

JUST REWARDS

By Barbara Taylor Bradford

St. Martins, 2006

Reviewed by :: Jenna Bayley-Burke

While *Just Rewards* spans just six months of time, it covers decades of history, as family lines and loyalties tangle. Readers new to Emma Harte's saga will surely miss some of the depth and dimension of the interplay, but thanks to a family tree at the opening, and frequent background introductions to characters (slowing the pace somewhat), anyone can follow along with the emotional story.

Four of Emma Harte's great-granddaughters and the choices they make are the focus of this tale. Tessa is torn between the career she always thought she deserved and the man she never dreamed she'd find. Evan is learning how new motherhood causes a woman to view her parents and their choices differently. India is devoted to a man who worries his past makes him unworthy of her, and Linnet, the heir apparent to the Harte retail empire, is a woman so like her great-grandmother she's willing to risk everything for success.

The choices women make have changed with the times in some ways and in others remain the same. Just as Emma Harte had to learn how to balance work and family, so do her progeny in this novel. The relationships between the women are delicately drawn. The professional jealousy of sisters Linnet and Tessa is paralleled by the vindictive envy Angharad holds against sister Evan, the encouragement Linnet provides and receives from India and Evan, and the protective hold Tessa and Linnet's mother, Paula, current head of the Harte empire, holds over the younger generation. And if the internal strife weren't enough, there is the ever-present threat of Emma's grandson, Jonathan Ainsley, who'll stop at nothing to get what he believes is due him. Even bomb the church the day of Evan's wedding.

Barbara Taylor Bradford's latest title in the Harte family sage, *Just Rewards*, claims to be the finale. But with so many possibilities left to explore...Ainsley & Angherad's baby, Prissy's revenge, the need for a Kallinski heir, and Tessa's decision to name a few...can Bradford really let this be the last word? Will readers let her?

4 Kisses