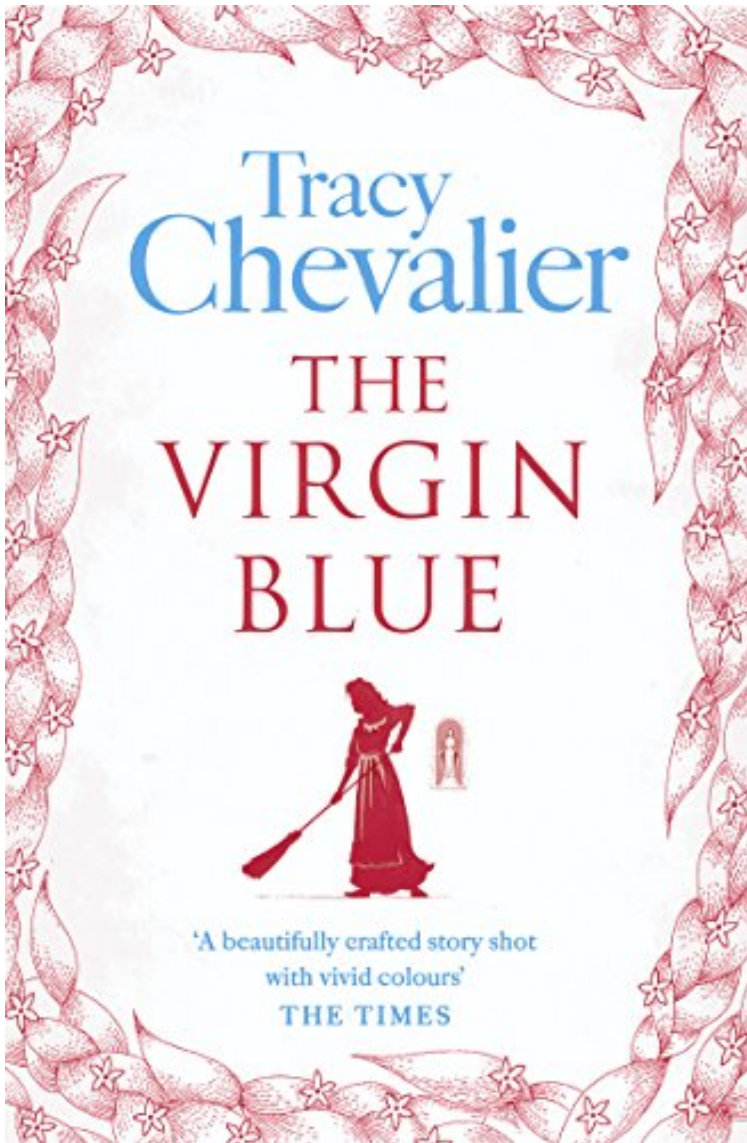


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The Virgin Blue



Par Tracy Chevalier
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Par Tracy Chevalier : The Virgin Blue before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Virgin Blue:

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Description : Description du produitMeet Ella Turner and Isabelle du Moulin - two women born centuries apart, yet bound by a fateful family legacy. When Ella and her husband move to a small town in France, Ella hopes to brush up on her French, qualify to practice as a midwife, and start a family of her own. Village life turns out to be less idyllic than she expected, however, and a peculiar dream of the color blue propels her on a quest to uncover her family's French ancestry. As the novel unfolds - alternating between Ella's story and that of Isabelle du Moulin four hundred years earlier - a common thread emerges that unexpectedly links the two women. Part detective story, part historical fiction, The Virgin Blue is a novel of passion and intrigue that compels readers to the very last page.

Prsentation de l'diteurPerfect for fans of Barbara Erskine, Kate Morton and Sarah Waters, this is historical fiction at its very best.The compelling story of two women, born four centuries apart, and the ancestral

legacy that binds them. Ella Turner does her best to fit in to the small, close-knit community of Lisle-sur-Tarn. She even changes her name back to Tournier, and knocks the rust off her high school French. But it is all in vain. Isolated and lonely, she is drawn to investigate her Tournier ancestry, which leads to her encounter with the town's wolfish librarian. Isabelle du Moulin, known as Le Rousse due to her fiery red hair, is tormented and shunned in the village suspected of witchcraft and reviled for her association with the Virgin Mary. Falling pregnant, she is forced to marry into the ruling family: the Tourniers. Tormentor becomes husband, and a shocking fate awaits her. Plagued by the colour blue, Ella is haunted by parallels with the past, and by her recurring dream. Then one morning she wakes up to discover that her hair is turning inexplicably red.

From Publishers Weekly: Chevalier's clunky first novel, initially published in England in 1997, lacks the graceful literary intimacy of her subsequent runaway hit, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. In split-narrative fashion, it follows a transplanted American woman in southwestern France as she connects through dreams with her distant Huguenot ancestors. The primary plot concerns the plight of Ella Turner, an insecure American midwife of French ancestry. Her architect husband, Rick, has been transferred from California to Toulouse, France, with Ella accompanying him. Often left alone, she becomes lonely and isolated, and when she decides it's time to have a baby, she begins dreaming of medieval scenes involving a blue dress. In alternating sections of the novel, these details are developed in a narrative about a 16th-century French farm girl and midwife, Isabelle du Moulin, and her eventual marriage to overbearing tyrant Etienne Tournier. Isabelle and Etienne belong to a vehemently anti-Catholic Calvinist sect that overthrows the village's cult of the Virgin, who is also known as La Rousse and depicted in paintings as red-haired and wearing a blue dress. Because of her own red hair and midwifery practice, Isabelle is suspected by her husband of witchcraft and punished accordingly. Ella, with the help of magnetic local librarian Jean-Paul, researches the lives of Isabelle and Etienne, trying to get to the bottom of her strange dreams. Chevalier tries hard to make Ella sympathetic, but her dissatisfaction with Rick is baffling, as is her attraction to the chauvinistic Jean-Paul. Equally difficult to swallow is the heavy-handed plot, which relies on jarring coincidences as it swerves unsteadily from past to present.

Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From AudioFile: In Tracy Chevalier's first novel, we follow two very different women born centuries apart living in the same rural area of France. In an entertaining mix of historical fiction and detective story, Chevalier uses her proven talents to make us care deeply about the conjoined fates of seventeenth-century Isabelle du Moulin and twenty-first-century Ella Turner. Narrators Carter and Marceau Clarke both read terrifically well. They infuse their respective characters with vivid personalities and make the extra characters for which they are each responsible believable--from aged French male peasant to 10-year-old girl. As an added bonus, all the French accents are spot-on. An utterly involving listen. A.C.S. AudioFile 2003, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine