

## ***The Confession Discussion Questions***

1. "It is not the criminal things which are the hardest to confess, but the ridiculous and shameful." How does this Rousseau quote play out in Katherine's life? in Laura's? in Daniel's?
2. Laura ponders that she would have obeyed, out of respect if her unbelieving husband were to forbid her to have Bible studies or prayer gatherings in their home. Do you think this is an appropriate response for a Christian spouse?
3. Lydia and Peter offer Katherine a home, even though doing so might upset the Lapp family and the Amish community of Hickory Hollow. What would you do in their place?
4. Katherine rapidly embraces all the trappings of her new, fancy lifestyle, giving in to her secret desires. Can there be a danger in being so quick to move on from one's past?
5. Compare the ritual of attending Amish singings with more modern ways of finding a mate. What do you think are some shortcomings or strengths of each method?
6. For years Laura has been looking forward to the reunion with her daughter, but the event (at least what she believes to be the reunion) leaves her disappointed. Have there been times when you have felt let down in the wake of a highly anticipated event? Discuss.
7. If you were in Laura's place, would you consider divorcing Dylan Bennett? What about turning him over to the authorities? What role would your faith play in either decision?
8. Can you understand Mary's attraction to Bishop John even after the harsh shunning he's put on her best friend?
9. Katherine is hesitant to approach her dying mother because the imposter Katie's presence complicates matters. Do you see her Amish upbringing affecting her uncertainty? Why or why not? What would you do?
10. Discuss the differences between Mennonite and Amish church services as depicted in this series. What do you see as the greatest distinction between the two ways of living Plain?

11. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." What does the verse Ella Mae quotes seem to say about hospitality? about shunning practices?
12. Do you agree with Laura's statement, "Sometimes undisclosed family secrets were better left alone." What do you think Katherine would say to this? Dan? Rebecca?
13. Talk about the characters of Bishop John and Dylan Bennett. What do each man's weaknesses say about him? Are the men similar in any way?
14. When Katherine finally has an opportunity to be near her birth mother, she is quiet, blending into the woodwork. She realizes she is still affected by Customs so much a part of her, she could not shake them off at will. Like Katherine, have you ever found yourself automatically falling into ingrained behaviors? What did you do to break those old habits and form new practices?
15. Were you surprised at Alyson's sudden change of heart toward Laura? What do you think prompted her decision to come clean?
16. For years now, Laura has borne the chronic pain and progressive loss of control brought about by multiple sclerosis. How well does Laura handle her condition? Can you imagine being in her situation? What do you think it would like to be Natalie, daily nursing a dying patient?
17. Katherine waits over a week for the baby dress to arrive and makes no attempt to return to the estate in the meantime, even though Laura is dying. What role do you think her background has in this? What would you do in a similar circumstance?
18. Why do you think Katherine feels so free and comfortable talking to her birth mother about things she's never shared with anyone?
19. Compare Laura and Katherine's reunion to Daniel and Annie's. Which would you rather be present for?
20. Daniel once believed allowing his family to think him dead was more compassionate than being up-front about his desire to leave the Amish community. In the intervening years, what has changed in him that has caused him to rethink this decision? Why has he chosen now to reestablish contact with his family?
21. Have you ever witnessed the death of a loved one, as Katherine does with Laura? What was that experience like, and how did it affect your relationship with

God?

22. Katherine wonders if her grief at the loss of her birth mother might be less painful because she didn't know Laura long before she died. What do you think?

23. If you were Daniel, would you come forward to confess and make amends, knowing that the end result is likely to be your shunning?