



The Innocent

Ann H. Gabhart

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Carlyn Kearney has spent two lonely years not knowing whether to mourn or to hope after she receives word from the Union Army that her husband is missing. The war ends without further word. Now penniless, in debt, and forced from her home, Carlyn seeks refuge at the Shaker village of Harmony Hill, only to discover that they will not allow her to keep her beloved dog, an animal that has been her faithful companion since her husband went off to war. Sheriff Mitchell Brodie has pity on the lovely young woman and agrees to take the dog. Carlyn is just settling into life as a sister in the Shaker village when she receives a devastating letter confirming her worst fears. As she wrestles with whether to commit herself fully to the Shaker life, mysterious deaths begin to occur, and Carlyn comes under suspicion. Can Sheriff Mitchell help her expose the true culprit?

The Innocent Details

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From Reader Review The Innocent for online ebook

Ann Gabhart says

When I decided to go back to my fictional village of Harmony Hill for one more story, I wanted to tell a story that was different from my other Shaker novels. And so I set the story after the Civil War and mixed in a dog and a little mystery. I liked writing about Carlyn and Mitchell and I hope others will enjoy reading their story.

Jessica says

Entertaining light read ??

Mayda says

The Civil War has been over for two years, but Carlyn's husband has not returned. Though others are calling her the Widow Kearney, she hasn't accepted that designation. Still, her dreams of a future with her husband seem to be only that, a dream. Unable to make the payments on their house, she is forced to leave and seek refuge at the only option available to her, the Shaker village. Obeying the rules are a struggle, especially when she is forced to relinquish her beloved dog. But she may lose more than her dog if she stays there. This story is an interesting mix of mystery and romance overlaid with Christian beliefs.

Janka H. says

Carlyn thinks her only decent chance for a food and roof over her head is to join the Shakers, the Christian sect nearby. After all, her husband is still missing from war and her prayers seem to go unanswered. But she prays anyway.

What an intelligent, mature writing! Ms Gabhart truly writes to serve you a food for thought while you can enjoy real characters who think and feel like adults.

They have their doubts, they have their sins, they have their fights and they have very real problems.

Carlyn Kearney was hurt enough in her life - a tyrannical preacher for a father who had tried his best to break her spirit (thanks be to God for a tender, God-loving mother) and a short-lived happiness in happy marriage - till the war. Now her husband is missing for two years and everybody else thinks that she is a widow - but how can SHE know? And there are debts - and a ruthless man offering her payments - with her body. So a gun and a smart dog with lots of teeth are her only weapons, right? But her mother always say "pray anyway". So Carlyn prays - and the nearby Shaker village seems as an answer. But the place is not the oasis of peace on earths it seems and claims to be - there was a fire and a man died.

And handsome sheriff is decided not only to find a culprit, but also a way into a beautiful widow's heart.

I can't heap enough superlatives for the in-depth storytelling and issues presented. Carlyn is of curious,

intelligent mind and can't accept any "truths" without understanding them. And Shakers, the Christian sect, has a lot of controversial teachings to make her sharp mind to ponder about - like why is marriage a sin? But they also offer a lot of charity and goodwill. I have never heard of Shakers before and I am glad to have this possibility to know more about them.

I also love my characters intelligent - and here I have plenty of that. Sheriff Brodie is complex character, too - a man with trust issues as his beloved had betrayed him, but he also knows a right girl when she comes around - even if the girl is maybe a widow, and also an independent being marching to the sound of her own drum.

Even the dog is smart! Asher, I would offer you a place in a minute.

I strangely also like Sister Edna, a strict tutor to Carlyn, addicted to following the rules, but also a tormented, sad woman with doubts hidden deep in her heart. Can you accept my hug and well wishes, Sister, even if I am of the world?

As for the cons - the plot is a bit prolonged and Sister Edna's doubts deserve to be explored in more details.

But still - what a mature, intelligent, high-quality read this is! After this novel I will read anything Ms Gabhart writes.

Ann says

Carlyn Kearney is living life at the near edge of poverty. Her soldier husband was reported missing during the last years of the War Between the States. The war has ended, but no word has come as to whether he is alive or dead. Since she has no income and a mortgage debt she cannot pay, an unscrupulous mortgage-holder demands the sheriff evict her from the house she shared with her husband. The sheriff, Mitchell Brodie, takes an interest in Carlyn and negotiates an agreement to give her time to find someplace else to live.

With nowhere to go, she seeks shelter in a nearby Shaker community. The Shakers are reputed to be peace-loving and willing to accept refugees from the world. From the beginning, Carlyn finds life in the community anything but peaceful. The rules are overwhelming, and she learns immediately that she's not allowed to keep her dog or any of her "worldly" possessions.

