

The Telling Discussion Questions

Lettie has always felt a need to go back and revisit her past, as if she couldn't move forward unless she first went backward. Can you relate to this on any level? Why or why not?

Grace puts the possibility of courting Yonnie on hold until things are more settled with her mother. Do you think she is right to do this? What would you do in her place?

Lettie struggles with her need to forgive her mother for the past--and whether it had "become too much a part of her to let it go." Do you think it becomes more difficult to forgive as time passes? What are some ways in which one might begin to move forward?

Were you surprised at how Judah receives the news of Lettie's return, as well as his demeanor toward her when she comes home to live again? Why or why not?

Lettie's "telling" all to Judah initially causes him pain, but ultimately baring her soul results in a new openness and sharing between them. Do you think this is realistic? Do you think intimacy in marriage is possible without such complete openness?

If you were in Heather's situation, would you pursue an alternative course of treatment? What do you think of her experience at the Wellness Lodge?

Heather's time in Amish country serves to open her up to others. What are some elements that encourage this transformation? Has an event or place in your life provided a similar spiritual and/or emotional catalyst for you? Describe.

What do you think of how each Adah and Jakob deals with the need for forgiveness from Lettie, Judah, and the brethren? Do you find one of them to be more at fault than the other? If so, why?

In Lettie's place, would you opt for the temporary shunning and private confession instead of full public disclosure? What do you think of her choice? Do you think the way the Amish community responds to public confessions differs from what the response might be among your own church community or family?

Ultimately Lettie has to return home before she is reunited with her missing daughter. Are you satisfied with the way this aspect of the story plays out?

Judah's welcoming embrace extends not only to Lettie, but also to Heather. Would you be able to be as accepting of Heather in his place?

Were you surprised to learn of the connection between Lettie and Heather? Was there a point where you began to suspect the two might be mother and daughter?

Contrast Yonnie with Judah. In what ways are they alike? Unlike? Do you see characteristics in either that you would find attractive or necessary in a spouse?