

# 'Glassmaker' author coming to the Glass City

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The Glass City is set to welcome New York Times best-selling author Tracy Chevalier as she shares the story behind her new novel, *The Glassmaker*.

"The book starts in 1486, and Orsola is 9 years old. And at the end it's 2022 and she is in her late 60s," Mrs. Chevalier said. "Like, how can you do that? Well, I wanted to cover



Chevalier

When the father of the main character, Orsola, dies unexpectedly, in an effort to save her family's business and livelihood, she

## Chevalier to take part in Q&A, reception

500 years of Venice history, and I also didn't want my characters to die."

works — in secret — to perfect the craft of glass making, a profession not open to women. Readers follow her time travel as her glass beads are ultimately worn by royalty from Paris to Vienna, all while she tries to earn her due respect.

Tracy Chevalier is best known for her second novel,

*Girl with a Pearl Earring*, which was adapted as a 2003 film starring Scarlett Johansson and Colin Firth.

During Friday's author series event, "An Evening with Tracy Chevalier," the award-winning author will share story inspirations and insights into her writing process, allowing attendees a rare oppor-

tunity to be immersed in the world of storytelling.

The evening kicks off with a 6 p.m. VIP mix-and-mingle reception at the Lourdes University Planetarium, followed by a 7 p.m. author presentation, question-and-answer session, and book signing at the Ebeid Student Center in Sylvania.

Here's what Mrs. Chevalier shared about her book and the

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## Author

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writing process in advance of her visit on Friday:

**Q:** Share the creative inspiration around the character's time travel.

**A:** Venice has this real timelessness about it, and I wanted to capture that in the book. I thought, maybe they age at a different rate from the rest of the world. Venice is a timeless city, and if there's any place in the world where time would work differently, it'd be there. The rest of the book is really grounded in reality. So each section is set in a different century, and you skip forward like a stone skipping across the water and through time. The characters don't age, but the rest of the world does.

**Q:** What inspired you to write a novel centered around the art of glass making. Do you have a personal fascination with it?

**A:** I never really thought about glass before this book. Years ago, I did a reading in Italy, in Milan, and a man came up to me afterward and said, "You know, you should write about glass beads made in Venice because they have a really interesting history. There are a lot of stories around them, they were used all over the world, and they were made by women. I know you like to write about women, so maybe you should think about that." That's really what did it. Just that suggestion from a reader and the desire to write more about Venice.

**Q:** Toledo is the Glass City, so it's perfect that you're coming here. Tell me what your glass and bead making research entailed and how

you pulled it off.

**A:** It was a lot. And when I look back, sometimes I think if I had realized, I might not have done it. But I started by reading everything I could about glass, the history of glass making. Then I went to Venice and all the glasses were made on Murano, which is this island off of Venice, and I started visiting workshops, talking to people, and asking questions.

I met an American woman who lives there and she makes glass, and her husband is Italian and a maestro, a really experienced glassmaker. This woman, Amy, was so helpful, because she lived there 20 years, but she could see it as an outsider, and she could tell me all kinds of things. She took me to the real workers, like what the tourists don't see.

Ben Malczewski, Starlite Theatre Group's vice president and development director, said after hosting Mrs. Chevalier in 2017, the organization was excited to have her back. "It was when she released her book *At the Edge of the Orchard*, which follows a pioneer family in the Black Swamps of northwest Ohio," he said. "We had a sold-out show at the museum. ... Let's bring her back. And the subject matter was on glass and we're the Glass City so that's perfect."

In partnership with Lourdes University, Starlite, Finch & Fern Book Co., and Red Bird Sylvania, the event is sponsored by Anderson Miller Insurance with additional support from the Taylor Automotive Family.

Tickets and more information are available at [starlite.theatergroup.org](http://starlite.theatergroup.org).

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