Things go downhill from there, and Carlyn finds herself a suspect in mysterious events that take place within the village. She has an ally in the sheriff, but he's not welcome in the community and she cannot leave.

This story fascinated me in many ways. Carlyn's dilemma is heartbreakingly real and the mystery kept me guessing until the final pages. Beyond that, I appreciated how Ann Gabhart gave readers a look at Shaker life from the viewpoint of a doubter.

This story goes beyond the "bonnet cover" to reveal the lives of real people. I recommend *The Innocent* highly.

My thanks to Revell and the author for my review copy.

Renee says

The Innocent by Ann H. Gabhart is yet another terrific installment in the series of Shaker novels set at Harmony Hill. Set directly following the Civil War, it features a beautiful war widow, her dog, and a

handsome sheriff. Centered around mysterious happenings at the Shaker village and the town surrounding Harmony Hill, The Innocent is a little more suspenseful than the previous Shaker titles, but no less fascinating. I don't think I will ever tire of reading these fictionalized stories of this strange sect. The Innocent is slightly lacking as far as romances go and I wish there could have been more interaction between the hero and heroine, but the sisterly camaraderie between Carlyn and Sister Berdine makes up for it. Overall, The Innocent is worth the read and deserving of a permanent spot on the shelf in the library!

~ My Rating: 4 out of 5 stars ~

I receive complimentary books for review from publishers, publicists, and/or authors. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Jalynn Patterson says

About the Book:

Carlyn Kearney has spent two lonely years not knowing whether to mourn or to hope after she receives word from the Union Army that her husband is missing. The war ends without further word. Now penniless, in debt, and forced from her home, Carlyn seeks refuge at the Shaker village of Harmony Hill, only to discover that they will not allow her to keep her beloved dog, an animal that has been her faithful companion since her husband went off to war. Sheriff Mitchell Brodie has pity on the lovely young woman and agrees to take the dog. Carlyn is just settling into life as a sister in the Shaker village when she receives a devastating letter confirming her worst fears. As she wrestles with whether to commit herself fully to the Shaker life, mysterious deaths begin to occur, and Carlyn comes under suspicion. Can Sheriff Mitchell help her expose the true culprit?

My Review:

The Civil War marked a time in history that should and does stand out to others especially fellow Americans. Many families lost their love ones all in the name of the war between the states. The nation was fighting against itself, with that thought in mind it can never be a good outcome. To the fate of many lives lost slavery was abolished. This was good BUT it still caused many to lose their loved ones. No one was spared from that grief, no one.

Carlyn Kearney was always looking for the day that her husband Ambrose would return to her and they could move on with their lives, but now according to the Union Army that day was never going to happen. Her husband is now missing.

Carlyn is now forced out of her home because of the inability to pay for that or the mounting debt given to her. She seeks refuge in a Shaker village, it seems harmless enough. Carlyn is again thrown another stone to the already growing pile on top of her. When a mystery that she gets pulled into may threaten her existence in the Shaker village as well.

Ann Gabhart is an excellent writer. she takes a simple story line and can expand it beyond your wildest expectations. She does it so subtly that before you even realize what is happen you have come to the last page of the story. The story is one that pulls you in and causes you to look for God in every situation just like the main character.

Disclosure This book was sent to me free of charge for my honest review from Revell.

Ibjoy1953 Hannabass says

MY THOUGHTS ON THIS BOOK

After hearing that her husband was missing in action, Carlyn Kearney had no where to turn but to the Shaker community for help. Her house was being taken away because of non payment, she had no idea when her husband would be home, or if he would. But in the shaker community, Carlyn finds out that things are not just as they seem in this community of people who are bound to their belief's.

Every time I read about the Shaker's, I find it hard to believe that people would actually believe as they do. But in Carlyn's case in this story, I can understand why she would turn to this group of people. She had no choice. She had no one, no money, and no way to make any money to pay for her land, and upkeep her house. Or for that matter, to feed herself. She did go in with the right attitude though, only going through the motions of their belief's. Sounds just like something I would do in that situation.

This is a really wonderful read. Ann Gabhart is a master storyteller and her books are full of interesting characters, storylines and detailed information. Just as it is in The Innocent. As I was reading this story, I felt like the characters were so real, I would get aggravated at some, cry at times, feel the tensions as the scenes unfolded, and laughed at times as the details were so vivid and real. And no one writes about the Shakers like Ann Gabhart. She knows their ways and knows how to write them in a story that makes it happen! I don't want to say a lot more about the storyline, because it will give too much info, and ruin it for you. Just know that this is a book that you don't want to miss!

I received this book from Revell to read and review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 55.

