

Reading Group Questions for *Bonnet Strings*

1. What were your perceptions of the Amish before reading *Bonnet Strings*?
2. What shaped those perceptions?
3. Did your perceptions of the Amish become more complicated after reading *Bonnet Strings*? If so, why?
4. Did you feel the tension that the author faced from being caught between two worlds? Were there scenes in the book that you felt were particularly good at conveying that tension?
5. Have you read Amish novels?
6. Did reading *Bonnet Strings* call into question the authenticity of any of those novels for you? If so, how?
7. Were you surprised that the author returned to her Amish community?
8. Does your perception of the Amish culture change, knowing that youth do not have a “conscious choice” about staying or leaving?
9. Do you think that the idea of having a conscious choice is a value that the Amish do not share with mainstream American culture?
10. Do you think Amish women are oppressed? Do you think they would share your view? Why or why not?
11. What do you think about the Amish practice of limiting their children’s education to eighth grade?
12. Assuming that the author’s childhood abuse is not an isolated case, what, if anything, should be done to protect Amish children from abuse?
13. Did you find there were universal elements to the author’s story? If so, what were they?
14. Were there issues that you feel were not properly addressed in *Bonnet Strings*? If so, what were they?