

# Angels of Morgan Hill

by Donna VanLiere

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## About the Book

From Donna VanLiere --- the author of the beloved *Christmas Hope* series --- comes a moving novel of faith, family, and destiny.

*You might think that what you're about to read has a great deal to do with my father and growing up poor in east Tennessee, but there is so much more --- what captured my heart was the hope of belonging and the dream of family. The woman I am has a great deal to do with that ninth year of my life. It started out as any other year, nothing extraordinary, but as each day unfolded it became remarkable in every way. There are times when I'm still amazed we made it through. It has been said that every life has a story. This is my story....--From the Prologue*

Jane Gable thinks 1947 will be like every other year in Morgan Hill, Tennessee but it's the year everything changes. Jane first lays eyes on young Milo Turner the day that her abusive, alcoholic father is buried in the Morgan Hill cemetery. The Turners are the first black family ever to move into the area, and while their presence challenges the comfort of many in the small, tight-knit community, Jane and her brother, John, have found new friends.

Then tragedy strikes the Turner household, and the Gable family is asked to make a decision that could rip their world apart. One path might open up a whole new world and bring them closer than ever. Or it might bring them nothing but trouble and heartache. On their journey, Jane discovers that angels are all around us, every day, in the most extraordinary --- and ordinary --- ways.

**The Angels of Morgan Hill** is filled with unforgettable characters who show us the ways and means of the heart and prove that even in the darkest hours, we are never truly alone.

## Discussion Guide

1. How would you describe Jane? What is her relationship like with Fran, John and Henry? How do those relationships change over the course of the book? At the beginning of the book what is Jane's outlook on life? What is Fran and John's? How do their perspectives change throughout the book?
2. One theme in the book is that God uses people to help shape our character. How did Lonnie Gable shape the lives (positively or negatively) of Fran, Jane and John? How was Henry and Loretta used? Willie Dean and Addy? Beef and the boys? Who has had a profound impact (good or bad) in your life? Share those as a group.
3. How would you describe Fran Gable? What is her relationship like with Jane and John? Henry and Loretta? What is it like with Joe Cannon and Addy? What role do you think faith plays in how Fran handles the circumstances in her life with Lonnie, then in the decision she faces about Milo?
4. Who is Henry Walker to Jane? How is his relationship different with Fran? How do the people of Morgan Hill view Henry? Was there anyone else within Jane's reach that could have possibly stepped into the role that Henry held in her life? If yes, who? If no, why was Henry different from the other men in the book? How did you feel when Henry saved Fran? How does Henry's character resonate with you?
5. Minor characters play an important part in the book. Besides the role of annoying aunt, how else does Aunt Dora play into Jane's life? What other secondary characters provide enriching elements in the book? Can you describe how one of those minor characters contributes to the storyline?
6. In what ways do you think the war changed Joe Cannon? What were Joe's strengths? Weaknesses? How do you think the fire that broke out on his property affected him long term? Why was it so hard for him to share his feelings for Fran?
7. Compare Fran Gable and Addy Turner (strengths, weaknesses, personality differences. How does Fran view herself and how does Addy view herself? How do they size up each other?) Why do you think they struck up a friendship with one another? What do you think the conversation about a cup of cold water has on Fran? Do you think Fran would have taken Milo into her home if she had not befriended Addy? Why or why not?
8. Describe Milo at the beginning of the book and note the changes he makes throughout the story. How does his relationship change with Jane and John? What do you think he really feels about Fran? Wouldn't it have been easier to live with the minister and his wife? Why would he ultimately decide to live with the Gables? How did that one decision forever change his life?
9. Why are people opposed to a little boy living with Fran and her children? How is the opposition of Beef and the boys different from Margaret's? How do Beef and the boys really view Fran? How do you think they view Joe Cannon and Henry? How do they view the Turners? How does Fran feel after Margaret's betrayal?
10. In what ways is the community of Morgan Hill a major character in the book? How does the landscape mold the lives of the characters? What part of Morgan Hill is most alive in the pages to you?

**11.** At the end of the book Jane is a grandmother. What did you think of her as a grown woman? What kind of mother do you think she was? How do you think her relationship with Henry changed after Fran married Joe? Is Jane the kind of woman you'd like to have over for dinner?

## Author Bio

Donna VanLiere is a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author. Her much-loved *Christmas Hope* series includes THE CHRISTMAS SHOES and THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING, both of which were adapted into movies for CBS Television, THE CHRISTMAS SECRET, THE CHRISTMAS JOURNEY and THE CHRISTMAS HOPE, which was adapted into a film by Lifetime. She is also the author of THE ANGELS OF MORGAN HILL and FINDING GRACE. VanLiere is the recipient of a Retailer's Choice Award for Fiction, a Dove Award, a Silver Angel Award, an Audie Award for best inspirational fiction, and a nominee for a Gold Medallion Book of the Year. She is a gifted speaker speaks regularly at conferences. She lives in Franklin, Tennessee, with her husband and their children.

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