Wendy says

BACK OF THE BOOK BLURB

Carlyn Kearney has spent two lonely years not knowing whether to mourn or to hope after she receives word from the Union Army that her husband is missing. When the war ends without further word, Carlyn finds herself penniless, in debt, and forced from her home. With nowhere else to go, she seeks refuge at the Shaker village of Harmony Hill.

The Shakers profess peace through simple living, but to Carlyn, the Shaker life seems anything but simple. When mysterious deaths disturb the peace of the village, Carlyn falls under intense scrutiny. Can a kind sheriff help her expose the true culprit?

MY REVIEW

This may be the best book in the series so far. A great story of love, faith and strength by one woman, who

thinks she is alone against the world. Even a little bit of murder and mystery, so good. The one thing she encourages, through her mother, is to "pray anyway". What a good thing to remember/do, even if you think God isn't listening, if you have temporarily lost your faith, anytime you need help with anything, no matter how trivial it may seem to someone else, "PRAY ANYWAY".

This has been a very interesting series and I would encourage all to read it. I learned a lot about the Shakers, even though they seem peaceful, loving and faithful, I almost feel like there is a problem with their lifestyle and sometimes they seem mean to me. I really don't think I could be a Shaker. I'd be interested to know what others opinions are.

Rachel says

This is the sixth novel of Ann H. Gabhart's Shaker series, and I liked it just as much as I like the first five (and a half :) books. As I expected, this novel was well written, and the characters were well drawn and interesting. I especially enjoyed Carlyn's spirited and headstrong debates with Sister Edna in this story. The historical setting among this short lived cult was also intriguing as well because I believe that if a novel also makes you think of what you believe and why as well as entertains, it is a bonus to a well written story.

Kristina says

The Innocent by Ann H. Gabhart is an historical Christian novel. It is September of 1865 and Carlyn Kearney has not heard from her husband in two years. He went off to fight in the Civil War and she did not hear from him after the summer of 1863. Carlyn is out of money and has no way to pay the lien on their property and home. Carlyn does not know what to do. She does not want to leave their home in case her husband, Ambrose comes back. Ambrose was listed as missing in action.

Sheriff Mitchell Brodie arrives one day with Curt Whitlow. Curt owns the lien on the property. He has offered to help Carlyn out in exchange for certain favors (we all know he means sex). Curt is married with a family of his own, but that does not stop his roving ways. Sheriff Brodie is very nice and polite to Carlyn. Carlyn greets them at the door with a shotgun and her dog, Asher. Asher has been her friend since the day he arrived starving on her doorstep. Asher does not like Curt and is very protective of Carlyn. Carlyn has one week to leave.

After much prayer Carlyn decides to go to the nearby Shaker village of Harmony Hill. Carlyn is accepted into the village, but not Asher. Carlyn asks Sheriff Brodie to watch Asher for her and give him a good home. Carlyn tries to fit into life at the village, but it is very different. They all have to dress the same way, no violence, a lot of work, many rules, and they are always being watched. Sister Edna is assigned to be Carlyn's teacher or guide. Sister Edna seems to resent Carlyn (for her looks) and is always finding fault. One day Carlyn overhears an argument between Brother Henry Stratton and Curt Whitlow. The next night their barn with the horses is on fire and Brother Henry cannot be found. Sheriff Brodie sets out to find out who set fire to the barn and who wanted Brother Henry dead (poor man is found under a hay bale). Then Curt Whitlow is missing (and assumed guilty). When Sister Edna is found at the bottom of some steps during the night by Carlyn, Carlyn is accused of pushing her. What is going on in this village? Sheriff Brodie has his work cut out for him. Mitchell Brodie is also having feelings for Carlyn. He would like to get to know her better, but he is unable to be with her in the village (Shaker's are against marriage). Can Mitchell keep her safe

and find a way to get to know her better? Does Carlyn have feelings for Mitchell?

Read *The Innocent* to find out who is messing with the Shaker village and the fate of Carlyn and Mitchell. I give *The Innocent* 4 out of 5 stars. I liked it, but I admit to not loving it. It is heavy in scripture (a tad preachy). I enjoyed the mystery in the story (I cannot help it if I like mysteries). I found pleasure in how the story ended. Ann H. Gabhart is a good storyteller. I have read books of hers before, and I will definitely will read more of them in the future. She has a good understanding of the Shaker culture and put it together very nicely into this book (there are others as well).

I received a complimentary copy of *The Innocent* from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. The review and opinions expressed are my own.

<http://bibliophileandavidreader.blogs...>

Janie R. says

Such a good book!!

