



Vengeance Is Mine: A Novel Of Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard, And Lady Rochford The Woman Who Helped Destroy Them Both

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There was room for only one woman in George Boleyn's heart: his sister, the mercurial and fascinating Anne Boleyn, who was destined to change history and wear a crown. To his adoring wife, Lady Jane Rochford, he was cold and indifferent.

When Anne failed to give Henry VIII the son she had promised him, and he was tiring of her tart tongue and tantrums, false charges of adultery were hastily concocted. Lady Rochford provided the crowning touch when she accused her husband and his beloved sister of incest. Both died upon the scaffold. Lady Rochford paid dearly for her treachery. She was left alone, shunned and friendless, until wild, sweet, wanton Katherine Howard danced into her life and became Henry's fifth queen.

When Katherine, disgusted by the obese and impotent King's fumbling attempts to make love to her, took a lusty young lover Lady Rochford helped them meet. And when the truth came out, she was the first to betray them. As she sits in the Tower of London, being tormented by the ghosts of George and Anne Boleyn, and awaiting her own appointment with the headsman's axe, Lady Rochford takes up her pen. *Vengeance Is Mine* is her story.

Vengeance Is Mine: A Novel Of Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard, And Lady Rochford The Woman Who Helped Destroy Them Both Details

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From Reader Review Vengeance Is Mine: A Novel Of Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard, And Lady Rochford The Woman Who Helped Destroy Them Both for online ebook

Johnny Hazelnut says

Is a so-called "historical novel," or rather a hysterical novel, by one Emily Purdy who calls herself Brandy Purdy in the US and calls this novel "The Boleyn Wife." in the US, and "The Tudor Wife" in England. I read the version published as "The Tudor Wife," just so you know. It is the tale of Lady Jane Rochford, who was some sort of lady-in-waiting, camp follower, or suchlike in the court of King Henry VIII during that period when it was like a real life soap opera except with people getting their heads cut off.

Unfortunately, the market for historical novels set in this period is so overstuffed that most of them are dire, especially when written by Americans as this is.

Executive Summary

Minor historical figure observes made up shit to try to shift some units.

A bit more detail, if you wouldn't mind, please?

The first thing I noted about this novel was that almost the very first line of dialogue in it begins "Forsooth!" Because everyone said that, and "zounds!" and "verily" and "hey nonny nonny" and "methinks" back then, didn't they? Needless to say, this sets the bar for the quality of the dialogue in this novel (hint: trite and wooden with overuse of the above phrases to hammer home that yes, Virginia, this is the 16th century.)

Lady Rochford, the protagonist, allegedly gave this novel as the speech to someone or other, yes, all 420 pages of it, or so we are expected to believe, on the eve of her joint execution with Catherine Howard. She's a minor figure who apparently ratted on Anne Boleyn and resulted in her getting her head cut off and allegedly is some sort of historical hate figure as the snitch who got in the way of Henry and Anne's otherwise fairytale love. She narrates this novel as some sort of lady in waiting, first to Anne Boleyn, then to Jane Seymour, then to Anne of Cleves, then to Catherine Howard before she herself gets her head cut off (a common affliction in them days). So we know how it all goes, right? Henry falls in love with Anne at first sight but it's actually more like some sort of lust resulting in him writing "Greensleeves" and 17 hot-blooded love letters about her "duckies," then she cheats on him, divorced beheaded died, divorced beheaded survived. All from the point of view of a convenient bystander who has her own little to-dos as well.

Okay, so The Six Wives of Henry VIII and Anne of the Thousand Days already covered this. So The Tudor Wife brings nothing new to the table. This just makes it, well, mediocre. But The Tudor Wife is not mediocre. It is bad. And it is so bad that it's truly horrible, as in Star Wars Holiday Special appalling. Here's why.

Firstly, the prose. Wooden. And trite. Large amounts of wordage is spent describing people unnecessarily. Whatever happened to "show, don't tell." The opening chapter is spent unfavourably comparing and contrasting the narrator's looks to the bewitching dark eyes and long, dark curls of Anne Boleyn. This goes on for pages, how Anne is some sort of lusty seductress who has every man in the royal courts of Europe falling at her feet whereas Lady Jane couldn't pull a rotten tooth out of a dead horse's head. Okay. We get it.

It also is about it as far as everyone else's characterisation goes. Henry VIII himself - Fat, syphilitic and grouchy. Anne Boleyn - hot. Jane Seymour - the dutiful good wife and lost lenore. Anne of Cleves - ugly, genuinely repulsive, the Flanders Mare. Catherine Howard - irrepressible sex rocket who shags anything with a pulse, including Anne of Cleves.

