



Bring Up the Bodies: A Novel (Wolf Hall Series Book 2)

By Hilary Mantel

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Winner of the 2012 Man Booker Prize

Winner of the 2012 Costa Book of the Year Award

The sequel to Hilary Mantel's 2009 Man Booker Prize winner and *New York Times* bestseller, *Wolf Hall* delves into the heart of Tudor history with the downfall of Anne Boleyn

Though he battled for seven years to marry her, Henry is disenchanted with Anne Boleyn. She has failed to give him a son and her sharp intelligence and audacious will alienate his old friends and the noble families of England. When the discarded Katherine dies in exile from the court, Anne stands starkly exposed, the focus of gossip and malice.

At a word from Henry, Thomas Cromwell is ready to bring her down. Over three terrifying weeks, Anne is ensnared in a web of conspiracy, while the demure Jane Seymour stands waiting her turn for the poisoned wedding ring. But Anne and her powerful family will not yield without a ferocious struggle. Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies* follows the dramatic trial of the queen and her suitors for adultery and treason. To defeat the Boleyns, Cromwell must ally with his natural enemies, the papist aristocracy. What price will he pay for Anne's head?

***Bring Up the Bodies* is one of *The New York Times*' 10 Best Books of 2012, one of *Publishers Weekly*'s Top 10 Best Books of 2012 and one of *The Washington Post*'s 10 Best Books of 2012**

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Exclusive: Hilary Mantel on How She Wrote *Bring Up the Bodies*



Origins of the Book

Bring Up the Bodies is the second part of my trilogy about Thomas Cromwell, chief minister to Henry VIII. I have been interested in Cromwell for years, and wanted to get beyond the negative portrayal of him in popular history and fiction. He was a ruthless man, certainly, but no more so than other contemporary politicians; and in Henry, a man of violent temper, he had a very demanding employer. As soon as you get back beyond the prejudices about Cromwell, you find a clever, enterprising, resilient and optimistic man, with a story well worth telling. He was at the center of Henry's court for almost ten years, and when you look at events from his point of view, they seem very different from the stories of the Tudor court to which we've grown accustomed.

Originally I thought I would tell the story in just one book. But as I made progress with *Wolf Hall*, I discovered the richness and depth of the material. I was glad to alter my plans. Now the project will reach a conclusion in *The Mirror & The Light*, the book that is still ahead of me.

How is it different from *Wolf Hall*?

Wolf Hall takes in a huge span of time, describing Cromwell's early life, and reaching back into the previous century, to show the forces that shaped England before he was born. The foreground action of the book occupies several years, ending in July 1535, on the day of the execution of Cromwell's political antagonist,

Thomas More.

The action of *Bring Up The Bodies* occupies only nine months, and within that nine months it concentrates on the three weeks in which Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, is arrested, tried and executed for treason. So it is a shorter, more concentrated read. There are no diversions once the plot against Anne begins to accelerate, and the tension builds as her death approaches.

It's quite possible to read *Bring Up The Bodies* without reading *Wolf Hall*. It makes sense in its own terms. But I think a reader will get a deeper experience by starting with the first book and seeing the characters evolve.

Space: What's on your desk, in your office, on the walls, outside your window? Describe your writing space. Where do you go when you can't write there?

My office is in my apartment on the East Devon coast. Before my desk there is a big window, and beyond that a shingle beach and the sea. On my large pine desk there's just my laptop, my working papers, and my diary, plus a silver dial that tells the time in the world's major cities. I have a mouse mat with the Holbein image of Thomas Cromwell on it; my husband magicked this up from somewhere. I keep my pens and markers in a china pot with a picture of Henry VIII, which came from the National Portrait Gallery in London. On my left there is a whiteboard which I use to plan each chapter as I write, and also to scribble down any fleeting thoughts; if I'm elsewhere in the apartment it's the whiteboard I run to, to catch a phrase I'm afraid might slip away. I can write anywhere, though; I long ago learned to write and polish a paragraph in my head. And I do a lot of work in my notebooks when I'm travelling, shuttling up to London on the train. I write in the car too; in the passenger seat, I should add.

Soundtrack: What/who do you listen to? Why? How? (headphones, computer, radio?)

I can hear the sea. Nothing else is as good as that. Noise doesn't distract me, necessarily, but if I put on music I quickly blank it out.

Tools: Pens? Notebook? Computer (Mac or PC)? Special software?

Most of my work originates in longhand. I like writing by hand but I have 2 sorts of handwriting; one is quite decorative, and the other is as plain as possible and as legible as possible, my note-taking hand which I use when I copy from a document. At a certain stage I rip up my notebooks and shuffle the pages into some sort of order in ring-binders; from those I work straight on to my pc. I've been writing on the screen since 1986, at which point I was into my third book. But I'm old enough to remember the toil in the days of typewriters and messy, smudgy carbon copies.

