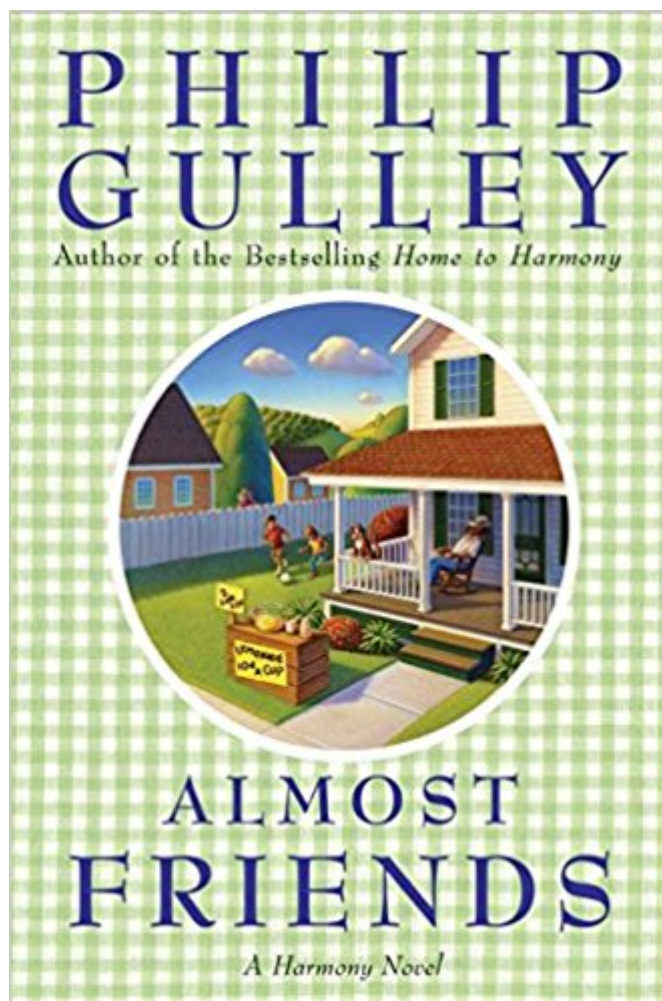


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Almost Friends: A Harmony Novel



Synopsis

It's summer in Harmony, but not everything is as sunny as the weather. The good citizens of Harmony are back and stirring up trouble as usual, sometimes with disastrous results. Pastor Sam Gardner must take a leave of absence from his post at Harmony Friends Meeting to take care of his ailing father. But when spunky pastor Krista Riley comes to fill his position, the quirky Quakers seem to fall in love with her, and it begins to look like Sam's sabbatical may be permanent. Krista's resilience is put to the test when Dale Hinshaw and Fern Hampton begin to question whether a woman can faithfully lead their flock, and it looks like the resulting tiff might just be the undoing of Harmony Friends Meeting. Will Sam come to the rescue? Finding the answer to this question makes the trip back to Harmony worth turning every page.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps no author can spin a good smalltown church tale as humorously as Gulley, who has been justly compared to Garrison Keillor for his dry wit. This latest installment in the Harmony, Ind., series is no exception, and it's populated with the characters that series aficionados have come to appreciate. A storm is brewing in Harmony, and pastor Sam Gardner, although on sabbatical, is right in the center of it. Caught in the controversy is seminary student Krista Riley, who is filling in for Sam and rumored to be gay. Leading the charge against her is Dale Hinshaw and spinster Fern Hampton, two members of Harmony Friends whose controlling ways will be recognizable to anyone

who ever attended a small church. As the conflict heats up, Sam, battling jealousy over Krista's popularity with some church members (and in fear of losing his job) initially fails to stand up for his interim minister. Gulley's strong message about gay acceptance in the church may feel didactic to more conservative Christians looking for a good story, but is in keeping with the message of tolerance found in his previous books. Occasionally, a character is overdrawn, but this is nonetheless a delightful return to Harmony. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• No author can spin a good smalltown church tale as humorously as Gulley. • (Publishers Weekly)

Philip Gulley has a way of writing about church and small town life that is inclusive to those of us who don't usually feel like we fit into those places. From the moment I started reading the first Harmony book, to the end of this latest one, I felt welcome in his world and inspired to be a nicer person than usual. That says a lot coming from someone who doesn't go to church or live in a small town. His characters are charming and easy to relate to, and his talk about church life, morals, and God are inclusive. If you find Jan Karon's Mitford a little heavy-handed with the evangelizing, this series may be more your speed. In this book, we are shown more of Sam and see him struggling with some very human failings. Sam takes some time off to care for his father, and while he is gone a student minister named Krista takes his place. Between Dale Hinshaw's rantings that a woman is leading the church, Fern's ire over Krista's involvement in the big Chicken Noodle Dinner event, and Sam's jealousy over the welcome that people give to Krista, we get to be along for the ride as Harmony's residents struggle with change in the church and try to triumph over their personal failings. This is a light and easy series to read and is very uplifting. I read it in a day - I just didn't want to put it down - and finished it feeling inspired and refreshed. This latest is highly recommended.

I am not Quaker but I do go to church and I am a christian. I have really enjoyed past books by Phillip Gulley and this one is no exception. It is the epitome of a small town and what happens in churches all over the country. I love how there is a female minister in the story and how Dale Hinshaw continues to be a pest! Mr Gulley paints a great picture of his characters and I laugh so hard when I read these books. It reads like Garrison Keelor! I love it! I feel good that I can finally

pick up a fictional book that is like eating a good meal very satisfying.

Hilariously funny and uplifting, always with a simple yet amazingly profound message of truth! I find myself furious with the bad guys, Ssh ale, Fern and Shirley and so proud of the good ones, Miriam, Asa, Deanna, Sam and Barbara and so many others who outnumber the shirtless weasels! As good in a different way as Jan Karon's "Mitford Series" and I'm a practicing cradle Catholic!

Enjoyable reading.

I have become a fan of Phillip Gulley. This is the 4th book of his that I've read. He is spot on in characteristics of people. And his interpretation of events and situations is clever and insightful. And he makes you laugh. Sometimes it's a chuckle but more and more it's outright belly laughing. His writing is fluid and well constructed. Short chapters filled with thought provoking and entertaining writing.

I read Gulley's entire series based on his first books hilarity. I found each subsequent "Harmony" book less funny and more about his life grievances and difficulties. Still a good read but I was looking for a humorous series.

The Harmony series is warm, friendly, and full of homespun humor. They are especially enjoyable to read at bedtime because they give you such a relaxed feeling. I thoroughly enjoy each one in the series.

Almost Friends offers an insight to a community that many of us may not know still exist in the United States. One that is governed by a church with strict beliefs and policies. Although the author tells an interesting story, I found the plot to be confusing and not what I expected.

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