Yes. Yes. There is a scene where Catherine Howard and Anne of Cleves engage in some hardcore honey-fuelled lesbionics. This is despite, when Anne of Cleves was first introduced, much stock was taken of her lank, greasy-upon-greasy hair, slack belly, ungainly face, and breasts far removed from the "pritty Duckys that I trust soon to kysse" that Anne Boleyn was possessed of and which Henry admired in his 17 hot blooded love letters to her. However, and conveniently, she gets a makeover before munching Catherine Howard's rug. But despite this, one still pictures repulsive!greasy!Anne of Cleves engaging in this inauspicious conduct.

Here's an excerpt from that scene. Don't worry. The prose remains this hopeless throughout the rest of the novel.

Katherine imperiously demanded a bath.

"Ja, Liebchen," Anna embraced her and nuzzled her neck. "Und it was the greatest ride of mein life!"

it hurts

[illegible]

The thing is, I don't object to honey-fuelled lesbionics per se, however, it would help if firstly, this episode has any significance to the plot. Even if it were just thrown in as fanservice, then I could still get behind it if it wasn't just so horribly written and images of Anne of Cleves when she was first introduced didn't get inserted into my brain constantly.

Speaking of which, there is a lot of annoying failure to do the research exhibited in this novel. Anne of Cleves was probably not all that ugly, to be fair, and in any event, there is a school of thought the whole reason why Henry contemplated marrying her in the first place was not because he saw her Holbein-painted profile image but to cosy up to a fellow Protestant nation; it was a political marriage and even after the

divorce he ensured she was well looked after and adopted her as his sister. The "Flanders mare" thing was just an excuse to ditch her in favour of another pretty girl half his age (Catherine Howard) to slap bellies with. Furthermore, Anne was perfectly aware of this and reportedly was very smart and politically astute, and not the ugly, stupid ingenue described in this novel.

There's no evidence that Anne of Cleves was a lesbian either even though she never remarried. Ditto Catherine Howard. There's also no evidence that Jane Rochford, the narrator, ever encountered Thomas Wyatt, Thomas Cromwell, or similar, and certainly not amorously.

This, together with various other historical brainfarts, shows a shocking lack of research in the novel. True, Henry never asks Anne Boleyn, "Honey, fix me a sandwich" as apocryphally another similar novel about this period has, but it's still pretty dire. To cover this up the author throws various historical trivia such as Anne Boleyn having six fingers and supernumary nipples and being nicknamed "The Goggle Eyed Whore" by detractors. The rest of us aren't fooled. Sorry.

In conclusion: 'Sdeath! Methinks this novel doth seriously insert things into its mouth and inhale with its nostrils being closed up, verily, in the manner of a Dyson carpet-dust removing implement. It is a novel loathsome to the eye, dangerous to the brain, curling to the lip, and whose prose resembleth that emitted from the very Stygian bowels of the pit that is bottomless. (Translation: This sucks like a Dyson. Run screaming from any shop that sells it.)

(originally written for Everything2.com)

Judy says

read 20 pages and couldn't decide how to dispose of my copy - awful

Michele says

Okay, so this is Brandy Purdy's book that was originally self published and was recently picked up by Kensington and will be re-released under the title *The Boleyn Wife* towards the end of January 2010. Just to be clear, I read the older, self-published version.

And if you aren't too picky about your Tudor facts, this book is a funny romp through Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn's court, as told from the perspective of Jane Rochford, Anne's sister-in-law who later provided the testimony that sent Anne, her brother, and a multitude of others to the chopping block.

Jane Rochford's character is only there to provide a voice to the goings-on around her. We don't hear too much about her own thoughts and motivations (other than jealousy). But to be fair, historically we don't know much about Jane's motivations....really no primary sources there, just suppositions. In other words, there's lots of room for Ms. Purdy to have fun with it.

This book is perhaps most famous for it's campy little love scene between Henry's 4th and 5th wives, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard. It involves a pot of honey, but I'll say no more. Actually, it wasn't explicit and took place behind bed curtains and I thought it was brave and fun of the author to throw it in there.

Ms. Purdy writes a smooth narrative, much reminiscent of Philippa Gregory, so if you liked *The Other Boleyn Girl*, you'd probably like this book, soon to be published under the title of *The Boleyn Wife*.

Nan Hawthorne says

This is a fun book. It's unintentionally irreverent and that's what I like about it. It plays with the historical figures in a provocative and controversial way that I found refreshing. If you are a prude or an idol-worshiper skip this one. If you like to be entertained, tantalized and challenged, the novel is for you.

