his head and ground his teeth together. After slowly counting to five, he brought himself under control enough to answer.

Forcing his lips into a wry curl, he brought his arms down and propped his elbows on the chair’s hard plastic armrests. “Maybe I just haven’t had the right motivation to fit in anywhere yet. Doesn’t mean I can’t do it.”

Len examined him for several seconds, and Briley remained still and

unflinching beneath his boss's scrutiny. Finally a grin tugged at one corner of the man's lips. "All right. It might take me a little while to get everything organized for a lengthy stay in Amish country, but I'll get it arranged. In the meantime, do lots of reading up on the Plain groups. I mean, research 'em deep, Briley. Get their traditions and religious practices in your head so you won't go offending them the minute you hit town."

Briley raised his hand like a Boy Scout making a pledge.

With a snort of amusement or derision—Briley couldn't quite determine which—Len pushed off from the desk and snatched up the newspaper that had started their discussion. Tapping his thigh with the rolled-up wad of newsprint, he aimed a warning look in Briley's direction. "Don't get too cocky. Those people are supposedly family oriented. That'll be unique for you, who's never had a family to speak of. Don't let some Amish girl sucker you in."

Len's comment about family cut, but Briley covered it with a laugh. "Briley Forrester taken in by a plain-clothed, plain-faced, plain-living female?" He shook his head, hunching back over his keyboard. "Not likely."



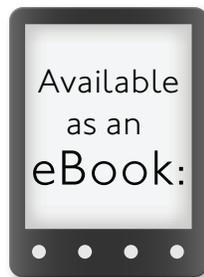
WATERBROOK MULTNOMAH
PUBLISHING GROUP
A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE, INC.

Want to keep reading? You've got options:

Purchase a copy direct from the publisher or from your favorite retailer:

[BUY NOW](#)

Download a copy for your eReader and keep reading right away:



[amazonkindle](#)

[Google
books](#)

[iBooks](#)

[nook™
by Barnes & Noble](#)

[And More...](#)