

Mystery Quilt Sew Along - 2018

Designed by Kathleen Tracy (of Country Lane Quilts)

Welcome to another little quilting adventure for 2018! I hope you'll join me in making a Mystery quilt this year. Here's how it will work –

1. This is a **free** sew along for another scrappy medallion quilt that will measure about 30" x 30". There are no patterns to buy. Just download the .pdf patterns every month from my website and print them out. (You may need to download Adobe .pdf reader in order to open these .pdf files. Also, make sure you have the latest, updated version of Adobe.) We had a few problems with the files last time and there are still recurring problems with Yahoo and Facebook so I'm hoping that hosting it on my website will eliminate problems and make it easier for you to download the patterns. We'll be working on this project every month and , if you follow along, you'll finish the last pattern in June 2018. The patterns will remain up on a special page on my website www.countrylanequilts.com until after the mystery is completed so you will be able to download them at any time it's convenient for you. Look for the Mystery Quilt page near the top of my website.
2. I'll give you the first block on January 3. Then, you can expect to get your mystery quilt patterns on or around the first of every month through June.
3. I'm planning this as a scrap quilt. However, it would also work as a two-color quilt or a matching quilt using only a few of your favorite colors if you do not like scrappy quilts. There will be several options as we go along. It's your choice and it will be fun to see what you come up with. I like to make scrappy quilts and while I use a lot of different scraps I like my scrap quilts to have a "rhyme and a reason" so it's not entirely haphazard - there is some planning involved. I repeat some of the same colors throughout the quilt in different prints to have a "theme." You may notice that my favorite color is blue and so many of my favorite scrappy quilts use lots of blue to pull them together. My suggestion: Take your time choosing your fabrics. Look at some of your favorite quilts made by your favorite designers and try to figure out what it is about their quilts that you love. When you choose your fabrics for the first block, repeat some of the same colors but in different prints or select colors that will coordinate with those for the rest of the quilt. Use your favorite colors but don't be afraid to try coordinating them with other colors. This will set the tone for your quilt and bring it all together at the end. The blocks will be simple to make and even if you're a beginner you shouldn't have any trouble.
4. This time, I've added appliqué for the first block. Some of you may not like doing appliqué at all and so I am offering you the option of making a pieced block instead. If you choose, you can skip the appliqué altogether and piece a different block. The alternate block will be the same size as the appliqué block and the rest of the quilt will be the same. The appliqué can be done in cotton fabric or wool. You may choose your own method of appliqué. There are lots of different ways of doing it and you have many to choose from so keep in mind that I cannot give instructions for every method of doing appliqué. You're on your own for that. There are plenty of tutorials and videos on doing appliqué online or in some of Martingale's quilting books. Take a look at the **Quilting Basics** section at the end of my book *Small & Scrappy* (page77). You'll see some tips with diagrams as to how I like to do my own appliqué using the template and starch method.

5. Except for the first block, most of the blocks are small and I think many of you can easily sew this from your stash and scrap basket and perhaps use a few additional fat quarters. Sometimes, buying a couple of new pieces of fabric will inspire you and "liven" up your project. I am working on making up some scrap bags of 1800s reproduction fabric that I am going to sell on my website – some new, some not so new, but all pretty and scraps that are similar to the ones I use for my quilts. If you like scrappy quilts, then these may be just what you need to mix in with your own fabrics. Keep in mind, these will be **scraps, not a kit** so you cannot expect to use them to make your entire quilt. You'll need more fabric of your own that coordinates. If you do not have a shop that sells reproduction fabrics near you, try finding a shop online. Even Etsy and eBay have shops that sell fabric bundles or fat quarters.
6. Every month I'll also suggest another challenge quilt from my book *Small & Scrappy*. If you wish to follow along and make some of the quilts, you'll need the book. (These patterns are not free.) I will also have a new book out in July 2018 and, after the Mystery is finished, we'll be making some of those quilts for our group challenges later this year.

Thanks to all of you for joining in! I'm hoping you'll have fun with this one.

-Kathy

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