



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR WOLF HALL BY HILLARY MANTEL

1. What does Holbein's portrait capture about Thomas Cromwell's character that even Cromwell, himself, recognizes? What kind of man is Cromwell? In the rapacious world of *Wolf Hall*, do you find him a sympathetic character, or not?
2. What effect did Cromwell's upbringing have on his character and his later views about the privileged society that permeates the court? How does he feel about the aristocracy and its insistence on ancient rights?
3. What does Cromwell mean when he tells his son that "it's all very well planning what you will do in six months, what you will do in a year, but it's no good at all if you don't have a plan for tomorrow"?
4. Comment on Cromwell's observation regarding an earl that "The world is not run from where he thinks. Not from his border fortresses, not even from Whitehall. The world is run from Antwerp, from Florence, from places he never imagined." What does Cromwell mean...and in what sense is his statement a very modern view of the world?
5. Why does Cromwell dislike the Catholic clergy? What are his motives for helping Henry marry Anne Boleyn and sever ties to the Pope? What larger goals does he hope to achieve in helping ? Are they selfless...or selfish?
6. If you are familiar with Thomas More, especially through *A Man for All Seasons*, were you surprised by this book's treatment of him?
7. How does Cromwell perceive Anne Boleyn? How does she come across in this book? Consider his observation when she is in the presence of the king's friends: "Anne is brittle in their company, and as ruthless with their compliments as a house-wife snapping the necks of larks for the table." Also talk about the danger he sees for Anne as he thinks, "Any little girl can hold the key to the future."
8. Do you know the fate of Cromwell, some years after the book's ending? If you don't know, can you surmise? If you do, how does it color your reading of *Wolf Hall*?
9. Mantel is writing a sequel to *Wolf Hall*—*The Mirror and the Light*. Do you think you'll want to read it when published?

Questions by LitLovers.



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