Once again, Ann H. Gabhart puts forth another Shaker book, which I just loved! I always enjoy reading her historical Shaker books, they always hold my interest throughout the whole book! My favorite characters were Asher, a loyal and protective wonderful dog of his owner, I actually cried when his owner had to part with him! Then of course, there was handsome, Sheriff Brodie, he was not only a great lawman, but a good man!

I highly recommend this book, you will enjoy it, also!

Lisa Johnson says

Title: *The Innocent* (A Harmony Hill Novel)

Author: Ann H. Gabhart

Pages: 400

Year: 2015

Publisher: Revell

My rating is 5+ out of 5 stars!

I so thoroughly enjoy reading the tales woven by Ann Gabhart, and this one is no exception! While the cover gives a hint of a Shaker story inside, it doesn't reveal the depth of mystery or the faith themes inside. The tale takes place after the War Between the States, right at the end in fact, when many women were waiting to see if their husbands, brothers, etc... would be coming home. Life was precarious and dependent upon the men providing for the family or extended members who needed daily sustenance and protection.

Here is a woman named Carlyn who strove to stay true to her marriage vows until she knew for sure whether her husband was dead or not. Many in the town already assumed she was a widow since it had been two years since her husband left. The owner of a house was a man with few scruples and unless Carlyn gave him herself she was going to be homeless. So Carlyn seeks the local Shaker village until she knows what happened with her husband so that she has food, protection and time to sort out what her next season in life would be.

However, there are things happening at the Shaker village that are being blamed on Carlyn. The sheriff is

taken with Carlyn, but knows he has to wait until she finds out what happened to her husband before pursuing her. He agrees to care for her dog as she can't keep him at the village. Throughout the story I learned things about the Shakers, which frankly were quite odd. Some of the beliefs I learned some time ago through my husband's aunt who once worked at a Shaker village as a guide.

The characters are colorful, the setting enticing and the story captivating from beginning to end. I loved how truthful Carlyn was in what she was or was not willing to do while in the Shaker home. Carlyn remembers a lot of what her mother taught her from the Scriptures, which encourages us all to teach the Word though we may never know when it will bear fruit in a person's life. The tale of a Shaker and sheriff having a budding romance is ingenious. I loved too how though the war caused some rocky moments in the faith of a couple of characters they eventually returned to faith of their childhood, but it wasn't without some work.

The novel is a stand alone for those wondering if it is part of a series. I highly recommend the novel as it reminds us of a time when daily living was hard and work was a matter of survival. Faith and prayer are lifelines for those who believe in Jesus and we would be remiss to so easily dismiss them. Grab a copy and enjoy the tale that stirs the heart, grabs the soul and captures the imagination of the reader!

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received one or more of the products or services mentioned above for free in the hope that I would mention it on my blog. Regardless, I only recommend products or services I use personally and believe will be good for my readers. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255. "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Diana says

Intriguing Historical Fiction!

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In the masterful prose she is so well known for, author Ann H. Gabhart has penned another fascinating story of the religious sect known as the Shakers during the post-Civil War era.

It has been two long, lonely years since Carlyn Kearney received news from the Union Army that her husband, Ambrose, was missing. In hopes that he might still be alive, Carlyn waits patiently—but finds herself penniless and at the mercy of the cruel and lascivious Curt Whitlow, the owner of her house. Curt arrives with Mitchell Brodie, the kind and handsome new sheriff in town, to force her from her home. With nowhere else to go Carlyn finds herself seeking refuge at the Shaker village of Harmony Hill.

Under the strict tutelage of Sister Edna, Carlyn learns the strange ways of the Shakers. Marriage and other worldly ties and possessions are forbidden and considered a sin, and instead of living a simple life stringent rules must be learned and obeyed. Soon mysterious deaths disturb the peace of the Shaker village and Mitchell is determined to find the person responsible. Mitchell and Carlyn fight their growing attraction for

one another as she is still a married woman—or is she? Will her beloved Ambrose make his way back home to her awaiting arms? And when she finds herself in terrible danger, will either man arrive in time to rescue her from the dark clutches of death?

I have read all of Ann H. Gabhart's books regarding the Shakers and they are truly mesmerizing! From their strange worship dances and furious stomping to the separation of families and earthly possessions, Ms. Gabhart's research and vast knowledge of the Shaker religion is impeccable. Except for the fact that they were a very hard working, devout people who believed in living simply, the Shakers were very much unlike the Amish in that they followed the teachings of Mother Ann and total celibacy. *The Innocent* is a spellbinding page-turner with everything one could ask for in a novel – a bit of mystery, tenacious characters, a strong spiritual thread, and oh, I mustn't forget the romance! A book you won't be able to put down until the climactic conclusion...be sure to order your copy today!

Rachelle Johns says

Not an Amish story, but the Shakers. Christiansburg with a "western" flavor.
