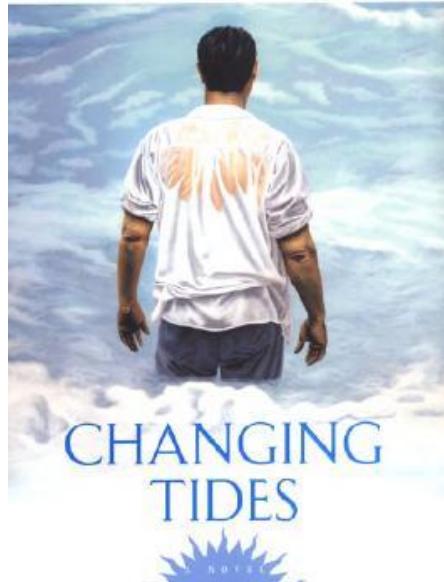


MICHAEL THOMAS FORD



Changing Tides

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'Changing Tides' is the heartwarming story of a man's struggle with his teen daughter, and the revelatory relationship he finds with another man.

Changing Tides Details

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From Reader Review Changing Tides for online ebook

Daniel Bayes says

Real slow getting out. Felt like I was being tortured by useless info about marine biology, Steinbeck, and this dissertation. It just came across like the author either wanted to show off his researching ability or force the reader to read about things he loves under the false pretense of a gay romance. It improved, but ultimately the tactics of switching from pivotal plot to boring extra crap on sea slugs and this heinous manuscript within was enough to keep me from giving it 3 stars. Last Summer and Looking for It were much better novels by the author.

Lena♥Ribka says

4,5 stars!

Has it ever happen to you- you got a notification that someone *liked* your review and your first thought was - "It has to be a mistake! I have never read a book with this title!" Of course you have. But you have already forgot. Because it was nothing special in this book that could make you remember it weeks later.

Michael Thomas Ford writes books I won't forget. They are memorable. I love everything of this authors I've read before and this book didn't disappoint me either.

I like books with a multilayered plot: when different stories are told in parallel with the main story line, multi-facetted stories that at first sight do not seem to be connected, but the more you read the more you're aware of how deeply intertwined they're with each other.

Changing Tides is one of those books, and I enormously enjoyed it. At the beginning it reminded me of The Last Song by Nicholas Sparks. Caddie's life was turned upside-down when her parents divorced and her father Ben Ransome, a marine biologist, who always seemed to understand sea creatures better than human beings, moved from LA to Monterey, California. Nine years later her mother, who couldn't deal with Caddie's anger and her teen age rebellion, decides it would be in everyone's best interest if her 16 years old daughter spent the summer with her father in Monterey.

Hudson Jones, a graduate student, who believes he's found a lost John Steinbeck novel called Changing Tides comes to Monterey for a summer to hunt out evidence that it's a Steinbeck's original script and to find the answer to the most important question – was it more than just a friendship between John Steinbeck and his best friend Edd Ricketts, a marine biologist? And so we have more than one main stories: a father/daughter relationship(can they re-build their trust and make up for lost time?) , John Steinbeck/Edd Ricketts friendship(was it more in their relationship?), Ben/Hudson or is it Ben/Ben(there are things he has to know about himself and accept them to get to know happiness. At last.).

A summery:

This summer will become decisive for all protagonists.

The story is told from the views of those three characters, in change: we have Caddie's view, Ben's and Hudson's. And as a bonus a story, from the lost novel *Changing Tides*.

I listened to this book, and I bought the next MTF book as an audio edition when I was half through it and saw that Blake Somerset narrated all of MTF's books. He did a great job.

Maybe for some readers the pace of telling will be a bit too slow, and I agree, that it's not a rush read, the author takes time for many details and for intern monologues, but I don't want to miss a single sentence in this book. I smelled the sea salt, I admired an amazing underwater world, I lived through all emotions and felt it sooo sooo real, sooo close!.. Now I want to learn scuba diving and I'd like to re-read John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* and for sure I'll read more of Michael Thomas Ford.

I know that I've remembered this book for a long long time.

It is not a *OMG, it was hot* kind of book, but *OMG, what for a wonderful prose* book.

