



# Maybelle in Stitches

*Joyce Magnin*

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Maybelle can't sew. But when she finds an unfinished quilt in the attic of her mother's house, she gets the crazy idea to complete it. At first, it's just a way to fill the lonely nights while her husband, staff sergeant Holden Kanzinzki, is away fighting in World War II.

Yet when Maybelle discovers that the quilt is made from scraps of material that can be traced back through her family heritage, the project is suddenly much more important. Then word comes that Holden is missing in action, and with little else to do, Maybelle clings to the quilt as much as to the hope that her husband is still alive. As neighborhood friends gather around Maybelle to help her through the unknown days and nights ahead, it is the quilt that becomes a symbol of her unflagging belief that Holden will return--to her, to their home, and to their quilt-covered bed.

## Maybelle in Stitches Details

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Author : Joyce Magnin

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## From Reader Review Maybelle in Stitches for online ebook

### Catherine Boardman says

Never judge a book by its cover. I confess that I was seduced by the patchwork quilt on the cover and the title of MAYBELLE IN STITCHES. I love to sew almost as much as I love to read, what could be better a book that combined both. Very early on we learn that Maybelle is a welderess, I know nothing of welding but looked forward to learning.

Maybelle can weld but she can't sew, I'm willing to believe that the author can't either as the potential rich seam of fabric and thread selection, stitches and memory remains unmined. Its wartime and menfolk are mostly away which is why Maybelle welds. Is welding heavy work? Intricate work? Hard work? I don't know as this rich seam goes unmined as well.

The seam that does get mined however is God. God is good and we need to have faith. That is the message of this book. I agree God is good but surely he can sew as well? Not a book about stiches but about faith. Readable but disappointing.

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### Patricia Kemp Blackmon says

Maybelle couldn't believe she was going to attempt to finish a quilt her mother had started. Her dear friend Doris said it was a memory crazy quilt since it had pieces of fabric from Maybelle's heritage. After great contemplation they decided to add more than her childhood scraps to the quilt she would add pieces of memory of her husband and others whom were enduring this Second World War. The fact that her husband was missing in action makes finishing the quilt more important than ever.

There is one big problem Maybelle can't sew and needed help. She had several women workers from the shipyard renting rooms in her home. She too worked at the shipyard as a welder building ships which was her contribution to the war. Some of the women staying in her home and a couple of other she worked with was interested in helping her with the quilt even adding some of their own memories to the quilt and at the same time they would teach Maybelle to sew.

I found the character Maybelle to be pessimistic in many ways. For instance her lack of faith in God to keep her husband safe or to get her through life's everyday trials and tribulations. She did not think she was capable of learning to cook or sew in other words most things women were expect to know by her age. She had no faith in herself or God. She came off at times as being self-centered. Especially when there others were worried about their husbands being missing or becoming casualties of war.

I loved the story line of the shipyard women workers, but the rest of the reading was slow. The reading seemed repetitive at times about the characters daily lives. But the story line kept me reading and waiting for something interesting to happen which it did occasionally through the story.

My own father was in the Navy during WWII. He died from Leukemia in 1955 when I was four years old. I have no memory of him. A memory quilt would have been nice.

I do recommend this book.

I rated this book a 4 out of 5.

Disclosure: I received a free copy of this book from Litfuse Publicity Group/Abingdon Press for review. I was in no way compensated for this review. This review is my honest opinion.

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## **Janka H. says**

A novel about the companionship during the war times.

Maybelle Kazinski and the other women working at the Sun Shipbuilding and Dry Dock are coping with the tough WW2 times as well as they can - having their men fighting and them doing the men' s work at the factory. Maybelle' s husband was called to serve too soon after their wedding and she misses him terribly, as her friend Doris misses her own husband Mickey. Then the hard moments come - Maybelle' s mother dies unexpectedly and few days after her husband is reported as missing. To help her overcome her grief, Doris encourages Maybelle to continue with her mother' s quilt. Tomboy Maybelle feels truly unsure about any domestic works, but pushed by Doris, she agrees to give it a try. Soon they form a little quilting company with some other women working at the factory and they share their joys and sorrows over the quilting, hoping and quietly fighting for the big freedom cause.

