

A PERFECT  
SECRET



# Pennsylvania Dutch Glossary

*ach*—oh

*aenti*—aunt

*bensel*—hard to handle; a handful

*Budget, The*—a weekly newspaper serving Amish and Mennonite communities everywhere

*bruder*—brother

*daed*—dad

*danki*—thank you

*Derr Herr*—God

*Englisch* or *Englischer*—a non-Amish person

*gut*—good

*hiya*—hello

*kapp*—prayer covering or cap

*kumme*—come

*milch*—milk

*narrisch*—crazy

*nee*—no

*Pennsylvania Deitsch*—Pennsylvania German, the language most commonly used by the Amish

*runschpringe*—running-around period when a teenager turns sixteen years old

*sohn*—son

*was in der welt*—what in the world

*wunderbaar*—wonderful

*ya*—yes

# *Reading Group Guide*



GUIDE CONTAINS SPOILERS, SO DON'T READ BEFORE COMPLETING THE NOVELLAS.

1. Why do we often pretend to be someone different, in some aspect, even with those we love?
2. How does Luke's mother's death undergird his decisions in life?
3. Why does Rose enjoy being the "Rob in the Hood" for a change? What does this say about her personality?
4. What is it about your life that God is perfecting at this time?
5. What is potentially dangerous about secrets in a relationship?
6. How does Rose's relationship with her aunt Tabby bring balance to her life? Who helps you in this way?
7. Why do weddings create such stress and expectation in life?

CHRISTMAS  
CRADLES



## *Reading Group Guide*

Guide contains spoilers, so don't read before completing the novellas.

1. Asa and Anna's relationship is formed by a spontaneous meeting that is, in retrospect, clearly arranged by God. What "chance meetings" have you had in your own life that have revealed God's presence to you?
2. Asa's past is redeemed in a unique way through the experiences of the night. How has God turned your past mistakes into healing or wholeness in the present?
3. Anna's character is one of self-reliance and personal resourcefulness until she discovers a love that allows her to lean on another for support. What relationships in your life provide you with the greatest support?
4. How does the symbolism of "new birth" play out in the story on levels beyond the actual deliveries?

A MARRIAGE  
OF THE HEART



## READING GROUP GUIDE

---



GUIDE CONTAINS SPOILERS, SO DON'T READ BEFORE COM-  
pleting the novellas.

1. Joseph battles an extremely tough addiction but relies on Christ to see him through, moment by moment. What problem does God help you with on a moment-to-moment basis?
2. At first Abby wants to escape her way of life, rather than yielding to God's work in her. What do you wish you could escape that might be yielded to the Lord for transformation?
3. How does the idea of "play" develop intimacy between Abby and Joseph?
4. Abby learns to feel safe with Joseph. Who do you feel most safe with in your own life—safe to be yourself, express your ideas, and so forth?

# *Amish Recipes*

## DONNA'S RAISIN-FILLED COOKIES

1 egg  
3 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1 cup mill  
2 teaspoon soda  
2 cup sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 cup shortening  
flour (start with about 4 cups)

Mix ingredients together, adding enough flour to make a soft dough. Roll out dough, cutting to desired size. Place on cookie sheet and put a spoonful of raisin filling on top. Top with another cookie and seal around edges.

Bake in 350° oven until slightly brown.

### *Filling*

1 box raisins  
2 eggs  
1 cup sugar  
1 tablespoons butter  
2 cup water  
2 tablespoons flour

*Cook the raisins until tender. Add the sugar and butter. Mix eggs and flour together and stir slowly into raisins. (May be slightly lumpy but it won't matter.) Cook slowly, stirring constantly. Cool.*

## AMISH RECIPES

Hints: *Make the top cookie thinner than the bottom one. I take the top cookie and sort of flatten it a little in my hand and then form it around the bottom cookie, sealing the edges. I use about a box and a half of raisins. That way you can put plenty of raisins in each cookie. I use a medium-size glass to cut out my cookies. You can make any size you want.*

---

### TEABERRY COOKIES

A teaberry is a low-growing, creeping evergreen plant with white flowers, aromatic leaves, and spicy edible scarlet berries. You can order teaberry extract at [www.country-pantry.com/candy\\_making.html](http://www.country-pantry.com/candy_making.html) and teaberry candies at [www.nutsonline.com](http://www.nutsonline.com).

1½ cups vegetable oil  
1½ cups white sugar  
2 eggs  
4 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 cup buttermilk  
¾ teaspoon salt  
¾ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon teaberry extract  
optional: teaberry candies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix together vegetable oil (yes, 1½ cups!), sugar, and eggs.
3. Mix in flour, baking soda, baking powder, buttermilk, salt, vanilla, and teaberry extract.
4. Pour teaspoon-sized amounts of batter onto cookie sheets,

## AMISH RECIPES

leaving plenty of room in between. Cookies will puff up and get large.

5. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes.

—COURTESY OF GILBERT STOUT

---

### AMISH ICEBOX COOKIES

- 1 large egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon of any extract you like—vanilla, root beer, etc.

#### Mixing the Dough

1. In small mixing bowl, whisk egg, egg yolk, vanilla, and salt until well blended.
2. In large mixing bowl, beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stop mixer and scrape down sides of bowl with rubber spatula.
3. Add egg mixture and beat until blended and creamy.
4. Add flour and blend with the mixer on low speed or with a wooden spoon just until soft dough forms.
5. Divide dough into two equal portions and stir flavoring of your choice into each half of dough.

#### Preparing/Storing the Dough

1. Line your counter with plastic wrap and scrape one portion of dough onto it.

## AMISH RECIPES

2. With lightly floured hands, roll dough into log about 9 inches long and 1½ inches in diameter. Repeat with second portion of dough.
3. Wrap each log separately in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours. (Wrapped logs of dough can also be placed in a freezer bag in the freezer for up to a month. Slice and bake cookies directly from the freezer.)

### Baking the Cookies

1. Position oven rack in middle of oven and preheat to 375°F.
2. Using a sharp knife, slice log into ¼-inch thick slices, rotating the log as you cut so it maintains its round shape.
3. Transfer slices of dough to ungreased cookie sheets (line sheets with parchment paper if desired), spacing them at least 1 inch apart.
4. Bake, one cookie sheet at a time, for 12 to 14 minutes (a minute or two longer for frozen dough), until cookies are pale golden around the edges but still soft on top.
5. Remove from oven and let cool on cookie sheet for 1 to 2 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Yields about 6 dozen cookies—store in an airtight container or freeze.