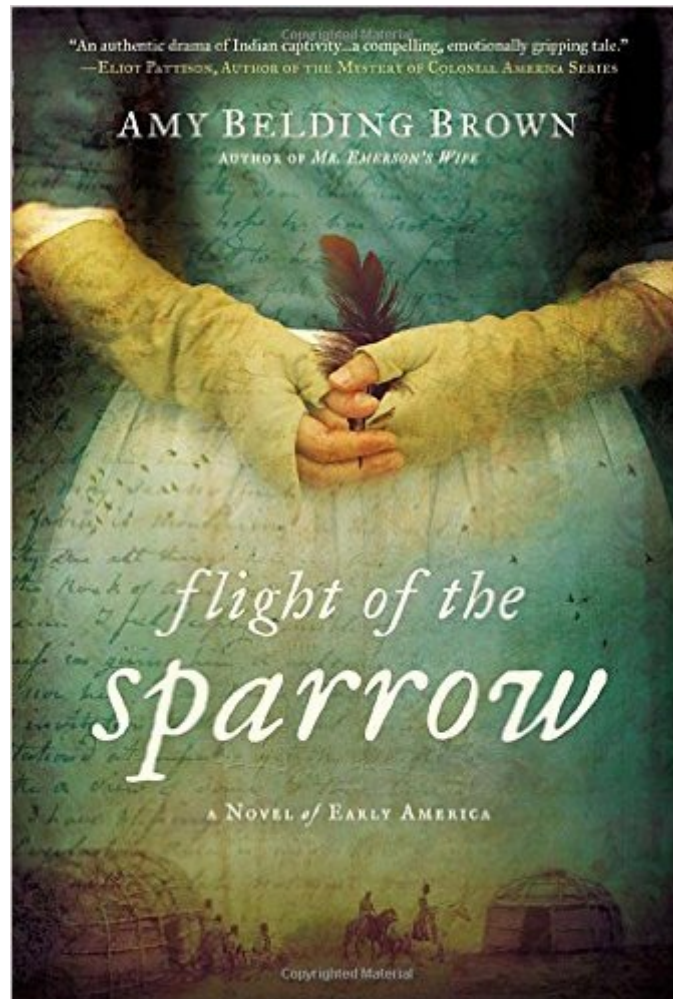


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# Flight Of The Sparrow: A Novel Of Early America



## Synopsis

A historical novel based on the life of Mary Rowlandson—An authentic drama of Indian captivity—A compelling, emotionally gripping tale. —Eliot Pattison, author of the *Mystery of Colonial America* series

She suspects that she has changed too much to ever fit easily into English society again. The wilderness has now become her home. She can interpret the cries of birds. She has seen vistas that have stolen away her breath. She has learned to live in a new, free way....

—Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1676. Even before Mary Rowlandson was captured by Indians on a winter day of violence and terror, she sometimes found herself in conflict with her rigid Puritan community. Now, her home destroyed, her children lost to her, she has been sold into the service of a powerful woman tribal leader, made a pawn in the ongoing bloody struggle between English settlers and native people. Battling cold, hunger, and exhaustion, Mary witnesses harrowing brutality but also unexpected kindness. To her confused surprise, she is drawn to her captors' open and straightforward way of life, a feeling further complicated by her attraction to a generous, protective English-speaking native known as James Printer. All her life, Mary has been taught to fear God, submit to her husband, and abhor Indians. Now, having lived on the other side of the forest, she begins to question the edicts that have guided her, torn between the life she knew and the wisdom the natives have shown her.

Based on the compelling true narrative of Mary Rowlandson, *Flight of the Sparrow* is an evocative tale that transports the reader to a little-known time in early America and explores the real meanings of freedom, faith, and acceptance.

