



Sister's Choice

Emilie Richards

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With nine years and a turbulent childhood between them, Kendra and Jamie have never been storybook sisters. After a long estrangement, they've finally begun to heal their hurts and forge a new bond.

Now Jamie is offering a gift Kendra has long since given up hoping for, the fondest wish of her heart—a baby. Already raising two young girls on her own, Jamie wants to become a gestational surrogate for Kendra and her husband, Isaac, giving birth to a child the husband and wife have created together. Despite some lingering misgivings about her once-wayward younger sister's commitment, Kendra agrees, and soon Jamie is pregnant.

In addition to this amazing gift of life, Jamie has designed a new house for Kendra and Isaac and is overseeing its construction on Isaac's ancestral property along the Shenandoah River, with the help of Cash Rosslyn, one of the most attractive men Jamie has known. By giving her sister both a home and a family, Jamie hopes to prove to Kendra that she deserves absolution for her past mistakes. But when a medical crisis threatens her health and her promising new relationship with Cash, Jamie learns that the most difficult choice in her life is yet to come—and its cost may be beyond calculation.

Sister's Choice Details

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Karen Martin says

Richard's books are always richly textured, with lots of depth and characters you grow to love. This book is right up there with the best. Family dynamics are very authentic, true-to-life relationships and dialogue without being predictable in any way. I very much enjoyed the story-within-the-story portraying the life of an elderly but vibrant woman being shared with the main character, who is involved with her grandson. The lives both women live - past and present- are tightly intertwined with their sisters, and the meshing of the stories complement and do not detract from the storytelling. This is a book I will keep to share with friends, and read again.

Joyce says

I have now read 4 books of hers in this particular series. Each book I felt was better than the last. I have enjoyed how each book concentrates on different individuals of this little community, making you feel a part of the community as you get to know your neighbors.

Tammy Adams says

Despite many references to the fact that Kendra cannot have children and the book being based around the fact that her sister was a surrogate for her, it was NEVER explained WHY she couldn't have a child of her own. I think it was mentioned that she was too "light" (whatever that means). I understand this must be part of a series and I haven't read the other books but with the surrogacy being the basis of the entire book I think it's reasonable to expect an explanation as to why the surrogacy is needed. I would have given this another star if this one question had been answered. Would still love to know the answer.....

Jeanne Adamek says

This is the last in a series of 5 books. Unfortunately the last I should say. I can recommend each and every one of the Shenandoah Album series. They are all terrific stories that do not shy away from the normal problems in life, but gives many ways of seeing things and putting it all in proper perspective. The author doesn't give easy answers, but more challenges the reader to see all different answers...

I loved all the characters and loved the location where they lived. Although Emilie Richards did satisfactorily tied up all the (obvious) loose ends, I still felt when finishing this last book as if I was moving away and losing all my friends...

Ann Olson says

I can't quite pin what it is about that book that prevented me from really enjoying it. I liked it, I loved this series, and I'm sad that this is how it finished. Partly it felt like they just weren't that tied into Toms Brooks. Jamie just never really interested me as a character, despite the interesting storyline. And it did bother me that labor and snowstorms seem to be an inevitable combination in books... Something that has also bothered me throughout this series is a lot of gender stereotyping (though Jamie did give voice to that for one short second) in regards to "girls doing each others hair and boys watching football" and men not being good at sharing feelings and Cash always being so surprising in his understanding and romance. It was great to see Kendra again, along with Elisa and Sam. Would have liked to see more of Helen and Gayle.

Kathryn says

The last (so far) in this series. As with all the Shenandoah books I enjoyed it very much. Great characters as usual that the reader grows to love.

Now rereading using the audiobook version by Blackstone Audio. If I could give more than 5 stars I would. Loved the story of the two sisters, Kendra and Jamie and how they helped each other. I loved the story of Grace, grandmother of Cash, I loved going back to the war time and hearing her early story. Grace now has a big place in my heart just like Helen does from Book 1 in this series. So well narrated by Isabel Keating, she sure brings the characters alive.