The book brough back memories about my own female companionships and joy and sorrow shared over the work. I am grateful for these times, and a bit sentimental as well. I think that authoress was spot-on to write about the female alliance as the "tool" on how to cope with life, this is a deep truth.

This book can grow on you. While I don' t like several aspects, I very much liked the female companionship and sticking together (with some well observed female behaviour). The women in question aren't saints, they are human and behaving like one (even with a bit of cattiness). I would even liked deeper insight to their souls, as the deepest conversations often happens during the working together.

I also liked quilting and work informations about the war times in the U.S. Even the cultural elements (like singers Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra) were well used.

As for the characters - Maybelle really could get on my nerves sometimes, as she was a bit self-centered and oversensitive about herself. But this also might be because she was real, as these characteristics are not unknown at females :) I liked Doris, her sidekick, who was a lot braver and humble and always willing to help even as she was suffering the most among the women involved.

But I must say I have found her romance in the latter part of the book quite, quite unrealistic.

I liked Roger, he truly was one good man.

The book could use a good editor, I found some name discrepancies during the course of reading (but that might be just the ARC problem as I have received this book free from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review).

All in all, I like the message of hoping and coping and lending the helping hand. Everybody could use a lot more of it.

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## Sunflower says

"Maybelle in Stitches" has to be one of my favorite books in the quilting series, because one, she is very quirky, reminded a lot of me in not being able to sew, cook, or master really anything home economics and set in the forties.

With WW2 and a husband away, serving his country as a background, we are treated with Maybelle finding an inner strength that she never knew she had as she face not one but several challenges including a life changing situation, involving her good friend Doris.

The quilting series are a fun read, particularly for those with even a cursory knowledge of quilting as each of the books, tend to go into details about quilting patterns, sewing techniques and what quilting means both to the quilter and the receiptant, but more than anything else, what really has captured my love for the quilting series, is the interplay of how quilting, like books, tell a story and captures moments in lives.

With "Maybelle in Stitches", it is literally a coming of age story, as Maybelle finds herself suddenly find herself able to fend for herself in situations that often had her dependent on others and when life throws her curveballs, she finds herself all the more stronger than she really knew is in her.

Set in the forties, when men most of the men were fighting and for the first time, women became an integrated part of American industry, Joyce Morgan, really captures the lives that the women found themselves having to both adjust and in some cases, improvising, as they faced an unknown future with the men fighting for freedom in both the European and Japanese campaigns.

The characters are fleshed out enough, that the reader is drawn into the story and it seemed to me, that more emphasis in this book, then the other quilting series was really placed on the quilting, which for someone who like myself, is fascinated with quilting would particularly enjoy reading.

This doesn't devalue the story overall...you almost find yourself lost in the time frame and I can almost hear the music of the Forties playing in the background as Maybelle, Doris and the other characters, find themselves adjusting to the current normal of their situations.

Charming and a reminder of the strength of God throughout any circumstances...."Maybelle in Stitches" was a very fun read.

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## Tania Godwin-evans says

I love historic fiction, and a love story and anything to do with sewing (I am a quilter myself) but this book fell very flat for me. I can understand that people who have family serving in wartime will constantly think of them but Maybelle is such a weak sappy character even though she welds ships. It seems that she has been coddled by her mother and has no domestic capabilities.

During a clearing out session Maybelle comes across a quilt that her mother had started. She was persuaded by her best friend Doris to complete the quilt and got a couple of girls to help. I personally would have just edged the already created section and make a cushion cover as how would one know what fabric her mother had planned to use next. But then if that was the case there would be no story.

This novel lacks so much detail. Maybelle can weld but not sew and that is all we get. We are given no detail

of her work in the ship yard. Was it heavy work, was it hot. How intricate did she need to be, how was she recruited to that rather than a land girl?

Then again the fabric that Maybelle found and the threads used for the quilt were equally passed over. What were service stripes for example, what were they made of? What colour were they. What colour was Lois's baby blanket? So many rich and varied pieces of the pattern were left unanswered. It was a means to engage the first from the ship yard and to while away the hours until the next shift. Instead of a weekly meeting, as would appear to be the norm, these girls meet every day after their shift in the ship yard.