It follows the thought process, actions and disintegration of Anne Boleyn's sister-in-law Jane as she destroys Anne through malice and later Henry VIII wife Catherine Howard through indulgence.. in the process destroying herself. Some may think the book inaccurate, but in fact Purdy used historical record on which to base it, e.g. the testimony at Catherine's trial.

It's nice to hear from someone else in the Tudor panoply.. and refreshing to see them less than stellar.

Those who get bent out of shape by the sex in this book probably sat through *The Tudors* on HBO without complaint.. this I don't understand.

Good as this one is, Purdy's other novel to date, *The Confession of Piers Gaveston*, is far the superior. It is handled with a skill I hope to see again in her work.

By the way, *The Boleyn Wife* was originally published as *Vengeance is Mine*, but was such a high seller for a POD book that a publisher snapped it up and had the author expand on the original manuscript.. so anyone who read both got a bonus on this rewrite.

Rio (Lynne) says

1.5 Stars. Poor Anne of Cleves must be rolling in her grave! This is a bad attempt at a sexy romp through The Tudor times. I was looking forward to a fresh prospective on Jane Boleyn and hoping for a researched story on her life and why she made the cruel decisions she did. Instead the author follows Tudor cliches and the new insight she added was purely fictional and to me...ridiculous "I mean come on Anne of Cleves and Kat Howard doing the nasty? Not to mention Jane and **** hooking up." I didn't want to spoil it for you. If I knew nothing about this time period I might have thought this was a fun romp through medieval times, instead this was simply ridiculous. If you want a good story on Jane read *The Boleyn Inheritance*. One of Philippa's good ones that I actually liked.

Misfit says

Vengeance is Mine is a bit of a different take on the oft told tale of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn - this time through the POV of George Boleyn's wife Jane Rochford. Although Jane loves George, he finds her distasteful and prefers the company of his sister Anne, other women and men (poor Mark Smeaton), and finds her solace instead by sneaking around peeping through keyholes and hiding in cupboards to witness the salacious lives of others at court.. The latter part of the book covers the period of Katherine Howard's short

reign where Jane served as lady in waiting.

Since we've all been Tudor'ed to death and know the basics I don't need to rehash the entire plot, I'm just here to give my two cents on the reading experience. I didn't care for the use of the first person narrative in this one, it really was too much of a stretch some of the places Jane had to be in to *witness* events first hand - and my, oh, my those keyholes were awfully big back in the days. I never really felt that I was inside Jane's head and seeing what made her tick, and while I know Anne had the reputation for her shrewish tongue this just seemed OTT to me - it was all so black and white, I like a few shades of gray.

And lastly, there are the infamous *sex scenes*. Were they as graphic and offensive as I'd heard about? No, but neither were they well written and tasteful either. Anne dressing up as Salome in front of the entire court with Henry Norris in a loin cloth was quite enough, as was the pot of honey scene between Anne of Cleves and Kat Howard but the book definitely flew at the "Little Kitten" bit on page 228.

Page 228, "...and to know that you want me, deny it though you will, as much as I want you, and that between your thighs your Little Kitten is hot and dripping wet with lust for me."

Eeeewwww. This novel has just been revamped with a new publisher under the title The Boleyn Wife and I'm not sure how close it stays to this book, but I strongly recommend a closer look at the book store prior to making a purchase - this is not going to be the book for everyone and it was definitely not the book for me. If you're looking for a very fictional take on Anne and Henry and don't care about historical accuracy this might suit as a quick and easy read, but on the other hand this book isn't going to provide you with anything new on the matter either. 2/5 stars.

Wen says

I cant say I Hated the book because I Did finish it, BUT I kept plowing along hoping the book would get better and have more substance. Sadly it got more and more wild as it went on. The book spends much of its content focused on Janes peeping tom tendancies and on the sexual escapades and depravity of various characters.

I was hoping to learn more about Jane Boleyn but only got a more fictionalized, over the top, quasi-erotica expanded upon version of rumors and what little facts are really known about her.

Lois says

it was ok, The rise and fall of Anne Boleyn told thru the eyes of her jealous angry sister-in-law. Portrays Anne as never getting over Henry Percy and not in the least interested or in love with King Henry and therefore able to keep him chasing her all those years because she truly does not want him. Interesting take on the common fable.

Marie Z. Johansen says

I have always been fascinated by the purported strong relationship that Anne Boleyn had with her brother

George. Jane Parker, Lady Rochford, wife to George Boleyn, Lord Rochford has always been mentioned in the history books as an afterthought. Indeed, I don't think that there is a lot of factual information to be had about Jane Parker - women themselves, unless famous, were more or less afterthoughts in Tudor times!

