



# 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 Connolly, Chantilly Regional Library, VA*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Marie Griffin:**

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important act, like looking for your favorite book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your condition; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled *The Lady and the Unicorn*. Try to stumble through book *The Lady and the Unicorn* as your close friend. It means that it can to get your friend when you sense alone and beside that course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you personally. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , let us make new experience as well as knowledge with this book.

#### **Aubrey Newsome:**

People live in this new moment of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the spare time or they will get large amount of stress from both day to day life and work. So , if we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely indeed. People is human not only a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is actually *The Lady and the Unicorn*.

#### **Beth Kelly:**

In this era globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. The book that recommended for you is *The Lady and the Unicorn* this e-book consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented how do the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That is why this book ideal all of you.

#### **Cherry Simard:**

On this era which is the greater person or who has ability in doing something more are more special than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple way to have that. What you must do is just

spending your time little but quite enough to get a look at some books. On the list of books in the top collection in your reading list is definitely *The Lady and the Unicorn*. This book that is qualified as *The Hungry Hillside* can get you closer in turning out to be precious person. By looking right up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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