

# **Plain Truth Study Guide**

**Plain Truth by Jodi Picoult**

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## Plot Summary

*Plain Truth* is a novel about an Amish girl who finds herself in the center of a murder trial and the lawyer who comes to her rescue. Katie's background makes it difficult to believe she would do something so heinous as kill her innocent newborn son, but the evidence seems to point in that direction. Despite her personal revulsion to what Katie has done, Ellie Hathaway takes her case as a favor to their shared aunt. Through the course of the trial, Ellie and Katie become friends and through each other begin to see certain truths about themselves that help them to find happiness in their lives that seemed impossible to achieve. *Plain Truth* is a novel of love, trust, and honesty that will touch the hearts of all who read it.

A baby is found dead inside the barn of an Amish dairy farm. At first it seems to be a run of the mill assignment, but the detective quickly finds inconsistencies in the statements of the family who live on the farm. When the teenage daughter of the farmer appears to be suffering the after affects of giving birth, despite her denials, the detective smells murder. The girl is quickly treated at a local hospital and arrested when medical evidence proves she is the mother of the infant.

Ellie Hathaway has just finished the biggest case of her life. However, instead of being excited about this fact, Ellie feels sick. Ellie no longer finds satisfaction in defending guilty clients. Not only this, but Ellie is no longer satisfied with her lover, either. Ellie decides to leave town for a time, to give herself the space she needs to decide where her life should go from this point on. Ellie goes to the countryside to visit her aunt. However, moments after her arrival, Ellie's aunt becomes embroiled in a private family tragedy. When Ellie learns that a cousin she did not even know she had has been accused of murder, she immediately refuses to become involved. However, Ellie cannot let her favorite aunt down and quickly finds herself not only defending this girl, but becoming her babysitter as well.

Ellie moves in with the Fisher family in order to protect their daughter, Katie, from spending the time before her trial in jail. Ellie is not happy about this situation at first because their way of life is so drastically different from her own. However, Ellie quickly adjusts. At the same time, Katie is struggling with her memories of the night the baby was born, swearing to all who will listen that she never had a baby. Ellie calls in an old friend, Coop, who is a psychiatrist to help her decide if she can defend Katie with an insanity plea. Through Coop's sessions with Katie he is able to help Katie admit that she did have a baby, but he cannot get Katie to admit to harming the child. Ellie uses this information to begin her insanity plea.

Through the course of preparing for the trial, however, Katie convinces Ellie that she cannot use insanity as a defense. Katie has been raised to always tell the truth and by hiding behind insanity, Katie feels she would be lying. Ellie agrees to change her defense. However, Coop continues to come out to the farm on a regular basis and he and Ellie rekindle a relationship that once almost led to marriage. Ellie finds happiness in her relationship with Coop, but is still afraid to allow him to love her, something that



ended their relationship twenty years before. When Ellie discovers she is pregnant in the middle of the trial, this only further complicates her relationship with Coop.

Ellie puts on the best defense she can for Katie, including presenting evidence that the baby's death might have had natural causes due to an infection Katie could have gotten from drinking the raw milk on her family's dairy farm. This information so upsets Katie that she decides she must testify despite Ellie's objections. To Ellie's further horror, Katie gets on the stand and confesses to murdering her baby. However, Ellie finally realizes it is the testimony of the medical expert that has caused Katie to do this, because if drinking the contaminated milk killed her then she considers the death to be her fault.

The jury remains in deliberations for so many days that both Ellie and the prosecutor become anxious. The prosecutor finally makes a deal that Katie accepts, leaving her sentenced to a year on monitored probation. Katie's life has basically been restored to normal with this plea. Ellie, who suffers a threatened miscarriage, finally agrees to marry Coop. Everything seems to have been wrapped up satisfactorily except the truth behind the baby's death. The day Ellie prepares to leave the farm, Sarah, Katie's mother, confesses to Ellie. Sarah had known that her husband would never accept Katie's baby and Sarah also knew she could not survive losing her last remaining child. Sarah did what she thought she had to do to save her child.



# Part One, Chapter 1,

## Part One, Chapter 1, Summary

*Plain Truth* is a novel about an Amish girl who finds herself in the center of a murder trial and the lawyer who comes to her rescue. Katie's background makes it difficult to believe she would do something so heinous as kill her innocent newborn son, but the evidence seems to point in that direction. Despite her personal revulsion to what Katie has done, Ellie Hathaway takes on her case as a favor to their shared aunt. Through the course of the trial, Ellie and Katie become friends and through each other begin to see certain truths about themselves that help them to find happiness in their lives that seemed impossible to achieve. *Plain Truth* is a novel of love, trust, and honesty that will touch the hearts of all who read it.

A young girl gives birth alone in a milking barn. The owner of the farm wakes his wife when he hears a strange noise. The girl cuts her baby's umbilical cord and pulls him into her arms, allowing him to suck on her pinkie. Then the girl falls asleep before she can wrap the baby to keep him warm. When the girl wakes, the baby is gone. The girl believes that God has taken the baby away in answer to her prayers. The next morning, the farm hands arrive to help the owner of the farm, Aaron Fisher, milk the cows. One of the hands, Levi, falls into a pile of manure. Levi goes into the storeroom to find a change of clothes and instead finds the body of a dead baby.

The police are called. The detective, Lizzie Munro, is skeptical that this is anything more than a misunderstanding since felonies rarely happen on Amish farms. However, when Lizzie arrives she cannot find anyone who is willing to admit to giving birth to the baby. Lizzie interviews Mrs. Fisher and the farm hands, but finds Aaron Fisher unwilling to speak to her. When the Fisher's teen daughter comes out of the house it is just moments before the baby is taken from the barn. The teenager reacts dramatically, running from the barn at the sight of the lifeless body. Lizzie follows her, suspicious but not convinced this reaction has anything to do with the baby's death. However, when Lizzie sees blood running down the girl's leg, she begins to question not only the girl's reaction but her denials of having given birth.

## Part One, Chapter 1 Analysis

A young girl gives birth all alone in a barn. This is enough to begin a mystery that readers anticipate exploring in the following chapters. The fact that the girl's baby disappears while she is sleeping is a curious fact as well, especially when the reader notices that the girl does not go looking for her baby. The girl thinks God took the baby in answer to her prayers, revealing to the reader that the girl did not want her baby and hoped it would disappear. Now the reader has a motive for the murder that is revealed further into the chapter.



A baby is found dead in a milk barn the morning after a teenage girl gave birth in secret. However, the baby is found on an Amish farm, lending another twist to this mystery. The detective does not think much of it until she arrives at the farm and cannot find anyone willing to claim the baby. Then the Fisher's daughter comes out of the house and reacts dramatically to the sight of the baby while denying giving birth. However, the girl's denials fall flat when the detective sees blood running down her legs. The reader now has a suspect and a crime. The mystery of the baby's death will propel the plot over the rest of the novel.



# Part One, Chapters 2-3

## Part One, Chapters 2-3 Summary

Ellie Hathaway wakes from a nightmare that stems from the case she successfully defended in the previous weeks. Ellie successfully got an acquittal for a man who sexually abused several girls. Due to this, Ellie is unsatisfied with her life and unsure where she wants it to go from here. Ellie's boyfriend, Stephen, however, is excited about her win and has arranged for her to interview at his law firm, a large firm Ellie once wanted to be a part of. On the way to the interview, Ellie's car breaks down. Instead of feeling sympathy for her, Stephen is annoyed that she missed the interview and embarrassed him. This situation causes Ellie to realize how unhappy she is in her relationship as well. Ellie wants to have children, but Stephen does not and this has caused tension between them for some time. Now, in light of Stephen's lack of concern over Ellie's safety, Ellie realizes this is not the relationship she wants. Ellie packs her bags and goes to the country to visit a favorite aunt, Aunt Leda, who grew up Amish but is now part of the English world because of her marriage to a Mennonite. However, moments after arriving, Ellie's Aunt Leda is called away on an emergency.

Katie is in the hospital, fighting the doctors as they try to do a pelvic exam, still adamant that she did not have a baby. The doctors force Katie to submit to their tests, finally sending her to the operating room for a procedure to stop her bleeding. While distracted, Katie remembers a time six years before when her mother sent her on the train to visit her brother, Jacob, in State College. Jacob met her train that first time and gave her the gift of English clothes so she would not stand out so much among his college friends. Lizzie arrives in the emergency room just in time to catch the doctor who originally treated Katie. Lizzie convinces him she is a family friend and learns that Katie gave birth recently and the bleeding stemmed from retained products of conception. Katie will be okay, but this information gives Lizzie the information she needs to link Katie to the dead baby.

Leda arrives at the hospital as Katie is settling into her room. Leda suggests to her sister Sarah that she speak with the Amish leaders about arranging a lawyer for Katie. Sarah does not understand why this is necessary until Leda explains that if the police believe the baby was murdered Katie will most likely be arrested. Sarah becomes frightened because she does not know how to deal with the English world and its laws. Sarah also knows Aaron will not agree to hire a lawyer for their daughter. Leda promises to help any way she can. Later Leda returns home and tells Ellie about Katie, hoping Ellie will volunteer to aid in Katie's defense, but Ellie does not want to become involved in another legal case at the moment. At the same time, Lizzie receives the medical examiner's preliminary report that states that the baby was alive and breathing on its own at the time of death and that there appears to be evidence of suffocation. Lizzie takes this information to the district attorney who agrees that Katie should be arrested. Lizzie and several uniform officers arrive at the hospital as Katie is preparing to go home and arrest Katie.



Katie is taken to the courthouse for arraignment while Leda rushes home to tell her husband what has happened. Ellie overhears her aunt's distressing story and surprises even herself by deciding to act as council for Katie. Ellie arrives at the courthouse moments into the arraignment and fights for Katie to be released pending trial. The judge does not want to release Katie without some sort of supervision, but Sarah refuses to accept responsibility for her daughter because of Amish guidelines. Ellie is forced to accept responsibility herself by agreeing to live with the Fishers until the trial.

## Part One, Chapters 2-3 Analysis

Ellie is introduced in chapter two. This chapter, written in the first person point of view, establishes Ellie as a focus character, her point of view suggesting she is vital to the development of the plot. Ellie is a successful, driven lawyer who has just woken up to the realities of defending criminals. Ellie is unhappy in her career despite her success and a near tragedy shows her that she is also unhappy in her personal relationship. Ellie decides to escape the world she has built for herself and runs off to the country just in time to become a witness to the drama unfolding on the Fisher farm, though Ellie's connection to this situation will not become clear until the next chapter.

