

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Rachel agree to leave Copper Creek? Do you agree or disagree with her reasons? How do her feelings of guilt play into her decision? Have you ever been tempted to avoid an issue or a loved one because of something you've done? How did you resolve it—or is it something you still need to address?
2. Although Leah and Rachel are identical twins, their personalities are starkly different. How do their personalities change as the story progresses? In what ways do they remain the same?
3. Have you known any identical twins? Did the author's portrayal ring true? Why or why not?
4. Imagine that Judah King was the one who withdrew the sheet of paper from the *Ausbund*, declaring him the next bishop of Copper Creek. How might he have addressed Rachel's sin, given the way he loved her?

5. Do you believe that our deceased loved ones in heaven view the pain we go through on earth? Did you find Amos's viewpoint believable? Why or why not?
6. If you were in Tobias King's place, would you have chosen to forsake your child or your pride? The choice may seem easy in theory, but if it involved confessing a shameful sin, would it be? What factors might influence your decision?
7. If you were in Judah's place, could you have forgiven Rachel and still built a life with her? If you were in Leah's place, could you have forgiven your sister's betrayal? Have you ever been faced with a heart-rending situation like this? If so, how did you handle it?
8. What are some of the biblical allusions in *The Outcast*? What did they add to the story?
9. Holistic and conventional medicine are compared and contrasted throughout *The Outcast*. In the end, do you feel one was more effective than the other? If so, why? Why is there a tension between the two approaches? Have you or your family encountered this tension?
10. Ida Mae and Rachel were both rejected by the communities that once sheltered them. Compare their individual responses. It's natural to want to turn around and reject others in the same way we've been rejected. How have you responded in the face of rejection?

11. In the end, Leah and Tobias decide to leave Copper Creek because of the painful memories it holds. What's the difference between forgiving and forgetting? Why is it sometimes difficult—maybe impossible—to forget a wrong, even when we've worked hard to forgive? Does true forgiveness have to include forgetting? Why or why not?
12. Was it startling to learn that the Plain communities struggle with the same sins as the English? Why do you think these communities tend to be viewed in a utopian light?