

***Amity & Sorrow* by Peggy Riley**

Questions and topics for discussion

1. How are names used as metaphors in the novel?
2. What is the meaning behind how names are given (i.e., attribute names for the children and the family name shared by the Bradleys of Oklahoma), and do you think they serve a purpose?
3. How does the writer explore the bond between Sorrow and Amity? In what ways is their relationship typical of the bond between sisters?
4. The children in the polygamous community were illiterate. What are the implications and impact of that type of ignorance? Is a faith that is designed to keep its believers ignorant and isolated a “true” faith?
5. How can blind faith be dangerous? Was Sorrow brainwashed or devout?
6. Who defines what makes a family, and is there a true definition of family anymore? Do you think these polygamous women are a “true” family?
7. Are there scenarios that can justify a polygamous lifestyle? What are the benefits of a polygamous community to the wives in *Amity & Sorrow*? Do you think Amity will be drawn to live a polygamous lifestyle?

8. What role did meth play in the story? What did that add to the plot or reveal about the community?

9. Is it a fair exchange to join a faith and a family to “get clean”? Who gets more out of the exchange—the individual women or the family in total? Does a faith that offers a safe place of healing appeal to you, or is it a kind of con?

10. One of the hardest decisions a mother can make is to turn against her child. How does Amaranth struggle with this decision? Do you think she makes the right choice?

11. To what extent was Sorrow a victim? Or did she become a willing participant when she returned “home”? At what age should children be responsible for their actions?