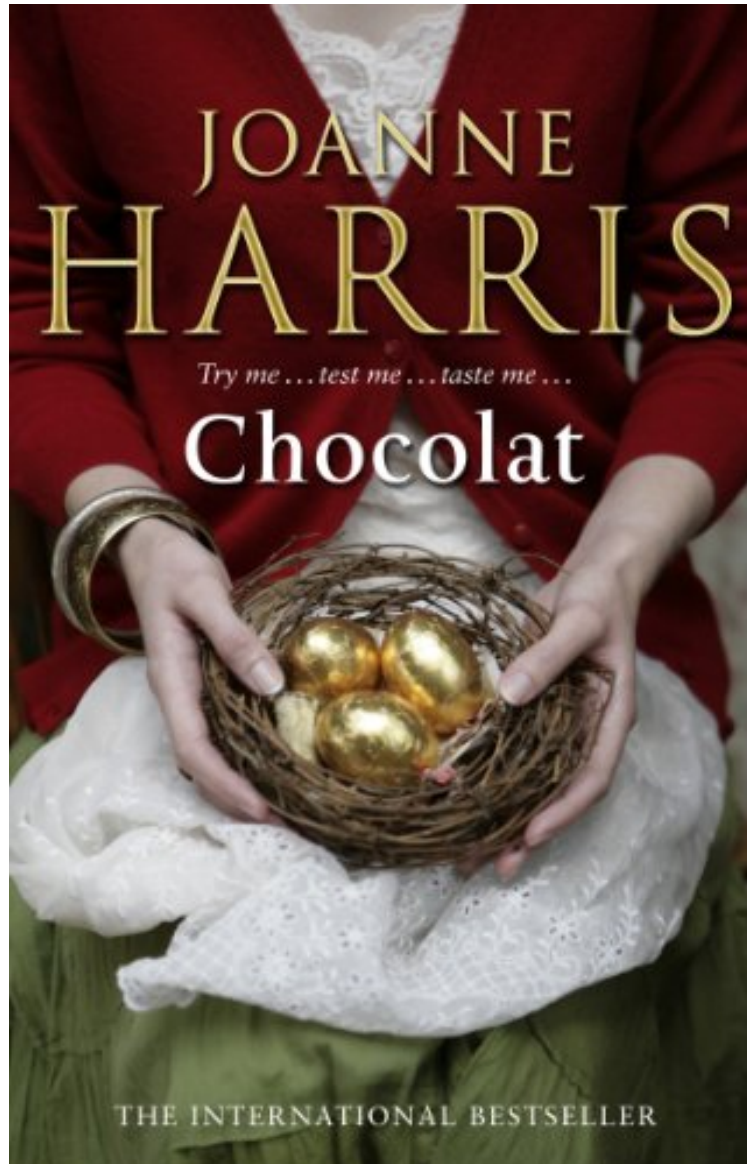


[Free pdf] Chocolat

Chocolat

Von Joanne Harris

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Von Joanne Harris : Chocolat before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chocolat:

Kurzbeschreibung When an exotic stranger, Vianne Rocher, arrives in the French village of Lansquenet and opens a chocolate boutique directly opposite the church, Father Reynaud denounces her as a serious moral danger to his flock - especially as it is the beginning of Lent, the traditional season of self-denial. As passions flare and the conflict escalates, the whole community takes sides. Can the solemnity of the Church compare with the sinful pleasure of a chocolate truffle?

de Vianne Rocher and her 6-year-old daughter, Anouk, arrive in the small village of Lansquenet-sous-Tannes--"a blip on the fast road between Toulouse and Bourdeaux"--in February, during the carnival. Three days later, Vianne opens a luxuriant chocolate shop crammed with the most tempting of confections and offering a mouth-watering variety of hot chocolate drinks. It's Lent, the shop is opposite the church and open on Sundays, and Francis Reynaud, the austere parish priest, is livid. One by one the locals succumb to Vianne's concoctions. Joanne Harris weaves their secrets and troubles, their loves and desires, into her third novel, with the lightest touch. There's sad, polite Guillaume and his dying dog; thieving, beaten-up Josphine Muscat; schoolchildren who declare it "hypercool" when Vianne says they can help eat the window display--a gingerbread house complete with witch. And there's Armande, still vigorous in her 80s, who can see Anouk's "imaginary" rabbit, Pantoufle, and recognizes Vianne for who she really is. However, certain villagers--including Armande's snobby daughter and Josphine's violent husband--side with Reynaud. So when Vianne announces a Grand Festival of Chocolate commencing Easter Sunday, it's all-out war: war between church and chocolate, between good and evil, between love and dogma. Reminiscent of Herman Hesse's short story "Augustus," *Chocolat* is an utterly delicious novel, coated in the gentlest of magic, which proves-- indisputably and without preaching--that soft centers are best. --Lisa Gee, .co.uk

From Kirkus sA first novel that rather cloyingly describes the transformations that overtake the residents of a small French village when a mysterious stranger and her daughter arrive and open a chocolate shop. The townspeople of Lansquenet live in the present day, but the patterns of their lives were established long before they were born and change very little from year to year. A hamlet straight out of Flaubert, Lansquenet is filled with busybodies who have nothing better to do with their days than spy on one another, until two new arrivals provide fresh grist for the mill. What inspired Vivianne Rocher to move to Lansquenet with her daughter Anouk and to open a chocolate boutique is never explained, but her effect on the populace is profound and immediate: the grim little town and its sniping inhabitants are transformed through the magic of Vivianne's confections into an almost surreal assembly of sensualists, each somehow discovering in bonbons the key to happiness. Elderly crones find themselves remembering long-forgotten loves; shy young couples work up the nerve to break the ice. Is this all the result of only chocolate? Or is some more sinister force at work? The local priest suspects the worst, and his suspicions are reinforced by his awareness that Vivianne opened her shop on Shrove Tuesday and thus has been tempting the entire parish from its Lenten austerities for the past six weeks. Now, she has even announced plans for a Chocolate Festival to take place on Easter Sunday itself! Horrified, he hatches a plan to foil her festivities, but God does not always side with the just. Who will win the soul of the town? Premise, prose, and pace all march along capably, but they fail nevertheless to raise the whole above the debilities of heavy symbolism and excruciatingly precious plot. -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.