



# Jodi Picoult

## Book club discussion questions

### Plain Truth

1. What character has the most to learn during the course of this novel? Why?
2. In what ways does immersing herself in Amish culture alter Ellie's perception of the case? Of Katie?
3. Does the American legal system have the right to govern a group that lives separate from American society?
4. To what extent is Katie responsible for what happens to the infant?
5. What role does Hannah's ghost play in forming Katie's actions? Sarah's?
6. Jacob Fisher and Leda are two characters who bridge diverse worlds in this novel. Are they successful? Explain.
7. Do the actions of the men in this book aid or detract from the growth of the female characters? Explain.
8. Was Aaron Fisher justified in cutting Jacob out of the family?

9. The Amish base much on the concept of Gelassenheit, or humility, and putting others before yourself. What examples support this? In what places in the book does this not happen, and how does it affect the society?
10. Forgiveness is a basic tenet in the Amish faith. Which Amish character in this book forgives the most? Who is the most unyielding?
11. What about the Amish culture is similar to "English" culture? What is the most different?
12. Is the verdict a fair one, in your opinion?
13. Why would an Amish person accept a punishment without having committed a crime?
14. What do you think would have happened if the baby had lived?
15. In your opinion, what occurs after the last page is turned-- to the Fishers, to Katie, to Ellie?
16. What do you think Ellie will do with the information she learns from Sarah at the end of the book?
17. Why do we care so much about Katie Fisher? How does her specific situation come to touch upon universal issues like community estrangement and forbidden love?
18. What kind of a man is Aaron Fisher? As you were reading, what were your reactions to his choices? If you had to, could you make a case for defending his code of life, his propensity to put the community above the individual?

19. "You know how a mother would do anything, if it meant saving her child," Sarah tells Ellie. And earlier on, referring to her ability to butcher chickens with remorse, Sarah says to Ellie, "I do what I have to do. You of all people should understand." What is Picoult up to here? Why should Ellie in particular understand this?
20. "We all have things that come back to haunt us," Adam Sinclair tells Katie at one point. "Some of us just see them more clearly than others." Discuss the ways in which the ghosts of the past come to haunt the present action in *PLAIN TRUTH*. Of all the book's characters, who comes to "see" things most clearly? Ellie? Jacob? Sarah? Explain.
21. What kind of future do you see for Ellie and Coop? For Katie and Samuel? Jacob and his Plain heritage?
22. Discuss the significance behind the title. Is "Plain Truth" a different sort of truth than "plain truth"?