Words: What are you reading? Do you read anyone to prime the pump, so to speak? Or to escape your own writing?

On the whole I prefer not to read fiction when I'm hard at work on my own writing, because I find it difficult to make the commitment a novel requires, to enter into someone else's imaginary world. Instead I devour newspapers and read books on medicine, psychology, social studies. But much of my reading is tied to research for my Cromwell novels. If I get stuck while I'm writing, if my sentences feel arid, then reading poetry sometimes works. It restores some essential sense of rhythm.

Inspiration: Do you do anything to get inspired? Exercise? Walk? Nap? Hobbies?

Two almost infallible methods for me. If I'm stuck part way through developing a scene, I get into the shower. When you are dripping water, that's when the words start to flow: at the moment of maximum inconvenience. For bigger problems, going to sleep is good. Fresh material swims up as I wake.

If everything is out of proportion, if I'm overwhelmed and mentally tired, a walk by the sea helps. I've always wanted to live by the sea and thought it would be good for me, and the last year's work on *Bring Up The Bodies* seems to have proved it. This time last year, the book was just a few boxes of notes.

Photo credit: Francesco Guidicini

From Bookforum

In the sequel [to *Wolf Hall*], *Bringing Up the Bodies*, which transpires over the year following the execution of More, there is little to mitigate Cromwell's chief task, which is to arrange for the king's wife to be killed at his behest . . . The novel's pace is a slow creep of ghoulish inevitability. The rot seeps and spreads, and Cromwell gains in menace what he loses in sympathy. — Jessica Winter

Review

"Mantel knows what to select, how to make her scenes vivid, how to kindle her characters. She seems almost incapable of abstraction or fraudulence; she instinctively grabs for the reachably real...In short, this novelist has the maddeningly unteachable gift of being interesting."—*The New Yorker*

"[*Bring Up the Bodies*] is astringent and purifying, stripping away the cobwebs and varnish of history, the antique formulations and brocaded sentimentality of costume drama novels, so that the English past comes to seem like something vivid , strange and brand new."—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Two years ago something astonishingly fair happened in the world of prestigious prizes: the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction for 2009 both went to the right winner. The book was Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*, and it would have dwarfed the competition any year...It was a hard act to follow. But the follow-up is equally sublime...That ironic ending will be no cliffhanger for anyone even remotely familiar with Henry VIII's trail of carnage. But in *Bring Up the Bodies* it works as one. The wonder of Ms. Mantel's retelling is that she makes these events fresh and terrifying all over again."—*The New York Times*

"*Bring Up the Bodies* isn't just her boldest book; it's also her best — and it reaffirms Mantel's reputation as one of England's greatest living novelists."—*NPR*

"Hilary Mantel made waves in 2009 with her Man Booker Prize-winning page-turner, *Wolf Hall*...The second in her planned trilogy, *Bring Up the Bodies* stalks Anne Boleyn and the soap-opera worthy machinations of Cromwell and his evil allies to bring down the powerful wife of the king. Who knew history could be so sexy?"—*Vanity Fair*

"What's being called the Wolf Hall Trilogy is a remarkable work in progress, a series that makes the past feel immediate and—this is the best part—unpredictable. Even if you know the history, you'll find yourself racing through these pages to find out what happens next."—*People*

"After pulling off this literary feat twice, you realize the smartest person in the room isn't Cromwell after all—it's Mantel."—*The Huffington Post*

"the finest works of historical fiction in contemporary literature."—*The Washington Post*

"Fans of *Wolf Hall* will relish this book, but *Bring Up the Bodies* also stands alone...Her characters are real and vivid people who bring to life the clash of ideals that gripped England at the time. She makes the past present and vital."—*The Economist*

"*Bring Up the Bodies* stands magnificently on its own...such is [Mantel's] skill"—*LA Times*

"You won't be able to tear your eyes away."—*The Seattle Times*

"the worst that can be said about Mantel—her latest book makes you angry, because you want more."—*Slate*

"In Mantel's hands, Cromwell's cunning, morally complicated orchestration of that historic slice through the royal neck is as exciting as any thriller."—*Entertainment Weekly*

"With wit, daring style, and a staggering breadth of historical knowledge, Mantel breathes new life into reclaimed territory."—*Bookslut*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ana Jara:

What do you about book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what your own problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy man? If you don't have spare time to accomplish others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They need to answer that question mainly because just their can do in which. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on pre-school until university need this particular *Bring Up the Bodies: A Novel* (*Wolf Hall Series Book 2*) to read.

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