

Portrait of a Sister
Book Club Questions

From the Book:

- 1) When Katie steps off the bus in New York City, she's more than a little overwhelmed. In many ways, it's like she's landed on a new planet. Have you ever gone somewhere that is so utterly different from everything you've ever known? Did you like the change—why or why not?
- 2) All her life, Katie has been a rule follower. She's done what was expected of her, when it was expected of her. It's the way she is, the way she's seen—even by herself. Do you feel as if you're seen a certain way and do you find that you maintain that because it's the way you are or because it's the way people expect you to be?
- 3) Katie keeps her drawings to herself because she knows it's something she's not supposed to do. But she also keeps it to herself because it's something that is hers, alone. So much of her life has been about following a certain path, acting a certain way, and this is all hers. Do you have a hobby or a passion that you either indulge in now or hope to at some point? What is it? And what about it speaks to you?
- 4) While there was the potential for Eric to become a love interest for Katie, the friendship was richer in many ways. Through Eric's eyes, Katie was able to see herself as something other than just a daughter and a twin sister. Do you have a close friend of the opposite gender? Is that friendship different than ones you have with people of the same gender? How so?
- 5) If someone you loved had an extraordinary talent and you had an opportunity to help them go somewhere with that talent, would you? Why or why not? Do you think Hannah acted selfishly in showing Katie's pictures to her boss?
- 6) What do you see as the turning point for Katie—the moment when she realized the path she'd been walking was, indeed, the right path for her?
- 7) If you were Katie, what would you have chosen?

Bonus questions:

- 8) Were you surprised that Katie gave the money to Hannah, so that she could follow her dream of becoming a hairdresser/beautician? Do you think she should or could have kept it for herself and Abram? Why?

- 9) Miss Lottie plays a pivotal role in helping Katie make her decision to stay home, do you think that she "steered" her decision? Or did she just ask the right questions so that Katie could understand herself better? Do you have a "Miss Lottie" in your own life? If so, who?
- 10) What do you think Katie should do with the drawings already in her sketchpad? Should she throw them away or give them to someone? If the latter, to whom and why?
- 11) Katie decides to modify her passion for drawing in a way that enables her to keep drawing while still following the Amish beliefs. Have you ever had to modify a passion of your own to fit with another aspect of your life? If so, what and how?
- 12) What do you see as pros (and cons) to living in a big city like NY? If you were to live in a big city anywhere in the world, which would you choose and why?