



The Other Boleyn Girl

By Philippa Gregory

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The #1 *New York Times* bestseller from “the queen of royal fiction” (*USA TODAY*) Philippa Gregory is a rich, compelling novel of love, sex, ambition, and intrigue surrounding the Tudor court of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, and the infamous Boleyn family.

When Mary Boleyn comes to court as an innocent girl of fourteen, she catches the eye of the handsome and charming Henry VIII. Dazzled by the king, Mary falls in love with both her golden prince and her growing role as unofficial queen. However, she soon realizes just how much she is a pawn in her family’s ambitious plots as the king’s interest begins to wane, and soon she is forced to step aside for her best friend and rival: her sister, Anne. With her own destiny suddenly unknown, Mary realizes that she must defy her family and take fate into her own hands.

With more than one million copies in print and adapted for the big screen, *The Other Boleyn Girl* is a riveting historical drama. It brings to light a woman of extraordinary determination and desire who lived at the heart of the most exciting and glamorous court in Europe, and survived a treacherous political landscape by following her heart.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Sisterly rivalry is the basis of this fresh, wonderfully vivid retelling of the story of Anne Boleyn. Anne, her sister Mary and their brother George are all brought to the king's court at a young age, as players in their uncle's plans to advance the family's fortunes. Mary, the sweet, blond sister, wins King Henry VIII's favor when she is barely 14 and already married to one of his courtiers. Their affair lasts several years, and she gives Henry a daughter and a son. But her dark, clever, scheming sister, Anne, insinuates herself into Henry's graces, styling herself as his adviser and confidant. Soon she displaces Mary as his lover and begins her machinations to rid him of his wife, Katherine of Aragon. This is only the beginning of the intrigue that Gregory so handily chronicles, capturing beautifully the mingled hate and nearly incestuous love Anne, Mary and George ("kin and enemies all at once") feel for each other and the toll their family's ambition takes on them. Mary, the story's narrator, is the most sympathetic of the siblings, but even she is twisted by the demands of power and status; charming George, an able plotter, finally brings disaster on his own head by falling in love with a male courtier. Anne, most tormented of all, is ruthless in her drive to become queen, and then to give Henry a male heir. Rather than settling for a picturesque rendering of court life, Gregory conveys its claustrophobic, all-consuming nature with consummate skill. In the end, Anne's famous, tragic end is offset by Mary's happier fate, but the self-defeating folly of the quest for power lingers longest in the reader's mind.

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From Library Journal

Before Henry VIII ever considered making Anne Boleyn his wife, her older sister, Mary, was his mistress. Historical novelist Gregory (Virgin Earth) uses the perspective of this "other Boleyn girl" to reveal the rivalries and intrigues swirling through England. The sisters and their brother George were raised with one goal: to advance the Howard family's interests, especially against the Seymours. So when Mary catches the king's fancy, her family orders her to abandon the husband they had chosen. She bears Henry two children, including a son, but Anne's desire to be queen drives her with ruthless intensity, alienating family and foes. As Henry grows more desperate for a legitimate son and Anne strives to replace Catherine as queen, the social fabric weakens. Mary abandons court life to live with a new husband and her children in the countryside, but love and duty bring her back to Anne time and again. We share Mary's helplessness as Anne loses favor, and everyone abandons her amid accusations of adultery, incest, and witchcraft. Even the Boleyn parents won't intervene for their children. Gregory captures not only the dalliances of court but the panorama of political and religious clashes throughout Europe. She controls a complicated narrative and dozens of characters without faltering, in a novel sure to please public library fans of historical fiction. Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State Univ., Mankato

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Review

Gregory effortlessly breeds color and life into a tale of obsession built around a ruthless, fascinating woman.

"You want a real page-turner, but you don't want to tarnish your reputation for literary taste. "The Other Boleyn Girl" is your kind of...book."

-- Janice Numura, "Newsday"

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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