KatieMc says

This is my second book by Michael Thomas Ford and I must say that he has the craft of writing down pat. I don't know anything about his background, and there's not much that is revealed by a casual google/wikipedia search, but I am mildly obsessed with how his stories come to life. He has a precision in describing small actions such as eating a sandwich which put you right into the story, right there with the characters. He includes mastery level knowledge of very specific subject matter, in this case, marine biology, diving, and Steinbeck, all thematically combined in a Monterey California setting. He manages to write 3 protagonists (yes 3!) each with interesting and meaningful story arcs. I don't know if that craft it taught in an MFA somewhere or is the result of diligent hard work, but I do know that I can turn to this author for a reliable solid read.

Jeremy says

I read this during an 18 hour train trip and despite all the other entertainment at my fingertips in my iPod, I could not put this book down. I really like Michael Thomas Ford's essays, and I had a feeling I'd like his novel work as well, but this one, which was said to be his best, was incredibly difficult to find in Utah. However, during my visit to The Castro in San Francisco I found that famous bookstore A Different Light, and knew I'd find this book there with no trouble. I did (fancy that), and am quite pleased with the story.

People behave realistically here, and the relationship between the father and daughter rang true. I also always appreciate lovemaking scenes that don't sound the same as all the other ones out there, and this one managed to step up. It was a nice novel to fill my time and I enjoyed myself.

Grey853 says

This review contains spoilers for the book. Don't read if you don't want to know.

This book is told from three points of view, Ben, a marine biologist, a visitor named Hudson, and Ben's 16-year-old daughter Caddie. I'm not a big fan of shifting points of view, but at least Ford gives each character full chapters, which makes it less jarring for the reader.

Personally, I tend to get more attached to one character's view and would rather stick with that. However, in this book that would definitely limit the reader's ability to know what was going on with the other two main characters.

Ben is a very closed off man, much more focused on his science and research than people. He's probably the one character I most relate to. He divorced and left his daughter and ex-wife nine years before and now Caddie, who's going through a difficult time, comes to stay with him in Monterey for the summer. He has good intentions, but he's got no idea how to deal with a bitchy teenage girl, one who apparently is rather promiscuous as well.

We learn a lot about Caddie in her chapters, why she does some of the things she does. She's angry with her father and she goes out of her way to make him notice her. She's frustrated by his very laid back attitude, his inability to give her the confrontation she pushes him for. So, she tries harder, which leads to a nearly tragic end.

During this father-daughter reunion, Ben runs into a man named Hudson. Hudson is researching Steinbeck's life. He's trying to finish the work of a deceased lover.

Ben and Hudson become friends. It's Caddie who clues in on the attraction and she's jealous. She wants to drive Hudson away from her father.

This is where I was shaking my head. I found it hard to believe that Ben would be so completely oblivious to being gay until his 40s. I know there are people who don't come out until later years, but we're inside Ben's head and he's confused and not really sure if he's gay or just attracted to Hudson, that whole, "I'm not really gay, but just gay for you" thing. I'm not sure I buy that.

Still, it was rather romantic that they got together in the end. Plus, Ben and Caddie do manage to come to terms with their relationship after a few tense chapters at the end.

Lori Ehrman says

This was a great book. Although it's classified as Gay Fiction, the sexuality of the characters was somewhat minor to the story. It was much more about who they were as people and how they arrived at that place in their life. While there was MM sex, it was tame and intrinsic to the story line.

Pavellit says

Wow, I'm totally impressed! I've discovered that not only Steinbeck *'has a way of bringing people together in curious ways'*.

With some novels which switch usually the narrative between two characters you can lose the flow of the story. This novel is clever in the way that the three characters not only have completely different voices, but it deals with both straight and gay characters in equal measure, and in a fully fleshed and multidimensional way.

Ben Ransome, a 40-something marine biologist living modestly in Monterey, California, whose safe place is the ocean and the creatures he encounters there, where he doesn't have to speak to anyone. *"People aren't exactly my specialty."* To his surprise, his ex-wife, Carol, calls from LA urging that their teenage daughter, Caddie, come to stay with him for the summer. He left his family when Caddie was only seven. Ben is a person who wants to be in control of his emotions and expects that people behave in a logical way. That is the reason why he doesn't know how to understand and deal with his moody and aggressive daughter. *'He loved his daughter; that was never in doubt. But he didn't feel this love as he knew others did. It didn't radiate out from his heart and enfold him in golden warmth. He felt constantly in shadow.'*

