



An Elm Creek Quilts Sampler

Jennifer Chiaverini, Denise Roy (Editor)

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Three Complete Novels,

The Quilter's Apprentice, *Round Robin*, and *The Cross-Country Quilters*, from *The New York Times*
Bestselling Author, Jennifer Chiaverini

Here's where it all began -- the three novels that first made beloved friends of the Elm Creek Quilters, who stepped out of Pennsylvania's idyllic Elm Creek Manor and into the heart of America.

The Quilter's Apprentice: Master quilter Sylvia Compson shares the secrets of her creative gifts with her young assistant, Sarah McClure. During their lessons, the intricate, varied threads of Sylvia's life begin to emerge. It is the story of a young wife living through the hardships and agonies of the World War II home front; of a family torn apart by jealousy and betrayal; of misunderstanding, loss, and a tragedy that can never be undone. As the bond between them deepens, Sarah resolves to help Sylvia free herself from remembered sorrows and restore her life -- and her home, Elm Creek Manor -- to its former glory. In turn, Sylvia helps Sarah confront her own troubled past. Out of their shared triumph is born a lifelong friendship and a fledgling business called Elm Creek Quilts.

Round Robin: To celebrate the beginning of Elm Creek Quilts, Sarah, Sylvia, and their circle of friends name themselves the Elm Creek Quilters. As a gift to Sylvia, the others have begun a round robin -- a quilt created by sewing concentric patchwork to a central block as it is passed around a sewing circle. As each woman makes her creative contribution, she adds her story to the history of Elm Creek Manor. Resplendent in green, blue, and gold, the quilt serves as a symbol of the complex, lasting ties that unify mothers and daughters, sisters and friends. As they stitch together the sometimes harmonious -- often discordant -- scraps of their crazy-quilt lives, the Elm Creek Quilters learn that friendship is a most precious gift and that even in the darkest of times, love illuminates the way home.

The Cross-Country Quilters: Five women arrive at Elm Creek Manor, hoping to find in their quilting lessons an escape from the problems they have left at home. This far-flung group becomes fast friends who pledge to complete a "challenge quilt" -- symbolic of each woman's personal goals -- in one year's time. Although the Cross-Country Quilters share a common creative goal, as the year goes by, their bonds are tested by the demands of daily life. But despite differences in age, race, and background, the friends' love for quilting and affection for one another unite them in a patchwork of caring and acceptance. The quilt they make reminds them of an everlasting truth -- friends may be separated by great distance, yet the strength of their bond can transcend any obstacle.

"Endearing characters and pleasant vignettes render this series as charming and cozy as a favorite blanket," said *Publishers Weekly* of the Elm Creek Quilts books. Jennifer Chiaverini is at her heartwarming best in these three novels that launched a bestselling phenomenon.

An Elm Creek Quilts Sampler Details

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Hanna says

Still reading the third book, but overall I like these books. They are just kind of cute to me... And I love hearing all the stories of the old manor, even if they are fictional.

In the first book, again I like the stories and I like how it's mostly centered on Sarah and Sylvia.

In the second book, I like how almost each character in the first book gets their own little blip or chapter. I feel like I know the characters better now, and it made the book a more enjoyable read.

In the third, I'm still getting used to how they're introducing new people, but it's still pretty good so far.

Anyway, good series.

Patti says

A co-worker loaned this book to me - the logic being, I make quilts, I will enjoy a book about quilters.

In this instance the logic was flawed. Yes I make quilts, but I don't live to make quilts and I don't want to read badly written books about people who are passionate about quilts. I'm not passionate about them, and I can't waste my time on bad writing.

The book basically reads like a romance novel with much internal dialog and angst over fairly trivial problems.

I can't really rate it because I only got about 50 pages into the 721 page tome before I realized it was not for me.

Melissa says

I did enjoy it and will finish reading the series. It is very simplistic- the dialogue, the plot, the characters, etc. I don't mind the quilting explanations so much since I am not a quilter, however I find the stupid questions that people ask about quilting to be... well, stupid. Seriously, basting like a turkey?

However, it is a quick read and I enjoy the historical parts where they reflect back on times during the wars and so on. These certainly won't be my favorite books but they are quick, easy, and harmless.

Jeanne Smith says

If you are a quilter you will love these stories

Carol Arnold says

This series of books was good enough to make me want to read the next three! Will be starting on them soon.

Julie H. says

This volume contains the first three novels in the series: *The Quilter's Apprentice*, *Round Robin*, and *The Cross-Country Quilters*. For anyone who enjoys quilts, quilting, and cozy fiction this will make for a peaceful afternoon. As someone who has read a lot about quilting, I found Chiaverini's descriptions of the process really well done.

The first novel, *The Quilter's Apprentice* is the set up for everything that follows. It's pretty tame, and the main character's willingness to be trod upon by others and not speak her mind will likely drive you nuts, but if you just want some quiet escapism that revolves around learning to quilt and the healing that can occur when a group of women spend time together working to achieve a common goal, then you'll likely be able to put the frustrations of how civil everyone in the novel tries to be aside.

