



Sweater Quest: My Year of Knitting Dangerously

Adrienne Martini

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"I knit so I don't kill people" —bumper sticker spotted at Rhinebeck Sheep and Wool Festival

For Adrienne Martini, and countless others, knitting is the linchpin of sanity. As a working mother of two, Martini wanted a challenge that would make her feel in charge. So she decided to make the Holy Grail of sweaters—her own Mary Tudor, whose mind-numbingly gorgeous pattern is so complicated to knit that its mere mention can hush a roomful of experienced knitters. Created by reclusive designer Alice Starmore, the Mary Tudor can be found only in a rare, out-of-print book of Fair Isle–style patterns, *Tudor Roses*, and requires a discontinued, irreplaceable yarn. The sweater, Martini explains, "is a knitter's Mount Everest, our curse, and our compulsion. I want one more than I can begin to tell you."

And so she took on the challenge: one year, two needles, and countless knits and purls to conquer Mary Tudor while also taking care of her two kids, two cats, two jobs, and (thankfully) one husband—without unraveling in the process. Along the way, Adrienne investigates the tangled origins of the coveted pattern, inquires into the nature of artistic creation, and details her quest to buy supplies on the knitting black market. As she tries not to pull out her hair along with rows gone wrong, Martini gets guidance from some knitterati, who offer invaluable inspiration as she conquers her fear of Fair Isle. A wooly *Julie and Julia*, this epic yarn celebrates the profound joys of creating—and aspiring to—remarkable achievements.

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