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The Anchoress: A Novel

Robyn Cadwallader

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England, 1255**. What could drive a girl on the cusp of womanhood to lock herself away from the world forever?**

Sarah is just seventeen when she chooses to become an anchoress, a holy woman shut away in a cell that measures only seven by nine paces, at the side of the village church. Fleeing the grief of losing a much-loved sister in childbirth as well as pressure to marry the local lord's son, she decides to renounce the world--with all its dangers, desires, and temptations--and commit herself to a life of prayer.

But it soon becomes clear that the thick, unforgiving walls of Sarah's cell cannot protect her as well as she had thought. With the outside world clamoring to get in and the intensity of her isolation driving her toward drastic actions, even madness, her body and soul are still in grave danger. When she starts hearing the voice of the previous anchoress whispering to her from the walls, Sarah finds herself questioning what she thought she knew about the anchorhold, and about the village itself.

With the lyricism of Nicola Griffith's *Hild* and the vivid historical setting of Hannah Kent's *Burial Rites*, Robyn Cadwallader's powerful debut novel tells an absorbing story of faith, desire, shame, fear, and the very human need for connection and touch. Compelling, evocative, and haunting, *The Anchoress* is both quietly heartbreaking and thrillingly unpredictable.

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