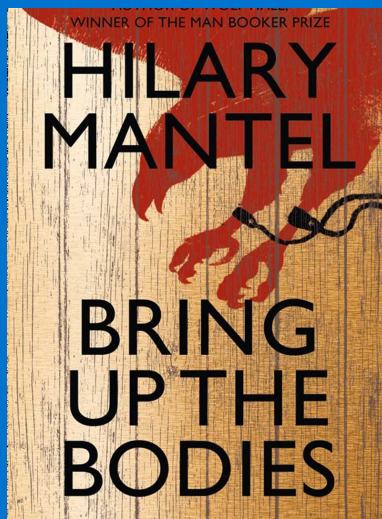


# Bring up the Bodies

## Hilary Mantel



### Author Background

- Birth—July 6, 1952
- Where—Glossop, Derbyshire, England, UK
- Education—University of Sheffield
- Awards—Man Booker Prize
- Currently—lives in England

Hilary Mary Mantel CBE is an English novelist, short story writer and critic. Her work, ranging in subject from personal memoir to historical fiction, has been short-listed for major literary awards. In 2009, she won the Man Booker Prize for her novel *Wolf Hall*. She was born in Glossop, Derbyshire, the eldest of three children, and was brought up in the Derbyshire mill village of Hadfield, attending the local Roman Catholic primary school. Her family is of Irish origin but her parents, Margaret and Henry Thompson, were born in England. After losing touch with her father at the age of eleven, she took the name of her stepfather, Jack Mantel. Her family background, the mainspring of much of her fiction, is explained in her memoir, *Giving Up the Ghost*.

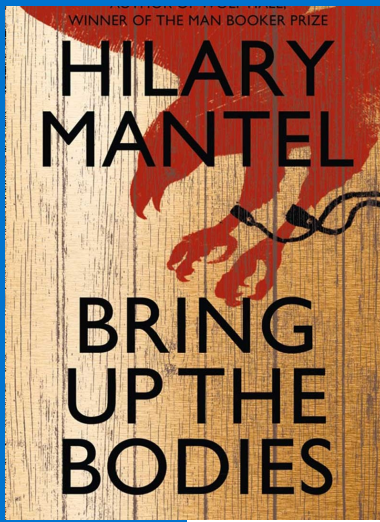
Mantel attended Harrytown Convent in Romiley, Cheshire, and in 1970 went to the London School of Economics to read law. She transferred to the University of Sheffield and graduated as Bachelor of Jurisprudence in 1973. After graduating she worked in the social work department of a geriatric hospital, and then as a saleswoman. In 1974 she began writing a novel about the French Revolution, which was later published as *A Place of Greater Safety*.

In 1977 she went to live in Botswana with her husband, Gerald McEwen, a geologist, whom she had married in 1972. Later they spent four years in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia—a memoir of this time, *Someone to Disturb*, has been published in the *London Review of Books*. During her twenties she suffered from a debilitating and painful illness. This was initially diagnosed as a psychiatric illness for which she was hospitalised and treated with anti-psychotic drugs. These produced a paradoxical reaction of psychotic symptoms and for some years she refrained from seeking help from doctors. Finally, in Africa, and desperate, she consulted a medical text-book and realised she was probably suffering from a severe form of endometriosis, a diagnosis confirmed back in London. The condition and necessary surgery left her unable to have children and continued to disrupt her life, with continued treatment by steroids radically changing her appearance. She is now patron of the Endometriosis SHE Trust.

(from Wikipedia)

# Bring up the Bodies

## Hilary Mantel



### Book Summary

#### ***Bring Up the Bodies (Wolf Hall Trilogy, 2)***

*Hilary Mantel, 2012*

*Henry Holt*

*432 pp.*

*ISBN-13: 9780805090031*

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.

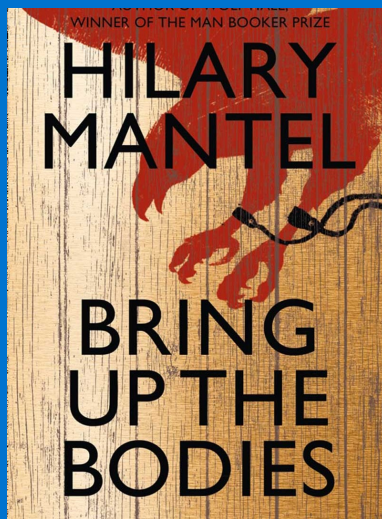
At a word from Henry, Thomas Cromwell is ready to bring her down. Over three terrifying weeks, Anne is ensnared in a web of conspiracy, while the demure Jane Seymour stands waiting her turn for the poisoned wedding ring. But Anne and her powerful family will not yield without a ferocious struggle.

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?

