

A Spool of Blue Thread: A novel

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Short-listed for the Man Booker Prize

"It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon. . ." This is how Abby Whitshank always begins the story of how she fell in love with Red that day in July 1959. The Whitshanks are one of those families that radiate togetherness: an indefinable, enviable kind of specialness. But they are also like all families, in that the stories they tell themselves reveal only part of the picture. Abby and Red and their four grown children have accumulated not only tender moments, laughter, and celebrations, but also jealousies, disappointments, and carefully guarded secrets. From Red's father and mother, newly arrived in Baltimore in the 1920s, to Abby and Red's grandchildren carrying the family legacy boisterously into the twenty-first century, here are four generations of Whitshanks, their lives unfolding in and around the sprawling, lovingly worn Baltimore house that has always been their anchor.

Brimming with all the insight, humor, and generosity of spirit that are the hallmarks of Anne Tyler's work, *A Spool of Blue Thread* tells a poignant yet unsentimental story in praise of family in all its emotional complexity. It is a novel to cherish.

An Amazon Best Book of the Month for February 2015:

It's pretty clear that Anne Tyler is comfortable with the art of storytelling. From the first lines of *A Spool of Blue Thread*, there's an urge to sit back and settle into the cadence of her words. Or, rather, Abby Whitshank's words as she recounts the story of how she fell in love with Red Whitshank in 1959. But don't get too comfortable. Anne Tyler understands that, despite their best intentions, family members don't often let each other settle back for very long—and the Whitshanks, a Baltimore clan whose history is told through several generations in this sensitive and empathetic novel, is no different than most. As Abby and Red age, their children are drawn back to their sprawling house. When the second part of the novel moves back in time, the shift is jarring at first; but after a fifty year writing career (this is her 20th novel), Tyler has the end in sight. This is a book about the stories we tell each other and the little moments that make up our lives. - Chris Schlupe

ANNE TYLER was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1941 and grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina. This is her twentieth novel; her eleventh, *Breathing Lessons*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1988. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

Other Books

Half-Truths and Semi-Miracles, The first thing I tell people is, I'm just an ordinary woman. I'm just like you. Susanna has an incredible gift: she can heal ailments with just the touch of her hand. People travel from far and wide based on their faith in her abilities. But Susanna's power only works in certain cases—it's a semi-miracle. And as she grows into a woman, and tries to build a life of her own, her calling to fix and cure becomes more of a burden than she could ever have imagined. Why is she able to take people's pain away sometimes, and not others, not when she needs to most of all? With the balm of time, and the wisdom of experience, Susanna must learn to live with the mysterious nature of her miracle. Available to readers for the first time since its initial publication, this is a wry and moving story by an

American master. "Not merely good . . . she is wickedly good." –John Updike Look for Clock Dance, the charming new novel from Anne Tyler, available this July.

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