The second novel, *Round Robin* is a good deal more interesting. It revolves around a round robin quilt, which consists of the assembled parts constructed by different members of a quilting group. There is a very nice juxtaposition here between whatever trials and tribulations one of the characters is facing and the final form that her section assumes. The story also resolves some of the more pragmatic concerns any reader will have about the logistics of operating the business known as Elm Creek Quilters. Likewise, it tackles mother-daughter issues that permeate the series on several levels. It's predictable, but sweet.

The third story, *The Cross-Country Quilters*, is the story of a year in the life of four women who befriend each other at Quilt Camp. Each vows to tackle and conquer some major obstacle with which she is beset. The reward for this is that she may only then complete the block for a quilt that they will assemble at Quilt Camp the following summer. Chiaverini strives for a wide demographic and hopes that her characters stand in for Everywoman and the sorts of challenges faced by 20th- and 21st-century women (e.g., uninvolved divorced spouse, abandonment, abusive fiance of young daughter, trust issues, learning to live with MS, etc.). On the down side, however, the storylines are utterly predictable and as a consequence trite. On the positive, there is a good amount of quilting knowledge being shared--as this is the one thread (sorry, couldn't resist) that connects all the stories in this series.

These stories certainly provide a peaceful and uncomplicated respite from a sometimes all-too-bustling world. If, however, you enjoy fiction with a bit more bite/complexity, this may not be the series for you. I found it helpful to take a break between each novel and go read two or three other books. If I'd had to have read all 721 pages straight through I'd have found them simply too saccharine. With breaks and read in intervals, however, one can enjoy the quilting bits.

Samm Seals says

this is three novels in a popular series. I can see why it's popular, quilting aside. It's about people and how they cope with a wide variety of problems. A quilting summer camp brings them together and fast friendships develop and it's over years. I was disappointed that the first novel was a slow much less

interesting read than the following two. However, it sets the stage and is very important once you get beyond it. I plan to check out Jennifer Chiaverini other quilt novels. Since I don't prefer to do quilting and I paint quilt squares on canvas, furniture, whatever, I enjoy the concept and look forward to how Chiaverini uses quilts as background for exploring peoples' lives.

Sheri says

This was a re-read for me and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I had forgotten so much of the rich detail that makes the characters in these first three books of the series feel like friends. I cared about them. I also picked up a lot of great quilting advice. I took some classes and worked on some small projects a few years ago but reading these three books has inspired me to get back at it. Practice makes perfect and I can't wait to get started. Thanks Jennifer Chiaverini for the inspiration and for writing such heart warming stories. I have purchased the next anthology with books 4,5, and 6 and I know I won't be disappointed.

Tracie says

I am continuing to read this book, although it is very long (3 books in one). So far it is enjoyable and what I would consider "light reading". I find it difficult to read the previous reviews which bash this author. I am not a fan of "literary snobs" although I think I am married to one. I like to read a wide variety of works depending on my mood, what people recommend, etc. I don't consider myself experienced enough to be a critic. I can find things that I enjoy in almost every novel, poem, memoir, etc. I especially find it odd that someone would admit to only reading several ages and then post a full blown negative review. There is value in everything, you just have to take what you can and leave the rest.(less)

Amber says

I really enjoyed all three of these books. They are about real women, not just the trials and tribulations of falling in love, but about the real problems of every day life. However, I must caution anyone interested in these books that if you are not interested in quilting, then you may not enjoy these books. Not only are the stories centered around quilting, but they are also laced with descriptions of quilt blocks and the sewing methods, so anyone without a knowledge of quilting may become frustrated.

Shari says

If you quilt, you will love these books. There are even actual quilt patterns that go along with these books. They are very well written. One feels like they know Sylvia Bergstrom Compson and her quilting family at Elm Creek Manor. Generations of family history and stories are told throughout these novels.

Kelly says

As a quilter, and a wanna-be preoffessional quilter, I love theses stories. The very first one had me hooked with the story-line and characters and even was a great motivator to get me going on a new or an existing project. I love these human interest stories that have roots in hobbies that I love

Beverly says

I've read all Jennifer Chiaverini's books except Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker and am currently reading The Giving Quilt. I think I loved Sonoma Rose the best, as it's about my home area of Northern CA. Jennifer is a gifted writer, who has lots of insights into relationships, and the ins and outs of people and their problems. Each Novel has been very entertaining and as I've been to many of the places where they take place, seem very real.

Thank you, Jennifer for sharing your talents and historic information with all of us. You don't have to be a quilter to enjoy these books, as they are not full of buzzwords that so many modern novels have that make one feel like you're reading a foreign language.

I'm looking forward to more of her stories.

