

# Book of the Week

***Dark Tides* by Philippa Gregory**

**Book Review by Maureen Lang**

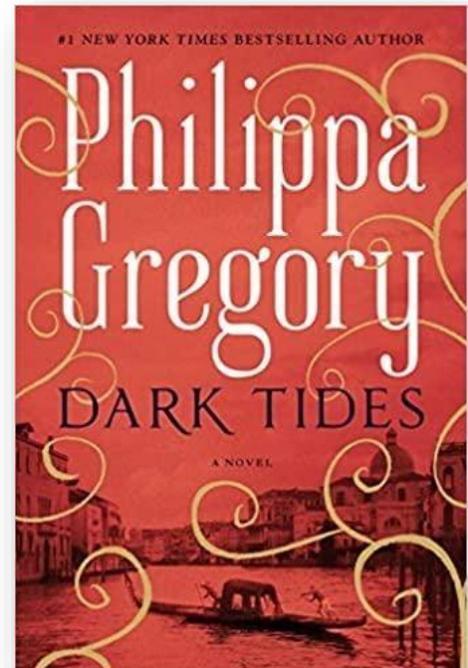
*Dark Tides* by Philippa Gregory is one of the new books available at the library that caught my attention. I was familiar with Gregory's other books and even today can remember much of her *The Other Boleyn Girl*, even though it has been a couple of years since I read it.

This book differs from her other books in that though it, too, takes place in the later 1600's, it is about non royal subjects in the New England area near Plymouth, and in the England of Charles II. There are two story lines taking place in this book involving different parts of the same family.

The primary story revolves around Alinor, the matriarch warehouse owner, and her family, who have eked out a living. She has just been notified that her son Rob has drowned in a Venice lagoon. Alinor feels she has second sight, and when receiving this news, knows that she would have sensed something if this had really been true.

The action begins when two separate visitors arrive at the warehouse and dramatically change the future of all who live there. First, Sir James Avery, a former lover of Alinor, has come back into favor with the king, and wants to secure Alinor and their illegitimate child's future with his regained wealth and titles. Alinor tells him that their child died years ago, and that after 21 years, she no longer wants to be involved with him. Within minutes the bewitchingly beautiful Nobildonna da Ricci (Lavinia) and her infant son arrive. The widow of Rob announces that since they have no place to go and are penniless; she has decided, like a good daughter in law, to move in with the family of her late husband. Alinor is suspect of this interloper's motives. This is just the beginning of the calculated workings that affect all who become involved with the beautiful widow.

Ongoing is the story of Ned, Alinor's brother, who has moved to New England to get away from the reign of Charles II. He is starting over, trying to stay friends with both the colonists and the Native



Americans around him. He just really wants to be left alone and be a good neighbor to all. This is 50 years since the Mayflower landed and the need for more land for the newcomers has brought more and more tension between the two groups of people. Both feel they are entitled to this land, one by being born there, and the other by God's providence. How can Ned manage to satisfy the expectations on him by both groups of people he wants to please and stay in harmony with?

This story is an extremely engaging one. It really grips the reader as Lavinia spins her web around all she meets, and poor Ned who is just trying to make a place of freedom for himself in a new land. This book has the advantage of having been written by an author that is both a genuine historian (Ph.D , University of Edinburgh), and a great story writer. You will learn a lot about how people lived in this time frame, their attitudes, and motivations. It was especially meaningful to me as I have ancestors from the Mayflower and have recently read the book Mayflower by Nathaniel Philbreck. This book, too, is an outstanding nonfiction read that clarifies many of the misconceptions about early America. Reading the two books together brings accurate facts and background to an extremely enjoyable story.

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