Mystery

Cover Her Body: A Singular Village Mystery
Eleanor Sullivan
Yesteryear Press
978-1-936214-55-6
(September 30, 2011)

In *Cover Her Body*, Adelaide Bechtmann, a midwife and holistic healer, discovers the body of a sixteen-year-old girl and quickly concludes she was murdered. Revealing the truth could inadvertently implicate her and cost her the medical practice and more. But she cannot remain silent. She investigates, only to find her community, so carefully guarded by rules, cannot accept the possibility of a murder and even provides the perfect hiding place for the culprit. With little help, save for advice from her mentor, she presses on despite danger to herself and her loved ones. It's a choice between risking it all for what she believes is right or keeping up her community's façade of peace. Meanwhile, if the murderer doesn't stop her, the authorities will.

Eleanor Sullivan weaves a unique historical medical mystery set in the utopian Zoar Separatist community of 1830s Ohio, a tale that explores individual faith, women's rights, and unrelenting courage—courage to stand for the right thing, no matter the cost. The book also examines what happens when idealistic views fall apart, how quietly religious rules can overtake freedom, why freedom only comes with truth, and how the simple seed of sin, left to sprout, grows into the bitterest fruit.

An award-winning author of nursing books, Sullivan holds a nursing degree and doctorate. A distant relative of one of the founders of the real Zoar village, she has carefully studied that community and her specialized knowledge in these two areas makes for an intriguing tale.

The strong female lead is compelling, a highly intelligent woman of the 1800s with freedom and a career few women enjoyed; yet she remains confined in a society that should have offered her even greater freedom. And while Adelaide drives a captivating plot, it takes time for the reader to get into the rhythm of the story, and clues seem slow in coming, with key elements suddenly discovered toward the end. *Cover Her Body* is not a traditional mystery, but one its genre lovers may find a refreshing change of pace.

Diane Gardner