The quilt turned into a monster and it was a shame that the group didn't each take part of the original quilt and add to it to make a series of quilts; in that way they would all have had a piece of each other's memories, hopes and dreams. It is clear that the quilt started to represent many things to the girls that worked on it (the quilt), not least it was a way for coping with the redundancy of life and a bright hope for the future; and a loved one's return. There was obviously more than enough fabric to make a series of Hope quilts that could have kept all of the girls warm.

We do get quite a lot about trusting God and leaving your troubles with him. But this is more from the viewpoint of Doris that Maybelle who seems to have lost faith (as we all do from time to time). Unlike other religious based books though the mentions of religion here did not seem in the least bit false. Perhaps religion played a greater part in people's lives during WWII.

Although this book is readable it is not really about the quilt or the lives of the girls it is more about faith. This reader was ultimately disappointed in what could have been a wonderfully rich novel. The intention was there but unfortunately, the execution was rather lacking. This short read sell well short of this readers expectations.

I think that perhaps part of my disappointment was as a result of reading this ARC what as littered with errors. Not only did the author use the wrong names in at least two sequences but there was a whole chunk where the timeline was totally out. It is this reader's fervent hope that these errors were corrected before this novel went to final print.

Another factor leading to this reader's disappointment was that the synopsis and the novel are really at odds. If these things don't bother you and you like snapshots of life during 1940's America then this is for you. If you want a book about quilts, you are better off reading *The Forgotten Seamstress* by Liz Trenow.

Full Disclosure: I received a free copy from Netgalley for an honest review.

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## **Wanda says**

This book is about Maybelle Kazinski, a welderette for Sun Shipbuilding and Dock in Chester, Pennsylvania. Maybelle was newly married when her husband was called off to war. Now he is missing in action and she is left to wonder if she will ever see him again. Her friend, Doris is determined to help keep hope alive so when Maybelle finds an unfinished quilt her mother had been making, Doris insists on gathering a few ladies to help finish it. It is a crazy quilt made from material that Maybelle identifies as scraps from her family history.

Maybelle is pretty disheartened by her own lack of skills when it comes to things like sewing, cooking and cleaning, all of the things most women know how to do, and she gave up repeatedly. Her best friend, Doris, was always there to encourage her and nudge her along and I loved that. Everyone needs that kind of friend

in their life. Everyone really came together as a group to finish the quilt but it was much more than that. They were all women fighting for the same cause. They all had loved ones at war and each knew the other's sadness and pain. They were a sounding board for each other, a shoulder to lean on. I love that the book was about the war. I love war torn stories. Reading about the devastation and havoc of war can really speak to a person and touch their heart in a deeper way. I did find it a little slow, however. I kept waiting for the pace to pick up but it never did. The storyline was good and I liked the characters but it failed to really draw me into the story, to hook me. It was set in 1943 and the language and setting was true to that time period. One of the major sayings in the book was "what a gas" or "it's a gas". I thought that was great. Anyone that likes sewing or the background of the war efforts (it was mostly about building and repairing war ships) will like this book. If you like a fast paced novel it might not be for you.

Disclaimer: I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher for my honest review. The opinions expressed are mine alone. I received no monetary compensation for this review.

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## **Kathleen E. says**

Monday, April 7, 2014

Maybelle in Stitches ~ Quilts of Love book by Joyce Magnin, © 2014

A new Quilts of Love novel set in World War II brings us to Maybelle in Stitches by Joyce Magnin. Maybelle Kazinski is a welderette, along with other war brides working at Sun Shipbuilding and Dry Dock in Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1943, a suburb of Philadelphia. The shipyard work went on every day around the clock, with the whistle announcing the change of shifts.

