

Reba "Forward"

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Have you ever made a quilt? I have. it's one of the most therapeutic and calming things I've ever done. and I had a huge sense of accomplishment when I finished. Both of my grandmothers made quilts, my mama did, and my aunt jeannie did. I loved to open that big box at christmastime knowing it was a quilt that one of them had made. I was so flattered that after all the time and energy they had spent on that quilt, they had selected me to receive it. even as a young girl, I knew a quilt was a gift I would cherish always. Back when I was living at home, I remember during the winter months mama would set up her sewing machine in the living room over by the window. at night when we'd all be in there watching tv after supper, mama would be over at her sewing machine, making another quilt from the scraps left over. From a dress or blouse she had made for one of us earlier. Then, when she had sewn all the squares sewn together, she'd lay the batting on the living room floor, lay the quilted piece on top of that, and then start tacking it down. when that was completed, she'd sew the border around it. then it was finished. all that remained was for mama to decide who would be the proud recipient of her precious handiwork which represented so many hours of love. I feel very blessed to have received one of mama's quilts. I sleep under it every night I'm home. it doesn't match the fancy comforter we bought in los angeles, but it feels better than anything you can imagine. just because I know my mama made it just for me. When daddy's mother died in 1950, one year before my sister alice was born, mama got the trunk that held all of the quilts, china, crystal, silverware, and knickknacks that grandma had collected during her lifetime. mama discovered that grandma's trunk also included a few quilt pieces that she had started but had never finished. my sister susie eventually wound up with those quilt pieces and we all figured she would finish them out and keep them for herself. But as only susie would do, she cut the makings of the quilt into four squares, had them quilted, put a picture of grandma mcentire and a description of the quilt

together, and had them framed for Alice's, my brother's, and my Christmas present. That's how thoughtful Susie is. She could have kept the quilt for herself, but, instead, she shared with her brother and sisters something so special, which had belonged to a woman none of us had ever met. That's part of Susie's charm. That's also the charm of a quilt. Like a mother, it wraps its arms around you—so soft, yet so sturdy, and so comforting. In my grandma's time the sewing of a quilt would bring friends and neighbors together, and in quilting circles today that lovely tradition continues. Now we live in a time when so many women do not even have a sewing machine in their home and when country quilts hang in the fanciest boutiques and galleries selling as decorative art. That would surely give my grandma and her circle a good laugh and more than a few shakes of the head. Can you just imagine the visiting, the stories, and the fellowship that have gone on during the making of all the wonderful quilts through the years? And can you imagine all the children who have been tucked in securely underneath them in their beds night after night? And us adults too? That's what you call comfort from a country quilt. I hope this book is as comforting to you as my mama's quilt has always been to me. Like a quilt, this book is made up of small pieces of material—some of my favorite stories, memorable experiences, and more than a few opinions—written, rather than sewn, from the stuff of my life. I have stitched these pieces together with my sincere hope that you will find the quilt of a book friendly, warm, and enjoyable, something you can turn to for comfort and entertainment and for sharing with friends and family. So grab your favorite quilt, wrap up, get comfortable, and enjoy. From me to you. Love, Reba

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