Kate Vale says

Another Shenandoah Album titles, this story focuses on two sisters, Kendra and Jamie, whose relationship when they were growing up was less than helpful for either of them. Their experiences then have followed them into adulthood and continue to infuse their interactions. Kendra can't have children, but Jamie has had no problems getting pregnant. Her two daughters are testament to that, but Jamie's descent into drug use and other acting out has scarred her sister as surely as it has scarred Jamie, even though that part of her past is long gone.

Jamie decides to give her sister what she wants but can't have: children. How? By acting as a surrogate. After convincing Kendra and her husband, Isaac, two embryos are transferred and Jamie soon realizes that the pregnancy--begin in a petrie dish--has taken. She's now pregnant with TWO babies. So far so good. Right? Maybe.

In order to enable Kendra to watch over Jamie during the next several months, Jamie moves into a little cabin with her girls while the house she has designed (she's an architecture student) that Kendra and Isaac will call their own. The man overseeing the construction is Cash Rosslyn, a man who watched his wife decline and die, and he makes clear that he's never going to settle. Why else would he live in a decrepit trailer his grandmother wouldn't allow any hired man to occupy? To Jamie's surprise, she likes Cash and he can't help himself. He likes her, too, and is undaunted by her gradually burgeoning pregnancy.

But what should have gone smoothly is fraught with physical issues as well as mental and emotional ones. Complications also arise when Cash learns something about Isaac he never would have guessed--until his taciturn father, who claims to have once known Isaac's mother--tells the men what he suspects. Then there's Grace, Cash's grandmother, and her long-standing feud with Helen, one of the celebrated quilters in the

community.

As if this wasn't enough to keep a reader turning pages, Jamie discovers a lump in her breast that threatens her life and those of the babies she's carrying. She can't tell Kendra. What she decides to do and why informs the rest of the story to its crisis-ridden end. In doing so, both sisters become closer and Cash throws off the chains of his fears about death and dying.

A story guaranteed to illustrate the multiple complexities of family relationships in all its tangled elements.

Gloria Bernal says

I loved this. After reading Lovers Knot I wanted to know more about Jamie, as her relationship with her sister Kendra was not fully developed in that novel. I was so glad there was a sequel, picking up their relationship later on, when Jamie gets to give her sister the gift of motherhood. Sisters Choice is a quilting pattern, but also a very appropriate title for this story of surrogacy motherhood. Kendra is childless, but doesn't want to be. She practically raised Jamie, her younger sister, most of her young life. Now Jamie offers to be the "incubator" for her twins and carry them to term for her sister and brother in law, with a few twists and turns through her pregnancy. All the characters, quilters, sisters, brothers, and all the people of the town are endearing and you feel bonded to them by the end of the novel and want more.

Cara says

The story line was a great idea, but I think it could have been told better. I wish the ending would have been written out more. It's all this detail and character building for the first 3/4 of the book, then the ending is rushed and leaves too much unfinished at the end...in my opinion. Pretty good read, but won't read it again.

Sarah Oboda says

I read this as a comparable title to the Surrogate novel I drafted in NaNoWriMo last November. The novel seemed to be lengthy. It also involves what I'd call "nice country boy romance," which isn't my style. The characters and plot were intriguing enough, with decent twists, and a satisfying ending. I feel like I learned some things about quilting culture and architecture, but having a background in either. If you like complex family drama, soft country romance, or quilting, this may be your type of book.

Denise says

3 to 3.5 stars. I listened to this book and at first, there was something about the narrator (Isabel Keating) that I just didn't like. Her voice reminded me of Tina Fey's (which was distracting) and some of her accents were a bit too exaggerated for my taste. I almost didn't last past the first hour, but I persevered and I'm glad I did. It was an interesting story of family (the sisters surrogacy story line was interesting), friends (I loved grandma Grace), and the sense of place (an apple orchard in VA) was lovely. The quilting was a minor side line and I enjoyed it. I could have done without the twist near the end, but other than that, I thought it was a nice,

interesting story. As a side note the audio production was filled with some very long pauses that were irritating to say the least.

Donna says

I discovered this author earlier this month, and liked her writing. I gave the first two of her books 4 stars even though they were sappy (in a good way) and a little on the predictable side. So now this is my third book by her that I've read and it gets 3 stars. I liked this one, I just didn't feel as invested.

