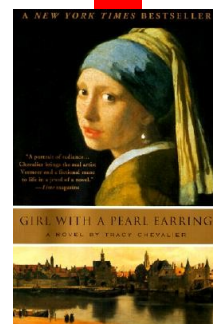


Art, Exploration and Tulips

Fiction set in Netherlands' Golden Age

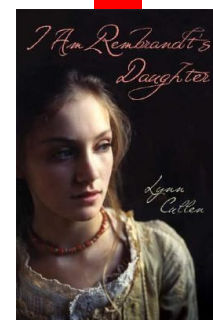
[Girl with a Pearl Earring](#) by Tracy Chevalier

The artistic careers of Johannes Vermeer, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Frans Hals flourished during Netherlands' Golden Age, and their work has been given new attention by a number of recent historical novels. The foremost among these is Tracy Chevalier's [Girl with a Pearl Earring](#) (1999) in which the young Griet becomes a maid in the Vermeer household, posing innocently for the seductive portrait of the title and arousing his wife's jealousy as a result.



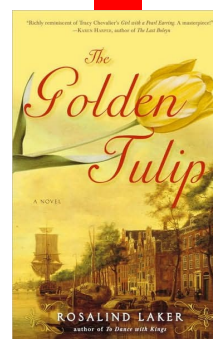
[I Am Rembrandt's Daughter](#) by Lynn Cullen (YA)

With her mother dead of the plague, and her beloved brother newly married and moved away, Cornelia van Rijn finds herself without a friend or confidante—save her difficult father. Out of favor with Amsterdam's elite, and considered brash and unreasonable by his patrons, Rembrandt van Rijn, once revered, is now teetering on the brink of madness. Cornelia alone must care for him, though she herself is haunted by secrets and scandal. Her only happiness comes in chance meetings with Carel, the son of a wealthy shipping magnate whose passion for art stirs Cornelia. And then there is Neel, her father's last remaining pupil, whose steadfast devotion to Rembrandt both baffles and touches her. Based on historical fact, and filled with family dramas and a love triangle that would make Jane Austen proud, *I Am Rembrandt's Daughter* is a powerful account of a young woman's struggle to come of age within the shadow of one of the world's most brilliant and complicated artists.



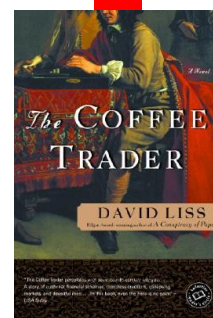
[The Black Tulip](#) by Alexandre Dumas

Cornelius von Baerle lives only to cultivate the elusive black tulip and win a magnificent prize for its creation. But when his powerful godfather is assassinated, the unwitting Cornelius becomes caught up in a deadly political intrigue. Falsely accused of high treason by a bitter rival, Cornelius is condemned to life in prison. His only comfort is Rosa, the jailer's beautiful daughter, who helps him concoct a plan to grow the black tulip in secret.



[The Golden Tulip](#) by Rosalind Laker

Francesca's father is a well-known painter in the bustling port city of Amsterdam; he is also a gambler. Though their household is in economic chaos, she is given the chance to study with Johannes Vermeer, the master of Delft. Unaware of a terrible bargain her father has made against her future, Francesca pursues her growing affection for Pieter even as she learns to paint like Vermeer. As her talent blooms, "tulip mania" sweeps the land. What seems like a boon for Pieter instead reveals the extent of the betrayal of Francesca's father. And as the two learn the true nature of the obstacles in their path, a patron of Francesca's father determines to do anything in his power to ensure she stays within the limits that have been set for her.



[The Coffee Trader](#) by David Liss

Although David Liss' [The Coffee Trader](#) is set primarily in Amsterdam, it is set firmly in the era of Dutch exploration and commerce. Having lost his fortune in the sugar markets, Miguel Lienzo — a canny trader from the city's Portuguese Jewish community — decides to take his chances on a new commodity, the bitter-tasting coffee bean. This intelligent thriller takes us from 1659 Amsterdam's primary trading centers to the back alleys of the city where business is secretly transacted.





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[Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister](#) by Gregory Maguire

Gregory Maguire's novel (1999) is an offbeat retelling of the Cinderella fairy tale, set in the seventeenth century city of Haarlem during the years of the tulip craze. The homely Iris Fisher is the protagonist and the ugly stepsister of the title; she has an artistic eye, however, and the ending will cause readers to reconsider what beauty really means.

[Tulip Fever](#) by Deborah Moggach

Deborah Moggach's [Tulip Fever](#) (1999) takes its name from the obsession that captured the attention of Netherlanders during the seventeenth century. Set in the 1630s during the height of tulip mania, this literary historical novel is a lush presentation of the era's art and culture. In the story, a young wife cuckolds her elderly husband with the artist asked to paint their portrait. As the romantic pair gamble their money on a get-rich-quick scheme involving tulip bulbs, they discover the consequences of their rash actions in more ways than one.

[City of Dreams: A Novel of Early Manhattan](#) by Beverly Swerling

Among Dutch ventures overseas, their settlement at New Amsterdam is perhaps the most familiar to Americans. Beverly Swerling's [City of Dreams](#) (2002) takes a comprehensive look at the experience of Dutch settlers in America and the early days of life in Manhattan. Lucas and Sally Turner, brother and sister, are both healers. This novel sees them and their descendants from their arrival in 1660s Nieuw Amsterdam through the American Revolution. Unlike many epic tales of a place, the characters in Swerling's novel are vivid and memorable, and their story intertwines with that of modern medicine.

[Girl in Hyacinth Blue](#) by Susan Vreeland

This luminous story begins in the present day, when a professor invites a colleague to his home to see a painting that he has kept secret for decades. The professor swears it is a Vermeer--but why has he hidden this important work for so long? The reasons unfold in a series of events that trace the ownership of the painting back to World War II and Amsterdam, and still further back to the moment of the work's inspiration. As the painting moves through each owner's hands, what was long hidden quietly surfaces, illuminating poignant moments in multiple lives. Vreeland's characters remind us, through their love of this mysterious painting, how beauty transforms and why we reach for it, what lasts and what in our lives is singular and unforgettable.

