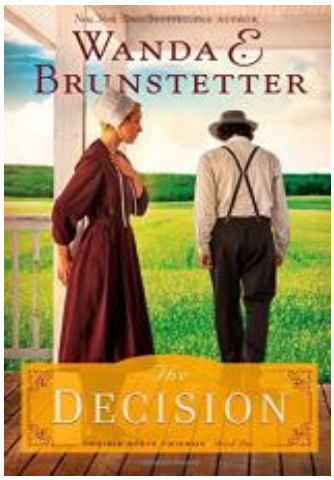
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The Decision: Prairie State Friends, Book One

by Wanda E. Brunstetter



About the Book

Sometimes Jonah feels he must be unlovable . . .

By a strange turn of events Jonah Miller was left at the altar by the love of his life back home in Pennsylvania. Seeking to leave heartbreak behind, he moves to Illinois to build a new life, settling into the Amish community of Arthur, as a buggy maker.

The move is working well for the good-hearted Jonah, especially after he meets Elaine Schrock, who hosts Amish dinners with her grandmother in their home in the picturesque little town. But when Elaine?s grandfather suddenly dies, and her beloved grandmother --- her only living relative --- slips into dementia, Elaine must decide between her growing love for Jonah and her determination to provide loving care for her grandmother. The demands on her time and energy are overwhelming; Elaine worries that she can?t meet her caregiving demands and still be the kind of wife Jonah deserves.

Jonah offers to help Elaine --- so do her friends, Leah and Priscilla, but still Elaine has a heartbreaking decision to make. What does the future hold for her --- and what for this gentle man, Jonah?

Discussion Guide

1. Elaine felt that the care of Edna, her grandmother, was her responsibility, so at first she had trouble accepting help from others. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed help but tried to do everything on your own? How did you feel when someone stepped in to help?

2. Elaine waited too long to tell her grandmother about her illness, and Edna ended up hearing it from someone else. If you knew someone in your family had been diagnosed with a serious illness, would you tell them right away, or do you

think it would be better to keep it from them?

3. When Edna first learned that she had dementia, she was in denial. Have you or someone you know ever been told by a doctor that something was seriously wrong? If so, how did you deal with it?

4. When Edna realized she was losing her memory, her biggest concern was that she wouldn?t remember any of her family or friends. If you were in Edna?s place, what would be your biggest fears? If you suffered from memory loss, what would you do to help remember those who are closest to you?

5. Elaine told Jonah a lie when she said she didn?t love him. Is there ever a time when it?s okay to lie?

6. When Sara began having health issues, she put off going to the doctor, using the cost as an excuse. Have you or someone you know ever avoided going to the doctor due to the lack of money? Was Sara right in neglecting her health, or should she have asked someone for the money she needed? By not going to the doctor sooner, was Sara putting her son at risk?

7. Elaine?s closest friends, Leah and Priscilla, helped her deal with the sorrowful events that came her way. What are some ways we can help a friend who is going through a difficult time?

8. Elaine?s friends often gave her advice. When should we listen to a friend?s recommendations, and when should we choose to ignore them?

9. Do you think Elaine was being overprotective of her grandmother? As a caregiver to a relative with dementia, how would you handle things?

10. Jonah had been hurt by two women and was afraid to take another chance. Have you or someone you know ever been fearful of entering a new relationship because of past failures? If so, how did you or your friend deal with those fears?

11. Even though Elaine told Jonah she didn?t love him, do you think Jonah gave up too quickly her? Should Jonah have tried harder to assure Elaine of his love for her and his willingness to help during her time of need?

12. Arthur, Illinois is a real town. While reading this story, what did you learn about this Amish community?

13. Does reading about the Amish influence you to simplify your life? What are some ways people can simplify? What are ways *you* could simply your life?

Author Bio

New York Times bestselling author Wanda E. Brunstetter has captured the hearts of millions of readers with her Amish fiction, making her ?Amish Country?s Most Beloved Storyteller.? With more than 70 books to her credit, and with more than eight million copies sold, Wanda has consistently earned spots on such prestigious bestseller lists as *New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, *USA Today* and CBA. All of Wanda?s novels are based on personal research intended to accurately portray the Amish way of life.

Considered one of the founders of the Amish fiction genre, Wanda said her fascination with the simple life began when she met her husband, Richard, who grew up in a Mennonite church. Getting to know her Mennonite sisters-in-law caused the author to yearn for the simpler life. Her desire to explore the Amish culture increased when she discovered that her great-great grandparents were part of the Anabaptist faith. In their travels, Wanda and her husband have become close friends with Amish across America, who have credited her with giving readers a deeper understanding of the people and their customs.

When not writing, Wanda, who is a puppeteer and ventriloquist, enjoys entertaining children and adults with Amish ventriloquist figures and indulging in photography, gardening, bird-watching and beachcombing. Most of all, she cherishes time spent visiting with her Amish friends, her husband, their two grown children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She and Richard live in Yakima, Washington, and spend winter months in Sarasota, Florida.

Critical Praise

?The first book in a new contemporary series has amazing characters who are kind and willing to help those they love any way they can. Brunstetter is a talented author.?

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