As they wait for supper to be ready, Maybelle and her friend, Doris, listen to the radio ~ Frank Sinatra, and "Stardust," a favorite song of Maybelle's husband, Holden. She just had his letters to hold. He shipped out the day after their wedding. With rationing of food, gasoline, and electricity, individual homes rented out rooms to others working at the shipyard; some more than to one, working different shifts. Roger, deferred from the army because of loss of hearing, rents a room from Maybelle and her mother, Francine. Doris has lived down the street from them since childhood. Encouraging her daughter and Doris to go to the Canteen for the evening, tired, Francine goes to bed early. That is the last they have a meal and time together. She passes away of a stroke before morning.

Maybelle has adjustments to make beyond what she thinks she is capable of ~ cooking, especially. How she will miss her mother and her care of the two of them. How will she manage, and with her husband somewhere in Europe? Receiving frequent letters from him, it has been almost two weeks since the last one.

While sorting through her mother's things, Maybelle finds fabric and remembrances from her childhood ~ swatches of memories ~ pieces of her deceased father's shirts, old curtains, all saved in a trunk. The beginning of quilt pieces stitched together lay near the bottom, along with scissors, thread, and cut shapes; a part of her baby blanket sewn in.

Deciding to rent out her mother's room, Maybelle puts up a notice in the break room at the yard. Roger says he knows of two women who do not want to commute during the winter months. As Doris and Maybelle begin working on more quilt squares, there is a knock at the door. Thinking it is the new renters, Maybelle goes to the door. A man in uniform is standing there, with a telegram. Private Holden Kazinski has been reported Missing in Action.

As women gather day-by-day, they uphold each other awaiting word of the war's end and the return of their

loved ones; hopefully to their open arms.

Each generation awaits loved ones' return. During World War II, women helped in the defense plants to support the needs of those serving our country. This story is in conversational style between Doris and Maybelle as they encourage each other. A bright spot in any day, to be included and loved by those near with understanding. Author Joyce Magnin has brought the 1940s alive with its music and happenings in the war effort with those who wait.

Joyce Magnin is the author of the Brights Pond novels, including the award-winning *The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow*. A member of the Greater Philadelphia Christian Writers Fellowship, Joyce is a frequent workshop leader and the organizer of the StoryCrafters fiction group. She lives near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Find out more about Joyce at [quiltsoflovebooks.com](http://quiltsoflovebooks.com)

\*\*\*Thank you to Litfuse Publicity Group for inviting me to be part of the book tour for *Maybelle in Stitches* by Joyce Magnin and to Abingdon Press for sending me a copy to review. This review was written in my own words. No other compensation was received.\*\*\*

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## DynamicUno Thomas says

I've read two other books in the Quilts of Love series (*Scraps of Evidence* and *A Sky Without Stars*) and really enjoyed their heart-warming and endearing stories. I figured it would be safe to assume that *Maybelle in Stitches* would follow suit-and I was right!

**What I Liked:** I enjoyed that the setting of the book was during World War II, when the men were off fighting for our country, patriotism was still alive and well, and the women were "doing their part to help the war effort" by welding and working in the ship yards.

I also enjoyed the characters and their distinctive personalities: Doris-with her "can-do" attitude and Maybelle who is still struggling to find her way in the world. Roger was a doll having to put up with all of the women around him, and the other women in the book helped to add comic relief and a touch of camaraderie when things were tough.

I enjoyed the friendship of the quilting group and the stories that they shared with one another about their lives, hopes, fears, and dreams.

**What I Didn't Like:** I hated the sad parts of the story. Although I know they were a sad reality of the time period, I wasn't expecting some of them and I was blubbing on the couch like an idiot. (You'll just have to read the book to find out what I'm referring to in the story.)

**Overall Impression:** If you're wanting something to make you feel nostalgic for a time period in which communities banded together to help one another in times of need, then *Maybelle* and her quilting partners will share their stories with you--as long as you grab a needle and thread. I really loved this book and would like to read more by Joyce Magnin.

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## **Cindy says**

I have never read this author so it was fun reading a new author. I enjoyed the story and it was quite interesting to see the everyday life of the ladies who worked in the ship yards as welderettes. I found the fact that people shared housing during the war very interesting. I don't know if I had ever heard that before. The story was good, I loved the quilt part of the story, I love crazy quilts, maybe someday I will be brave enough to try one. 3.5 stars from this reviewer.

