



# Beyond the Plain and Simple: A Patchwork of Amish Lives

*Pauline Stevick*

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*A series of vignettes describing Amish people and customs*

Pauline Stevick has visited more than 50 Amish homes in numerous Amish settlements across the country. She has attended weddings, viewings, school sessions and programs, family gatherings, and more than a dozen church services. She has ridden in Amish carriages and has even slept in Amish homes. Through her close association with the Amish, she has gained unique perspective and is able to provide keen insight into a culture that is misunderstood by many.

*Beyond the Plain and Simple* reminds readers that although the Amish dress in almost identical clothing, they have distinct personalities and convictions. In vignettes and reflections she reveals the ways in which members of the Amish community live out their faith against the background of their communal culture, all the while emphasizing their individuality. Topics range from Amish family values to women to a retirement community in Florida to an Amish intellectual. Stevick's eloquent narration is descriptive rather than expository as she often draws comparisons between Amish society and mainstream society, sometimes preferring the Amish ways and at other times questioning them. *Beyond the Plain and Simple* portrays the Amish as dynamic people who experience struggles, failures, and successes not unique to their community.

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