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More than anything else, thirty-something Holly Fisher longs for family. Growing up in Seattle without a dad or grandparents, she wonders what it would be like to have a heritage, a place of belonging. Holly is furious when her mother, Esther, reveals a long-kept secret: Holly's grandmother and uncles are still alive and begging Esther to return. And Holly is shocked when she learns that the family she's never known lives on a Lancaster, Pennsylvania, farm—as part of an Amish community her mother once abandoned. Guilt-ridden Esther, terrified to see her mother and siblings, begs Holly to accompany her on a visit to Esther's mother before she dies. But can their journey to a conflicting world heal their emotional wounds and finally bring them home?

Leaving Lancaster Details

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From Reader Review Leaving Lancaster for online ebook

Linda Hrebeniuk says

Enjoyed this Book.

4 star from me! Kate was very much on target regarding the daily thoughts, emotional struggles, and life of not just the Amish, but of all those who embrace the principles of life with our Lord. The book began with a slow start but as I kept reading I began to understand the reason why. I was touched how the life of a young person raised under the strict rules of Amish life would be tempted to leave and experience the grand life outside of the sheltered life, like a bird flying out of the nest. Especially in the 60's. The depiction of Amish life was correct. Now matter how much we try to follow the path of Jesus, we are human, with human feelings. We all will experience anger, hurt, and resentment. We all will at some time in life hurt someone by our unwillingness to forgive. We all are human, and all fall short of the glory of God, there is not one who is without sin except for Jesus Christ. This was,a wonderful book, showing God's mercy and love being poured into the depths of a heart.

Mercedes Cordero says

2 1/2 stars out of 5

Love, regret, forgiveness, redemption, second chances, new beginnings; these are some of the words that best describe the idea or themes behind this novel. This is the story of a woman coming home to the family she deserted, and the story of this woman's only daughter finally feeling at home with the family she never knew she had. Both women are afraid, scared and in desperate need of love, mercy, grace and each other. It could have been such a wonderful, beautiful, touching story, but the execution prevented it.

This is the problem I had: the two female leads were so unlikable, their attitudes so undesirable, that it was very hard to find a redeeming quality in them. The thing is that both women appear to have been written with much younger versions in mind. Holly, the daughter, sounded like an 18 year old, and the mother... maybe a 30 something, but they were both so childish and immature in their thinking, actions and in the way they spoke that it was hard to sympathize with either one. They were fighting constantly, and contradicting their thoughts with their words; for instance, the daughter would do a little soul searching and realize that she needed to cut her mother some slack, but then almost immediately say something rude to her, out of the blue. She was a brat. Half the time I was expecting them to start a "You did!" "I did not!" "Did, too!" "Did not!" fight.

Also, sometimes it felt as if the author had forgotten her own plot and previous scenes. For example, the mother mentioned her 5 brothers to her daughter, and Holly says: "Mom, you're talking gibberish. First a mother. Now, five brothers?..." Then, a few pages later, the mother mentions her five brothers again, and Holly says: "Five brothers and this is the first I'm hearing of them?" Really, no. Other times the characters' words and actions made no sense, their expressions and reactions coming out of nowhere.

I will say this, however: the author did a beautiful job writing the big confrontation / redemption scene. It was beautifully written, expressed and managed. It was really moving. Also, Nathaniel was a very nicely

written character, as well as Jeremiah and Beatrice.

The novel did keep my interest as it slowly unraveled the mysteries and secrets behind this family and their actions. But not all was revealed, which I think means that there would be more to come.

*I received a copy of this book from the publisher, David C. Cook, through NetGalley in exchange of an honest review.

Kristine Morgan says

Leaving Lancaster is the first Amish book that I have read in a while. I really enjoyed revisiting this genre. The theme of this book is forgiveness, can Esther forgive herself for taking Samuel away from their home? Can she ever return home? The story is fast moving and enjoyable. I will definitely read more of Ms. Lloyds books in the future.

