



Crane Pond: A Novel of Salem

Richard Francis

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The great success last year of Stacy Schiff's *The Witches* proves, once again, that abiding interest in the Salem Witch Trials remains high. Richard Francis's stunning novel *Crane Pond* is the story of Samuel Sewall, loving father and husband, anti-slavery advocate, defender of Native American rights, and presiding judge at the Salem Witchcraft trials in 1692, where he sentenced twenty innocent women to death. He was the only judge to later admit his terrible mistake, and ask for forgiveness.

At once a searing view of the Trials from the inside out, an empathetic portrait of one of the period's most tragic and redemptive figures, and an indictment of the malevolent power of religious and political idealism, it is an absorbing new telling of one of our founding stories.

Crane Pond explores the inner life of a well-meaning man who did evil. It humanizes an unflinching portrait of political hysteria that is as relevant today as it was in the seventeenth century. The novel brings to life Sewall's efforts to piece together a new perspective from shattered preconceptions—illuminating his search for atonement, peace, and ultimately a renewal of hope.

Richard Francis, Sewall's most lauded biographer, seamlessly marries rigorous research and an astute understanding of a deeply complex character to a compelling dramatic framework sure to enchant the wide readership of quality historical fiction.

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