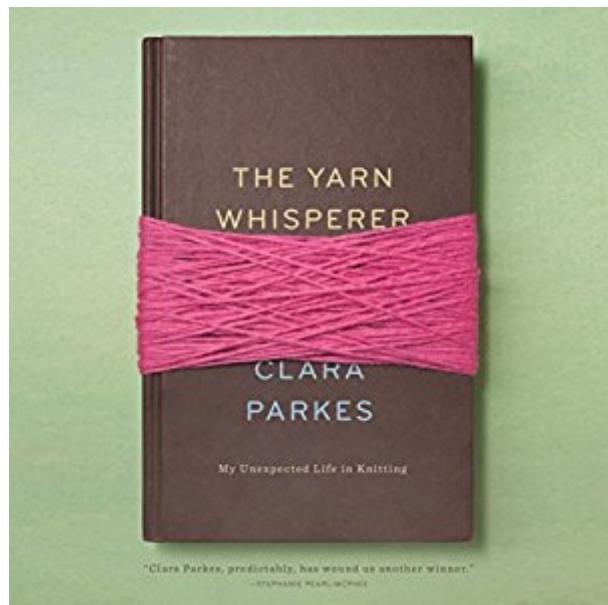


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The Yarn Whisperer: My Unexpected Life In Knitting



Synopsis

Stockinette, ribbing, cables, even the humble yarn over can instantly evoke places, times, people, conversations, all those poignant moments that we've tucked away in our memory banks. Over time, those stitches form a map of our lives. (From the preface) In *The Yarn Whisperer: Reflections on a Life in Knitting*, renowned knitter and author Clara Parkes ponders the roles knitting plays in her life via 22 captivating, poignant, and laugh-out-loud funny essays. Recounting tales of childhood and adulthood, family, friends, adventure, privacy, disappointment, love, and celebration, she hits upon the universal truths that drive knitters to create and explores the ways in which knitting can be looked at as a metaphor for so many other things. Put simply, "No matter how perfect any one sweater may be, it's only human to crave another. And another, and another."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been a fan of Clara Parkes' Knitters Review forever and have loved her other three books. This one is no exception. It is written with the yarn lover and knitter in mind. The book contains no patterns, but rather is a collection of reminiscences or essays by Ms. Parkes. She talks about her life as it relates to knitting and yarn. "This book is a collection of my own musings on stitches - why we work them, what they do to fabric, and how they have contributed to the fabric of my own life. For life really is a stitch. It has a beginning, a midpoint, and an end. It serves a purpose, and if we're lucky, it creates something beautiful and enduring." There is one essay that relates to steeks -

sometimes we have to make a cut in something in order to give it a chance to become whole. In the chapter about the choreography of stitches she discusses her move to Tucson and the discovery of the rodeo. She also learns square dancing. She looks at myriad stitches and designers and compares them to different types of choreography. For instance, Kaffe Fassett is a modern choreographer and other designers are more traditional. There is a poignant essay about her parents' divorce and her trip cross-country. The essay on stashes really spoke to me. I have so much yarn that I could open my own yarn shop. Ms. Parkes discusses the need to cull stashes and compares them to gardens. "As hard as it is to say, I should point out that a healthy stash requires frequent and prudent weeding. It can easily get overrun before we notice what's happening". In her essay called *Stitch Traffic* she gives very sound advice, that "putting blind faith in anything is rarely a good idea, whether it's a GPS or a knitting pattern.

I'm giving a very reluctant three stars. I would have given it two stars, but the subject matter alone made it worthy of an extra star. I'm glad I bought the book because I want more essays about knitting and yarn and fiber to be written and published. But... but... I LOVE Clara Parkes. If I ran into her at Maryland Sheep and Wool, I'd silently freak out, channel my inner Canadian YarnHarlot style and play it seriously cool (because who the heck would I be to her?), and then freak out about it for the whole next year, much as I did when I was looking at the sheep photographs at the same time as Deborah Robson -- who wrote *The Fleece & Fiber Sourcebook*, which is one of my very favorite books ever -- at the 2013 Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival. That said, going back to *The Yarn Whisperer*... yikes. The essays are short and the metaphors are big, obvious, clunky, and shoved down the readers' throats in the least elegant manner possible. I have a very difficult time with any author using "we" to try to strike notes of (usually false) profundity. It's equally difficult to take here. Every time a writer tells me "we" do something, I want to shout back, "No, *we* don't!" speaking, of course, as myself. Writers have no business speaking in sweeping generalizations about people. Stick to specifics. Leave it to the reader to see herself in what is portrayed. The book could have been awesome if she'd made the memoir more cohesive and detailed while weaving (no pun intended) the yarn side of her life into the story naturally. I think she should step way back to allow her readers to see connections and links for themselves.

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