This book was provided for review purposes only, no payment was received for this review

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## **Kathleen (Kat) Smith says**

We all know about women being employed at factories during World War II as an effort to help do whatever they could to enable their men to come home from the war as soon as possible. For Maybelle Kazinski, she is doing her part as a welder in Sun Shipyard, getting ships ready to aid in the war effort. She had only been married for a couple of days to Holden before he was called to report for duty, but it was worth it to know that he would have her waiting for him when he returned, if he returned at all. It seems like the waiting was truly the hardest part and even though working for six days helped to pass the time, she would cringe whenever the doorbell rang expecting the worst.

She just wasn't prepared for that dreaded feeling in the pit of her stomach to take the life of her mother, Francine and leave her alone. She had lost her father earlier and besides Roger, one of her mother's boarders who also worked at Sun Shipyard who she had come to see as a brother of sort, she had no more family left. Her only consolation was her best friend Doris who also had a husband serving overseas. Between the two of them, they did what they could to encourage each other that the war would be over soon and their men would come home.

But life isn't always sunshine and roses! Fate intervenes when we least expect it and for Maybelle it would be when the doorbell rings and a yellow telegram is delivered. The only good thing about the news it contained was that Holden wasn't killed but simply missing in action. But for Maybelle it seemed to be her undoing. On the heels of her mother's death and Holden's MIA telegram she had to find something to keep time from crawling along. When she discovers a crazy quilt of scraps her mother was making as a surprise for her and Holden for Christmas, Doris decides to convince Maybelle that they should finish it. But Maybelle isn't exactly what you would called skilled at sewing or cooking for that matter. Her high school sewing project involved her sewing the zipper of her dress into the neck area instead. Something that is still laughed about between her and Doris. But at least it will help to pass the time between working and sewing.

I received Maybelle in Stitches by Joyce Magnin compliments of Abingdon Press and Christian Fiction Blog Alliance for my honest review. I did not receive any monetary compensation for a favorable review and the opinions expressed here are strictly my own. This is the 16th novel in the Quilts of Love Series and one that can be read as a stand alone as each talented author takes their turn at telling a story with the quilt at the centerpiece. Joyce appealed to not only the romance lover in my heart but to WWII lover as well. I loved the background story she researched about women working in the shipyards as welders for Sun Shipyard which she includes at the conclusion of this novel. It makes it so rich to read how difficult it was waiting for men to come home from the war not knowing if they would ever see them again. Hands down this one rates a 5 out of 5 stars in my opinion.

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## Deb Haggerty says

**Deb's Dozen: 12-Word Summaries – World War II welderette, ship-building, home-making, laughter, loss, love, friendship becomes family.**

The time is World War II - 1943; the place is Chester, Pennsylvania; the setting is the Sun Shipbuilding and Dry Dock; the main character – Maybelle Kazinski, welderette. Yes, you read that correctly – welderette. In 1943, many women were called into action at home – filling the jobs the soldiers and sailors left behind. So Maybelle became a welderette – worked her way up from cutting bolt holes in the sheet metal to welding seams on the warships that came through their plant.

Maybelle and her best friend, Doris, both worked in the plant. Their husbands had gone off to war after a very short period of marriage – in Maybelle's case, two weeks. She longs for her husband, Holden, as does Doris for her husband, Mickey. Doris is lucky, though; she hears from Mickey fairly frequently – at least as often as the V-mail gets through.

Maybelle, a tomboy of sorts, lives at home with her mother, Francine, who would put Betty Crocker and June Cleaver to shame. When Maybelle's mom dies unexpectedly, Maybelle is lost – she doesn't know how to do all those house-wifely things. Thank heavens Doris lives just down the street, and their boarder, Roger, is handy in the kitchen and as a scrounger, too.

Cleaning out her mother's things, Maybelle runs across a quilt her mom has started – piecing together materials from Maybelle's past – her baby blanket and other memorable bits of cloth. Doris has the inspiration that they should finish the quilt – despite the fact that Maybelle can't sew.

