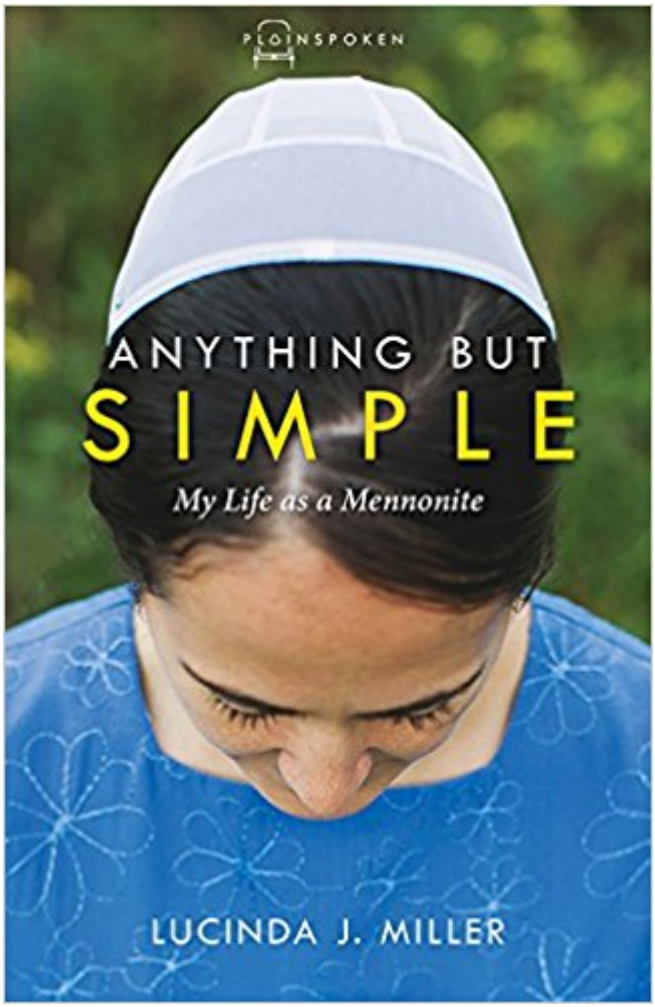
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Anything But Simple: My Life As A Mennonite (Plainspoken)



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Synopsis

Like her grandmother, Lucinda J. Miller wears long dresses and a prayer covering. But she uses a cellphone and posts status updates on Facebook, too. Anything but Simple is the riveting memoir of a young womanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rich church tradition, lively family life, and longings for a meaningful future within her Mennonite faith. With a roving curiosity and a sometimes saucy tongue, Miller ushers us into her busy life as a young schoolteacher.Book 5 in the Plainspoken series. Hear straight from Amish and Mennonite people themselves as they write about their daily lives and deeply rooted faith in the Plainspoken series from Herald Press. Each book includes Ã¢â ¬Å“A Day in the Life of the AuthorÃ¢â ¬Â• and the authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s answers to FAQs about the Amish and Mennonites.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lucinda J. Miller is a writer, teacher, blogger, and member of a conservative Mennonite community in Wisconsin. She teaches elementary school at the Sheldon Mennonite Church, and her writing has appeared in Daughters of Promise and Red Cedar Literary Journal. Her childrenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book, The Arrowhead, is forthcoming from Christian Light Publications. Connect with her at lucindajmiller.com

Reading Lucinda MillerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s debut memoir is a lot like going for a walk in a Mennonite meadow, cows mooing in the distance, family flocking around the ripening apples on family trees.

But it is more: It pushes forward like a coming of age novel: childhood, adolescence, young adulthood. It also plumbs deep, the writer fathoming her faith and her place in a larger, neon-lit world, which beckons.Sensitive and aiming to be scholarly, the author admits to being Dorky, Schoolbook Snorky, at odds with feeling both set apart and wanting to fit in. A former Mennonite myself, I could easily identify with wearing a prayer cap, taking vows of faith, and accepting the Holy Kiss of a whiskery woman after the foot-washing ritual.Luci, the storyteller, evidently took her creative writing classes to heart as she brings to life two Turtle Bishops, one whose wife Sandra ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“had a face as round and wrinkled as a warm oatmeal cookie fresh from the oven and fallen in on itself.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• As truth-seeker, she opens up windows in other people minds to discover her own, I think, exploring the lives of the elderly but chipper Charlene and the sophisticated and muddled Mara. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Peel off the layers of my caped dress and opaque cap, and we all have the same strivings and struggles with believing," Luci Miller seems to say.Lucinda MillerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s little/big-girl voice sounds authentic, without guile. I imagine this could be Book 1 in a series of her own collection of plainspoken stories, some wild and ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“off the grid.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• True to her best self.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and couldn’t put it down until it was finished.

"Books opened my eyes to a broader world, gave me a safe place to explore that did not threaten my own existence. Lost in pages, I lived the lives and dreamed the dreams of a thousand people in a thousand times. I ruined my eyes but saved my mind with books. "This is one of my favorite quotes from Anything But Simple by Lucinda J. Miller because is exemplifies the very reason why I have loved reading books since I was old enough to read. It is the one thing that stands out in my dad’s mind when he recalls my childhood. In this book, Lucinda J. Miller tells readers what it is like living as a Mennonite, the differences between being Amish and Mennonite and her own personal struggles with the guidelines that the church establishes for those living in the community in rural Wisconsin."I used to wonder, when I was young, what it would be like if the whole world were Mennonite. What if you’d past a gas station and see Mennonites there, pumping gas? And what if you’d go into the grocery store and there were only Mennonite families doing the shopping? The dads in the lead, smiling in a friendly sort of way and wearing long-sleeved dress shirts like the men wore to church, the wives in their dresses and head coverings pushing heaped carts down the aisles, children gathered around them in bundles.What if you never had to worry about anyone stealing from you or doing bad things, because everyone obeyed Jesus? (As, in my childish mind, I

assumed Mennonites always did.) And what if everywhere you went - to the ocean, to the park, to California - it was as if you were meeting family, because everyone was just like you?"I guess it is something most of us forget when we look at the Amish and Mennonites is how very different they are compared to us. But what about putting the shoe on the other foot and wonder how difficult it must be for them to live among the English world and the ways that are far different from their own. Anything But Simple conveys what it is like for one young woman growing up and seeing so many things changing around her as the established ways that set Mennonites and Amish apart are now trying to hold on to their faith while living in a world quite different from their own. I really enjoyed the stories that Lucinda shares in her book about her dreams of wanting to be a writer but stuck in a sense dealing with being very different and trying to share her own personal legacy with readers in this book. I applaud them in their efforts much like as Christians, we understand how vastly different the world is around us, trying to hold on to our faith in a growing hostile world.I received Anything But Simple by Lucinda J. Miller compliments of Herald Press. "But if you try for simplicity, is it simple anymore?" Lucinda compares some of the complex code of laws, both written and unwritten, as exists within her denomination, as the Pharisees of Jesus' day might be an excellent comparison. In the Mennonite world everything matters, clothes matter because they define you as separate in society and they define you in Mennonite circles as part of a certain fellowship or conference, a certain level of liberal or conservative. But then again something as insignificant as whether or not a man's top shirt button is closed during church service can become an important issue in certain church groups. In their world, every decision is given excruciating examination in light of the Bible and the church. This is a wonderful insightful book for anyone who really wants to know the truth about living life as a Mennonite and for that reason I give this a 4.5 out of 5 stars.

You've probably read a novel about the Amish or Mennonites as those books are very popular. But are they accurate? Miller shares an open and honest memoir of what it is really like being Mennonite.I was impressed with the honesty in Miller's account. She tells of her struggle with the dilemma of wanting to cultivate the Mennonite tradition yet also being a little ashamed of being part of a people thought to be socially backward. She explores the idea of keeping a simple lifestyle. She wonders about being bound by outward appearance, knowing that one could look perfect on the outside but be worldly within. Would losing that separateness on the outside mean losing that consecrated heart on the inside?I was surprised to read that the Mennonite community is just about like any other Christian community. They have their church splits. They have their conservatives and liberals, differing on the methods used to enforce guidelines.Miller shares her experiences of

joining church, communion (twice a year), and foot washing. She also shares her discovering the reward of putting feelings to words and her desire to achieve fame as an author. She takes us through her dreams, dashed and then reborn.There is a question and answer section at the end of the book. In it, Miller shares many facts about clothing, history, difference between Amish and Mennonites, use of modern technology, and the suggestion to find out more from bloggers listed at The Mennonite Game website.I recommend this memoir to those who want to get a realistic account of one person’s experience of growing up Mennonite. Her writing style is not sophisticated but does give readers an enlightening account of being a single and Plain Mennonite woman today.I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. My comments are an independent and honest review.

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