Peggy Zeigler says

this series was recommended to me by a friend, I finished it early this morning and enjoyed it very much. Even though the "main" Characters are not in the 3rd story as much, they are in there enough that I knew it was a continuation of the books. This book is a combo of the first 3 books in the series. Starting out with a young couple looking for jobs in a new town and meeting the older owner of Elm Creek Manor. It soon includes others, and I liked the way it follows each person, giving their perspective of what is happing in the story line. Telling how they knew each other and the good parts of a life and the bad. Not everything is tied up in a neat little bow, but enough so that I am eager to read the next 3 installments.

Nomad says

I am a sewist. I sew quilts and clothes for babies and children, and also wedding quilts for my friends and other home decor sewing. It always relaxes me to go to the sewing machine and make something for someone else, like I can give the people who mean a lot to me a physical manifestation of that caring. However, I never found myself interested in a book about quilters or sewers that wasn't non-fiction. Till the Elm Creek Quilts series.

Elm Creek Quilts is a fictional quilting and sewing retreat in rural Pennsylvania in the town of Waterford. For anyone who has ever wished they could just spend a quiet week or two in front of their sewing machine and not be bothered by kids, this series is a bit of wish fulfillment. It's like the perfect place where no one would ever bother you and you could work on whatever you wanted in blissfull quiet. For mothers out there, you know what I mean.

This is an omnibus collection, which means more than one book compiled into one volume. In this case the first three books. The Quilter's Apprentice, Round Robin and The Cross Country Quilters. All three were very good and nice cozy reads. Nothing too complicated, but very truthful when it comes to the emotional lives of women. Especially as we grow and get hurt, hurt others, marry, have children, sometimes divorce, sometimes become widows. The ties that bind us as women and hold us together through the bad times.

Some wonderfully honest emotional scenes. Laughter, tears, it's all here!

Great reading if you sew, but if you don't, I can honestly say you might find this series boring. I very much enjoyed this omnibus and for me personally it's 4 stars, however... due to required familiarity with sewing and quilting terminology and techniques, this means that many readers who would have enjoyed the series will feel like half of it is in code. So, I deducted a star for that.

Jenny says

Here are my ratings: 4.75 for book 1, 4.75 for book 2 and 4 stars for book 3. I really enjoyed all of them so much. The first two in the series I could not get enough of. I had a harder time getting into the 3rd book, "Cross Country Quilters" only because I missed the characters so much from the first two. I did end up getting sucked into that one too! A very enjoyable series, a perfect summer read.

GoldenjoyBazyll says

Novel 1: Quilters Apprentice: I wish I had read this book first! I started w/ the New Years Quilt and got a good idea of the history of the family and how the camp started however- this book explained the details better. I love the part where Sarah arranged a meeting for Ms. Compton and Ms. Embry in the gazebo. You will have to read it to find out why!!!! ;)

The gist of the book- for me- was that often times people needlessly let issues with others sit too long...they live with sadness and anger... for what? Most of us have done it..... created wasted moments. Funny how that goes isn't it.

Read the book and think on it.

Novel 2: Round Robin: I loved this story! Everything appears to be going well... as long as it is all swept under the rug however.... eventually the mess becomes too large to hide.... a big lump disturbing the peace. Ever been there? Well, that is the theme of the story. The quilters all appear to be going along easily until something pops up in each of their lives to throw a twist into the seemingly peaceful existence. Funny how messy life can be with all of its twists and turns. What's amazing is that as crazy as things can get somehow we all emerge and today's disaster becomes tomorrow's memory. What's even more amazing.... how much we worry and agonize today and same time next year how different it all seems. I guess because today's problems are maybe opportunities in disguise.

Anyhow.... the book is a lovely example of all of this and the strength in real friendships that get one through when the going gets rough!

Novel 3: Cross Country Quilters:- This is where the out of towners stories and lives begin to unfold. A totally mismatched yet perfectly matched group of women find each other at camp. The time together help these women to support each other and forge bonds that get them through tough times when they go back to their usual routines. What I also loved about this book is how all of the women: Famous/ working/ stay home moms all found common ground. The context of taking social/ economic status out of the mix and just leaving humans in their pure form was wonderful! Sort of reminded me of my dear circle of friends. We are all from different economic backgrounds/ racial and ethnic/ age/ marital status/ etc. When we come together we are all just who we are and glad to be together. What is better than that????

Gab says

This book contains the first three books in the Elm Creek Quilts series. I've read all of them before but a long time ago. I think I enjoyed the books more this time around, and look forward to continuing with the series. The stories focus on the friendship between women and are a lot more realistic than many other chick lit books - these characters have flaws and make mistakes and things don't always end happily ever after.

Connie says

These stories are to quilting what Debbie McComber stories are to knitting. Both writers write "feel good" stories, which I really like. Although this is a large book (3 novels together), it's really a quick read. I liked the stories, but I didn't feel as invested or as involved in the stories and characters as I do with Debbie McComber's books.

Julie says

As a quilter I was thrilled to discover this series by Jennifer Chiaverini. I just love them all. I love the historical stories the most . This book is a great introduction to the series and the wonderful characters of Elm Creek Quilters.