From Amazon:

Can a splintered Amish family reconcile?

More than anything else, thirty-something Holly Fisher longs for family. Growing up in Seattle without a dad or grandparents, she wonders what it would be like to have a heritage, a place of belonging. Holly is furious when her mother, Esther, reveals a long-kept secret: Holly's grandmother and uncles are still alive and begging Esther to return. And Holly is shocked when she learns that the family she's never known lives on a Lancaster, Pennsylvania, farm—as part of an Amish community her mother once abandoned.

Guilt-ridden Esther, terrified to see her mother and siblings, begs Holly to accompany her on a visit to Esther's mother before she dies. But can their journey to a conflicting world heal their emotional wounds and finally bring them home?

Set in the heart of contemporary Lancaster County, Leaving Lancaster explores the power of forgiveness, family reconciliation, and love where least expected.

Kate Lloyd is a novelist, a mother of two sons, and a passionate observer of human relationships. A native of Baltimore, Kate spends time with family and friends in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the inspiration for Leaving Lancaster. She is also a member of the Lancaster County Historical Society. Kate and her husband, Noel, live in the Pacific Northwest, the setting for Kate's first novel, *A Portrait of Marguerite*. Kate studied painting and sculpture in college and has worked a variety of jobs, including car salesman and restaurateur. Find out more about Kate on Facebook or at www.katelloyd.net.

About the author:

Kate Lloyd is a novelist, a mother of two sons, and a passionate observer of human relationships. A native of Baltimore, Kate spends time with family and friends in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the inspiration for Leaving Lancaster. She is a member of the Lancaster County Mennonite Historical Society. Kate and her husband, Noel, live in the Pacific Northwest, the setting for Kate's first novel, *A Portrait of Marguerite*. Kate studied painting in college. She has worked a variety of jobs, including car salesman and restaurateur, and she raised show-dogs.

Sharon says

Love Amish story books. This one was good. I did get tired of the two main characters always putting themselves down. Makes me want to be Amish. (Hee hee????)

Barbara says

This is a delightful novel, and somewhat different from many other Amish stories. The point of view switches often between Holly and Esther, as every chapter is told in the first person voice of one of them. This took a very short time to get used to, but was a very effective way to make me feel I understood the feelings and viewpoints of both characters. Grief, coming to terms with disappointments and losses in our lives, teenage rebellion, and the power of forgiveness are dealt with very well, but there seemed to be many questions left unanswered at the end of the book. I am, therefore, hoping there is a sequel. I understand why Holly and Esther's relationship is portrayed as it is, and it does seem very realistic considering the circumstances, but am hoping they grow and get beyond their differences even more. I am grateful that the author sent me this book as a giveaway prize, but I was in no way required to write a positive review. It is the first novel I have read by Kate Lloyd, and I fully intend to read others she may write in the future.

Denise says

I really did not like either of the main characters in this book. They were both quite immature and a bit whiny. How does one get to be that old and not know or not learn how to drive. Holly acts more like a spoiled teenager than a thirty year old woman.

Nellie says

When Esther entered her Rumspringa, she hitch hiked her way to San Francisco with her boyfriend, Samuel. All this past was kept hidden from her daughter, Holly. Esther has kept her family background a secret from Holly.

When Esther's mom becomes ill and begs Esther to come home, Esther must now tell her daughter and face the consequences of her deceitful life.

Esther and Holly return to Lancaster County to face her family and friends. Some embrace her with open arms while others still harbor bitterness and hard feelings for Esther's running away. The choice has to be made of whether return to the English world or to return to her roots.

Dani Moore says

Holly Fisher never knew her father. He died before she was born, in Vietnam. As far as she knows, her mother Esther is her only living relative.

She is about to lose her job, a victim of the bad economy. Her relationship with her mother has always been strained. Now that she's living at home, even more than usual.

She has no idea how much worse things are about to get.

