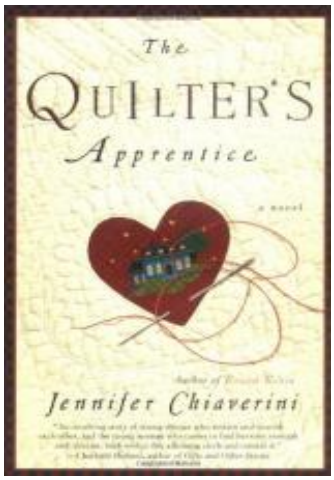
The Quilter's Apprentice

by Jennifer Chiaverini



About the Book

After moving with her husband, Matt, to the small college town of Waterford, Pennsylvania, Sarah McClure struggles to find a fulfilling job. In the meantime, she agrees to help seventy-five-year-old Sylvia Compson prepare her family estate, Elm Creek Manor, for sale. As part of her compensation, Sarah is taught how to quilt by this cantankerous elderly woman, who is a master of the craft.

During their lessons, Mrs. Compson reveals how her family was torn apart by tragedy, jealousy, and betrayal, and her stories force Sarah to face uncomfortable truths about her own alienation from her widowed mother. As their friendship deepens, Mrs. Compson confides in Sarah the truth about why she wants to sell Elm Creek Manor. In turn, Sarah seeks a way to bring life and joy back to the estate so Mrs. Compson can keep her home--and Sarah can keep her cherished friend. **The Quilter's Apprentice** teaches deep lessons about family, friendship, and sisterhood, and about creating a life as you would a quilt: with time, love, and patience, piecing the miscellaneous and mismatched scraps into a beautiful whole.

Discussion Guide

1. What is Sarah hoping to find when she moves with her husband to Waterford, PA? Does she really believe that she can make a fresh start in this small college town, or is she just making the best of things? Does she seem happy in her marriage? What do you think she really wants?

2. Why is Sarah so drawn to the quilt she first sees at Elm Creek Manor? What does this luminous, light-filled creation symbolize for her, in terms of love and loss and her earlier life?

3. Sylvia Compson lived through the horror and heartbreak of World War II. How did these experiences change her? What role does quilt-making play in her life today? How has the recent loss of her sister Claudia affected Sylvia? What

about a much earlier tragedy?

4. Describe the relationship that develops between Sylvia and Sarah. What does each woman get out of this friendship? In what ways does Sylvia remind Sarah of her own grandmother?

5. Teaching Sarah how to quilt fulfills something very profound in Sylvia. Explain what you think that is, and how it ties in to the major themes of the book.

6. How does Sarah help Sylvia to finally accept her past? How does Sylvia help Sarah come to terms with her past? How do both women help each other prepare for the future?

7. ?Sorrows come to us all,? Sylvia?s great-aunt once said to her. How does the adult Sylvia translate this portentous statement into the creation of dark and light sections of a quilt? If red squares ?keep the fires burning,? what do the other colors symbolize?

8. What kinds of changes do Sarah and Sylvia undergo by the book?s end? What have they discovered about friendship, acceptance, loyalty, and love?

Author Bio

Jennifer Chiaverini is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 36 novels, including critically acclaimed historical fiction and the beloved *Elm Creek Quilts* series. She, her husband and their two sons call Madison, Wisconsin, home.

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Publication Date: April 1, 2000
Paperback: 272 pages
Publisher: Plume
ISBN-10: 0452281725
ISBN-13: 9780452281721