

THE ADVENTURES OF LILY LAPP



Book Three

A Big Year *for* Lily

Mary Ann Kinsinger and
Suzanne Woods Fisher


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From Mary Ann

I would like to dedicate this book
to my loving husband
who has given me unmeasured love and support.



From Suzanne

To my very special nephews—
Tim, Connor, Drew, and Scott.
I have a hunch you would each pick
Aaron Yoder as your favorite character!

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Effie's Trick

Lily's toes felt tingly. She had been sitting on a backless church bench all morning long, and she wasn't sure how she could sit still one more moment. It was one hundred degrees in the shade, hotter inside the house. She wanted to swing her feet to wake them up, to jump up and down and stomp on them, but that wouldn't do at all. Mama would frown. There was a time and a place for all things, Mama often said. And church was a time to be still and silent. For three long hours. Even on a steamy July morning.

Lily glanced at baby Paul, snuggled in Mama's lap, looking at a little picture book of bunnies. It must be fun to be a baby and be held in church instead of having to sit on a hard bench until her back ached and her toes went dead. It was too bad she couldn't remember being a baby.

David Yoder, the minister, stood before the congregation, reciting some Bible verses in German that she couldn't

understand. She stifled a yawn as her gaze shifted to an open window. A gentle breeze blew the white curtain. It reminded Lily of Mama's sheets on the clothesline, luffing in the wind. A lazy bumblebee flew inside and buzzed around David Yoder's long crinkly beard. He kept on solemnly preaching while the bee buzzed around him. Even the bee grew bored and flew back out the window. For a moment, Lily imagined what might have happened if the bee had stung David Yoder. Now *that* would have caused a little excitement!

At long last, David Yoder's voice flattened to a deep hum—a sign that the long sermon was coming to an end. Around her, Lily noticed others shift their bottoms on the hard bench in anticipation of the end. The final hymn was sung and church was over! As soon as the fellowship meal was over, Lily could have the rest of the afternoon to play with her friends.

Mama asked Lily to take care of baby Paul while she went to help the other women set stacks of homemade bread on the tables and pour fresh peppermint tea into cups. Lily didn't mind taking care of baby Paul. All her friends eagerly took turns holding him, and it made her feel special to know that she had something other girls wanted.

When lunch was ready, everyone sat at long tables to eat the bread and sip their tea. The bread was spread with a special sweetened creamy peanut butter—church peanut butter. The cookie tray was piled high with Ida Kauffman's sugar cookies and Mama's raisin-filled cookies. Lily watched the raisin-filled cookies disappear as the tray made its way down toward the end, where she and Mama sat. She had worried there wouldn't be enough and even gave Mama a tiny suggestion to bring more cookies along this morning. Mama said

there would be plenty, but Lily knew that everybody loved Mama's raisin-filled cookies. Only two cookies were left on the tray as it passed by Ida and Effie Kauffman. Ida didn't take a raisin-filled cookie and shook her head when Effie tried to grab one. Instead, they took a bland sugar cookie. There were plenty of those on the tray.

That left two raisin-filled cookies for Lily and Cousin Hannah. As Lily nibbled on her cookie, she tried to pay attention to Mama and Aunt Mary's conversation, but she thought it was uninteresting. All mothers ever seemed to talk about was the work they had done that week and what silly new thing their babies had learned to do. She was glad when the bishop announced it was time to have a prayer of thanks. Finally, Lily could go play.

Lily and Hannah hurried to join their friends. Beth suggested they could play church with their dolls but Effie Kauffman said no. "Church is at my house today so I get to pick what we play," Effie said, sounding very much like Ida, her bossy mother. "Besides, we're in fourth grade now. Much too old to play with dolls."

Lily and the other girls looked at each other, eyes wide. None of them thought that they were too old, at the age of nine, to play with dolls. They loved to play with their dolls! No one dared to speak up, though. As Papa had once pointed out, Effie ruled the henhouse.

"Then what do you want to do?" Beth asked Effie.

"I think we'll go on a walk like the big girls often do on Sunday afternoons," Effie said. "It's a very grown-up thing to do." She started out the door and up a hill behind the house to a little orchard. Four little girls, including Lily, trotted behind her.

The orchard did look pretty, the trees full with soft green leaves. Lily spotted a few apple trees that were loaded with ripening apples.

