

The Outsider: A Novel

By Ann H. Gabhart

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For as long as she can remember, Gabrielle Hope has had the gift of knowingvisions that warn of things to come. When she and her mother joined the Pleasant Hill Shaker community in 1807, the community embraced her gift. But Gabrielle fears this gift, for the visions are often ones of sorrow and tragedy. When one of these visions comes to pass, a local doctor must be brought in to save the life of a young man, setting 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 readers live within a bygone time among a unique and peculiar people. This tender and thoughtprovoking story will leave readers wanting more from this writer.

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The Outsider: A Novel By Ann H. Gabhart Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #817688 in Books
- Brand: Revell
- Published on: 2008-08-01
- Released on: 2008-08-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .88" w x 5.50" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Shaker romance might seem like an oxymoron, but Gabhart (*Summer of Joy*) pens an interesting if emotionally lukewarm historical tale that explores the fascinating world of a religious Shaker community. The predictable story line is less compelling than the details about the Shakers and their stringent religious beliefs, with celibacy key to the plot. Set amid the War of 1812, the point of view shifts between the two romantic leads. Twenty-year-old Sister Gabrielle Hope's spiritual visions enable her to see future events. Although she's committed to the Shaker community of Harmony Hill (based on Kentucky's real-life Pleasant Hill), a few words and a kiss from the widowed outsider Dr. Brice Scott cause her to question the life she and her mother have chosen. More uncertainty follows as the strict rules of the community separate mothers from their children. Disappointingly, the romance never tingles, and even the novel's darker scenes of suicide and military execution are emotionally flat. But fans of Beverly Lewis's Amish novels may find Gabhart's well-researched historical fiction to their liking. *(Aug.)*
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From the Inside Flap
Excerpt
The harsh clang of the meetinghouse bell shattered the peace of the night. At the sound, Gabrielle jerked upright in her narrow bed. She had not been asleep, but instead had been lying very still with her eyes wide open staring out at the grainy darkness and listening to the soft breathing of the sleeping girls around her. She had matched her own breaths with theirs in hopes of bringing quiet harmony back to her thoughts, but the gift of knowing kept nipping at the corners of her mind. Visions of men with blackened faces, corn melting, and shadows of the world flitting among the trees had troubled her thoughts all day, but it was all too vague for understanding. All she knew for sure was the sense of dread awake and growing inside her. Usually when the gift of knowing came to her it wasn't shrouded in so much mystery. Rather it was clear, as clear as her image in a still pool. But this time a handful of pebbles had dropped in to cloud the pool. Earlier she had gone to her quiet place in the woods to pray for it was often while she prayed that the knowing filled her mind, but the vision had stayed dark and murky.
The bell kept tolling the alarm as Gabrielle quickly rose from her bed. Around her the younger sisters were waking and jumping out of bed to see what might be happening. Outside one of the brothers was shouting, "Fire!"

From the Back Cover
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.

Living just thirty miles from a restored Shaker village in Kentucky, Ann H. Gabhart has walked the same paths that her characters might have walked in generations past. Her thorough research provides a convincing and colorful backdrop for *The Outsider*. Gabhart is also the author of *Orchard of Hope* and *Summer of Joy*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Madeline Williams:

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Myron Abbott:

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