Her mother springs on her, with no warning, that her grandmother, who Holly thought was dead, is alive, sick, and wants them to come home to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

What will Holly and Esther find when they visit "Mamm Anna's" House. What will Esther do when she is forced to confront her past? Will Holly find the large extended family she has always coveted? Will Holly be able to forgive all the lies her mother told her, and all the things she never told her?

This book is a bit different from many "Amish Fiction" stories. It lets us inside the heads of some who have not lived Amish for years and some who never even know what it is to live Amish. A very enjoyable read, with a dash of twists, turns and romance thrown in for good measure. I was a bit frustrated to not find out all the answers, I hope they will come in more books from Kate Lloyd.

Wendy says

I don't usually read Christian fiction, I'm more of a non-fiction Christian reader, but I received the book free from David C. Cook publishing for winning one of their "Free Book Friday" Facebook contests. I never would have read or even picked up this book otherwise.

I got about half way through the book, and I just didn't care to finish it. The characters are especially immature. 38 year old Holly reads like she's 21 - bad attitude on one hand, and then the awkward social acumen of a 10 year old. Her 50-something year old mother, Esther, is so imbedded in the darkness and secrets of her past that she comes across as cold and selfish. I have a hard time caring about what these two women do because their attitudes are so bad and they are so petty. And the idea that a devout Amish man would propose to an apostate within 24 hours of reuniting with her... doubtful.

As for the writing, I didn't like the change between 1st and 3rd person as the author changed character perspective each chapter. She could have just as easily switched character perspective and stayed in 3rd person, but the switch to 1st was just awkward.

Cindy Williams says

Review for Leaving Lancaster by Kate Lloyd

Kate Lloyd takes us on a gentle journey through grace and forgiveness. Our story starts out with Esther receiving word that her mother is very ill and wants her to come home. Home is in Lancaster PA where her mother and siblings reside. Esther is a grown woman with a grown daughter of her own. Esther's husband has been missing since he left for the war, before Holly, (Esther's daughter) was even born. Esther's kept her past well hidden, and has told Holly that her mother had died and her relatives moved on. All Holly wants is a big family and a father. Imagine Holly's consternation when she finds out that her mom's been lying to her all along, that her mother is not dead, and she has a huge family.... an Amish family waiting for her in Lancaster! My goodness what excitement she must feel... but what about the betrayal Holly feels from her mother lies? What must Holly feel about this and why did Esther withhold information about her family from

her daughter? What happens when they go to Lancaster?

I really liked the way the story flowed and loved the different points of view as the two main characters shared their thoughts and feelings by taking turns relaying their story in every other chapter. My thoughts do run to something that was rather unusual for an Amish fiction story. I thought there were too many subplots going on. It didn't really take away from the story, but it appeared as though there were too many ideas going through the author head at the same time. I hesitated as to whether to write that last statement, but then I felt my review wouldn't have been totally honest.

I am glad to see there is another book out there (which thank you NetGalley for giving me access to it). I felt that the end of this book was a bit rushed and wanted the book to continue further.

I would recommend this book to my friends that read Amish fiction.

Heidi Matheson says

Very enjoyable read - all about family, forgiveness, sacrifice and love. I love the contrast between the contemporary life that Esther and Holly are used to and the Amish life they have been thrown into. The author's use of first-person language mixed in with third-person was initially a bit jarring but I came to appreciate seeing the world through Holly's eyes in particular as well as through the author's narration. I'm looking forward to continuing the story and seeing how the characters' relationships unfold.

Anastacia says

Leaving Lancaster is the first book in the series, and despite the name, the book has very little to do with the title. The book alternates between first person & third person - something I hate in a book - and makes it hard to get into any of the characters. In the beginning, I thought the book was taking place in the 60's and I was thrown for a loop when I realized it was actually taking place in current times - I also thought one of the main characters, Esther, was a teenager, and was really thrown for a loop when I realized she had a 30-something daughter. Most of the characters continue in that vein - they act so extremely immature, it's hard to like any of them.

