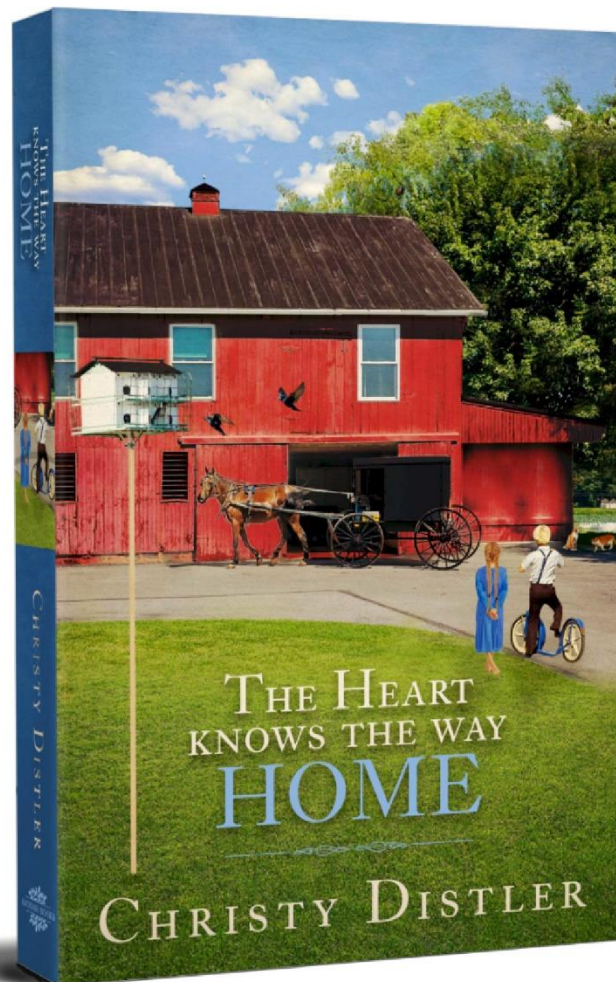
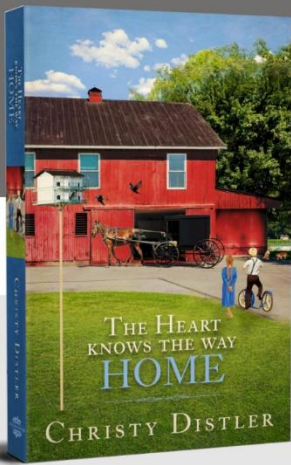


THE HEART KNOWS THE WAY HOME



BOOK CLUB KIT

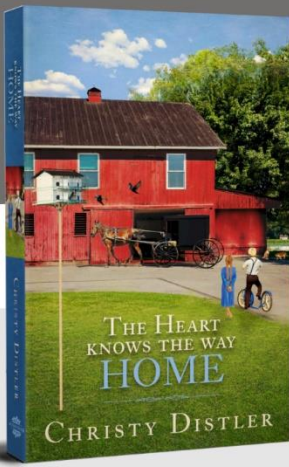


THE HEART KNOWS THE WAY HOME

BOOK CLUB KIT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Janna and Kayla Carpenter move to Akron—or attempt to—in search of a new beginning in their life. In your own life, have you ever felt like you needed to make major changes so you could move forward? Why do you think Janna chose Lancaster County after being away for so long?
- 2 Luke Martin also wants change in his life. Struggling to balance running a business and caring for his aging mother and young son, he grapples with the feeling that his business, although necessary to support his family, is taking precedence. What are some ways people can deal with this very common feeling?
- 3 Janna and Luke's relationship starts out complicated. Her desire for independence and his traditional Old Order principles set them at odds and cause tiffs between them. What events lead to their putting their differences aside and rekindling their friendship?
- 4 Both Luke and Janna have people who speak wisdom into their lives. Who are they for each character, and which ones are your favorites?
- 5 Janna is devastated when she learns that her mother intercepted the letters she and Martins wrote to each other almost fourteen years before. How do you think she came to terms with that betrayal?
- 6 Luke also feels betrayed by his mother, who has been mostly absent from his life. Were you surprised when she left so abruptly even after promising Luke that she wanted to change their relationship for the better? Why or why not?
- 7 Toward the end of the story, Luke makes the difficult decision to change churches, stating that he believes that is God's leading. Describe a time in your life when you knew with certainty that God was guiding you to make a significant change.
- 8 Luke and Janna's biggest confrontation happens after a friend from church invites Janna and the children to go to the community pool with them and Janna accepts. Who did you relate to more in this situation, Luke or Janna?
- 9 Despite their differences, Luke and Janna also share a lot of similarities. What are they, and which ones do you think were most important in impelling their relationship beyond friendship?
- 10 Who is (are) your favorite character(s) in the story? Why? Which character do you relate to the most? Why?
- 11 What was your favorite scene in the book? Which was the least favorite?
- 12 What is your greatest takeaway from reading this story?



THE HEART KNOWS THE WAY HOME

BOOK CLUB KIT

AUTHOR Q&A

- Q** What was your inspiration for writing *The Heart Knows the Way Home*?
- A** Honestly, I'd never expected to write a Plain romance story; it was even on my "Things I'll Never Write" list. Not because I don't like Plain fiction (Mary Christner Borntreger's *Ellie* was my first introduction to Christian fiction as a teen, and I still love her books), but because I had some qualms about writing it because of my background. And then Janna Carpenter appeared in my mind, and her story—and Luke's—started taking form. The story wouldn't leave me alone, and then I realized I could use it to bring awareness to Clinic for Special Children, a nonprofit medical facility in Strasburg, PA, that serves children and adults (mostly Amish and Mennonite) with genetic and complex other medical disorders. And once I had that motivation, the book almost wrote itself.
- Q** What sort of research did you do for *The Heart Knows the Way Home*?
- A** Most of my research delved into the particulars of the two Old Order Mennonite groups in the book. In my late-teens and early twenties, I attended a very conservative Mennonite church (similar to the Horning church, but we had Sunday school and believed strongly in spreading the gospel), and having lived Plain certainly made it easier to write about. Each sect has its own nuances, though, so research was necessary. The rest of the story aspects came naturally. I've lived my whole life within about an hour of Lancaster County, and I've driven the roads and been to places like Oregon Dairy, the Wilbur Chocolate Factory, Strasburg Railroad, and Cherry Crest Adventure Farm many times. I did have to do some research to portray Joah's medical issues, but Kayla's food allergies I wrote about from personal experience (my youngest child has multiple severe food allergies).
- Q** What was most difficult part of writing this story?
- A** I really vacillated on whether to use the names of the two Old Order Mennonite groups in the story. I didn't want to be so specific, mainly because Plain people prefer to be unassuming and many readers wouldn't inherently recognize the sects by name, but omitting the names wasn't working. My critique partners and my editor were sometimes confused about which group was being referred to in the story, so using the names seemed like the only way to avoid confusion.
- Q** What do you hope readers will discover by reading *The Heart Knows the Way Home*?
- A** Clinic for Special Children! The love and care the clinic provides to their patients, many of whom come from the Plain community, is so vital. Since a large portion of their operating cost is covered by charitable donations, awareness of the clinic's mission is crucial to their ability to serve their patients. Otherwise, I hope readers will see that God is a God of second chances (and third, fourth, fifth, and so on, if necessary) and that he truly does bring good from our most painful circumstances if we trust him. I've seen this promise fulfilled over and over in my life, and I can't help but share it.