

Wolf Hall: A Novel

By Hilary Mantel

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In the ruthless arena of King Henry VIII's court, only one man dares to gamble his life to win the king's favor and ascend to the heights of political power

England in the 1520s is a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by civil war. Henry VIII wants to annul his marriage of twenty years, and marry Anne Boleyn. The pope and most of Europe opposes him. The quest for the king's freedom destroys his adviser, the brilliant Cardinal Wolsey, and leaves a power vacuum.

Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell is a wholly original man, a charmer and a bully, both idealist and opportunist, astute in reading people and a demon of energy: he is also a consummate politician, hardened by his personal losses, implacable in his ambition. But Henry is volatile: one day tender, one day murderous. Cromwell helps him break the opposition, but what will be the price of his triumph?

In inimitable style, Hilary Mantel presents a picture of a half-made society on the cusp of change, where individuals fight or embrace their fate with passion and courage. With a vast array of characters, overflowing with incident, the novel re-creates an era when the personal and political are separated by a hairbreadth, where success brings unlimited power but a single failure means death.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Amazon Best of the Month, October 2009: No character in the canon has been writ larger than Henry VIII, but that didn't stop Hilary Mantel. She strides through centuries, past acres of novels, histories, biographies, and plays--even past Henry himself--confident in the knowledge that to recast history's most mercurial sovereign, it's not the King she needs to see, but one of the King's most mysterious agents. Enter Thomas Cromwell, a self-made man and remarkable polymath who ascends to the King's right hand. Rigorously pragmatic and forward-thinking, Cromwell has little interest in what motivates his Majesty, and although he makes way for Henry's marriage to the infamous Anne Boleyn, it's the future of a free England that he honors above all else and hopes to secure. Mantel plots with a sleight of hand, making full use of her masterful grasp on the facts without weighing down her prose. The opening cast of characters and family trees may give initial pause to some readers, but persevere: the witty, whip-smart lines volleying the action forward may convince you a short stay in the Tower of London might not be so bad... provided you could bring a copy of *Wolf Hall* along. *--Anne Bartholomew*

From Publishers Weekly
Henry VIII's challenge to the church's power with his desire to divorce his queen and marry Anne Boleyn set off a tidal wave of religious, political and societal turmoil that reverberated throughout 16th-century Europe. Mantel boldly attempts to capture the sweeping internecine machinations of the times from the perspective of Thomas Cromwell, the lowborn man who became one of Henry's closest advisers. Cromwell's actual beginnings are historically ambiguous, and Mantel admirably fills in the blanks, portraying Cromwell as an oft-beaten son who fled his father's home, fought for the French, studied law and was fluent in French, Latin and Italian. Mixing fiction with fact, Mantel captures the atmosphere of the times and brings to life the important players: Henry VIII; his wife, Katherine of Aragon; the bewitching Boleyn sisters; and the difficult Thomas More, who opposes the king. Unfortunately, Mantel also includes a distracting abundance of dizzying detail and Henry's all too voluminous political defeats and triumphs, which overshadows the more winning story of Cromwell and his influence on the events that led to the creation of the Church of England. *(Oct.)*
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From Bookmarks Magazine
Critics were not surprised at Mantel's Booker Prize win, despite stiff competition that included A. S. Byatt's *The Children's Book* and J. M. Coetzee's *Summertime*. *Wolf Hall* offers a fascinating and expertly researched look at a man famously villainized in the play and film *A Man for All Seasons* and *Showtimes*'s more recent bodice-ripping series *The Tudors*. Despite the effusive praise, critics thought that the vast array of characters (many named Thomas) and titles of nobility may leave some readers scratching their heads despite the guide Mantel provides in the book. Nevertheless, this intriguing human portrait should leave most readers anticipating the promised sequel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alice Lawson:

This Wolf Hall: A Novel book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The

benefit you obtain by reading this book is actually information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This Wolf Hall: A Novel without we recognize teach the one who examining it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't always be worry Wolf Hall: A Novel can bring whenever you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even cellphone. This Wolf Hall: A Novel having very good arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Helen Williams:

The book Wolf Hall: A Novel has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was authored by the very famous author. The writer makes some research previous to write this book. That book very easy to read you can find the point easily after reading this article book.

Joshua Cameron:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book especially book entitled Wolf Hall: A Novel your brain will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging every word written in a e-book then become one type conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get previous to. The Wolf Hall: A Novel giving you a different experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful facts for your better life on this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

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