

The Boleyn Girls



compiled by: Monica Williams

Barnes, Margaret Campbell. *Brief Gaudy Hour: A Novel of Anne Boleyn.*

The book begins in France where Anne Boleyn is being groomed for her return to England. While Anne is sometimes portrayed as a villain, this book provides a more balanced view of a woman who used both her beauty and intelligence to forge her own path and attain the ultimate goal, to be Queen. In the end, however, neither her beauty nor her brains were enough to save her from her tragic fate.

Bogdan, D.L. *Secrets of the Tudor Court.*

Mary Howard, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, is being sent to court to serve in her cousin Anne Boleyn's retinue. Mary acts as her father's spy to keep an eye on Anne's relationship with the king. The Duke of Norfolk is a cruel and ambitious master.

Duun, Suzannah. *The Queen of Subleties: A Novel of Anne Boleyn.*

While awaiting execution, Anne Boleyn, doomed queen, writes the story of her life. Lucy Cornwallis is the king's confectioner who bakes the sweet delicacies enjoyed by Henry VIII and his court. Told in alternating chapters by each of the protagonists, this novel reveals court life from a variety of perspectives. The one person who connects the women is Mark Smeaton, the court musician. Lucy falls in love with Smeaton, who in turn falls in love with Anne. Smeaton is executed for supposedly dallying with a queen. Lucy remains in the kitchen, an invisible witness to it all.

Gardner, Laurien. *A Lady Raised High.*

Frances Pierce, a young country girl, steps in to protect Anne Boleyn from a well thrown handful of mud. For her bravery Frances is made a servant in Anne's retinue. Frances struggles to deal with life in the royal household, but becomes a favorite of Anne. Frances' simple country ways and devotion to her mistress serve her well until Anne begins to fall from favor.

Gregory, Phillipa. *The Boleyn Inheritance.*

Anne Boleyn's death was not the end of her legacy. Told alternately by Jane Boleyn, wife of Anne Boleyn's brother George, Anne of Cleves, and Katherine Howard, each woman tells her own story. Jane continues to scheme and ingratiates herself into the court of Anne of Cleves and then later advises Katherine Howard. Anne, longs to escape from her mother and brother who constantly bully her, but is life with Henry VIII an improvement? Lastly, there is Katherine Howard, young, spoiled, and naive, characteristics which leads to her downfall.

Harper, Karen.

The Last Boleyn.

While it is her sister Anne who is most known to history, Mary Boleyn survived what her brother and sister did not. It was Mary's actions that set events in motion. Like Anne, she was sent to France to be educated. At the French court she became mistress to Francis I, and earned the sobriquet, "The English Mare". Her blonde haired, blue eyed, classic beauty also caught the attention of Henry VIII. Trapped between the machinations of her manipulative family and court life, Mary's survival is truly a remarkable story.

Lofts, Norah.

The Concubine: A Novel.

Anne Boleyn is brought to the English court to serve as lady-in-waiting to Queen Katherine. Anne's dark hair, dark eyes, and French inflections set her apart from the English rose looks that are popular at court. Her looks, however attract the attentions of King Henry VIII. Henry defies the advice of his courtiers and abandons all common sense in his pursuit of Anne. Her ascent is swift, but so is her downfall.

Maxwell, Robin.

Mademoiselle Boleyn.

Before she rose to be Queen, Anne Boleyn, resided at the French court with her sister Mary. The girls as teens were ladies in waiting to Queen Claude of France who sees motherhood as her sacred duty. Anne is drawn to the intelligent and Protestant Marguerite of Savoy, sister to King Francis. Despite being in France, Anne and her siblings cannot escape the machinations of their father, who forces Mary to become Francis' mistress to discover French secrets. Anne resolves to be her own woman, no matter what the cost.

Maxwell, Robin.

The Secret Diary of Anne Boleyn.

Queen Elizabeth I is newly crowned. She is visited by an old friend of her mother's who comes bearing a diary written by Anne Boleyn. The woman promised to deliver the diary when Elizabeth was fully grown. Elizabeth grew up hearing only the ugly stories and rumors about her mother and her affairs. Her mother's diary tells the true story about all involved and provides some much needed advice for a young queen at a crucial moment.

Plaidy, Jean.

The Lady in the Tower.

Anne Boleyn's rise may not have been the meteoric spectacle which so many books present. She was raised in England, but her true education began in the French court, where she was first an attendant to Queen Mary (sister of Henry VIII). She catches the eye of both the King of France, who admires her for her beauty and his sister Marguerite, who admires Anne's intelligence. By the time Anne returns to England, she is more French than English. Something of that quality makes her attractive to King Henry VIII, though their story does not make up the bulk of the novel. Anne is depicted as an intelligent young woman who looks back upon her life and wishes things had been different.

Purdy, Brandy.

The Boleyn Wife.

The Boleyn saga is told by Lady Jane Parker who is married to George Boleyn, Anne's dashing brother in a marriage of convenience. She cannot compete with her alluring sister in law and the close relationship the siblings share. Jane's resentment of Anne's power and status as Queen and her husband George's indifference has tragic consequences for them all.



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