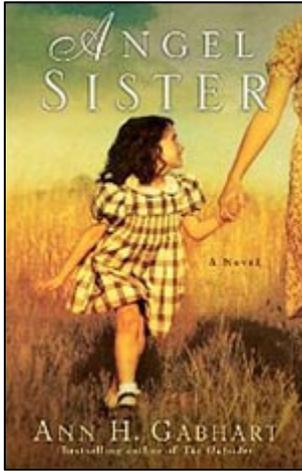


## Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- June 2011



I knew that I wanted to review *Angel Sister* by Ann Gabhart after I wrote an endorsement for it, but that was months ago and I had sort of forgotten what the story was about, other than knowing how much I loved the book.

So today while eating lunch, I glanced through the book to refresh my mind...and I got so locked into the story, I had to keep reading to the end. I rarely read a book twice and if I do, the readings are years apart. Not months. *Angel Sister* is that kind of book, something we don't see a lot of these days.

The story takes place during the Depression in Kentucky. Times were hard and people struggled. We all know that. But the Merritt family lived in a little bitty town called Rosey Corners, where everyone knew everyone else and had for generations.

What happens when a little girl named Lorena Birdsong shows up to be taken in by the Merritt's? Well there's Kate, who is trying so hard to keep her family together, a father who drinks a bit too much, an overworked mother, sisters who don't realize how bad things really are, and grandfathers. It's a family with a long history of human frailties.

Another family in the church says they will take the child, but Lorena wants and needs Kate and her mother to help her wait until her own mother can return for her, busting wide open secrets of things that happened years earlier. These characters will stay in your mind because they are so real and so very human.

Ann draws on the stories she heard her family share through the years and a few characters from her own history, and then weaves a story rich in drama, tragedy and love. What will it take to bring the Merritts—and the community—all together? Or will nature rip them apart even more so than they already are?

*Angel Sister* is the first of Ann's books that I have read, but I'll read more. Like so often is the case, I read the story because a good friend said, "You have to read this book. I know you will love it." And I did. And I do. This southern novel in the tradition of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is sure to leave you wanting more.

Until next time,

*Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine*