



Visits with the Amish: Impressions of the Plain Life (Bur Oak Book)

Linda Egenes

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Who are the “plain people,” the men and women who till their fields with horse and plow, travel by horse and buggy, live without electricity and telephones, and practice “help thy neighbor” in daily life? Linda Egenes visited with her Old Order Amish neighbors in southeast Iowa for thirteen years before writing this informative and companionable introduction to their lifeways.

Drawn to their slower pace of life and their resistance to the lures of a consumer society, Egenes found a warm welcome among the Amish, and in return she has given us an equally warm perspective on Amish family life as she experienced it. The Amish value harmony in family life above all, and Egenes found an abundance of harmony as she savored homemade ice cream in a kitchen where the refrigerator ran on kerosene, learned to milk a two-bucket cow, helped cook dinner for nine in a summer kitchen, spent the day in a one-room schoolhouse, and sang “The Hymn of Praise” in its original German at Sunday service.

Whether quilting at a weekly sewing circle above the Stringtown Grocery, playing Dutch Blitz and Dare Base with schoolchildren, learning the intricacies of harness making, or mulching strawberries in a huge garden, Egenes was treated with the kindness, respect, and dignity that exemplify the strong community ties of the Amish. Her engaging account of her visits with the Amish, beautifully illustrated with woodcuts by Caldecott Medal winner Mary Azarian, reveals the serene and peaceful ways of a plain people whose lives are anything but plain.

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