Returning to the third person point of view, the reader is taken to the hospital where Katie is fighting an examination. The results of this examination do not bode well for Katie, who is continuing to deny that she has given birth. The doctors discover that Katie has given birth and is suffering complications from this unattended birth. Katie is taken care of and settled in her room where Leda comes and informs Katie's mother, Leda's sister, that Katie could find herself in trouble if the police decide the baby's death is murder. This is exactly what the detective, Lizzie, decides when she gets a copy of the medical examiner's preliminary report in which they find that the baby most likely died of suffocation.

Leda knows that Katie will need a lawyer, but from her own background she also knows that the Amish will not actively look for a lawyer or have the means to pay for it. Leda thinks of Ellie, but Ellie has come to the country to leave her career behind, not to take on a new case. However, when Ellie hears her aunt's distress over the situation, she decides to take the case anyway. What Ellie did not plan on was moving in with the Fishers in order to allow Katie to be free for the months it will take for the case to go to trial. Ellie does agree, however, when it becomes clear this is the only way to win Katie's temporary freedom. This turn of events opens an interesting plot twist for the reader, suggesting not only a direction for the following chapter, but a fascinating development that will propel a large part of the plot for the rest of the novel.



# Part One, Chapter 4

## Part One, Chapter 4 Summary

Ellie wants to take back her pledge to live with the Fishers the moment it slips out, but she does not. Instead Ellie finds herself escorted to the home that same night. Ellie finds the home itself to be surprisingly full of modern conveniences despite the lack of electricity, and warm and comforting. However, Katie's father is less than accepting of her presence, arguing with Leda and Sarah for some time before finally acquiescing to the situation. Katie shows Ellie to the room they will share. Ellie takes advantage of their few minutes alone to ask Katie about the baby, but Katie still flatly refuses to admit to having had the baby at all.

Ellie goes for a walk around the property, thinking about the defense she will have to mount for Katie, frustrated at the lack of cooperation she is clearly going to receive from both Katie and her parents. When Ellie returns to the house, she is put to work helping prepare dinner. Before dinner, a group of reporters show up to interview the family. The Amish resist having their pictures taken, but Aaron stoically stands before their cameras in order to protect his family. Ellie rushes to his aid and threatens the reporters with arrest if they do not leave.

Ellie has trouble adjusting to the Amish way of life. The conversation over dinner is in a language she does not understand. The Fisher family speaks the traditional Amish language of Pennsylvania Dutch over dinner. Ellie objects, insisting they speak English. After dinner and when all the chores are done, Ellie is bored without a television to watch or books to read. Ellie is relieved when it is finally bedtime. In the middle of the night, Ellie wakes to find Katie missing. Ellie tracks her down at the pond where she is speaking to someone who is not there. Katie tells Ellie that she is speaking to her sister who drowned in this pond several years before. Ellie thinks that Katie is crazy. Before returning to bed, Ellie uses her cell phone to call an old boyfriend from college who is now a psychiatrist, hoping he can help Ellie mount an insanity defense for Katie.

## Part One, Chapter 4 Analysis

Ellie moves in with the Fisher family, an experience that is going to be difficult for everyone involved. Ellie does not fully understand the Amish way of life and the Amish are not easily adapted to Ellie's English ways. The first night is full of tension. First, Ellie speaks with Katie and finds her still adamantly denying the birth of her child despite the medical evidence to the contrary. Then Ellie finds herself thrust into a household that is very different from what she is accustomed to, introducing the theme of religion as it relates to the Amish lifestyle. The Fishers do not even speak a language that Ellie is familiar with and the lack of television leaves Ellie at a loss as to what to do with her time.



Ellie attempts to find a way to defend Katie, but she is finding this difficult as well due to Katie's unwillingness to admit to what she has done. The case is sure to be sensational, as evidenced by the reporters already hunting down the family. Ellie has to come up with a good defense in order to win this one, but without the family's support, this will be doubly difficult. When Ellie finds Katie at the pond in the middle of the night speaking to a dead girl, she begins to wonder if Katie is sane. Ellie calls a friend to help, a psychiatrist, playing with the idea of mounting an insanity defense for Katie. Ellie calls this friend in the middle of the night, suggesting a relationship that makes this type of phone call acceptable. This begins another twist in the plot that not only introduces a possible love interest for Ellie, but also begins the search for a proper defense for Katie against these charges.



# Part One, Chapter 5

## Part One, Chapter 5 Summary

The next morning the Fisher family rises early to attend church. At first Aaron does not want Katie to go along, but Sarah insists. Ellie comes running out of the house as the family begins to leave, insisting that she must go as well because of the restrictions the judge put on Katie's freedom. Aaron reluctantly agrees. The family travels in a horse drawn buggy, an experience that is new to Ellie, and arrives at the home of another Amish family where the services are held. When they arrive, Ephram, the local bishop, loudly welcomes Ellie in order to let the other Amish families know that her presence is acceptable. Ellie then enters the services at Katie's side.

The services are long and slow, but when they end, the bishop announces there will be no meeting afterward, which means the elders have decided not to punish Katie for her involvement in the baby's birth at this time. Katie is greatly relieved. After the services, Aaron and Sarah go to visit friends and family, leaving Katie and Ellie alone. Katie attempts to make friends with Ellie by suggesting they go for a walk by the pond. On this walk, Ellie explains the process of a trial to Katie and Katie explains the rules and punishments of the Amish world. To Katie, it seems she should simply be allowed to tell the truth and receive a punishment fitting to the crime and does not understand why that is not the way it works in the English courts. No matter how she tries, Ellie cannot make Katie understand. Late that night, Ellie wakes when Katie cries out in pain. Katie's breasts are swollen with milk.

Throughout the day, Katie recalls moments of her past that brought her to this situation. Katie remembers going to visit her brother one weekend he planned to go skiing. Katie goes with Jacob and his friends, only to find herself left behind while Jacob and his friends ski the more dangerous trails and she is left with the beginner slopes. Katie remembers another time when Jacob came to the farm in the middle of the night on the anniversary of Hannah's death. Jacob calls Katie outside with a flashlight and the two of them walk to the pond, talking about their divided guilt over Hannah's death. Jacob felt he should have been there instead of reading in the barn while Katie was there and felt she should have done more to save her sister. This is the first time Katie sees Hannah's ghost skating over the water. Finally, Katie remembers attending Jacob's graduation and meeting his new landlord, a PhD graduate who is subletting his house while he goes out of town on a research tour. The man, Adam Sinclair, is an expert in paranormal science, a subject Katie finds fascinating.

## Part One, Chapter 5 Analysis

The Fishers attend church, taking Ellie along reluctantly since she is not a part of their community nor will she understand most of the service presented in Pennsylvania Dutch. Ellie finds the service boring. However, it is a first step in attempting to win over



the Amish community. If Ellie is going to be successful in defending Katie, she will need as much help from her family and friends as she can get. The fact that the bishop stands up for her is a good sign that there are members of the community willing to help.

Katie attempts to make friends with Ellie and takes her for a walk beside the pond. While they walk, Katie tells Ellie about the Amish way of life. In the Amish community, the bishops and church leaders decide punishments, another example of the theme of religion. A person who has done something wrong against the Amish code of living comes in front of the church and confesses, receiving a punishment appropriate to the crime. Katie explains this to Ellie and wonders why it cannot be that way in the English judicial system. Ellie attempts to explain this, but Katie does not understand, underscoring her innocence fostered by living such a sheltered life in the Amish community. Later that night, Katie's milk comes in, once again reminding Ellie that Katie is still lying about not having had a baby and making her wonder if her client, who holds honesty so highly, will ever tell her the truth.

Throughout the chapter there are flashbacks in which the author reveals different events that took place in the months and years leading up to the baby's birth. Katie visits her brother frequently and is left alone at one point while Jacob goes skiing with his friends. This makes the suggestion to the reader that Katie was left alone a lot, leaving her vulnerable to a sexual attack that might explain her reluctance to admit to the baby's birth. Another flashback reveals Katie's belief that she can see her sister's ghost on the pond where she died, bringing Katie's sanity into question. Finally, a flashback reveals Katie's encounter with Jacob's older landlord, a man who studies ghosts and captures Katie's attention with his knowledge of these matters and his attraction as a young man. This meeting opens another door that could lead to an explanation regarding the baby's paternity, leaving the reader wondering which scenario will explain the baby's parentage and perhaps offer a motive for its death.



# Part One, Chapter 6

## Part One, Chapter 6 Summary

Ellie is invited to a quilting party where she witnesses one of the Amish ladies insisting Katie stay away from her infant child, suggesting a mistrust of Katie that was not present until the recent events on the farm. During this episode, Ellie's cell phone rings. The call is from Stephen, her longtime lover, who believes Ellie has moved to the Fisher farm in order to get his attention. Ellie tells him she needs him to give her a little space. Back in the house, Ellie discovers the party has ended, but Sarah does not seem either surprised or upset about the situation. Ellie then goes to find Katie and witnesses a conversation between Katie and her longtime beau, Samuel. There seems to be a lack of emotion between the couple but Ellie puts this down to the Amish way.

The prosecutor's evidence against Katie arrives and Ellie spends most of the afternoon going over it. Ellie thinks of a few motions she needs to write and pulls out her laptop to do this, but finds the batteries have died. Ellie goes in search of an electrical outlet but cannot find one. Ellie runs into Aaron and expresses her needs to him. Aaron suggests they speak to the bishop about it. A few minutes later, Aaron rushes Ellie, Katie, and Sarah into a buggy, not telling them where they are going. It turns out they are going to a funeral for the baby. Ellie watches Katie closely during this ceremony, not surprised when Katie runs out of the cemetery. When Ellie tries to comfort her, Katie again insists the baby is not hers.

Ellie speaks to the bishop after the funeral about her need for electricity. Despite Aaron's objections, the bishop agrees to have an inverter set up in the milk barn for Ellie's exclusive use. Later Ellie goes to find Katie just as the bishop finds her. The bishop and church leaders want Katie to confess to her sins at the next church meeting. Katie agrees, which surprises Ellie because of her adamant denials. However, Katie explains that even if she did nothing wrong, it is still the Amish way to confess.

## Part One, Chapter 6 Analysis

The quilting party is important because it reveals to both Ellie and the reader that some members of the Amish community think that Katie is guilty. A young mother refuses to allow Katie to touch her infant, suggesting she no longer trusts that Katie will not harm the child. Sarah's reaction to this is also interesting as she does not seem surprised or upset about this reaction. Sarah defends her daughter, but is not upset that her friends should act as they have. This seems a strange reaction by a woman who does not believe her daughter had a child or harmed it any way.

There is a funeral for the baby and Katie reacts once again like a grieving mother even though she continues to deny that she has given birth or injured the baby. Ellie is frustrated by this continuing denial because of all the medical and physical evidence



against it. Ellie is beginning to think Katie really has gone crazy. Then, when Katie agrees to confess to these sins in front of church leaders, it makes Ellie even more frustrated because she does not understand how Katie can admit this to the church but not to her, the lawyer.