“Perhaps,” Effie said, tapping a finger on her chin, “perhaps we could each pick an apple.”

Lily grew suspicious. It was not like Effie to be generous, even with an apple on a tree. Beth and Malinda walked around the tree to decide which apple they wanted to eat. Lily had already found the one she wanted. Near the top was one of the most beautiful apples she had ever seen. It was enormous, bright yellow, and Lily could practically taste the crisp juicy crunch as she bit into it.

She pointed it out to Hannah. There must be some way to get to it. “I have an idea,” Lily said. “I’ll go ask Joseph to climb the tree and get that apple for us.” Joseph was always climbing trees.

“No boys,” Effie said, which made Lily annoyed. Effie was always adding new rules onto her games.

“I could climb the tree,” Hannah said.

“Girls don’t climb trees,” Effie said. “That’s sinful. Everybody knows that.”

Hannah looked bewildered. “It is not sinful to climb a tree,” Lily blurted out.

Beth, Malinda, and Hannah’s mouths opened to a surprised O. They seemed astonished to hear Lily stand up to Effie. It just wasn’t done.

It sure did feel good, though. It sure did. Lily ignored her friends’ warning looks and kept going. “It might not be ladylike but it is *not* sinful. I’m going to climb up and get that apple myself.” She grasped the lowest branch and pulled herself up. She looked down at the girls and took in the varied

expressions on their faces: Effie looked angry, Malinda seemed worried, and Beth was amused. Best of all, Hannah looked pleased. That was all the encouragement Lily needed. She scrambled to the next branch, then the next, until she reached the branch that held the big shiny apple. She gathered the corners of her apron together to make a basket and dropped her apple into it. She picked a few more apples for the girls. The biggest sweetest apples always grew near the top of the tree. Everybody knew *that*.



With five apples in her apron, Lily clutched it with her left hand and made her way back down the tree. When she had reached the last branch, she carefully tossed the apples, one by one, to the girls. Lily took a big bite of the apple she'd been after. Delicious! Crisp and juicy, just like she imagined.

As Lily hopped down, her dress caught on a branch and held. For a split second, she dangled in the air. Then a ripping sound filled the air and she dropped the rest of the way to the ground. Effie laughed hysterically as the girls helped Lily to her feet. "Oh Lily, your dress!" Hannah said.

Lily's heart sank. Her dress had ripped in a huge three-cornered tear. Her beautiful purple dress was ruined.

The nice big apple no longer seemed quite so delicious. There was nothing to do but try to hold the tear shut and go find Mama. She wished she had never climbed that tree. Mama would be disappointed that she had torn her best Sunday dress.

As Lily entered the house, clutching the backside of her torn dress, the women stopped talking. Everyone stared at Lily. She wished she could disappear. Mama quickly came to her side and guided her into a bedroom. "What happened?" she asked.

"I climbed a tree to get some apples," Lily said. "My dress caught on a little branch when I jumped down."

Ida Kauffman had followed them into the bedroom and listened to Lily's confession. She handed Mama some safety pins to try to hold Lily's skirt together. "That's what happens when you try to draw attention to yourself," she said to Lily. "God has to teach you a lesson." Before she left the room, she turned back for a moment, one eyebrow arched. "Wi der Baum, so die Frucht. Recht, Rachel?" *Such as the tree is, such is the fruit. Isn't that true, Rachel?*

Mama kept her eyes down. After Ida left, Mama asked Lily, "Why on earth would you climb a tree in your Sunday clothes?"

"I wasn't planning to," Lily said. "But Effie said that it's sinful for girls to climb trees. Next thing I knew I was halfway up the tree."

Mama finished pinning Lily's skirt. Then she put her hands on Lily's shoulders. "I know how it can feel to want to prove someone wrong. But when you act on that prideful impulse, it usually hurts you in the end. Next time, think twice, Lily." She tapped her gently on the nose and rose to leave.

Lily was surprised that Mama understood how it felt to want to prove someone wrong. She wondered if that someone for Mama might be Ida Kauffman. Maybe there was hope for Lily after all. If Mama had grown up to be good and sweet and kind even when people annoyed her, maybe someday Lily would, too.

In the meantime, Effie Kauffman made life a misery.