



## Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World

By Catherine E. McKinley

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**Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World** By Catherine E. McKinley

For almost five millennia, in every culture and in every major religion, indigo—a blue pigment obtained from the small green leaf of a parasitic shrub through a complex process that even scientists still regard as mysterious—has been at the center of turbulent human encounters.

*Indigo* is the story of this precious dye and its ancient heritage: its relationship to slavery as the "hidden half" of the transatlantic slave trade, its profound influence on fashion, and its spiritual significance, which is little recognized but no less alive today. It is an untold story, brimming with rich, electrifying tales of those who shaped the course of colonial history and a world economy.

But *Indigo* is also the story of a personal quest: Catherine McKinley is the descendant of a clan of Scots who wore indigo tartan as their virile armor; the kin of several generations of Jewish "rag traders"; the maternal granddaughter of a Massachusetts textile factory owner; and the paternal granddaughter of African slaves—her ancestors were traded along the same Saharan routes as indigo, where a length of blue cotton could purchase human life. McKinley's journey in search of beauty and her own history ultimately leads her to a new and satisfying path, to finally "taste life." With its four-color photo insert and sumptuous design, *Indigo* will be as irresistible to look at as it is to read.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this memoir of longing, community, and personal maturation, McKinley (*The Book of Sarahs*), half African-American by birth, adopted and raised by white parents who were plant devotees, seeks her roots through the intertwined European and African history of the once rare indigo. A plant dye long prized for its deep blue color, indigo became a staple of trade from Africa across the Mediterranean and Europe; indigo and the fabric dyed from it evoke stories of slavery (past and present), global trade, and entrenched cultural traditions. McKinley's journey to the source of indigo leads her unexpectedly to politically unstable areas like the Ivory Coast, as well as to Ghana, Mali, and other African countries, where she is welcomed. McKinley's passion for the rare blue dye—created from ash, urine, and leaves, and used to painstakingly imprint storytelling designs—leads to intense friendships and an introduction to the complexity of social and economic status in a continent so far removed from the woman who inspired McKinley's journey—her grandmother—a questioning, tartan-clad woman in a rich blue coat. Photo insert; map. (June)

### Review

"[McKinley] introduces the reader to a wide cast of characters who slip in and out of the narrative unobtrusively." *Kirkus Reviews*

"The sections in which [McKinley] focuses on the history of indigo are fascinating, and some of her vivid descriptions shimmer with an almost cinematic quality." *Ingrid Levin, Library Journal*

"Call it blue gold, the devil's dye, or the cloth of history; indigo is the color that launched the ships and caravans of worldwide commerce. It encompasses the slave trade, the factories of European industry, and the woman-dominated markets of Africa. It binds the blue sails of Columbus's ships to denim jeans and the exquisite hand-woven fabrics collectors crave. Catherine McKinley follows her passion, her 'insatiable, desire' for this beauty and history to Africa. There she enters a complex world--ancient, post-modern, stable and volatile. It demands that she be student, adventurer, aesthete and journalist: she meets these demands with restless intelligence, scrupulous honesty, a love of paradox and a generous exuberance. Indigo haunted her; now it will haunt you." *Margo Jefferson, author of On Michael Jackson*

"A charming book: ethereal, wise, personal, as well as an imaginative exploration of what this color really might be, when you go under the surface of its just being about blue." *Victoria Finlay, author of Color: A Natural History of the Palette*

"*Indigo* is a journey in every sense of the word, and one undertaken with an engaging passion. It is also, in the words of Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*." *Mark Kurlansky, author of Salt*

"Catherine McKinley's *Indigo* is a moving and lyrical journey through several continents and through the writer's own internal landscapes. This beautiful and unforgettable book, like indigo itself, reaches deeply into all our lives." *Edwidge Danticat, author of Brother, I'm Dying*

### About the Author

**Catherine McKinley** is the author of *The Book of Sarahs*. She is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, where she has taught Creative Nonfiction, and a former Fulbright Scholar in Ghana, West Africa, where she began her research on indigo. She lives in New York City.

## **Users Review**

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#### **James Pierce:**

The book *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World* give you a sense of feeling enjoy for your spare time. You may use to make your capable far more increase. Book can to become your best friend when you getting tension or having big problem using your subject. If you can make looking at a book *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World* being your habit, you can get considerably more advantages, like add your own capable, increase your knowledge about a few or all subjects. You could know everything if you like start and read a e-book *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World*. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science reserve or encyclopedia or others. So , how do you think about this e-book?

#### **Theresa Diaz:**

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#### **Rufus George:**

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book can be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the e-book untitled *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World* can be great book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

#### **Linda Harris:**

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them household or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read a book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent the entire day to reading a reserve. The book *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World* it is quite good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book possesses high quality.

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