Ellie needs electricity in order to do her job. However, the Amish farm does not have electricity—machines in the home and the barn run on a gas generator. Ellie arranges to have an inverter brought to power her machines, further alienating Aaron. Ellie feels guilty about this, but it is something she needs in order to defend Katie properly. Ellie is single-minded in her focus to help Katie, strangely parallel to Aaron who is single-minded in his need to continue living as closely to the guidelines of the Amish community as possible.



# Part One, Chapter 7

## Part One, Chapter 7 Summary

Samuel summons Katie out of bed that night with a flashlight, a traditional act of courting in the Amish community. Samuel confesses to Katie that he has been wishing that her baby was his as well. This causes Katie to recall a time alone with Adam when he took her to a bridge to see if she could sense a ghost he knew to live there. Katie felt the ghost, but most importantly, she connected with Adam, sharing a few kisses with him under the bridge.

Katie, Ellie, and Sarah are canning pickles in the kitchen when Lizzie returns to the farm, still hunting for a motive in the case. Ellie rushes Katie upstairs to keep the detective from interviewing her. Instead, Lizzie interviews Sarah, Levi, and Samuel. From Sarah, Lizzie learns little except that there was once another child who died while Katie was watching her. In her discussion with Samuel, Lizzie learns that he cannot be the father of the child because he has not been intimate with Katie. Lizzie attempts to see Katie, but finally decides to leave when neither Katie nor Aaron are cooperative. However, Lizzie finds Levi, another farm hand, standing by her car. Lizzie shows off the car to the young man and in the process gets him to relax. Levi reveals to Lizzie that Katie often went into State College to visit her brother Jacob who has been banished from the Amish community for continuing his education.

Ellie confronts Katie when she learns from Samuel what he told Lizzie, about never being intimate with Katie. Ellie wants to know who the father of Katie's baby is, but Katie is still refusing to acknowledge having had a baby. Ellie becomes frustrated and yells at Katie, only causing Katie to cry. Later, Samuel goes home and finds the bishop waiting for him. Before the bishop can ask Samuel to confess at the next church meeting, Samuel admits to loving Katie and wanting to marry her. Samuel also denies being the father of the baby.

## Part One, Chapter 7 Analysis

Lizzie returns to the farm in order to find a motive for Katie's actions. The district attorney wants to go into this trial with as much information as possible and motive is key to his prosecution. Lizzie learns many things, first that Katie had a baby sister who died under her care. Lizzie then learns that Samuel is not the baby's father, suggesting that Katie had a relationship with someone else in the past year. Third, Lizzie learns that Katie has a brother who has been banished from the community whom she frequently visited over the past few years. The reader does not have to be able to read Lizzie's mind in order to see how a good detective might put these facts together and come up with a motive. Perhaps, Katie had a relationship that was not proper in her community and it is for this reason she felt the need to hide and kill her child.



Samuel's admission to not being the baby's father coupled with Katie's flashbacks of her time alone with Adam begins to point the reader toward a possible father. However, the reader still cannot be sure if the baby's conception was the result of a consensual relationship or a rape, but it is beginning to look consensual. However, if the act were consensual, why is Katie still refusing to admit to the baby's birth? This is a question driving the plot at this point and is also a question that is causing Ellie a great deal of frustration as she continues to struggle with a way to defend a client who does not want to be defended.





# Part One, Chapter 8

## Part One, Chapter 8 Summary

Leda comes to visit Ellie and helps her to understand a few things about Amish culture she is still struggling with. Ellie does not understand why the Fishers held a funeral for the baby if they do not claim it and Leda explains that they feel it is their duty. Leda also reveals that the community has labeled the baby's death a stillborn, refusing to consider that the child was murdered. Leda then reveals to Ellie the existence of Katie's older brother Jacob, a fact Ellie had been unaware of up to this point. Ellie is excited by this news, but she cannot arrange to see Jacob just yet because she is not supposed to leave Katie and she is expecting Coop, her psychiatrist friend, to arrive soon.

Ellie asks Katie about her brother while they are spraying down the cows together. Katie tells Ellie how her brother was banished from their home after refusing to confess in front of the church elders and that her father considers him dead, therefore the rest of the family are supposed to do the same. Then Katie reveals how she often went to visit him over the six years since he left and how she would act like an English teenager when with him. It is during this conversation that Coop arrives. Ellie is happy to see Coop, happier than she expected to be.

Ellie and Coop discuss Katie on the porch over lemonade with Coop explaining to Ellie the idea of a dissociative state. Coop says that a person can go into this state during a traumatic episode, such as giving birth, and do things they might not do normally and then forget them afterward. Ellie feels this could describe what is happening with Katie. Ellie watches as Coop speaks with Katie a short time later. Katie talks about her life on the farm, of the rules of the Amish community. Katie tells them about the gang she became a part of when she became a teenager, an Amish custom, and how she has participated in many of the normal activities of a teenager, such as drinking and listening to music. Katie also explains what happens to someone who is banished from the community like her brother was, and how she would have suffered the same treatment if she had given birth to an illegitimate child. Afterward, Coop suggests to Ellie that Katie is indeed suffering from a dissociative state due to her fear of punishment should her father learn the truth about her baby.

The next day, Ellie visits a pathologist who she hopes can take a second look at the baby's autopsy findings and find an alternative explanation for the infant's death. That night, Katie stays up all night hoping Samuel will come courting in the middle of the night, but he never does. Coop returns the next day and asks Katie more questions, but Katie continues to deny having the baby. This causes Ellie to decide she must present an insanity plea because she has no other defense for Katie's actions.

A few nights later, Ellie attends a party with Katie thrown by one of her Amish girlfriends. Samuel is at the party and openly ignores Katie until the end of the party. At the end of the party, Samuel insists on taking Katie home. On the ride home, Samuel accuses



Katie of having a relationship with someone else and demands to know the other man's identity. Katie refuses to acknowledge such a relationship, let alone a baby. Samuel is saddened by this, insisting to Ellie there was a baby and it was Katie's.

A friend of Ellie's who administers lie detectors comes to the farm a few days later. Katie is very afraid to take the test, but she does well on the first test, passing it with flying colors. More relaxed for the second test, Katie fails miserably when she is asked about the baby. The second test makes it impossible for Ellie to use either test in court. When Coop speaks to Katie again he manages to get her to admit to not feeling well the night before the baby's birth or the morning after, but still Katie refuses to acknowledge the actual birth. Coop and Ellie spend some time alone to talk about Katie but instead begin to talk about their own history. Ellie learns that Coop is divorced now and she tells him that her relationship with Stephen is over. They discuss the past, the fact that Coop once wanted Ellie to marry him but she broke up with him, afraid of that kind of commitment at such a young age. However, Ellie makes it clear to Coop that she is open to trying something again. As they discuss this possibility, Ellie sees Katie run from the house. Ellie and Coop follow Katie only to catch up with her in the cemetery, attempting to remove the word stillborn from the baby's grave. Ellie wakes her and takes her back to bed.

## Part One, Chapter 8 Analysis

Ellie is focused on Katie's defense during this chapter. Ellie learns about Katie's trips to the English world to visit her brother and her way of living like the English during these visits, giving Ellie the idea that the baby's father might be someone who is not Amish, giving fuel to the idea that Katie had reason to hide her baby's birth. Coop arrives and tells Ellie about a psychiatric condition in which a person might block out a traumatic event and remain sane at other times. As Coop begins to talk with Katie, it becomes clear this is most likely what has happened to Katie, but the reasons are still not incredibly clear. The only thing that is clear is that Samuel is not the father of the baby and he is not happy about this fact, using it as an excuse to break off his relationship with Katie. Katie takes this break hard.

Ellie decides she must file paperwork in order to defend Katie with an insanity plea. Ellie thinks that Katie is disturbed not only because of Coop's work with her, but also because of her continuing denials of having a baby and her belief that Hannah can be seen on the pond. When Katie fails a lie detector test, it further convinces Ellie that insanity is her only defense. Then Katie sleepwalks and tries to take the word stillbirth off her baby's grave. This further confuses the issues, leaving the reader wondering if Katie does remember giving birth and is simply lying about it or she really does not consciously remember the birth but in her unconscious world does.

Ellie and Coop's relationship is a new twist in the novel. Coop is someone Ellie clearly cares about and someone she once had the opportunity to marry and turned away. This shows the reader that Ellie has a commitment problem and leaves the reader wondering how the relationship will develop given this information. Ellie wants to have children,

something that is clearer to her now in dealing with Katie than it has been before, making Coop's return to her life especially important. However, the reader must wonder will there be a relationship or will there be more heartache in this already complicated story line.

# Part One, Chapter 9

## Part One, Chapter 9 Summary

Lizzie tracks down Jacob Fisher and asks him about his sister, in effect telling him about Katie's child before anyone else can. Jacob tells Lizzie little, but is quickly on the phone to his Aunt Leda to find out what is really going on. At the same time, Katie kneels before the elders of the church and confesses to giving birth to an illegitimate child, receiving the punishment of a *bann* for six weeks. Sarah makes the punishment easier by putting a table cloth over two tables to hide the fact that there are two because part of the punishment says Katie cannot eat with baptized members of the church. Ellie also helps by taking her meals with Katie.

Katie recalls during this time a night in which Adam came to the farm the night before he was due to leave for a research trip in Scotland. Katie and Adam make love. However, Katie quickly sends him away afterward when he fails to tell her he loves her.

Jacob comes to the farm and finds Ellie. Jacob tells Ellie about his relationship with Katie and her frequent visits to him over the past six years. Jacob insists that there is no way Katie could have committed murder because it goes against the essence of the Amish faith. At the same time, however, Lizzie is convincing the district attorney that this is exactly what Katie did in order to avoid being banished from her family.

Ellie and Coop go into the city to have dinner. The dinner goes well and ends with Ellie agreeing to go to Coop's apartment. However, in the midst of making love Ellie becomes tense and begins to argue with Coop. Ellie is still afraid of commitment and this fear causes Ellie to push Coop away. At the same time, Samuel takes a friend of Katie's out on a date and makes a pass at her in order to hurt Katie. However, the girl knows how he feels about Katie and breaks off the pass before it can get out of hand. The girl visits Katie a few days later and tells her about Samuel's behavior, causing Katie to believe Samuel is no longer in love with her, a fact that again breaks her heart.

Ellie attends a pretrial hearing in which she argues that the press should be kept out of the courtroom due to an Amish person's aversion to being videotaped. The judge agrees. Ellie also argues to receive money in order to have a state appointed psychiatrist see Katie in order to prepare an insanity plea. The judge also agrees to this.

