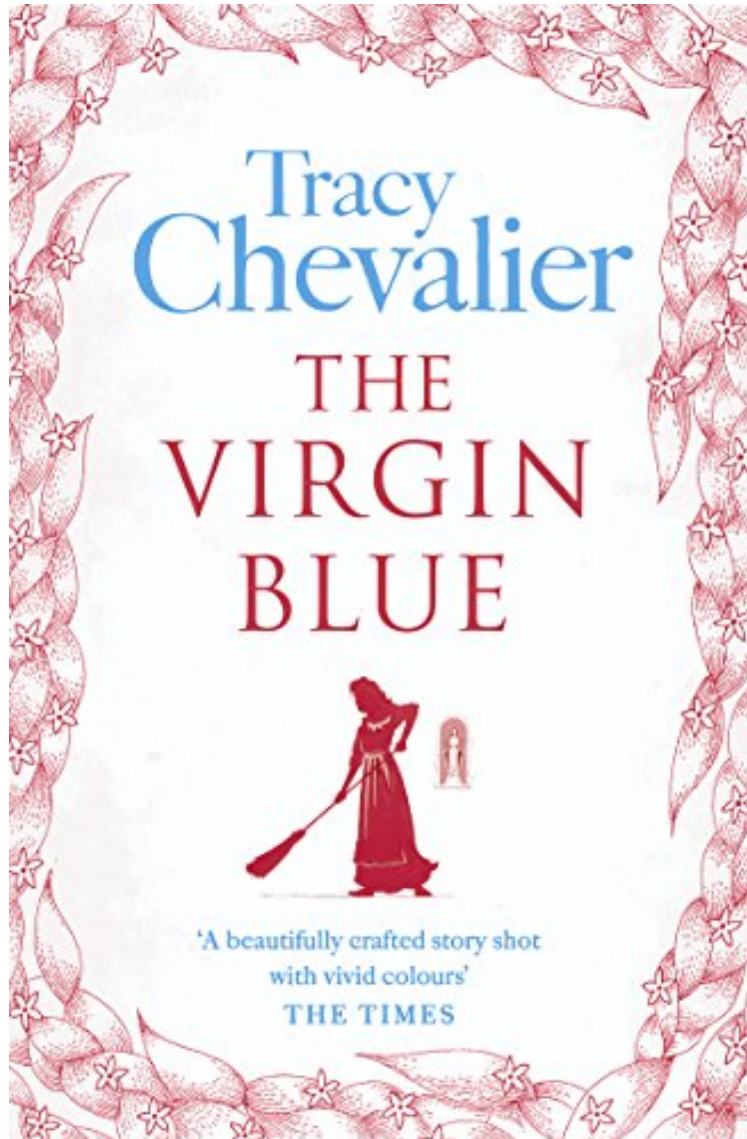


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The Virgin Blue

Von Tracy Chevalier

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Von 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:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen4 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. AN EXQUISITE AND TRIUMPHANT DEBUT NOVEL...Von lawyerauThis is a beautifully written debut novel. Exquisite in its imagery and clarity of language, the author tells two parallel tales. One takes place in sixteenth century France, during the Protestant reformation and religious persecution of the Huguenots (Protestants). The other takes

