



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH LESLIE GOULD



A Plain Leaving

THE SISTERS OF LANCASTER COUNTY #1
by Leslie Gould

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1. *A Plain Leaving* is your first in the SISTERS OF LANCASTER COUNTY three-book series. All of the novels are time-slip stories. What exactly are time-slip stories and what made you decide to write a series of them?

Time-slip stories, sometimes called dual-plot or parallel-plot stories, have both a contemporary and a historical thread. A few include time travel but most do not, including mine. I decided to write time-slip stories for two reasons. The first is that I love reading them! (Two of my favorite authors of time-slip stories are Melanie Dobson and Kate Morton.) The second reason is that I believe our ancestors often have a bigger impact on our own lives than we realize. That said, the characters in the historical plots in this series are the ancestors of the characters in the contemporary plots. And each of my main characters has something she needs to learn from one of her ancestors.

2. The series follows the three Bachmann sisters—Jessica, Marie, and Leisel—in the contemporary thread. What made you decide to focus on a set of sisters?

I'm the youngest of three sisters, although I need to add that we are very different than the three sisters in the contemporary thread of this series! But I find the relationships, dynamics, and birth order of sisters fascinating. And I believe a set of sisters is a pretty powerful force in both fiction and in real life!

3. The historical thread in the first book takes place during the Revolutionary War. Why did you choose that time period?

William Penn promised religious freedom to the first waves of Amish who came to America in the early to mid-1700s. But once the Revolutionary War started, that religious freedom was threatened when the Patriots began expecting Amish men to serve as soldiers. Some fled to Canada while others paid a war tax. It was a trying time for Anabaptists, including Amish and Mennonites, who were nonresistant and against fighting or supporting war in any way.

4. Even though Jessica, the main character in the contemporary thread in *A Plain Leaving*, knows she's been shunned since she left her Amish community, she is still hurt by the actual act of it. What exactly is shunning, and why do the Amish do it?

Shunning plays out differently depending on the Amish group and district, but the reason for it is to bring the church member back into the "fold" and into fellowship. Generally, church members and family may not sit at the same table as those who are shunned, ride in their cars, or do any type of business with them. However, shunning doesn't prohibit all social interaction—shunned members can visit their Amish families, attend weddings and funerals, and celebrate holidays together.

5. What do we have to look forward to in the second book in the series?

A Simple Singing is the second book in the series, and it follows the story of Marie Bachmann, the second oldest sister, in the contemporary thread. Marie has lived the most sheltered life of the three sisters, but a January vacation to the Amish settlement of Pinecraft, Florida, opens her eyes to the hurts of others. In the historical thread, Annie Bachmann finds herself nursing wounded soldiers during the Civil War and realizing that God's calling can surprise us all.