Coop meets with Katie again and manages to get her to admit that she might have been pregnant the night before the baby was discovered. When Coop asks her why she was not still pregnant the next morning, Katie says that she thought God had answered her prayers and taken her burden from her. When Ellie learns this new information she is not encouraged and decides to continue preparing an insanity defense. Shortly afterward the state appointed psychiatrist comes to talk to Katie. During this meeting, Katie remembers more about her pregnancy and also remembers the actual birth. This angers Ellie, but it also helps the psychiatrist back up Coop's assessment that Katie is



suffering a dissociative state because she still insists that she did not harm the baby. Katie says she fell asleep and the baby was simply gone when she woke.

When Ellie confronts Katie on this new memory and pushes her on the baby's conception, Katie tells Ellie how she was raped at a party while visiting Jacob. Ellie has Katie tell this to the state's psychiatrist, but the psychiatrist immediately sees through it and tells Ellie it is lies. Katie admits it is a lie to soothe Ellie and continues to refuse to talk about the real story of the baby's conception. The prosecution's psychiatrist comes a few days later and Katie tells him the same story she told the other psychiatrist. This man fails to believe that Katie suffers anything but teenage selfishness, however, and promises this is what he will testify to. A few nights later, Coop wakes Ellie in the middle of the night to discuss Katie. However, it becomes clear that what he really wants is time alone with Ellie. They walk to the pond and make love in the grass.

## Part One, Chapter 9 Analysis

Jacob finally learns what is going on with his sister when the detective finds him. Jacob comes to the farm to talk to Ellie, insisting Katie could not harm anyone because of her Amish upbringing, but even Ellie finds that difficult to believe in light of the evidence. It is no wonder then that Lizzie insists that it is because of Katie's upbringing that she would commit such an offense. Lizzie believes Katie would be afraid of suffering the same fate Jacob did for wanting to go to college and this is her motive for murder.

Ellie takes on the case full force, arranging for psychiatrists to see Katie while winning motions to protect Katie in the courtroom. All the psychiatrists who see Katie come to different conclusions, the one for the defense agreeing with Coop's assessment while the prosecution's doctor believes Katie to be a typical teen claiming amnesia just to get out of trouble. This is an interesting stance since Katie is not a typical teen. However, Katie behaves like a typical teen when she lies to Ellie about her baby's father when the reader knows how Katie really became pregnant. Katie had a relationship with Jacob's landlord and it was a consensual affair. This confuses the reader to a certain degree since Katie is so adamant that she does not remember the conception. However, the reader must realize this stems from Katie's feeling that she is a different person in the English world and she must want to protect that other persona as well as a man she was clearly in love with. Katie's feelings toward her time in English world touches on the theme of individuality versus conformity, underlining the two separate worlds Katie lived in and thus the two different sets of values she had to develop to deal with these worlds emotionally.

Coop and Ellie run into trouble in their relationship. Coop is clearly in love with Ellie even after all these years and the heartbreak she left him with twenty years before. Coop wants to pick up where they left off, but Ellie is not ready for that kind of commitment even now, after all these years. Ellie fights Coop, hoping he will just go away and end her struggle with her own emotions. However, Coop is in the fight for the long haul and refuses to leave. This causes Ellie to trust Coop and to turn to him, resulting in a consummation of their relationship. The reader sees this intimate moment

and must begin to wonder where it will take this couple, hoping the next few chapters will begin to reveal a direction for Ellie and Coop.

# Part One, Chapter 10

## Part One, Chapter 10 Summary

Three months have passed and Ellie finds herself working out in the fields with the Fishers as harvest time arrives. After one day of this hard work, Ellie returns to the house and finds Stephen there. Ellie is surprised to see him and not overly happy about it. However, out of politeness, Ellie invites Stephen to stay for dinner. When Coop appears during dinner it brings tension to the table. However, Ellie settles the matter by taking Stephen aside after dinner and telling him that their relationship is over because she is in love with Coop.

Over the next few weeks, while attending to the fields and to the building of a neighbor's barn, Samuel makes overtures toward Katie that suggest he has decided to rekindle their relationship. Jacob too appears at the family home and insists he will remain a part of the family as much as he can under the *bann*, despite his father's objections. At the same time, Ellie continues to prepare Katie's defense. However, Katie is growing increasingly unhappy with the idea of being presented as crazy in the English courts. It seems dishonest to Katie. At a hearing in the judge's office, the date is set for the opening of the trial. Ellie now has three weeks to finish preparing. Katie takes Ellie aside and tells her she will not allow her to defend her with an insanity plea. Ellie tries to explain to Katie that she cannot change her defense now with so little time to prepare a new defense, but Katie is adamant. Finally, Ellie relents.

## Part One, Chapter 10 Analysis

Ellie officially ends her relationship with Stephen and openly admits to everyone but Coop that she is in love with him. This is a new turn in Ellie's emotional state and it bodes well for a continuing relationship between Ellie and Coop. Things appear to be looking up between Samuel and Katie as well, with Samuel making several overtures toward Katie, suggesting he wants to rekindle their relationship. Samuel's attentions are good for Katie, but the reader cannot be sure at this point if Katie loves Samuel or if their relationship can happen given Katie's uncertain future.

Ellie continues to prepare Katie's case, sticking close to the insanity defense. However, Katie is growing increasingly uncomfortable with the insanity defense since it creates a situation in which she will be forced to be less than honest with the court. Katie cannot be dishonest. Finally Katie takes Ellie aside and refuses to allow her to present the insanity defense. Ellie is confused because she only has a few weeks to finish her preparations. However, because of Katie's insistence, Ellie agrees. Now Ellie has a short time to decide how to defend Katie, a situation that not only introduces tension into the plot, but gives the reader a roadmap to the next few chapters as Ellie fights to find some way to defend her client.



## Part Two, Chapters 11-12

### Part Two, Chapters 11-12 Summary

Ellie convinces the judge to allow her to change her defense. Then Ellie chases down Jacob. Katie has told Ellie the name of the baby's father and now Ellie wants to know why Jacob did not know about this relationship and warn her about it. Jacob tells Ellie he suspected but did not know for sure. Then Jacob shows Ellie a pile of letters he has been hiding from Katie that Adam sent to him for her. Ellie then goes to Coop to use him as a sounding board for a new defense strategy. Coop suggests that if the baby died of natural causes, this might have caused Katie to block out his death. With this idea in mind, Ellie returns to the pathologist. The pathologist tells Ellie that he believes the baby did die of natural causes. The pathologist believes that Katie contracted a listeria infection from drinking unpasteurized milk and passed it on to her baby. Not only did this cause the baby to be born eight weeks prematurely, but it also caused the baby to go into respiratory failure.

A few days later, the district attorney offers Ellie a plea bargain in Katie's case. Ellie does not like the bargain because it will require Katie to serve at least five years in prison, but she tells Katie about it anyway. Katie agrees to take the deal immediately because it will put an end to this ordeal. Ellie, however, insists that Katie go with her to visit a prison first. Katie and Ellie take a tour of the prison Katie will most likely be sent to first. On the way home, Katie tells Ellie she no longer wants to take the deal.

Everyone is nervous as the morning of the trial's opening approaches. Ellie practices her opening remarks for Coop, who reassures her the best he can. Ellie later finds Sarah crying in secret in the barn, worried that she cannot protect her daughter any longer. The morning of the trial, Leda and Coop come to pick everyone up in their cars. Sarah tries to go, but Aaron will not allow it. Samuel, however, goes since he has arranged to be a witness despite the fact that this will cause him to suffer some form of punishment from the church elders. Jacob also attends. At the courthouse, Katie must walk through a throng of press despite the judge's orders to keep them out of the courtroom. Ellie takes her to the restroom to recoup her calm and finds herself suffering a queasy stomach. In the courtroom, both the prosecutor and Ellie present their opening arguments. The prosecutor insists that Katie killed her baby to protect her way of life. Ellie swears it is Katie's way of life that makes committing this crime an impossibility.

### Part Two, Chapters 11-12 Analysis

Ellie is allowed to change her defense, but she has no idea to what. Ellie goes to Coop who suggests perhaps the baby died of natural causes and this is what made Katie block out the actual death. In this vein, Ellie learns that the baby suffered an infection that could have caused its death. This combined with Katie's upbringing in the Amish





community presents a defense Ellie thinks might be viable. However, this viability remains to be seen.

The prosecutor makes a plea offer to Ellie that Katie thinks is wonderful until she sees what prison life would mean for her. Katie becomes fearful for her own safety for the first time. Ellie too is afraid for Katie, having become close to her over the past few months. Despite Aaron's reluctance to address the trial and all its drama, everyone else in the Fisher home is becoming nervous. Sarah even reveals her fear in a rush of tears and the admission that she feels she should be able to save Katie and cannot, touching on the theme of protecting one's child. Ellie promises to do the best she can. However, even Ellie, who has been through this sort of things many times before, finds herself struck with a weak stomach on the morning of the trial's opening morning. Ellie's weak stomach is an interesting turn of events, suggesting perhaps something more than nerves might be causing Ellie trouble. However, there is little time to deal with this as Ellie rushes into the courtroom and makes her opening argument, basing her entire case on Katie's honesty as an Amish girl. The next few chapters will reveal if this defense has a chance of working.



## Part Two, Chapter 13

### Part Two, Chapter 13 Summary

Lizzie is the first witness on the stand. Lizzie runs through the first morning on the farm, the discovery of the baby's body and Katie's fragile medical condition that same morning. Lizzie goes on to describe her investigation, including the fact that Katie often visited her brother in State College and the fact that Katie's longtime boyfriend openly admitted to not being the baby's father, thus suggesting a motive for murder. Ellie cross examines Lizzie, putting holes in her theory by suggesting there were better places for Katie to hide the baby's body and dismissing a footprint found near the body by suggesting it was put there by the boy who found the body.

An emergency room doctor is the next to testify, telling the jury about Katie's medical findings the morning the baby was found. During Ellie's cross examination, she asks the doctor if anything about Katie that morning suggested she killed the baby, receiving a clear negative response. Next on the stand is the medical examiner. The medical examiner explains why he believes the baby took a few breaths that morning and the bruises on his mouth that suggested he was murdered by smothering. Ellie questions these bruises, however, establishing an alternative cause. Ellie also gets the medical examiner to admit the baby could have died of natural causes and still presented as he did at the autopsy.

During a break in testimony, Katie insists that Ellie ask the judge to allow them to go home so they will not miss the afternoon milking. Despite her better judgment, Ellie does as asked and is refused. The prosecution then puts their psychiatrist on the stand who suggests that Katie was of sound mind when her baby died. The psychiatrist goes so far as to suggest Katie is faking amnesia and knows full well how her child died. Ellie cross examines him and attempts to put holes in his theories with questions about a dissociative state, but the doctor is difficult to shake. The trial adjourns for the day after this testimony. At the Fisher farm, no one seems interested in the trial and this causes Ellie to become angry. Later, while apologizing to Katie for her behavior, Katie announces that she thinks Ellie is pregnant.