READERS GUIDE INCLUDED

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As she did in *Mr. Emerson's Wife*, Belding Brown has meticulously researched the period she writes about in *Flight of the Sparrow*. And again, she brings to life a complex woman, Mary Rowlandson, who was captured by Native Americans in 1676 in King Phillip's War. Belding Brown introduces us to Rowlandson in the opening pages: her compassion for others, including those looked down upon by members of her husband's Puritan congregation, her outward submission to his will, and the work involved in simply feeding and clothing her family. After her capture, she is at first shocked by the cultural differences of her captors. As time goes on, however, Rowlandson realizes she has more freedom as a slave of the tribe than she did before her capture. She is touched by the open affection and kindness tribal members have for children, in contrast to the Puritan strict discipline that included whipping children. Make no mistake. Life is hard as the tribe moves to escape British soldiers. They are often hungry and cold. But the burdens are shared equally. After almost four months, she is returned to her husband who has raised money for her ransom. She is asked to write about her captivity. Belding Brown imagines Rowlandson's adjustment, not just to her stern husband, but to a woman's subservience in general. And now Rowlandson can clearly see the hypocrisy of her society and especially those who profess Christian values but show little or no kindness, only judgement. Even her account of her captivity is skewed by the man who edits it. Belding Brown paints a compelling picture of 17th century life in colonial America. We are there during Rowlandson's dramatic captivity, and we are there as she reconciles conflicting values and experience. We hear Rowlandson's complex voice and strong spirit. This is a fine and moving historical novel.

Living in a structured house, living in a wetu. Having enough food, always hungry. Not showing love to your children, cherishing your children. Living a strict Puritan existence, living carefree. Never experiencing the pleasure of nature, hearing every little part of nature. All those statements show the differences Mary Rowlandson found when comparing her Puritan life to her life in Indian captivity. Which way would you want to live? ãçÂ Â Mary Rowlandson and many others were captured by Indians and were forced to live within the Indian community. It was a harsh life for her as well as the entire Indian community. Despite the hardships, Mary blended in well and was protected by an Englishman. You will follow Mary as she transforms from a Puritan English woman into an Indian woman. She loved her transformation and found the link to nature and peace that she didn't have as the wife of a strict Puritan minister. *FLIGHT OF THE SPARROW* was very well researched and held my interest. At first I didn't realize *FLIGHT OF THE SPARROW* was based on

an actual person. Once I found that out, the book became even more intriguing. I have never read any book about this time period in American history, but want to find out more. *FLIGHT OF THE SPARROW* is a gripping account of Early America, and history buffs will not be disappointed. I recommend this book to anyone who loves a well-researched, historical novel. I can't divulge any more without telling the story, but take the time to read *FLIGHT OF THE SPARROW*. I thoroughly enjoyed it. 4/5 This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher in return for an honest review.

This is not the first novel I've read based on the true story of Mary Rowlandson, a Puritan woman who survived a brutal Indian attack on Lancaster, MA, only to be taken into captivity, along with three of her children. While I did enjoy Amy Belding Brown's rendering well enough, I have to say that it is not as good as Debra Larsen's lovely, poetic book, 'The White'. I don't want to give away too much of the plot for those who aren't familiar with Rowlandson's story. Suffice it to say that, just as she is becoming accustomed to life as a slave and beginning to appreciate the Nipmucs' ways, she is ransomed and returned home--and the readjustment is not an easy one. At the urging of Increase Mather, the real-life Mary wrote down the details of her tribulations, intended to show the prevailing goodness of the Lord. In Brown's revision, Mary strikes a significant bargain with Mather in exchange for her memoir, which he publishes with extensive revisions to suit his own purposes. A few things about the novel don't quite ring true, and, in fact, Brown affixed an author's note at the end to explain them. Still, making Mary an early abolitionist and Native American sympathizer (as well as something of a feminist upon her return) seems imposed to engage contemporary readers. These elements stick out as artificial and out of place. I also felt that some of the characters nearly went beyond stereotype and into caricature. The worst of these is Mary's husband Joseph, a harsh Puritan preacher who yammers on about God's will continually and in the most inappropriate circumstances, to the point that he isn't left with a single human quality. While it's true that the Puritans were a rather straight-laced bunch, let it not be forgotten that they were among the first in England to advocate companionate marriage--the idea that one should marry for love and companionship rather than money, the engendering of heirs, and financial and political alliances. Overall, 'The Flight of the Sparrow' is an interesting look at a time and place often overlooked by fiction writers--but it's not without its flaws, which are hard to overlook.

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