

Vreeland,
Susan
*Girl in
Hyacinth
Blue*



Reading Vreeland's book is like opening up a Chinese box: each chapter reveals a new layer of meaning and import. The novel follows the trail of an "unknown" painting by the Dutch master Vermeer -- The Girl in Hyacinth Blue -- from its creation in seventeenth-century Holland to the present day. In each of the eight independent but chronologically linked chapters, the painting shows up as a prop in the lives of different owners, and tells the circumstances under which these people acquire or lose the painting

Vreeland, Susan
The Passion of Artemisia

Susan Vreeland's second novel traces a particular painting through time: the post-Renaissance painter Artemisia Gentileschi's violent masterpiece, "Judith". The book is beautifully researched and rich with casual detail of clothing, interiors and street life. While the main focus is on Artemisia and her family, history and politics are deftly worked into the background of the story.

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*If you liked Girl
with a Pearl
Earring by Tracy
Chevalier,*



*you may also
want to try...*

Dunant, Sarah

Birth of Venus

The Birth of Venus takes the colorful details of a distant time and place and blends them into an intriguing story. Set in Renaissance Florence, the book's heroine, Alessandra Cecchi, is married off by her merchant father to a wealthy, older man, despite Alessandra's romantic interest in a young painter working for her family. Like Chevalier, Dunant offers a vivid, gorgeously written historical novel, and The Birth of Venus is an exceptional choice for Chevalier's readers.

Fitzgerald, Penelope

Blue Flower

Readers who especially enjoy the spare, elegant quality of Chevalier's writing might also enjoy an author like

Fitzgerald, whose novels share this same lovely quality. Blue Flower is the story of an 18th century German romantic, Novalis, a young man of the late 18th century who is



destined to become one of Germany's great romantic poets. In just over 200 pages, Fitzgerald creates a complete world of family, friends and lovers, focusing on the poet's boisterous family, his struggle to articulate his longings, and, most tellingly, his passion for 12-year-old Sophie, a simple child he intends to marry despite the furious reservations of family and friends.



Forster, Margaret
Lady's Maid

The story is told from the viewpoint of Elizabeth "Lily" Wilson, lady's maid to poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who recounts the passionate romance that blossoms

between Elizabeth Barrett, and the poet Robert Browning, their scandalous elopement, and their new life in Italy. Just as Chevalier does with her Dutch maid Griet in *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, Forster explores the delicate role a servant plays in the life of her employer in this quietly compelling historical novel.

LaPierre, Alexandra

Artemisia

This is the story of Artemisia Gentileschi, one of the first female painters to gain acclaim in the male-dominated 17th century art world. Her story has all the ingredients of high drama: rape, jealousy, and an infamous court trial set against a backdrop of art and passion. LaPierre blends storytelling and careful detail in a complex rendering of the artist's compelling life along with supporting biographical detail.

Moggach, Deborah

Tulip Fever

Deborah Moggach's hypnotic, seductive novel, set in 1630s Amsterdam, is a compulsively readable tale about the dangerous addictions of the flesh and



the lengths to which lovers will go to attain them. Ambitions, desires and dreams breed a grand deception, and as the lies multiply, events move toward a thrilling and tragic climax.

Riley, Judith Merkle

The Serpent Garden

A young woman painter is sent to France by King Henry VIII of England to spy on the French court while painting its members.

Henry has ambitions on the French crown. The painter is Susanna Dallet, a widow, and as she paints portraits she describes the character of her subjects for the reader. In due course she becomes embroiled in political intrigue and a romance. By the author of *The Oracle Glass*.



Stone, Irving

The Agony and the Ecstasy

The Agony and the Ecstasy is not only a biographical novel of Michaelangelo Buonarroti, but a vivid story of the Italian Renaissance. One sees Florence and Rome through his eyes: the wars, feuds, machinations, characters and wonderful art of the Renaissance. The novel also conveys a sense of the creative process - we see the creations of nearly all of his works and the personal struggles behind each. Stone captures the make-up and passion of an incredibly versatile and gifted artist.