

The Secret Discussion Questions

1. Lettie Byler's long-held secret inspired the novel's title, but hers is not the only one. What are some other secrets the book's characters are keeping from each other?
2. Lettie tells Grace, "A reserved man can be hard to live with . . . a woman might never know where she stands." Do you think this difficulty is at all compounded by Amish culture? If yes, how so?
3. Judah obviously avoids confrontations with Lettie. Do you think she is also guilty of avoiding confrontation with him? Why or why not?
4. Despite the tension between their parents, the Byler siblings enjoy a close relationship. Why do you think this might be?
5. Judah puts his work before Lettie, thinking there will be time later to tend to her needs. Do you ever find yourself making similar justifications? (Or perhaps you've been on the receiving end.) How do you think this affects others?
6. Lettie leaves even though she knows her going will bring shame on my family. What do you think of her choice? What would you do in her situation?
7. Talk about Grace's relationship with Henry. What did you think of their relationship? Do you think Henry has any of the admirable qualities women look for in a husband?
8. Like Grace and Lettie, have you ever known someone so uncommunicative you found that relationship frustrating? What are some tactics one might try to get such a person to talk?
9. Consider this thought: Well, we're ALL dying, aren't we, from the second we're born. But only some of us get to actually live a full life. . . . Do you find the fact that it is Heather who makes this observation at all ironic? If so, why?
10. What do you think of Heather's decision to first pursue naturopathic treatment for her cancer? In her place, what would you do?
11. For much of the book, Mammi Adah is unwilling to offer Grace any clues about Lettie's past and what light it might shed on her current whereabouts. Do you think she is right to guard her daughter's secret? Why does she do this?
12. Grace, Becky, and Judah all note at some point how different Yonnie

Bontrager's approach to courtship is from their own. Contrast this to the more traditional Amish way. What are some advantages/disadvantages of each?

13. Heather does not tell her father about her diagnosis in this book, hoping to protect him from further hurt. Do you think this is a wise decision?

14. Lettie has always had a fondness for birds. What are some ways in which the bird metaphor relates to events in this book?

15. Do you think Grace's name is a good fit for her character? Why or why not?