

Reading Group Questions for *Why I Left the Amish*

1. What were your perceptions of the Amish before reading *Why I Left the Amish*?
2. What shaped those perceptions?
3. Did your perceptions of the Amish become more complicated after reading *Why I Left the Amish*? If so, why?
4. Did you like the transitions between the author sharing of her “present day” and memories as a child and young adult in her Amish community, or would you have preferred staying in one time frame?
5. Have you read Amish novels?
6. Did reading *Why I Left the Amish* call into question the authenticity of any of those novels for you? If so, how?
7. Were you surprised at the author’s description of what *Rumspringa* is and is not?
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. What do you think about the practice of “bed courtship?”
11. Do you think Amish women are oppressed? Do you think they would share your view? Why or why not?
12. What do you think about the Amish practice of limiting their children’s education to eighth grade?
13. Assuming that the author’s childhood abuse is not an isolated case, what, if anything, should be done to protect Amish children from abuse?
14. Did you find there were universal elements to the author’s story? If so, what were they?
15. The author is writing a second book. What do you hope will be addressed in this book?