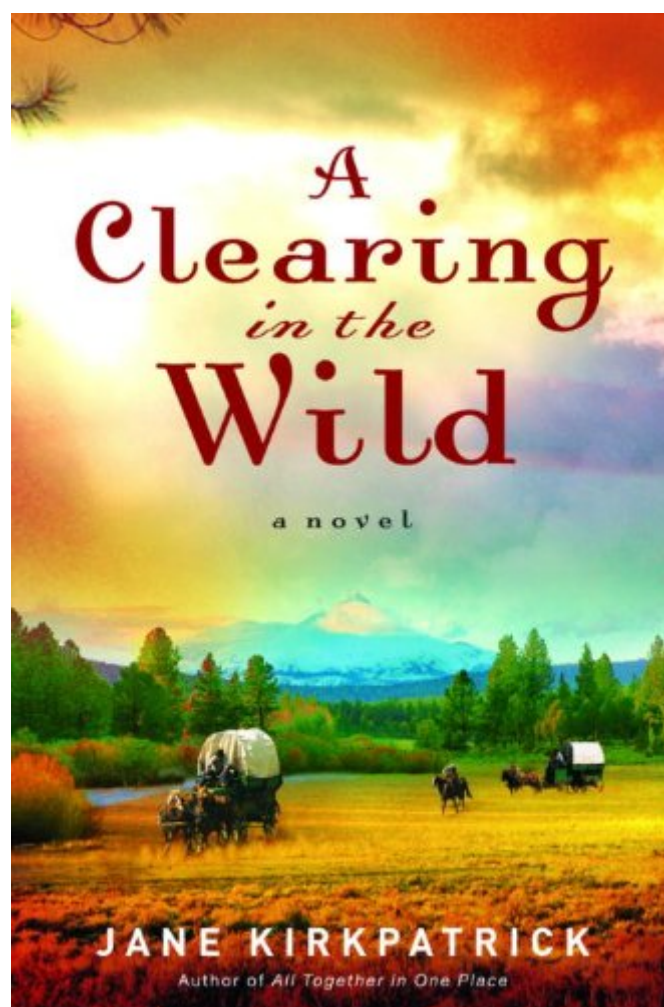


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# A Clearing In The Wild



## Synopsis

The first book in the Change and Cherish trilogy from the CBA bestseller and WILLA Literary Award Winner, Jane Kirkpatrick. Young Emma Wagner chafes at the constraints of Bethel colony, an 1850s religious community in Missouri that is determined to remain untainted by the concerns of the world. A passionate and independent thinker, she resents the limitations placed on women, who are expected to serve in quiet submission. In a community where dissent of any form is discouraged, Emma finds it difficult to rein in her tongue--and often doesn't even try to do so, fueling the animosity between her and the colony's charismatic and increasingly autocratic leader, Wilhelm Keil. Eventually Emma and her husband, Christian, are sent along with eight other men to scout out a new location in the northwest where the Bethelites can prepare to await the last days. Christian believes they've found the ideal situation in Washington territory, but when Keil arrives with the rest of the community, he rejects Christian's choice in favor of moving to Oregon. Emma pushes her husband to take this opportunity to break away from the group, but her longed-for influence brings unexpected consequences. As she seeks a refuge for her wounded faith, she learns that her passionate nature can be her greatest strength--if she can harness it effectively. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jane Kirkpatrick is one of historical faith fiction's best literary prose-masters, and this first installment in a new series, *A CLEARING IN THE WILD*, is a welcome invitation to explore the settling of the west. This is more than a historical tale, however. Based on her research into a true story, Kirkpatrick opens up to the reader endless questions about gender roles, the values and pitfalls of community, the dangers of power and problems of blind allegiances, the troubling balance between following the courage of one's convictions and selfishness, and the riddle of how a good God can be resolved with personal tragedy and suffering. In the 1850s in Bethel, Missouri, a Christian community seeks to live in harmony with each other yet separate from worldly things. Through first-person narrative, we discover that young 17-year-old Emma Wagner of the community is in love and ready to tie the knot with Christian Giesy, 20 years her senior and only a year younger than her father. The leader of the religious colony, Father Keil, is against the match, and his word is usually law among the group. But Emma's strong will prevails. Emma chafes against conformity and longs to express her individuality. Her dress is plain, yet she sews a double row of ruffles into her crinoline where no one but herself and her husband can see them. (Says her new husband, who loves her independence even as it troubles him, "It's a good thing to do, when you feel overcome by the rules.") She discovers that Christian has wanderlust, and in the way of all newly married women must readjust her thoughts of her beloved. "That momentary insight changed the way I looked at him, altered how I thought he saw our marriage too.

Jane Kirkpatrick is an unexpected treasure; like finding an Armani suit at Goodwill on 50% off Saturday! Her literary style makes you want to savor each word, chewing on each nuance while her stories demand that you gobble them up and enjoy. Based on a true story, *A CLEARING IN THE WILD* is the first book in her latest trilogy. In it she explores not only the vast country between Bethel, Missouri and Willapa Bay, Washington but also the hearts, minds and spirits of those pioneers who braved the unknown to find a safe haven for themselves and their families where they could live independently while practicing their faith. *A CLEARING IN THE WILD* tells the story of how an entire community of German Christian believers formed a community in which they could live together based on the Biblical concepts found in the book of Acts. They worked together for the common good, shared what they had and made decisions based on God's word. They reached out to others, taking them into the fold and worked to follow not only the Golden Rule but the Diamond

Rule which directs us to help others to live even better than we do. When rumblings of the conflicts between the North and the South began to reach them, their leader Wilhelm Keil, proposed that scouts travel west to find a place where the community could escape being drawn into the war that was inevitable. Emma Wagner is a young woman who represents the aspects of the human spirit that spark both progress and failure, independence and rebellion. It is that spark that cannot be smothered by Utopian concepts that require everyone to be equal. I am convinced that such a peaceful, harmonious ideal cannot be achieved anywhere but in Heaven itself.

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