### Part Two, Chapter 13 Analysis

Testimony begins in the trial. Lizzie is up first, telling about her investigation and why she came to the conclusions she did. Ellie attempts to put holes in her theories, but Lizzie's investigation seems thorough and difficult to shake. Ellie does the same with the rest of the prosecution's witnesses, doing well with some and not so well with others. As the day wears on, Katie decides she cannot handle the stress anymore and insists that Ellie take her home. Ellie has to explain the rules of the court to her and finds herself going to the judge to ask for an adjournment anyway. This is refused.



Ellie is annoyed at this point. When she returns to the farm, Ellie finds herself unable to keep her temper under control. Ellie blows up at the Fisher family for not asking about the trial or showing any concern. Ellie knows why they take this attitude, but still she cannot help losing her temper. Finally, alone with Katie, Ellie apologizes. Katie is unbothered because she knows what is behind Ellie's behavior. Katie believes Ellie is pregnant. This possibility is an interesting turn of events and the reader is left to ponder what it will mean for the remaining plot development.



## Part Two, Chapters 14-15

### Part Two, Chapters 14-15 Summary

Ellie takes a home pregnancy test and cannot make herself believe the positive result. Ellie had tried many times to get pregnant with Stephen and was unsuccessful, so this turn of events is a shock to her. Before Ellie can tell Coop or anyone else, Coop appears at the farm with a surprise guest. Coop has found Adam Sinclair. Coop and Ellie take Adam to a nearby diner and explain the situation to him, telling him his son has died. Adam wants to help Katie and agrees to keep his presence a secret until Ellie can put him in front of a jury where they will see Katie's reaction to him. Adam then asks to see the baby's grave. While he visits with his son, Ellie sits with Coop alone. Ellie tells Coop about their baby and he is quietly overjoyed. Coop asks Ellie to marry him, but she refuses to answer because she wants to make sure she is not agreeing to marriage out of a sense of responsibility to the baby.

The trial resumes and Ellie begins her defense by calling Jacob to the stand. Jacob does well under Ellie's questions, describing his sister's character and talking about her visits to him in State College. However, when the prosecutor begins to question him about these visits, the prosecutor is able to suggest to the jury that Katie has a habit of lying to her family, a virtue that is not part of the Amish way, suggesting that if Katie can break this simple rule, she can break bigger ones as well. During a break after Jacob's testimony, Ellie uses Jacob's experience to warn Katie against testifying, something Katie has been asking to do since the trial began.

Ellie calls Adam to the stand next. Katie is not happy with Ellie and shocked to see Adam, a fact the jury can clearly see. Adam slips out of the witness stand to take Katie some tissues, causing an even larger scene for the jury. During testimony, Adam talks about his relationship with Katie and his deep love for her. Adam insists Katie could not have killed their baby because her love for Adam and his for her would have prevented it. The prosecutor makes light of Adam and his profession, making Adam appear ridiculous in front of the jury. Afterward, Ellie arranges for Katie and Adam to have a few minutes alone in a conference room. At first, there is a happy reunion between the lovers. However, it quickly becomes clear that the baby will always be an obstacle between them as Adam badgers Katie into telling him the truth about the baby's death. Samuel comes to retrieve Katie after Adam leaves. They hold hands on the way back to the courtroom.

### Part Two, Chapters 14-15 Analysis

Ellie learns she is, in fact, pregnant, a situation that both makes her happy and scares her. Ellie wants to tell Coop but is afraid of what it will mean for their relationship. Ellie does not want to marry Coop just because they have conceived a child, therefore she refuses to answer his proposal when he asks. At the same time, Adam has returned to



the states and Ellie is placed in a position when she must tell him about the death of his child. Adam is not happy about the baby's death, but is willing to do whatever it takes to help Katie. Adam's willingness to help shows the depth of his feelings for Katie, leaving the reader wondering if Samuel's new attempts to reconcile with Katie will be for naught.

Ellie begins her defense, calling Jacob first. Jacob is a good witness until the prosecutor is allowed to question him. Then Jacob begins to look like a liar who encouraged his sister to indulge in the same sort of behavior. This does not seem to do much to help the defense. Then Ellie calls Adam. Adam's entrance into the courtroom causes an uproar and leaves Katie in tears. Katie's reaction proves to the jury that she loved her baby's father, hopefully suggesting that she also loved the baby. Adam's testimony is helpful to a small degree, but his profession causes him to appear ridiculous, taking away some of the power of Katie's reaction to his presence. Katie and Adam speak afterward, but there is tension between them. This tension appears to be a permanent state that Katie is unsure can be overcome. Samuel then appears, holding Katie's hand all the way to the courtroom. Samuel is clearly in love with Katie and the reader is left with the impression that Katie is beginning to return the feeling if she had not before.



## Part Two, Chapter 16

### Part Two, Chapter 16 Summary

Ellie puts Coop on the stand the next day. This testimony turns intensely personal for a few moments before Ellie is able to get a handle on her emotions and direct Coop toward Katie and her treatments. Coop speaks about the dissociative state and how it relates to Katie's case. Coop suggests that the death of the infant from natural causes would be enough to cause Katie to block out the child's death. The prosecution questions Coop and tries to put holes in his case. Finding this to only be marginally successful, the prosecution asks Coop about his relationship with Ellie, suggesting their intimate relationship has something to do with his testimony.

Ellie calls Samuel next. Samuel speaks of Katie's character and the Amish way of life. When the prosecutor attempts to get Samuel to admit Katie is capable of murder, Samuel stands his ground and walks off the stand leaving the prosecutor looking like a fool. The pathologist takes the stand next, talking about his theory that it is a listeria infection that caused the baby's death. The prosecutor is completely surprised by this witness and fails to shake him on cross-examination.

Katie becomes distant after the pathologist's testimony. Katie jumps out of Leda's car on the way home and insists that she and Ellie walk the rest of the way home. Halfway home, Katie stops at the cemetery and begins to cry at the baby's grave. Ellie believes Katie is simply allowing herself to grieve until Katie apologizes for killing her baby.

### Part Two, Chapter 16 Analysis

Ellie puts Coop on the stand and the testimony becomes personal, touching on things between the two of them that makes Ellie believe she can trust him. However, the prosecution brings their personal relationship into the testimony, belying all the good Coop has done for Katie. Ellie then calls Samuel, who holds his own and does a better job than most of Ellie's other witnesses. Then Ellie calls the pathologist. The pathologist's testimony sends the prosecutor into a tailspin because he did not expect an alternative theory of the baby's death. This is a coup for Ellie and her defense.

After the pathologist's testimony, Katie becomes withdrawn. Ellie feels as though Katie's behavior is a result of exhaustion and does not question it. However, when Katie falls apart at the grave of the infant, Ellie begins to think the trial is finally helping Katie come to terms with the baby's death, which is good for Katie emotionally. Ellie is in for a surprise, however, when Katie begins to apologize for killing her baby. Katie's admission shocks not only Ellie, but the reader as well. This admission also leaves the reader wondering how this will affect the rest of the plot development.



# Part Two, Chapter 17

## Part Two, Chapter 17 Summary

At home, Katie tells Ellie she insists on testifying on her own behalf. Ellie, who is angry with Katie, refuses to argue with her and agrees as long as Katie signs a waiver saying that Ellie advised her against testifying. Later, Ellie tells Coop how disappointed she is in Katie and how angry she is. Coop tries to help Ellie, but there are few words to soothe Ellie's hurt. At the same time, Katie goes for a walk with Samuel. Samuel asks Katie to marry him, pledging to wait as long as necessary.

The next day, Ellie has a conference with the judge before putting Katie on the stand. Ellie leads Katie through a list of questions that help her tell the jury about Adam and their relationship, about the pregnancy and the baby's birth. Katie continues to insist that she does not know how the baby died because she fell asleep. Without asking Katie if she killed the baby, Ellie ends her questions. The prosecutor's first question is whether or not Katie killed the baby. Katie says she did, but refuses to explain how. This causes an uproar in the courtroom, but Ellie does nothing to stop the testimony. However, Katie becomes so upset that Ellie asks for a recess and takes Katie out of the courtroom. While Ellie attempts to calm her, Katie says something that makes Ellie realize she made a mistake assuming Katie smothered her child and was confessing to it. Ellie puts Katie back on the stand and asks her how she killed her baby. Katie tells the jury that the infection she got caused her baby to die and this made the baby's death her fault.

After Katie's testimony, Ellie rests her case. The prosecutor presents his closing arguments, stressing the facts of the case and underplaying the listeria theory. Ellie presents her arguments as well, suggesting that Katie is so honest, is so intent on confessing her sins, that there is no way the jury can believe she murdered her child in cold blood. On the way out of the courthouse, the prosecutor declares victory. Ellie does the same. However, neither is confident they will get the verdict they hope for.

## Part Two, Chapter 17 Analysis

Ellie is deeply offended by Katie's confession of murder because she has begun to think of Katie as a surrogate child. Ellie feels Katie has been lying to her all the time and this feels like a betrayal. However, Katie sees it as another opportunity to be truthful as is her way. Coop tries to help Ellie by suggesting Katie is only saying what she feels she needs to say to make things right. Indeed, Katie does seem to feel better about the situation, even going so far as to promise herself to Samuel.

Katie takes the stand and allows Ellie to lead her through the birth of her child. Katie continues to insist she went to sleep and does not know what happened to her baby, but also claims she killed the baby. Ellie is as confused by this testimony as everyone else until she realizes that Katie's testimony is based on what she heard the pathologist



testify to the previous day. Katie thinks she killed her baby because she became infected with listeria. As crazy as this sounds, it makes sense to Ellie and she allows Katie to testify to it in court. The case is then ended, with only the verdict to wait for. Ellie and the prosecutor both claim victory, but neither is certain as the waiting begins. The waiting will shape the end of the book, leaving the reader on pins and needles as they wait to see if Katie will go to jail or walk free.





## Part Two, Chapters 18-20

### Part Two, Chapters 18-20 Summary

A full day passes and the jury is still deliberating. Ellie and Katie attempt to keep busy doing chores when Ellie discovers she is bleeding. Sarah and Katie rush Ellie to the hospital in her buggy where she learns that her baby is still alive, but the bleeding suggests a miscarriage is imminent. Coop insists on staying with Ellie at the Fisher home, just as afraid for her as he is for the baby. Ellie sees this and finally agrees to marry him. The next morning, the bleeding has stopped and the pregnancy appears to be viable.

Ellie is stuck on bed rest and becoming so restless she welcomes a visit from the prosecutor. The prosecutor offers Ellie another deal for Katie, offering two to five years with a nolo contendere, meaning Katie will not have to admit guilt. Ellie agrees to speak to Katie who quickly jumps at the deal. The judge hears the plea deal, agreeing with Ellie that Katie will be a perfect subject for an ankle bracelet rather than jail time. The judge agrees and sentences Katie to a year of wearing the bracelet. During this same time, Jacob makes peace with his father on his father's terms and Adam leaves for Scotland, allowing Katie to move on with her plans with Samuel.

With the case over, Ellie prepares to leave the Fisher home. While she is packing, Sarah comes to Ellie and tells her that she did not want to like her at first, but quickly learned to be grateful for her help with Katie's case. Sarah then gives Ellie a package to take care of. The package contains the scissors Katie used to cut the baby's umbilical cord. Sarah explains that she had to protect her child because she knew Aaron would never accept the baby and would send Katie away just like Jacob. Sarah could not stand to lose another child. Ellie accepts this package, knowing she should go to the judge with Sarah's confession. However, Ellie accepts Sarah's confession with the mutual understanding of mothers and decides not to do anything about it.

### Part Two, Chapters 18-20 Analysis

Ellie has a threatened miscarriage that leaves her in a position to take Coop's proposal at face value rather than as a sense of responsibility to the child. Ellie's decision ends her emotional struggle within herself with commitment issues and implies a happy ending for her and Coop that is coupled with the apparent survival of the baby. The prosecutor's deal for Katie in light of the long time the jury takes to come to a decision ends the case in a favorable light for everyone involved. This leaves Katie free to marry Samuel that November. Katie has confessed in open court and gotten her punishment, all she has wanted from the beginning. It also leaves Katie unharmed in a larger sense, which ends the novel on a positive note for Katie.



Sarah's confession to Ellie brings an end to the mystery surrounding the baby's death. Sarah killed the baby, though she never really says that she smothered it. Sarah implies the smothering, saying she did what she had to do to keep her husband from sending Katie away. This is the biggest example thus far of the theme of protecting one's child. Sarah did what she had to do, just like Ellie did what she had to do to protect Katie as well. In the end, Sarah's actions could have caused her daughter to go to jail, but they kept Aaron from sending her away and this was the goal Sarah was attempting to achieve because it was the only thing that fit into her realm of understanding at the time of the baby's death.



# Characters

## Katie Fisher

Katie Fisher is eighteen, a normal teenager who is looking forward to her future. Katie expects to marry her long time boyfriend in a few months and settle down to a domestic life like her parents. Katie has grown up Plain, or Amish, and looks forward to continuing her life in the Amish community, most likely continuing to live on her parents' dairy farm. However, there is an obstacle in Katie's way. Katie has just given birth to a baby out of wedlock. Katie's pregnancy was kept secret from her family and her community and when she woke from the struggle of giving birth, Katie's baby has gone missing. Katie tells herself it was all a dream and goes back to bed, hoping everything will go back to normal the next morning. However, instead of normalcy, Katie wakes to the police removing her baby boy's body from the milking barn and looking for a murderer.

In the stress of a physical examination and finding herself arrested by English cops, Katie convinces herself that she could not have had a baby. Even when confronted with physical evidence, Katie refuses to admit to the birth. Katie's cousin Ellie comes to her defense in court and finds herself forced to move in with the Fisher family in order to keep Katie out of jail. In her frustration with Katie's amnesia, Ellie asks a psychiatrist to speak with Katie. Slowly, Katie comes to a point where she can admit to the birth of the baby, but she cannot remember the death. Not only this, but Katie also refuses to admit to the conception. For months everyone believes the father to be Katie's long time boyfriend, but he sets them straight when someone finally thinks to ask him.

After a time, it comes out that Katie spent time in the English world with her shunned brother Jacob. Katie would go to her brother's home once a month over a period of six years to visit her brother, often wearing jeans and T-shirts during this time. It is during one of these visits that Katie meets a friend of her brother, Adam, and begins an affair. The affair ends when Adam leaves the country, but for Katie it continues when she realizes she is pregnant. Aware that this will mean punishment from her community and her family, Katie prays for the pregnancy to go away. This is what Katie believes happened when she wakes and finds the baby missing. However, the state does not see it this way. Katie is put on trial and eventually takes a plea bargain. Katie is content to never know for sure what happened to her baby.

## Sarah Fisher

Sarah Fisher is Katie's mother. Sarah is a typical Amish wife, always content to defer to her husband when it comes to important decisions. It never crosses Sarah's mind to contradict her husband in any way. Sarah is a good mother and she would have loved to have had many children, but she had multiple miscarriages between her first and second child and then she was forced to have a hysterectomy after the birth of her third child due to complications. Due to these circumstances, Sarah is very protective of her



three surviving children. However, tragedy takes away one of her children. When Hannah, her youngest child, is only seven, she falls through the ice on the family pond while ice-skating and drowns. This tragedy affects the entire family, leaving Katie and Jacob with a great deal of guilt and Sarah more protective of her two remaining children.

Unfortunately for Sarah, her oldest child, Jacob, decides to break the Amish rules and continue his education. This causes Jacob to be shunned from the community and expelled from his family. Sarah is so heartbroken over the loss of her child, she arranges for Katie to visit Jacob as a sort of surrogate for herself. This way Sarah does not break the rules of her community, does not openly defy her husband, but still receives news on a regular basis from her son. However, when these visits lead Katie into a relationship that results in a secret pregnancy, Sarah blames herself. Without anyone's knowledge, Sarah takes it upon herself to take care of the problem for Katie, to keep her husband from sending another child away.

## **Aaron Fisher**

Aaron Fisher is Katie's father. Aaron is a traditionally minded man who takes the guidelines of the Amish community to an extreme. Where Aaron is instructed not to eat with his son, not to do business with his son, and not to ride in his son's car, Aaron takes it step further and refuses to allow his son in his home. To him, Jacob is dead. Aaron feels that it is his fault his son could not continue to live the Amish lifestyle and has cut his son completely out of his life, not only to punish his son, but to punish himself. Aaron feels this is the punishment he deserves for letting down his son and God.

Due to Aaron's traditionalist views, Sarah knows that if he learns of Katie's illegitimate child, he will disown Katie as well. It is not hard for her to jump to this conclusion based on Aaron's reaction to Jacob's decision to go to college. It is for this reason that Sarah feels the need to protect Katie. However, she cannot protect Katie by simply arguing with her husband because this is not behavior in which an Amish wife is allowed to indulge. Sarah cannot argue with her husband and she cannot attempt to persuade him in these situations. Therefore, any action Sarah takes must be done without his knowledge. This is what causes Sarah to take the matter into her own hands, kill the baby, and hide her actions before anyone can learn of her connection to the baby and its death.

## **Ellie Hathaway**

Ellie is a defense attorney who has just finished a case in which she helped a guilty man go free. Ellie is wracked with guilt over this case and is no longer happy in her career. Ellie is also having trouble finding happiness in her personal life. Ellie desperately wants to have children but her current lover is not interested in children. Ellie's current lover does not even want to settle down and get married, perfectly happy to continue living independently, the way they have done for eight years. Ellie is no longer satisfied with this. Ellie leaves her lover and goes to stay with her aunt for a few weeks in order to



clear her head. However, before Ellie has even been in town a full twenty-four hours, she learns that her cousin has been arrested for murder and is in desperate need of representation. Ellie balks at the idea of taking on the case, but when she realizes how important this is to her aunt, Ellie decides to step up.

Ellie not only takes on the case, but finds herself saddled with babysitting duties, forced to live with her client in order to keep her out of jail. In order to live with her cousin, Ellie must live on an Amish farm. This is difficult at first. However, Ellie is determined to make the situation work and throws herself into the routine of the farm. Ellie soon becomes close to her cousin and begins to see her case through the eyes of a mother, wanting to protect her cousin the way her mother also desires to do. Ellie calls a friend for help, a psychiatrist who can help her to figure out how best to represent her client. This friend, Coop, is not only a psychiatrist, but he is also an old boyfriend whom Ellie never got over. Soon a romance develops between Ellie and Coop even as Ellie becomes deeper and deeper involved in her cousin's case.

Ellie is soon faced with the truth of her cousin's actions, having to face the possibility that this young woman she has begun to think of as a daughter might have killed her baby. Not only this, but Ellie also finds herself pregnant and faced with a decision in regards to her relationship with Coop. Ellie does not want to marry Coop because of the baby, but she does not want to lose him either. Neither does Ellie want to let down her cousin and watch her suffer the consequences of her heinous crime. Luckily a solution is presented to Ellie at the last moment that ends the trial and protects her cousin. At the same time, Ellie discovers a truth about herself and is able to commit to Coop without feeling as though she is doing it only out of some sense of responsibility to the baby.

## Samuel Stoltzfus

Samuel is an Amish teenager who has been in love with Katie since they were children. Samuel works on the Fisher farm as a farm hand alongside Aaron. Samuel will most likely inherit the farm when he marries Katie due to the fact that Aaron's only son has left the Amish community. When the baby is first discovered, Samuel is assumed to be the father not only by the police, but by the Amish community. However, Samuel quickly admits that he and Katie could not have made a baby together since they have never been intimate. This information saves Samuel from punishment through the Amish community, but it causes a rift between him and Katie that may end their relationship. Samuel is very jealous at the idea that Katie has been with another man. However, Samuel is a gentle man and he cannot sustain his anger for very long.

At Katie's trial, Samuel goes against the Amish guidelines and chooses to be a witness. Despite his discomfort at being thrust into the English world, Samuel proves to be a very good witness, standing up to the prosecutor in such a way that the jury cannot deny his affection for Katie. Even Katie is swayed by his testimony. Katie believes that Samuel is in love with another Amish girl and is saddened at missing out on their life together until Samuel surprises her with a proposal. Katie and Samuel will be married despite everything, allowing Katie to go on with the life she would have had if not for the baby.



## Leda

Leda is Sarah's sister. When Leda was a young woman she chose to leave the Amish church and marry a Mennonite. Leda's husband is Ellie's Uncle Frank. Ellie spent a great deal of time on Leda and Frank's farm as a child and it is to Leda's home that Ellie chooses to escape when her life becomes unbearable. While visiting Leda, Ellie learns about a cousin she did not know she had, Katie, and finds herself placed in a position to defend Katie. It is also through Leda that Ellie learns about the Amish, their lifestyle and their custom of banishing a member who has chosen not to live by the guidelines of the community. Leda is Ellie's connection to the Amish and she is also Ellie's connection to the outside world when she lives with the Fishers.