How the girls manage without their spouses, manage without Francine to guide them in the house or on the quilt, and how the war affects them with its effects, is a touching and wonderful story. I smiled in sympathy at Maybelle's ineptness in the kitchen, cried when Francine died, giggled at the antics of their dog, and wanted to quilt along as they progressed. You'll love this story of the gals left behind during World War II and how they coped – sometimes brilliantly, sometimes in spite of themselves.

Joyce Magnin has written several books including *The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow*, which was named one of the “Top 5 Best Christing Fiction Books of 2009” by Library Journal. Joyce is mom to three children, has one grandson, and mothers a neurotic parakeet.

I was given a copy of *Maybelle in Stitches* by Abingdon Press for my unbiased review.

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## JoJo Sutis says

This Quilts of Love Series is so good and so much fun!

There really is something for everyone!!!

And it's totally okay if you're not a quilter...you'll especially love Maybelle.

In this wonderful tale from Joyce Magnin, we journey back to the 1940's during WW2.

Joyce has done an amazing job of capturing the feel and emotion of this time period.

This story definitely pulls at your heartstrings! There are also many funny moments as well.

Another great addition to this wonderful series!!!

## **Julie Akeman says**

A wonderful and moving book. This series always features a quilt being made in the storyline. This story takes place in WWII a young woman is waiting for her husband to come home and discovers a quilt that her mom had started and though she is sorely inadequate with a needle her friend convinces her to get it finished to keep her mind occupied while hopefully waiting for her husband to return from the war. A very hearttouching book.

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## **Victor Gentile says**

Joyce Magnin in her new book, “Maybelle in Stitches” Book Sixteen in the Quilts of Love Series published by Abingdon Press brings us into the life of Maybelle Kazinski.

From the back cover: A patchwork quilt holds together two hearts separated by miles of ocean and the Second World War.

Maybelle can't sew. But when she finds an unfinished quilt in her mother's closet, she gets the crazy idea to complete it. At first, it's just a way to fill the lonely nights while her husband, Holden Kazinski, is away fighting in World War II.

Yet when Maybelle discovers that the quilt is made from scraps of material that can be traced back through her family heritage, the project is suddenly much more important. Then word comes that Holden is missing in action, and with little else to do, Maybelle clings to the quilt as much as to the hope that her husband is still alive. As neighborhood friends gather around Maybelle to help her through the unknown days and nights ahead, it is the quilt that becomes a symbol of her unflagging belief that Holden will return—to her, to their home, and to their quilt-covered bed.

History, World War II, Quilting and Shipbuilding. Quite a mix and, on the outside, it seems difficult to write a story combining all these elements. Fear not, Ms. Magnin has captured them well and provided an excellent story. The men are off fighting but the jobs needed to be filled so the women stepped up to the challenge. Maybelle becomes a welder at a shipyard. She has never been a welder in her life however she is up to the challenge. She has never sewn before either but accepts that challenge as well. This is a story about spiritual growth, about stepping out of your comfort zones and of relying heavily upon God. All kinds of events happen and it takes a rock-hard foundation upon God to keep her grounded. Maybelle and the rest of the characters are outstanding and wonderful to be with and learn about. Ms. Magnin has done an outstanding job of bringing history to the table. There is a lot in this book, much to think about and it just interesting and exciting as well.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Litfuse Publicity Group. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: “Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.”

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## Julie Barrett says

Maybelle in Stitches Quilts of Love Series by Joyce Magnin

Maybelle and Holden were married before he headed off to the war. She is a welder and works on all kinds of ships for the war effort. She lives in a house with her mother and they have boarders that also work at the factory.

Holden has written to her a few times and she is comforted by the quilt her mother made them for their wedding.

Doris is there to comfort her as she loses her mother and then Maybelle gets word Holden is missing in action. The quilt her mother had started along with Doris' help has brought a calm to Maybelle's life as she pieces the past together in little pieces.

Hope and her trust in God will see them all through....she just needs to find what she is good at and do it. So many disappointments in the past of things she was not able to do. Doris helps her make the big Thanksgiving dinner for everybody.

Very interesting history of events. They also get news of Holden ... An excerpt from another Quilt of Love book is included.

I received this book from Net Galley via Abingdon Press in exchange for my honest review.

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