



The Lady and the Unicorn

By Tracy Chevalier

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The Cluny Museum in Paris is home to many treasured artifacts, but perhaps none so exquisite as The Lady and the Unicorn tapestries. For centuries, these mesmerizing depictions of elegant ladies and unicorns surrounded by animals and flowers have bewitched and baffled art historians and enthusiasts alike. With customary panache, acclaimed novelist Tracy Chevalier transports readers back to the close of the fifteenth century and breathes life into the men who created them, as well as the wives, daughters, and servants who exercised subtle (and not so subtle) influences over their men. Like the many different strands of wool and silk that were woven together into one cloth, the lives and fates of these people intertwine in complex patterns as they seek desires sensual and spiritual, temporal and eternal.

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The Lady and the Unicorn By Tracy Chevalier Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If you think you wouldn't raise your skirts for a rakish legend about the purifying powers of a unicorn's horn, then maybe you aren't a 15th-century serving girl under the sway of a velvet-tongued court painter of ill repute. In keeping with her bestselling *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, and its Edwardian-era follow-up, *Falling Angels*, Tracy Chevalier's tale of artistic creation and late-medieval amours, *The Lady and the Unicorn* is a subtle study in social power, and the conflicts between love and duty. Nicolas des Innocents has been commissioned by the Parisian nobleman Jean Le Viste to design a series of large tapestries for his great hall (in real life, the famous *Lady and the Unicorn* cycle, now in Paris's Musee National du Moyen-Age Thermes de Cluny). While Nicolas is measuring the walls, he meets a beautiful girl who turns out to be Jean Le Viste's daughter. Their passion is impossible for their world--so forbidden, given their class differences, that its only avenue of expression turns out to be those magnificent tapestries. The historical evidence on which this story is based is slight enough to allow the full play of Chevalier's imagination in this cleverly woven tale. --

Regina Marler

From Publishers Weekly

Chevalier, whose bestselling *Girl with a Pearl Earring* showed how a picture can inspire thousands of words, yokes her limpid, quietly enthralling storytelling to the six *Lady and the Unicorn* tapestries that hang in the Museum of the Middle Ages in Paris. As with her Vermeer novel, she takes full creative advantage of the mystery that shrouds an extraordinary collaborative work of art. Building on the little that is known or surmised - in this case that the tapestries were most likely commissioned by the French noble Jean Le Viste and made in a workshop in Brussels at the end of the 15th century - she imagines her way into a lost world. We are introduced to Nicholas des Innocents, the handsome, irrepressibly seductive artist who designed the works for the cold Le Viste, a rich, grim social climber who bought his way into the nobility and cares more about impressing the king and his court than pleasing the wife who has disappointed him by bearing three girls and no sons. Le Viste's wife, Genevieve, tells Nicholas to create scenes with a unicorn but Nicholas's love of women - and especially of Geneviève's beautiful daughter Claude - inspires the extraordinary faces and gestures of the women he depicts. A great romance unfolds. What makes the tale enthralling are the details Chevalier offers about the social customs of the time and, especially, the craft of weaving as it was practiced in Brussels. There are psychological anachronisms: would a young woman in medieval times express her pent-up frustrations by cutting herself as some teenage girls do today? Yet the genuine drama Chevalier orchestrates as the weavers race to complete the tapestries, and the deft way she herself weaves together each separate story strand, results in a work of genuine power and beauty. And yes, readers will inevitably think about what a gorgeous movie this would make.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-This fanciful, engaging tale of the making of the famous unicorn tapestries is woven together as cleverly as the artworks themselves. Dynamic Nicolas des Innocents is proud of his skill as a painter and of his sexual prowess, and displays both at every opportunity. Always in need of funds, he persuades Jean Le Viste, a powerful Parisian nobleman, to commission a series of six tapestry designs of Nicolas's choosing: scenes focused on the unicorn, a fabled symbol of male virility and mysterious powers. Jean's pious wife colludes with the artist, as do her daughter and her lady-in-waiting. Nicolas courts them all. He journeys to Brussels, where his fate becomes intertwined with the family weaving the tapestries, but most of all their daughter, Alienor, whose blindness dooms her to betrothal to a brutish wool dyer. The "family" also includes the workers who assist them, one of whom, shy Philippe, secretly adores Alienor. The deadline

for completion of the tapestries is moved up, and tension increases as all concentrate on the task. The major characters' reactions to their world-early 1490s France-are revealed, like the tapestries being woven, a little at a time. The French court and its aristocracy; Flemish weavers, their work ethic, and their powerful guild-all are delineated with the consummate skill Chevalier brought to *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Dutton, 2000).-

Molly Connally, Chantilly Regional Library, VA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patrick Allen:

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Amy Christensen:

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Donald White:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book might be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the guide untitled The Lady and the Unicorn can be very good book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

Edward Doucet:

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all over the world can be said as the way for people to know world better then how they react when it comes to the world. It can't be said constantly that reading habit only for the geeky man or woman but for all of you who wants to become success person. So , for all of you who want to start reading through as your good habit, you may pick The Lady and the Unicorn become your own starter.

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