Caddie (named after a creature of the sea), 16-year-old, a rebellious city girl with a mostly bad attitude- coming and going as she pleases, smoking marijuana, staying out late, and sleeping with guys. She is angry at her father and not ready to forgive him for the lack of attempts to contact with her and her mother for years. *'She realized that her father's entire life was a mystery to her. Not that she cared, really.'* And logically she is not so happy to be dumped on her father's doorstep. *'For years she had resented her father for not being there. Now that he was, she was still resenting him, when what she should be doing was trying to see what kind of relationship they could have.'*

Hudson Jones, an young graduate student, who arrives in Monterey to authenticate a manuscript for a unpublished novel called 'Changing Tides' supposedly written by John Steinbeck (It's about a man who falls in love with his best friend. It might be about Steinbeck's feelings for Ricketts.). The voice of Paul, his dead lover who gave him the manuscript, urges him on, tells him to keep digging until he finds the truth. *'Paul's ghost waited for him in New Haven, had followed him here. Those of Steinbeck and Ricketts were there as well.'* It's time to face his demons from which he'd run for too long, and the newest of them- *'It was Ben's misfortune that he had, by whatever means, become one of them.'* *'He was afraid for Ben, afraid what he, Hudson, might have done to him. Some poison you can't never get out. Had he somehow tainted this man who only wanted to be his friend?'* His father's accusing voice echoes in his mind. *"It's your poison doing this to him."*

'They were, all of them, at the same crossroads, even though their journeys had begun in places far apart.'

Michael Thomas Ford uses many powerful detailed descriptions, additional stories (e.g. the story of Charlie and Tom from the manuscript), and fabulous Blake Somerset' audio narration in Changing Tides that compliment to his characters grow and change over this long, hot summer. OMG, this magnificent power of the ocean and the creatures (cuttlefish squids, octopuses, sharks) that live in it. A symbolic power- *'She closed her eyes and followed his light, going deeper and deeper, until all that lay before her was a small circle of gold light that kept the sea monsters at bay.'* I loved the diving sections. Being critical, it seemed a bit more slow paced and rambling especially in the beginning.

All things considered, it's a solid, rich and utterly compelling exploration of the nuances of a developing

friendship and romance . And it's sensitively well-written and researched read. I will definitely check this author other works.

Amy says

Wow. I was hooked from the first page, as Ben is diving. I know nothing at all about the subject or sea life, but I could see and understand everything that the author was describing. Makes me want to learn how to dive, myself!

I was a little annoyed when we left Ben's POV for Hudson, but I gradually came to love him as well.

Don't get this book if all you are interested in is the gay storyline. It took about half of the book before they even meet.

I loved this book and plan to hunt down the author's other books as well!

Mark says

This book is essentially a romance and it's delivered believably with a minimum of sentimentality. The characters are all realistically drawn, likeable and refreshingly different. Their inner musings never get overwrought (except for the teenager's and hers need to be). The backdrop the author has set up -- Monterey, Steinbeck, scuba society and marine biology--is richly detailed and appealing. I appreciated how the literary mystery in the book's center mirrors what's happening in the main characters' lives. The end was genuinely touching without being cloying. On the whole, the book provided a pleasant place to go at the end of the day. It takes a while to get going, though, and its population of well-adjusted characters seems to preclude any sense of danger, that things may not work out okay. That in itself, however, is kind of relief from the strum and drang of real life--or other gay novels.

Writerlibrarian says

it's a summer in Monterey, on Cannery Row (yes, Steinbeck's Cannery Row, makes you want to go and read or reread it), you have Ben, a marine biologist, diver who is waiting for his daughter whom he sees very little of to move in for the summer. Caddie (named after a creature of the sea, won't spoil it for you) 16, is angry and not so happy to be dumped on her father's doorstep. Hudson, is on a quest to authenticate a manuscript maybe written by Steinbeck. It's a coming of age summer for all three. I liked the slow pace of the storyline. I liked that the characters were multidimensional and that even the background characters like the girlfriend's waiter that befriends Caddie have depth. Yes the turning point of the story is a bit obvious in a duh! moment way but still believable since Ben is so oblivious of himself and the lives of the people around him.

I loved the diving sections. Really. The aquarium too. There's cuddlefish, squids, octopuses, sharks. Mixed with academic literature research how could I not love this book.

Paul Taylor says

Wow...what a pleasant surprise! I can't even begin to describe how wonderful it is to read a book about gay men who come together, and there remains a solid story even though someone ISN'T dying from AIDS. I know it's a reality, but I'm burnt out on realities. Life is hard enough, and I want a happy escape every now and then.

Usually in fiction we can't even seem to catch a break. Hooray for homo happy endings!

