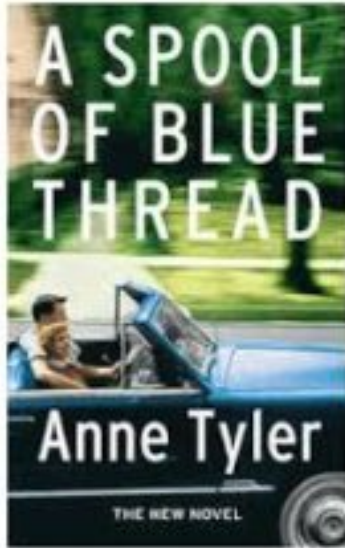


# A SPOOL OF BLUE THREAD



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'It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon...!' This is the way Abby Whitshank always begins the story of how she and Red fell in love that day in July 1959. The whole family on the porch, relaxed, half-listening as their mother tells the same tale they have heard so many times before. And yet this gathering is different. Abby and Red are getting older, and decisions must be made about how best to look after them and their beloved family home. They've all come, even Denny, who can usually be relied on only to please himself.

From that porch we spool back through three generations of the Whitshanks, witnessing the events, secrets and unguarded moments that have come to define who and what they are. And while all families like to believe they are special, round that kitchen table over all those years we also see played out our own hopes and fears, rivalries and tensions - the essential nature of family life. "She's changed my perception on life." (Anna Chancellor). "One of my favourite authors." (Liane Moriarty). "She spins gold." (Elizabeth Buchan). "Anne Tyler has no peer." (Anita Shreve). "My favourite writer, and the best line-and-length novelist in the world." (Nick Hornby). "A masterly author." (Sebastian Faulks). "Tyler is not merely good, she is wickedly good." (John Updike). "I love Anne Tyler." (Anita Brookner). "Her fiction has strength of vision, originality, freshness, unconquerable humour." (Eudora Welty).