She creates characters in great detail and strings them along through her stories. I like the depth this creates, even when I can't identify with them. What I don't like, is the constant repetition of certain character traits. And I'm never a fan of characters who constantly berate themselves. It feels like a cheap trick because it looks an awful lot like info dumping especially when this is overused. I want to be shown not told (over and over again).

The story itself was interesting. She can certainly paint a pretty picture. It was about a woman who becomes a surrogate for her older sister. I also liked that there were subplots. I think I liked that the most because I'd have to relegate this to the Hallmark Movie bin, if it weren't for that. So overall, 3 stars.

manipulation

Christa says

Sister's Choice was a great addition to Emilie Richard's Shenandoah Album Series. I enjoyed reading the story of Jamie Dunkirk, sister to Kendra Taylor from Lover's Knot. It was also great to see the continuation of the story of Kendra and Isaac Taylor. This fifth book in the series was a novel of love, acceptance, forgiveness, and difficult choices.

After a very difficult adolescence, Jamie Dunkirk, single mother of two daughters, has finally gotten her life back on track. Studying to be an architect, she has reached a point in her life where she yearns for absolution for all that she feels she put her sister, Kendra Taylor, through years earlier. Although born into wealth and privilege, the sisters were sadly neglected, and when Kendra left home for college at seventeen, she took eleven year old Jamie with her. Kendra tried to raise her well, but Jamie was rebellious, ran away, and became addicted to drugs. After years of no contact with Kendra, Jamie has reappeared with her two young daughters. She has tried to mend the rift with her sister, but feels a deep lack of trust from Kendra. Jamie knows that Kendra's deepest desire is for a child that she cannot bear due to an incident years earlier. After serious soul searching, Jamie offers to be a surrogate and carry a child for Kendra and her husband Isaac Taylor. Kendra and Isaac worry about the emotional complications of surrogacy, but eventually give in to their yearning for a child and agree. Jamie decides to spend her pregnancy in her sister's unoccupied cabin in the Shenandoah Valley, overseeing the building of the Taylor's new home.

As Jamie and her daughters settle into life in the small community of Tom's Brook, she develops a friendship with builder Cash Rosslyn. As a young man, Cash suffered a tragedy which has caused him to shy away from commitment, preferring to cultivate a footloose, "good ole boy" persona. Friendship with Cash brings

Jamie into contact with his grandmother, Grace Cashel. Jamie and her daughters are drawn to Grace, and they all become very important to one another. As they become close, Grace tells Jamie the touching story of her life as a young wife. While she rebuilds her relationship with Kendra and develops new ones in the Shenandoah Valley, Jamie enjoys carrying her sister's twins. Everything changes when Jamie is faced with a health crisis and has to make the most difficult decision of her life. Her determination to face the situation alone places her relationships with Kendra and Cash, as well as her very life, in danger.

Sister's Choice was an engrossing and emotional novel. It was very enjoyable and had a few mildly humorous scenes, but overall was not a lighthearted book. It dealt with some serious and difficult issues. I enjoyed the characters and the relationships that developed between them. I have thoroughly enjoyed the Shenandoah Album series, and this book was one of the best.

Pam Wiebe says

This is the first book I've read by Emilie Richards.

I enjoy reading series; I like the continuation of a story and enjoy "getting to know" the characters. I was disappointed to learn after reading Sister's Choice that it was the fifth book in the series, wish I had read the others first but that didn't prevent me from enjoying this book.

I think I liked Granny Grace's story more than I liked Jamie's story.

I found the ending rather predictable but all in all I really enjoyed the story.

Nancy says

Here is my truth, I don't know if I had READ this, rather than listened to it, I would have liked it better. The subplot was much better than the main story. The most annoying part was that the main character- Jamie has 2 little girls who -based on the reader- totally bugged and more than once had me considering just stopping, rather than finish the story. The story is based on 2 sisters. One who made a mess of her life early on and to redeem herself, acts as a surrogate for her sister (who helped raise her) and is unable to carry children in her own womb. It's a restitution story... with very annoying children included. Much of it was predictable and other parts were unbelievable... but if you're knitting, or scrubbing floors it was tolerable... but to be read only when desperate for sappy- except of course, for the subplot... which was great food for thought.