Ed says

I am currently in the process of reading *Last Summer* by Michael Thomas Ford and enjoying it very much. About 3 months earlier I read Ford's *Changing Tides* and somehow never got around to writing a review of it so today I'm tackling that book. I try to review books shortly after I have read them so my impressions are clear in my mind and not clouded by plots and characters of stories I have read since. Hopefully I will do the author justice.

This story takes place in Monterey, CA and is told from the POV of three individuals. Hudson Jones, a young gay man, comes to Monterey to complete research that was begun by a deceased lover on an unpublished manuscript possibly authored by Monterey's favorite son, John Steinbeck. If Hudson's research proves accurate it would be an eye-opening revelation about the famous author that would bring Hudson instant fame. Ben Ransome is a divorced marine biologist living in Monterey who is totally absorbed in his work and who has a virtually non-existent personal life. His life is turned upside down when his sixteen year-old daughter Caddie, much to her dismay, is uprooted from her Southern California home by her mother to spend the summer with her estranged dad in hopes of re-establishing a connection between the two. She is very angry at her father, feeling he is a deadbeat dad, and goes out of her way to aggravate him. On a personal note I unfortunately can relate only too well to the bad karma since I have an adult daughter who feels the same way about me. Ben and Hudson meet, enjoy each other's company despite the significant age difference, soon become friends and start spending time together in a platonic way. Carrie quickly detects the flirtation going on between her dad and Hudson even before they realize it. She is not repelled by it; in fact she becomes jealous of Hudson, a somewhat surprising attitude considering her animosity towards her dad.

There is a good story here although the going is a bit slow at first. The book is 352 pages long and as I recall it took about 100 or so pages before the pace picked up. Hang in there would be my suggestion if you are finding the book dragging; it is well worth reading. The tension between Ben and Carrie I felt was the most well-developed of the relationships and Carrie's bite off her nose to spite her face attitude has near tragic consequences. The shifting point of view of these three individuals works very well as the reader is able to get inside the head of each of them.

Unlike the most recent book I read, the sex scenes in this book both gay and straight have a PG-13 quality to them. That's not a criticism of either work but merely an observation. Both books were quite enjoyable. My major reservation about *Changing Tides* was that the author got into what I saw as too much detail about marine biology. Obviously Ford knows the subject well or did an incredible amount of research to prepare for his writing and I respect him for that. I just think that for most readers the detail is overkill. I did not lose

interest in the book because of this; the characters and storyline were both very good and kept me wanting to read more. If you happen to enjoy marine biology and a well-written book you will probably love this work. Obviously I enjoyed this book enough to want to read more by the author since that is in fact what I am doing now.

batya7 says

This book is a wonderful piece of literature. Well-written and compelling, the story works on various levels. The author explores the writing of John Steinbeck and Monterey, California, the setting of Cannery Row. Amid this background is a complex story of a daughter getting to know her estranged father and the father getting to know himself. Ben is a marine biologist and there are many scientific discussions enhance the book. Caddie is his daughter who is forced to stay the summer with her father. Hudson is a graduate student working on what he thinks is an unpublished novel written by Steinbeck. It's fascinating how the characters come together and mature as individuals.

An important part of the novel is that the men are gay. Hudson is out and Ben is only awakened to his attraction as their friendship deepens. Ironically, it is his daughter, Caddie, who identifies her father's attraction to Ben, a condition both men had been oblivious to. As their relationships mature, Caddie experiences a maturing cessation of the anger she'd held since her parents divorced.

Don Bradshaw says

Michael Thomas Ford has evolved into an excellent writer of human nature. Marine biologist, Ben Ransome, has forgotten how to live by totally immersing himself in his work. His world is turned upside down by the arrival of his sixteen year old rebellious daughter, Caddie, who he hasn't seen in 7 years. Ben is in the dark when it comes to even talking to Caddie. To further complicate matters, Hudson Jones, a young, gay man on an academic research to find the truth behind the relationship between John Steinbeck and his best friend Ed Ricketts. Ben must come to life and face Caddie's open hostility and his attraction to Hudson. This is not a book to rush through because of Ford's subtle glimpses the reader gets of their own life.

Angela Bee Bee says

I skimmed this because my Dad asked me to and I love Monterrey. However, the first kiss isn't until 75% and I dislike stories about teenagers. My Dad seems to like them because I was one so he was in this position. He loved the last (first?) sex scene so I read that to see what he was talking about.
