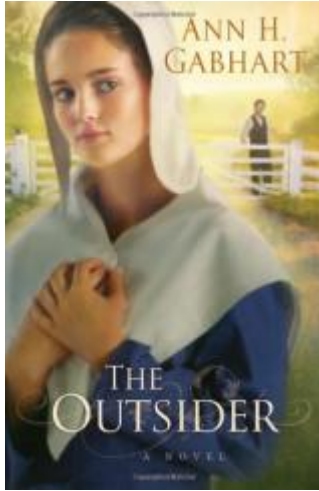


The Outsider

by Ann H. Gabhart



About the Book

She thought she was content --- until a love from the outside world turned hers upside down.

Gabrielle Hope and her mother joined the Harmony Hill Shaker community in 1807. The community promised stability and devotion that Gabrielle wholeheartedly embraced. But when a local doctor must be brought into Harmony Hill from the outside, he sets into motion a chain of events that will challenge Gabrielle's loyalty to the Shakers.

As she falls deeper into a forbidden love for this man of the world, Gabrielle must make a choice. Can she experience true happiness in this simple and chaste community? Or will she abandon her brothers and sisters for a life of the unknown?

Soulful and filled with romance, THE OUTSIDER lets you live within a bygone time among a unique and peculiar people. This tender and thought-provoking story will stay with you long after you finish the final chapter.

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Discussion Guide

1. Gabrielle Hope adjusted easily to the Shaker way of life, closed off from the outside world. Why do you think she found it so easy to acclimate to their community? Do you think her upbringing had anything to do with it? Would you be able to adjust as easily?
2. Nathan Bates states early in the story that he does not intend to stay within the Shaker community much longer. What makes him so certain he does not belong there when Gabrielle seems so certain she does? What do you see as the crucial difference between these two characters?
3. Dr. Brice Scott indicates that his patients think his cures are very unusual. How do you think Brice's past helps him to understand the different ways of the Shakers? How does it hurt him in interacting with their community? What similarities (if any) do you see between him and the Shakers?
4. Brice loses his faith at a young age when his first wife passes away. By contrast, when Gabrielle's younger brother and father pass away she managed to hold on to her beliefs. What do you think is the main difference between these two characters? Why do they react so differently to these tragedies?

5. It is clear Nathan's romantic feelings for Gabrielle are one-sided. Do you think Gabrielle revealing her true feelings for Nathan is what pushes him to finally leave the Shaker community? Have you ever been in this kind of awkward situation, not feeling the same way about someone as they do about you? How did it affect your relationship after your true feelings were revealed?
6. Brice is very devoted to his patients despite the way they think of or treat him. Why do you think he is so devoted?
7. When Gabrielle and Brice meet secretly in the woods, why do you think Gabrielle decides not to go with Brice then? Do you think it is because Brice is going off to war or do you think she is still too attached to the Shaker community?
8. After the meeting in the woods Gabrielle is disciplined by the leaders of the community. Her relationship with Sister Mercy changes at this point. Why do you think Sister Mercy treats Gabrielle differently? Do you think it is what Gabrielle did, some change that Sister Mercy perceives in Gabrielle's attitude, or something else?
9. During her time of constant supervision with sister Helen, Gabrielle is unable to love her as she does the other brothers and sisters in the Shaker community. Why do you think that is? Why do you think sister Helen is so judgmental toward Gabrielle and others in the community?
10. After Gabrielle is disciplined for meeting with Brice in the woods she still faces judgment from some of the Believers. Why do you think they seem unable to forgive her for what she did? If Gabrielle had stayed within the community do you think they would have ever forgiven her? Have you ever found it difficult to forgive someone?
11. When Brice goes to the war up north he meets a young man whose faith touches him. Why do you think Seth's faith has such an impact on Brice? Why do you think Seth clings so tightly to his faith despite his circumstances?
12. Brice experiences a major turning point in the abandoned cabin up north where he spends the winter. What do you think brings him to that point? What changes in Brice after that?

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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