The book begins with Ester receiving a letter from her mother, and even though she's ignored her mother's repeated pleadings to come home in the past, this time she decides to go home, admit the truth to her daughter, and drag Holly along. And so begins a novel of whining, lies, more lies, and more whining. Ester's obsession about the past, and blaming herself for things that were out of her control and not her fault, really drove me crazy. I get obsessing - being rather an obsesser myself - but at some point you have to say to yourself to suck it up and move on, and that doesn't happen in the course of this book.

And of course in the end, there's a happily ever after, though little is actually resolved. Yet, despite all of that, I did really enjoy the book and was glad to have the next book in the series at hand, ready to read.

I picked up this book to read for free on amazon, and read it as part of the Pennsylvania Patchwork book tour.

Betty says

This is the first book in the Legacy of Lancaster Trilogy. Holly Fisher, 37, is the main character. She lives with her widowed mother, Ester, in Seattle. Holly never met her father as he died before she was born. She has always wanted a family, but it has always been just she and her mother. Holly has recently been told by her boss that due to the economy he has to let her go. She had loved her job and now is anxious to find another. Money has always been tight for Holly and her mother.

Ester receives a letter from her mother stating that she is very ill and probably won't live much longer. She is begging Ester to come home to Lancaster so she can see her one more time before she dies. Ester knows she must go, but that means she will have to tell Holly that there is family in Lancaster that Ester has never told Holly about. She has also never shared their Amish traditions with Holly either. Ester knows that they must go but she fears what this will do to her relationship with her daughter.

The book is well written with strong and likable characters. The plot line pulls you along as you learn about Holly, her mother and their large Amish family and all the secrets that Holly is uncovering. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about Holly's budding relationship with the town's very popular Vet and Ester's prospects for a happy ending as well.

Iola says

Almost forty years have passed since Esther Gingerich and Samuel Fisher ran away from their Amish upbringing in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and headed west to live in a hippie commune and sing on the streets of San Francisco. They married, Samuel was drafted, shipped off to Vietnam and declared MIA, leaving Esther to raise their daughter alone because she was too proud to return to her family. Holly grew up believing her grandparents were dead, so it comes as a complete shock to her when Esther announces her intention to visit their Amish family – and wants Holly to come too.

The story alternates between being told in the first person (by 37-year-old Holly) and the third person (from the point of view of Esther, Holly's mother). I continually found myself backtracking to the beginning of the chapter because I hadn't picked up the change. Call me fussy, but combining first person and third person doesn't ring true for me. It reminds me that I'm just reading a story about a bunch of made-up characters.

This meant that I was noticing the writing rather than being carried along by the story, and as a result, I kept finding more things that bothered me. While these were mostly minor, many of which were addressed later in the story, I found these glitches were pulling me out of the story.

There were also contradictions in the plot line, and I found Holly hard to relate to. I could understand her anger and resentment towards her mother for having hidden her very alive family for so many years. She struck me as very self-centred, and I didn't really see this change as the story progressed.

Overall, I can't say that I enjoyed Leaving Lancaster. Plot-wise, it had a solid underlying theme of honesty and forgiveness. But I found the writing style too distracting to allow me to get into and enjoy the story.

Thanks to David C Cook and NetGalley for providing a free ebook for review.

Deb says

Many reviewers have done an excellent job describing the events of this book, so I will focus on what I liked and disliked about it.

What I liked:

The story flowed well and I found myself quickly turning pages to find out what was going to happen, especially as the women approached Pennsylvania.

The details of Amish and Mennonite life were interesting and seemed to be well researched. They were what really kept me reading.

The character of the Grandmother Anna, Esther's mother, was my favorite. I wanted her for my grandmother!

What I disliked:

I had a lot of trouble believing in the characters of Esther and Holly. Many of the things they said and did were not in keeping with what we knew about them. I could've smacked Holly several times. A more spoiled, obnoxious woman I'd be hard pressed to find.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in a Goodreads Giveaway.