## Lizzie Munro

Lizzie Munro is the detective assigned to the Fisher baby case. Lizzie arrives at the farm expecting to find a stillborn baby. Instead, Lizzie finds a dead baby that none of the women in the area will claim. While interviewing Katie, Lizzie is the first to notice that she is not well, noting that blood is flowing from under her skirt. Lizzie insists that Katie be taken to a hospital despite her personal objections. It is while Katie is in the hospital being treated for complications from giving birth that Lizzie learns the baby was most likely suffocated. Lizzie decides to charge Katie despite the fact that Katie denies having a baby or knowing anything about the baby. Lizzie believes she has a solid case because it seems clear to her that an Amish girl would not want the community to learn about her indiscretions because it could cause her to be banished. Lizzie goes after Katie with vigor, aware that this is an unusual case that can help her career. However, even Lizzie realizes that it will be difficult to convict an Amish girl of murder and continues her investigation even after the district attorney accepts the case.

## John 'Coop' Cooper

Coop is a psychiatrist that Ellie calls to help her decide if she should defend Katie with an insanity plea. Ellie and Coop have known each other since they were in college together. At one point, Coop wanted to marry Ellie but she did not want to commit at such a young age and broke off their relationship. Over the years, Ellie and Coop remained in touch but their relationship was strained. When Ellie calls Coop this time and learns that he is divorced, intimacy reblooms between them. However, Ellie is still reluctant to begin a relationship with Coop because she is still afraid of commitment. Coop is patient and does not allow Ellie to scare him off. Not only this, but Coop has also become fond of Katie and has begun to treat her as a patient, helping her through the emotional aftermath of having her baby. It is Coop that finally helps Katie remember the baby's birth and leads her to a place where she feels comfortable telling Ellie about the baby's father. If not for Coop, Katie might not have made enough progress to actively participate in her own defense.



## Jacob Fisher

Jacob Fisher is Katie's brother. Jacob has always loved to read. While apprenticing for a carpenter, Jacob was sent to build bookshelves for an English professor. It was during this time that Jacob discovered he could further his education if he lived in the English world. Jacob began to read as often as he could, hiding his books from his father. Jacob knew his father would not approve of his interest in books because the Amish do not believe in furthering their education beyond an eighth grade level. However, this did not dull Jacob's interest. When Jacob is accepted into college, he decides he must leave the Amish community. Jacob's father is disappointed by this decision and as a result he banishes his son from his home. Normally, Jacob's decision to leave the church would limit his ability to communicate with his family but it would not cut him off completely. It is Aaron's choice to banish him completely.

Jacob's sister, Katie, begins to visit him monthly shortly after his banishment. Sarah sends Katie because she wants to have contact with her son but cannot go herself. While Katie is with Jacob she dresses in English clothes in order to avoid standing out among Jacob's peers. Katie also goes to movies and does other things that would not normally be allowed under Amish guidelines. When Jacob graduates from college, he moves into the home of an acquaintance. Katie gets to know this man and falls in love with him. Soon Katie finds herself in a situation where she becomes intimate with this man. Katie soon learns she is pregnant, but lives in denial because she is afraid of the repercussions of such a pregnancy. It is this denial that leads to the death of the infant and Katie's trial for murder.

## Adam Sinclair

Adam Sinclair is a student at Penn State like Jacob. Adam and Jacob meet when Adam begins looking for someone to rent his home to while he is out of state doing research. Jacob finds the situation ideal and agrees to rent the house. Adam and Jacob become roommates while Adam waits for his research trip to begin. During this time, Adam meets Katie. Katie and Adam become fast friends. When Katie learns that Adam is a paranormal expert she is drawn to him even more because Katie thinks that she can see her sister's ghost on the family pond. Adam is the first person Katie has been able to tell this too and not feel as though she is crazy. Adam begins to teach Katie about paranormal activity and they quickly become close. Adam falls in love with Katie and they become physically intimate. However, Katie becomes ashamed and afraid of her actions when Adam does not admit his love to her. Katie sends Adam away on his research trip before learning she is pregnant. Afterward, Katie does not know how to find Adam, so she does not tell him. Katie does not see Adam again until her trial. During the trial, Adam tries to get Katie to tell him how the baby died, but Katie does not know. Finally Katie realizes that this baby will always be an obstacle between her and Adam and she decides to end the relationship.





## Objects/Places

### Inverter

Ellie must use an inverter to power her computer since the Amish do not believe in using electricity on their farms. However, the Amish do use gas-powered generators to run the heavy equipment required for their dairy/farm businesses.

### Milk Storage Room

Ellie uses the milk storage room as an office because this is where the bishop allows electricity to be made available for her use.

### Milk Barn

The milk barn is where the milking cows are kept. It is also where Katie gave birth to her son and where his body is later found.

### Horse Blankets

A newborn baby boy is found dead under a pile of horse blankets.

### Man's Shirt

A newborn baby boy is found dead, wrapped in a man's shirt.

### Scissors

There is a pair of scissors missing from the milk barn that the medical examiner believes was used to cut the baby's umbilical cord. Sarah later gives these scissors to Ellie during an implied confession of guilt.

### The Pond

There is a pond on the Fisher property where Katie's sister, Hannah, drowned after falling through the ice one winter. Katie visits the pond often because she believes she can see her sister's ghost.





## **Horse Buggies**

Since the Amish shun automobiles, their main source of transportation is a horse and buggy.

## **English Courtroom**

Katie is tried for murder in an English courtroom even though her people, the Amish, do not believe in actively participating in English trial law.

## **Amish**

To be Amish is to be a member of a religious community that shuns modern conveniences and lives by a code that stresses community over individuality.

## **State College, PA**

Jacob, Katie's brother, lives with the English in the town of State College where he attends the local university. It is while visiting her brother that Katie meets and falls in love with Adam Sinclair, the father of her infant son.

## **Paradise, PA**

The Fisher farm is in the small town of Paradise in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.



# Themes

## Protecting One's Child

One theme of this novel is found in the desire of three separate characters to protect their children. The first is Katie. Katie has a baby out of wedlock, a fact she finds difficult to deal with. In fact, Katie finds this situation so difficult that she refuses to admit to herself that she is pregnant until she goes into labor. It is during labor and the actual birth of the baby that Katie admits to herself that she is having a baby and accepts this baby in her heart. Katie immediately attempts to protect her child by stopping its bleeding and hugging it to herself in order to keep it warm. Katie's instincts kick in and she wants to be a good mother. When the child disappears, at first she convinces herself that the birth was only a dream. Later, when Katie begins to admit to herself what really happened, she becomes obsessed with the idea that she somehow caused the death of her child and must be punished for it. This is Katie's way of protecting her child.

Ellie also is protective of her children. However, the first child Ellie finds herself protecting is Katie. Ellie takes Katie on as a client, but in a way she begins to think of Katie as the child she never had and becomes so emotionally involved in the case that it begins to drive her every thought and emotion. Ellie wants desperately to save Katie from herself. However, when Ellie discovers herself pregnant, her emotions transfer to this child. Ellie finds herself helpless when she begins to suffer the symptoms of a miscarriage and nearly loses her child. Ellie learns through this experience that sometimes a mother must sit back and allow her child to fend for herself, thus allowing Ellie to let Katie take a plea agreement in her criminal trial, thus ending the ordeal for all involved.

Sarah is the final mother set upon protecting her children. Sarah once had three children. Her youngest daughter, Hannah, died suddenly while ice-skating on the family pond, a tragedy that marked Sarah in a way that only another mother could understand. A short time later, Sarah is forced to give up her son to the English world when he decides to further his education and his father refuses to allow him back into the family home. Sarah fights this banishment by allowing her third child, Katie, to visit Jacob on a monthly basis. However, it is these visits that allow Katie to meet Adam Sinclair, the man who will become the father of her child. Sarah is well aware of the symptoms of pregnancy and is aware of Katie's difficulties despite Katie's refusal to tell anyone her news. The night Katie gives birth, Sarah knows Aaron, her husband, will not accept the infant and therefore will send Katie away. Sarah sneaks down to the milk barn where Katie has given birth and steals the infant away before Katie awakens. Sarah cannot bear the idea of losing one more child or of watching Katie lose all she has desired since childhood, so she smothers the baby. Sarah does what she does to save her child, stepping back when the English world moves in to allow Ellie to finish her work for her.



## Religion

Religion is an important theme in the novel because it is the basis of the Amish faith and life and it is what separates Katie and her story from other teenagers. The Amish are highly religious, following a set of rules that are very strict. It is these rules that set the Amish apart from modern people. The Amish do not believe in electricity, do not believe in modern conveniences, do not believe in extended education, and do not believe in individuality. The Amish believe community is more important than anything else, often shunning their only family members who chose not to live by the Amish guidelines. It is this background that makes Katie's story different and shapes the plot of the novel.

Jacob, on the other hand, has turned away from the Amish religion. Jacob decides he would rather have an education than to live Plain. It is Jacob's decision to leave the Amish way of life that indirectly causes the death of Katie's infant. It caused his father to shun him and refuse to allow him into the family home even though the Amish guidelines allow Jacob to visit and speak with his family members. Sarah, saddened at the loss of her son, sends Katie to visit him in order to receive news of her eldest child. It is during these visits that Katie meets the man who will become the father of her child. It is also as a result of these visits that Sarah takes it upon herself to keep the same thing that happened to Jacob from happening to Katie. Therefore religion, both the devotion to it and the decision to walk away from it, is an important theme of the novel.

## Individuality versus Conformity

Individuality is a phenomenon of the modern world. In the modern world, children are encouraged to compete with other children. Parents plaster bumper stickers on their cars announcing how their children are higher achievers than others. Adults are encouraged to outperform their co-workers in a business situation. Students are encouraged to get better grades than others. Not only this, but in the modern world, people who dress differently than others are either revered or ridiculed, encouraged by these reactions to continue being different. Life is made interesting through individuality.

In the Amish world, everyone dresses the same. Everyone works hard, going to school only through the eighth grade, devoting their days to working their farms. Everyone worships together and abides by the same guidelines as everyone else. The Amish are taught that God comes first, then others, then themselves. Individuality is not encouraged among the Amish. The Amish live their lives the way their parents did before them and their parents before them.

Katie finds herself stuck in a world that is somewhere between individuality and conformity. Katie is a devoted Amish girl, but she also finds enjoyment in the visits she makes to her brother in the English world. Katie dresses in jeans and T-shirts while on visits to her brother. Katie watches movies and dances, Katie even drinks while on these visits. Katie likes the individuality and independence she finds while visiting her brother. However, the only world Katie has ever known is the Amish world and feels as though this is still where she belongs. Before she makes this choice, however, Katie conceives

a child with an English man. It is this choice that leads Katie into another black hole between her world and the English world, making this issue a theme of the novel.

# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel shifts from one chapter to the next. In many of the chapters, the author uses the third person omniscient point of view. This point of view allows the writer to shift from the point of view of one character to that of another, often telling her story through the eyes of many characters throughout one chapter. In other chapters, the author uses the first person point of view, narrating the story specifically from Ellie's first person viewpoint. This shifting point of view is characteristic of this author and it allows the reader to get a sense of who the main character is intended to be and to get a good sense of that character, allowing an emotional attachment to build between reader and character. This emotional attachment is important in order for the emotional impact of the plot to impress itself upon the reader and to create a sense of empathy. The third person point of view also allows for an emotional attachment to form between reader and other characters, but this attachment is more remote and often stems not from the narration but from chapters in which the reader was allowed to see Ellie's emotions in regards to these other characters.

The point of view in this novel works not only because of the emotional connection it allows to build between reader and character, but also because it offers the intimacy of a first person narration and because of the vast amount of information that can only be offered in a third person point of view narration. The chapters that move from character to character quickly in the third person allows the reader to obtain information that Ellie, the first person narrator, is not privy to and to see the story through the eyes of someone else who might have a different perspective. This allows the reader not only to sympathize with Ellie, but also to see flaws in her character and to see the plot with an objectivity that allows a deeper understanding of the overall plot. It is a unique, but successful use of point of view.

## Setting

The setting of this novel is rural Pennsylvania. However, it is not the physical setting of farm country in Pennsylvania that is the most important aspect of the setting, but the fact that the main setting of the novel is an Amish farm in the middle of rural Pennsylvania. The Amish way of life is drastically different from that of modern life and this is an important aspect in the overall plot of the novel. A young Amish girl is accused of murder, something highly unusual in the Amish community. However, in order for the reader to appreciate just how unusual this fact is, the author sets the majority of her novel on an Amish farm. On this farm, although the home and barn look just like any other farmhouse or dairy farm, there is no electricity. There is running water and gas, supplied by a propane tank, but there are no phones, no Internet, and no computers. Machines powered by gas generators milk the cows, but the harvesting of tobacco and corn is done by hand with only hand tools.



The Amish are deeply religious, attending services in the homes of neighbors rather than churches. The Amish govern their own people, imposing their own rules and their own punishments. One punishment common for offenses against the Amish community is the *bann*. The *bann* is similar to the silent treatment in which baptized members of the Amish community cannot share a meal with, ride in cars with, or transact business with an Amish member under the *bann*. It is this practice that provides the prosecutor in Katie's case the most likely motive—that a desire to avoid being placed under the *bann* caused Katie to kill her newborn infant.

The setting in this novel is important because it provides background information for the main plot. The novel is about a young Amish girl accused of murder. While someone unfamiliar with the Amish might find this subject mundane, given the violent nature of teenagers in society today, the setting explains to the reader in a clear way why this is highly unusual and most unlikely. Katie's Amish background makes a murder charge not only unlikely but also complicates her lawyer's ability to defend her. It is this fact that makes the setting important to the plot and elevates it to another character in the novel.

## Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is standard English. It is clear and precise, easy for most readers to understand. There are, however, times in which another language is used throughout the dialogue and in snatches of exposition that most readers will not understand. This language is Pennsylvania Dutch, the language spoken by the Amish. The Fisher family uses this language to speak to one another and it is also the language spoken in church and when they pray. Many of the Amish that Ellie will meet while living with the Fishers only speak this language and struggle when they attempt to converse with her in English. This language barrier is yet another obstacle Ellie must overcome in order to provide a strong defense for Katie.

The language of this novel flows well and does not disturb the development of the plot to a great extent. When the author uses words from Pennsylvania Dutch, she often does it in such a way that the words are self-explanatory or do not require a definition. The use of this language enhances the novel by helping the setting of an Amish farm feel authentic and further setting Katie apart from modern day teenagers, garnering yet more sympathy for her plight from the reader. Not only is the language used to tell a complex story in the simplest form, but it is also used to enhance the novel and to add to the plot.

## Structure

The novel is divided into twenty chapters. The chapters that are in the first person point of view are denoted with Ellie's name, the first person point of view character. These chapters flow as one, uninterrupted narration. The other chapters often include narration from several different characters, interrupting the flow of the chapter with many paragraph breaks in order to denote the change in narrating character. However, thanks

to the paragraph breaks, there is little confusion as to who the narrator is or when the shift took place.

The novel follows two main plot lines. The first is the murder of the infant and the subsequent trial of Katie Fisher for murder. This plot line leads the reader from the moment of the child's birth, through Katie's arrest, and into her trial for murder. This plot line does not reveal the true source of the infant's death until the final pages, creating a mystery for the reader to solve. The other plot line follows Ellie. Ellie is a high profile lawyer who has come to rural Pennsylvania to escape her growing unhappiness with her life. Ellie desperately wants to be a mother and this desire drives her emotions as she takes on Katie's case as a favor to their shared aunt, Leda. This plot line leads Ellie through months of self-discovery and helps her to find the keys to her own personal happiness. These two plot lines intersect at many points in their development and work together in order to find a suitable resolution for both stories.



## Quotes

"It was over as suddenly as it had begun. And lying on the matted, stained hay between her legs was a baby." Part One, Chapter 1, p. 3.

"After my car had broken down I had called the state police and several service stations, but I had never thought to call Stephen. Somehow, I had known if I needed to be rescued, I was going to have to do it myself." Part One, Chapter 2, p. 18.

"To my amazement, the Fisher home was not that much different from the one I'd grown up in. Braided rag rugs were scattered across the hardwood floors, a bright quilt sat folded over the back of a rocking chair, an intricately carved hutch held an assortment of delft china bowls and teacups. I think, in a way, I had been expecting to step back into *Little House on the Prairie*—these were people, after all, who willingly set aside modern conveniences. But there was an oven, a refrigerator, even a washing machine that looked like one my grandmother had had in the 1950s. My confusion must have shown, because Leda materialized at my shoulder. "They all run on gas. It's not appliances they don't want; it's the electricity. Getting power from public utility lines—well, it means you're linked to the outside world." Part One, Chapter 4, p. 50.

"Suddenly I realized what it meant to me, a lawyer, to be working on an Amish farm. I was supposed to create a defense for my client without any of the normal, everyday conveniences assessable to attorneys." Part One, Chapter 6, p. 93.

"My favorite place on the farm was the milk room. Thanks to the bulk refrigeration tank, it stayed cool, even at the hottest times of the day. It smelled like ice cream and winter, and the white walls and spotless floor made it a fine place to sit down and think. Once the inverter had charged the batteries of my laptop, I'd take my computer there to do my work."

Part One, Chapter 8, p. 124.

"Tonight, she would be shunned. She would have to eat at a separate table from her family. She would spend six weeks in the *bann*; still spoken to and loved, but for all that, also apart and alone." Part One, Chapter 9, p. 166.

"What good was a personal victory to someone who'd spent her life losing herself for the greater good of everyone else?" Part One, Chapter 10, p. 239.

"Coop stuffed his hands in his pockets; I could see how hard he was fighting to keep from making a disparaging comment about my treatment of him in the past. I wanted to touch him, to ask him to touch me, but I couldn't do that. We had been standing on the edge of this point once before, a hundred years ago, and for all that the cliff looked the same and the drop just as steep; I still couldn't catch my breath." Part Two, Chapter 12, p. 261.





"His words barely registered. I was too busy considering how many times that day I would be called upon to tell a man the one thing he least expected to hear." Part Two, Chapter 14, p. 304.

"You could not grow up Amish without knowing that eyes had weight, that stares had substance, that they could sometimes feel like a breath at your shoulder and other times like a spear right through your spine; but usually in Lancaster the glances came one on one—a tourist craning his neck to see her better, a child blinking up at her in the convenience store. Sitting on the witness stand, Katie felt paralyzed by the eyes boring into her. A hundred people were gawking at once, and why shouldn't they? It was not every day a Plain person confessed to murder."

Part Two, Chapter 17, p. 371.

"In the English world, people sent condolences and wrote e-mail and exchange valentines. In the Amish world, sympathy came in the form of a visit, love was a look of satisfaction cast across the dinner table, help was hands-on. All this time, Jacob had been waiting for an apology from his father, when that wasn't his father's means of currency." Part Two, Chapter 19, p. 396.

"The light had been left on in the barn, because Sarah knew her daughter was pregnant all along. The scissors used to cut the cord, covered with blood, had been hidden. The baby had disappeared when Katie was asleep—and the reason she didn't remember wrapping and hiding the body was because she had not been the one to do it." Part Two, Chapter 20, p. 404.



## Topics for Discussion

Why does Ellie leave the city? Is Ellie running from Stephen or is she running from her career? Why is Ellie suddenly unhappy with her life? Why does she think going to the country will help with her unhappiness? Will it help?

Who is Leda? How is her background important to the plot? Why does Leda have to remain at a distance from the Fisher family? Does Aaron impose more rules on his family than is necessary to live by Amish guidelines? How does this affect Leda's relationship with her sister? Is this why Ellie was not aware of the Fisher family? How would things have been different for Ellie had she known the Fisher family better before Katie's arrest?

Why does Ellie agree to live with the Fisher family? How is this important to the overall plot? How would the story have developed separately if Ellie had remained at Leda's? How do her living arrangements affect Ellie personally? How does it affect Katie and her family? Is this arrangement for the best? Who benefits the most and why?

Why does Ellie turn to Coop to help her with this case? Could Ellie have called another psychiatrist? Why does Ellie not accept Stephen's help as well? Do you think Ellie was consciously reaching out to Coop or do you think her desire to call him was strictly for Katie's benefit? How would Ellie's story have concluded if she had not called Coop?

Is Katie breaking any of the Amish guidelines when she visits her brother? Why does Katie so willingly wear the clothing of the English while on these visits? How do you think it makes Katie feel to fit in with the English? Do you think Katie's relationship with Adam has something to do with liking the way it feels to look English? Do you think Katie and Adam would have had a relationship if Adam were Amish?

Do you think Katie hid her pregnancy or do you think she was unaware of it? If Katie hid the pregnancy, what was her motivation? Do you think Katie was afraid of her parents and her community's reaction, or do you think she was only ashamed of her own actions? Do you think Katie was capable of killing her infant? Do you think Katie had the sufficient motivation to kill her infant? What would Aaron have done if he knew about Katie's pregnancy? Is this reason enough for Katie to hide the child?

Do you think Sarah knew Katie was pregnant? Do Sarah's actions at the end of the novel suggest she killed the infant? If so, what was her reason? Why does Ellie not turn Sarah in? Do you think Sarah was right in her motivations? Do you think Aaron would have sent Katie away? Do you think Sarah did the right thing? What do you think Katie would feel if she knew what her mother had done?