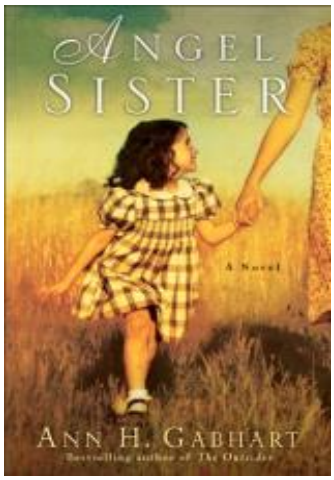
Angel Sister

by Ann H. Gabhart



About the Book

It is 1936 and Kate Merritt, the middle child of Victor and Nadine, works hard to keep her family together. Her father slowly slips into alcoholism and his business suffers during the Great Depression. As her mother tries to come to grips with their situation and her sisters seem to remain blissfully oblivious to it, it is Kate who must shoulder the emotional load. Who could imagine that a dirty, abandoned little girl named Lorena Birdsong would be just what the Merritts need?

In this richly textured novel, award-winning author Ann H. Gabhart reveals the power of true love, the freedom of forgiveness, and the strength to persevere through troubled times. Multidimensional characters face real and trenchant problems while maintaining their family bonds, all against the backdrop of a sultry Kentucky summer. Readers will be drawn into the story and find themselves lingering there long after they've finished the book.

Discussion Guide

1. Angel Sister is set in 1936 during the Great Depression. Do you see similarities with today?s economic hard times? What are the major differences?

2. Kate thinks of herself as the responsible sister and wants to take care of her family. Why do you think she feels this way? Did you ever feel this way while you were growing up --- as if it were up to you to make everything right in your family? Do you think that?s a common feeling for some children?

3. Victor loves Nadine and his girls desperately and yet he kept giving in to the temptation to drink even though his drinking was threatening to destroy his family life. Why do you think he couldn?t resist the temptation? Do you believe the Lord can free people of addictive habits if they give them over to him in prayer? Have you known this (the Lord taking away an addiction) to happen to anyone you know?

4. Nadine has a strong, unquestioning faith in the Lord. How do you think that helped her endure her father?s harsh attitude and actions? Do you think her life would have been a great deal different if she hadn?t gone back to Rosey Corner after Victor left to fight the war in France?

5. Lorena?s parents desert her on the church steps. Do you think her mother left her there out of love because she truly trusted the Lord to send someone to take care of Lorena? Can you imagine being so desperately poor that you might consider giving up a child if you thought the child would be better off?

6. Kate wants more than anything to be Lorena?s angel sister and take care of the little girl. When Grandfather Merritt takes the child from her, she tells her father she no longer believes there is a God. Have you ever been so disappointed and hurt that you turned away from the Lord?

7. Lorena?s name is her connection to her past and her way of remembering her family. Do you think she kept saying ?My name is Lorena Birdsong? or do you think after a while she no longer had the need to declare her name every night? How did you feel in the story when Kate, Lorena, and Graham shouted their names after the fire? Did it make you want to shout out your name too?

8. Why do you think Ella Baxter wanted to adopt Lorena when it was obvious she didn?t like children? Do you think in that day and time a childless woman had a stigma on her?

9. Victor never felt loved by his father. Why do you think his father was so hard on him? Do you think Nadine was right when she told Victor to forgive his father? Do you think Victor was a more loving father to his daughters because his own father was so cold toward him?

10. Why do you think Graham and Fern lived the way they did? Do you think without the responsibility of taking care of Fern, Graham would have lived a different life? Do you think Fern was mentally ill or simply closed off from the world because that was how she coped with the bad happenings in her life?

11. Aunt Hattie knew the Lord and she knew the people of Rosey Corner. Why do you think she was unable to stand up to Preston Merritt when she seemed to have no problem with anybody else?

12. Kate asked Grandfather Reece and her mother if they believed in guardian angels. Do you believe in guardian angels?

Author Bio

Ann H. Gabhart is the bestselling author of ANGEL SISTER, SMALL TOWN GIRL and WORDS SPOKEN TRUE, as well as several Shaker novels --- THE OUTSIDER, THE BELIEVER, THE SEEKER, THE BLESSED and THE GIFTED --- and *The Heart of Hollyhill* series. She lives with her husband a mile from where she was born in rural Kentucky.

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