*(From the publisher.)*

# Bring up the Bodies

## Hilary Mantel

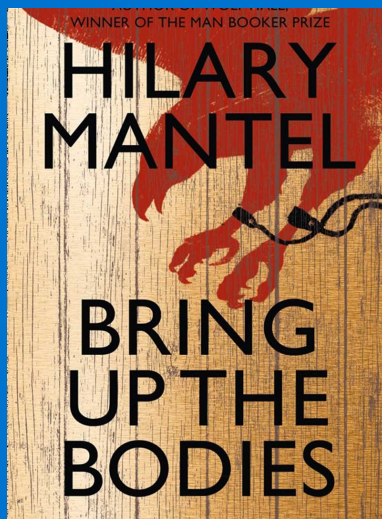


### Discussion Questions

1. The novel starts off with a description of hawks soaring in the sky and swooping in to slaughter their prey. In the same manner, the novel closes off with an image of a fox attacking a hen coop. What is the significance of these animals and what do they symbolize?
2. How has Cromwell's upbringing influenced him to become the shrewd and ambitious man that he is? What is the significance of Cromwell refusing to adopt the coat of arms belonging to a noble Cromwell family even as he widens the chasm between his father and himself? How does Cromwell view family and how is it different from his own experience growing up?
3. How is King Henry VIII described in the novel? Is he self-serving, or does he truly believe in the validity of his actions? Does he come over as a sympathetic character?
4. Katherine is accused by Cromwell of causing the split within the church, and of endangering her daughter Mary, by her stubborn resistance to the King's wishes. Do you view Katherine as a relentless and self-indulgent queen or is she noble for staying true to her beliefs?
5. Cromwell believes that England "will keep spiralling backwards into the dirty past" unless blunders are forgotten and old quarrels ended. How does this belief influence his actions in trying to build a new England? Does the king help or hinder him in this urge for renewal? How far are Cromwell's actions unselfish, and how far are they self-serving?
6. King Henry had fawned over all three women (Katherine, Anne, Jane) at one point in time. His past actions indicate that he loved his former wives, yet each affair proves temporary. How does Henry view love? Why do the women in the novel endeavour to wear the "poisoned ring?"
7. There is enormous power in a woman's gaze. How do the women in this novel utilize their feminine wiles to their advantage? What effect do they have on men subject to their lure, and what does this tell you about women's power over their male counterparts?
8. Birth and is a major conceit throughout the novel. As "nails give birth to nails," are children the product of their parents? Consider the parent-child relationships in the novel. What influence do parents have on their progeny?
9. When the King is thought to be dead after a jousting accident, there is a sudden rush to claim the crown. Are the players idealists, attempting to realize their political and religious ideals for England, or are they simply interested in getting power for themselves?
10. Anne Boleyn is accused of committing adultery and even incest. Could there be any truth in these accusations, or are they complete fabrications by her enemies? How does she change once she realizes she is in danger?
11. Cromwell seems very protective of Wyatt and saves him from death, even though he is widely suspected of being one of Anne's lovers. Why does Cromwell feel such a strong need to defend him when he vehemently accuses others of being the Queen's bedfellows? What sets Wyatt apart from the other men portrayed in the novel? What have Wyatt and Cromwell in common?
12. Does the novel make you reconsider your view of the Tudors?
13. The story concludes with Cromwell's claim that there are no endings, only beginnings. The country now has a new queen and a new leading family. What does this mean for England's future? What do you think Cromwell's role will be in the new order?
14. The execution of Anne Boleyn is one of the most frightening moments in English history. Anne's last words are scripted to appease the King. What do you think would have been Anne's last words had there not been any consequences?  
(Questions issued by publishers.)

# Bring up the Bodies

## Hilary Mantel



### Reviews

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...Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*...It was a hard act to follow. But the follow-up is equally sublime....*Bring Up the Bodies* is beautifully constructed...it proves

delightful to watch and anticipate how Ms. Mantel steers [all the characters] into and out of Cromwell's view, follows his canny assessments of how to play them off against one another and lays out the affronts for which they will later pay dearly... The wonder of Ms. Mantel's retelling is that she makes these events fresh and terrifying all over again.

***New York Times***

*Bring Up the Bodies* takes up exactly where *Wolf Hall* leaves off: its great magic is in making the worn-out story of Henry and his many wives seem fascinating and suspenseful again.... *Bring Up the Bodies* (the title refers to the four men executed for supposedly sleeping with Anne) isn't nostalgic, exactly, but it's astringent and purifying, stripping away the cobwebs and varnish of history...so that the English past comes to seem like something vivid, strange and brand new.

***New York Times Book Review***

[D]arkly magnificent...The pleasures of *Bring Up the Bodies*—and they are abundant, albeit severe—reside in Mantel's artistic mastery. She animates history with a political and psychological acuity equal to Tolstoy's in *War and Peace* (and she might have the edge on Count Leo in politics). Sardonic humor, particularly in scenes with not-nearly-as-dumb-as-she-seems Jane Seymour, leavens the ominous mood. Gruffly compassionate toward villains and victims alike, Mantel reveals their weaknesses and cruelties bundled up in a flawed humanity we share.

***Washington Post***