place in present day France. There are historical ties that bind these two stories, as well as a haunting familial legacy that reaches out across time to make itself felt in the present. The sixteenth century tale is based around a young woman, Isabelle du Moulin, who marries a boorish lout named Etienne Tournier, the oldest son of one of the more prominent families in their provincial town in France. She is a young woman upon whom the Virgin Mary made a great impression, when she was but a girl. The Tourniers, however, are believers of the new, harsh, Calvinist faith, and so Isabelle must also fully subscribe to it, if she is to survive in her husband's family and in the town in which she lives. When the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre occurs, in which Huguenots are slain without mercy throughout all of France, Isabelle is forced to flee to safety with what remains of her husband's family. Unhappy in her marriage, she goes on to have an event occur in her life that is so tragic that her pain and sorrow is made palpable in the present, touching one of her ancestors, Ella Turner. Of course, the parallel tale focuses around Ella Turner, a young, married American woman, who moves to France with her husband Rick, in order to advance his career. Ella agrees to the move, because it will take her to the region in France from which she knows her family originated. Once in France, Emma has some difficulty acclimating to life in the small provincial town to which they have moved, as well as to its denizens. Ella also finds herself having inexplicable nightmares and begins to feel herself somewhat alienated from her husband. To occupy her time, she begins a quest to discover more about her French ancestry. As Ella's story unfolds, alternating with the parallel story of Isabelle, commonalities between the past and present begin to emerge. These parallel stories then converge in a stunning denouement to resolve a tragedy of the past in the present. I absolutely loved this book, as it covered many of the genres that I enjoy. The author combines historical fiction, suspense, romance, and touch of the supernatural all in one beautifully realized novel. The author writes with the heart of a poet and the soul of a great storyteller, one whose prose is delicately nuanced as she weaves gossamer threads of a tale well told. This is simply a superlative and stunning debut novel that will keep the reader turning its pages until the very last. Bravo!

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Durchaus lesenswert, wenn auch mit Abstrichen. Von Vilette "The Virgin Blue" ist sicherlich kein Meisterwerk, aber ein gelungener Erstling von Tracy Chevalier. Sie erzählt hier die Geschichte zweier Frauen, die durch die Jahrhunderte miteinander verbunden sind. Die eine lebt im 16. Jahrhundert, die andere in der Gegenwart. Als Frankreich damals in Regionen gewaltsam calvinisiert wurde, werden rote Haare, Hebammen-tätigkeiten und eine Treue zur Gottesmutter Maria als teuflisch interpretiert. Die junge Isabelle leidet sehr darunter, versucht, nach Auen hin Abstand zu nehmen, bleibt ihrem Umfeld aber immer verdächtig. Ella stt auf Isabelle, als sie angeregt durch Trume mit der Ahnenforschung beginnt. Immer mehr verflechten sich die beiden Leben. Das merkt man allerdings nur als Leser, der abwechselnd von beiden Frauen liest. Mich hat besonders die Symbolik der blauen Himmelsfarbe interessiert, die fr Maria steht und die beiden Frauen Richtung schenkt. Ansonsten einige Parallelen zu viel zwischen den beiden. Dadurch wirkt das Buch zu konstruiert.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A good debut novel by the author - a bit grim, though. Von Mark O'Doherty The book is well-written and the historical setting - the French Huguenots, the violence and religious fury perpetrated by the Catholics, the flight to Switzerland, the role of superstition - is very well portrayed.... Still, I don't know, it seems to me something is missing. Perhaps a bit of comic relief; something uplifting? Although the mystic and magical colour blue adds a touch of the supernatural to the book, and contributes in converging these parallel stories, it's a bit much to expect that it alone - the colour blue - resolves the tragedy of the past in the present. In my opinion the plot still needed something more - perhaps an additional element of reconciliation - to harmonise Isabelle's grim tale in 16th century France with the present; where especailly the male characters are portrayed rather two dimensionally. I can empathise with the fact that there was a lot of male oppression and meanness against women in the Dark Ages - indeed, I am also haunted by this - but still, Isabelle's story is portrayed a bit black and white, in my opinion. Regarding Ella's story in France.... I liked it, I must admit. She seemed to bully a lot of the males, though - including her husband, poor Jan in Switzerland (it's still a mystery to me what he did wrong), etc. Perhaps the author had a bit of an agenda there - either consciously or subconsciously; perhaps avenging the male oppression of Isabelle, by bullying the french, dutch, american and swiss males in the present age? Overall I enjoyed the book; a fascinating and vivid story. I won't be getting to France though in the near future - after Ella's portrayal of the French, a trip to France by somebody who is unskilled in the French language - like me, for example - seems to be a thing better left alone :)

Kurzbeschreibung Perfect 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. *Pressestimmen*: A beautifully crafted story shot with vivid colors. *The Times* (London): Such an achievement for a serious writer that you feel it deserves an award. *The Independent* (London)