Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: A Memoir of Going Home By Rhoda Janzen Paperback, 272 pages List price: $5.99. Read An Excerpt. Everybody knows the morning-after embarrassment of the mysteriously random sex dream. In the complex moral universe that is Mennonite adulthood, a Mennonite can be good-looking and still have no sartorial taste whatsoever. My father may actually be unaware that he is good-looking. He is a theologian who believes in a loving God, a servant heart, and a senior discount. Nothing gets this woman down. She is the kind of mother who, when we were growing up, came singing into our bedrooms at 6:00 a.m., tunefully urging us to rise and shine and give God the glory, glory. And this was on Saturday, Saturday. Upbeat she is. The concept of father memoirs is a fascinating one. Confronting fathers directly and publicly is not, and never has been, easy: the patriarch should judge and not be judged. To write about the father is to sit in judgment upon him, and for most cultures this was a taboo too strong to be overcome. Though the book was an immediate success and the reviews were largely enthusiastic, the reviewer of the Academy had reservations about the “close anatomisation by a son of a father”, and the Times Literary Supplement raised the question of “how far in the interests of popular edification or amusement it is legitimate to expose the weaknesses and inconsistencies of a good man who.” Edward St Aubyn’s books are a very painful read on the subject of fathers. Reply. Share. Toews’s eighth book, Women Talking, is a fictional account of eight women gathering in the wake of the men’s arrests to decide a course of action. It’s a dense, eerie, darkly funny novel that reads like a tightly constructed short story. A Mennonite community in Bolivia. Photograph: Lisa Wiltse/Corbis via Getty Images. “I’ve spent a lot of time with Mennonite women, and there’s a certain kind of natural, inherent, storytelling capacity,” says Toews. “Not to the point where they’re being disobedient. She is aware that Women Talking has landed in a politically charged climate. “I know the book could be viewed as me making a political statement through a fictional narrative, which wasn’t really my intent. My goal is always to tell a story and to create characters that will move the reader.