

***The Thorn* Discussion Questions**

The Thorn by Beverly Lewis

The Thorn is set in 1985. How do you think that time period affects the story? What are some ways the book might be different if set in the present?

Rose's parents frequently use her older sister, Hen, as an example of what not to do. Do you think this is a helpful tactic? Did your parents set anyone up as a similarly cautionary example for you?

What are some particular challenges Nick faces as a foster son to an Amish bishop? Might the Amish community have any advantages when it comes to foster children? Discuss.

Emma has suffered for eleven years since her accident. Do you or does anyone you know live with chronic pain? How might that affect one's spiritual life?

Once Hen had a child of her own, she came to appreciate her parents and the way they raised her. Do you know others, perhaps you, who have had a similar experience? Discuss.

Do you think it is possible to blend the Old Ways with the new? Is there a way in which Hen might be confusing the external trappings of Amish culture with the internal peace and simplicity she desires?

Bishop Aaron risks losing his position if Nick is not baptized into the Amish church. What do you think of this? Is it fair to judge parents on the basis of their children's choices? Why or why not?

Is Hen justified in returning with her daughter to her parents' home? If not, how else might she and Brandon approach their situation?

Mr. Browning keeps Beth hidden away from outsiders in order to protect her. What are some other ways in which parents attempt to protect their children?

Compare Nick and Silas. What good qualities does each have? Bad? If you were Rose, would you find it difficult to choose between them? Why or why not?

Talk about how the Amish community responds to Christian's death. How might things be handled differently in an "English" community?