I am an avid reader of both history and historical fiction - and am always enthralled by anything Tudor. This book was no exception! The book draws on history to tell the tale of Jane Parker who, through an arranged marriage, became wife to George Boleyn. Jane paled in comparison to the fiery spirit of Anne Boleyn - George's sister and wife to England's notorious King Henry VIII. As Anne's star rises in the Court, Jane's resentment grows and she begins to plot her revenge. Ultimately, it is Jane's spurious charges, of adultery and incest with her brother George that brings about Anne's downfall. Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector is the person that Jane turns to. She unfurls her plot - making allegations to Cromwell that will ultimately cause the downfall of both Anne and George as well as the other courtiers who were alleged by Jane to have been Anne's lovers. Jane erroneously thought that by arranging to have Anne out of the picture she would, at last, have George's attentions all to herself. Wrong! George, always proclaiming his innocence and remaining true to his sister, goes to the block just short of Anne's own appointment with the swordsman.

Free of Anne - and her husband, Jane is sent from Court but she is soon brought back to Court to attend to Henry's newest bride, Anna of Cleves. Anna of Cleves is the only one of King Henry's wives prior to his last wife, Katherine Parr, to keep her head because Henry's dislike of her results in Anna's becoming the King's 'beloved sister'. Their marriage is annulled - freeing Henry to marry once again. Henry's next marriage, to the very young Katherine Howard, finds Jane ready to serve once again and Jane becomes the go-between, arranging clandestine meetings between Katherine and her love, Thomas Culpepper. Ultimately, when the affair is exposed to King Henry, Jane Parker Boleyn herself along with Queen Katherine, becomes a victim of the swordsman's axe.

This book is, we must remember, historical fiction. When I read a historical fiction book I like to reference the true history to see where the author remains true to the facts and where the true facts diverge and become true fiction. I don't expect a work of historical fiction to read like a history book. It is true that there are places in this book where scenes are invented and/or extrapolated. I anticipate this in a work of fiction. Indeed it is works of fiction that originally spurred my fascination with the Tudor period as a youngster and fanned my desire to read the true historical books about the period later on. I remain Tudor smitten.

I find it unfortunate that the new publisher chose a cover that sports an image that is somewhat tawdry and most definitely not in period garb. It reminds me too much of bodice ripper's like some of the Harlequin series. I much prefer the original, self-published cover - or the British edition's cover. It is an unfortunate fact of a literary life that, once a publisher accepts a book for publication, author's have little input into cover selection. I can't think what the publisher was thinking when they chose this one.

Nonetheless, under the cover this book is an enjoyable read; it's fast paced and will hold your attention. I recommend this book for all 'Tudor-philes' and for everyone who enjoy historical fiction and who can accept it as fiction based on some historical events rather than history that reads like fiction. I think everyone who buys this book will enjoy it quite well!

Robin says

This is the story of Jane Rochford, wife to George Boleyn, sister-in-law to Anne, and one of the people that helped send the two siblings to the block. Because of her actions her name is forever connected with

jealousy, vindictiveness, viciousness, and disloyalty. It covers her life from about the time she first meets and falls in love with George up to her death with Henry's fifth queen, Katherine Howard. Once she sees George she is determined to have him, despite her father's misgivings on the match. She naively believes that once they are married George will fall in love with her and be the loving attentive husband she wants him to be. As the story moves along and she realizes that he wants absolutely nothing to do with her, she fluctuates between loving him and hating him. We see her throughout the novel spying on all the other players from behind a bush, through a keyhole, hiding in a cabinet, etc, hoping to see something that she can use against her sister-in-law. Jane focuses a lot of her anger and hatred on Anne, believing her to be the sole cause of George's lack of attention; this leads her to helping Cromwell in his attack on Anne as she thinks once Anne is out of the picture, George will give her the attention she craves. Jane's sworn testimony to Cromwell helped convict George and Anne of incest and treason. The author throws a very interesting twist into the story at this point concerning the relationship between Cromwell and Jane; this was something I never expected but rather creative and explains, in a way, why Jane was so eager to give testimony against Anne. Of course, Jane is wrong again and is further infuriated when she realizes that George would rather die with his sister than live with her. After their deaths, Jane becomes lady-in-waiting for the next three queens: Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Katherine Howard. She especially takes to Katherine as she sees her as the child she was never able to have and hopes that Kat will come to love her. Jane is horrified to learn the kind of life Kat has lead and the type of person she has become and constantly warns her against her behavior with Thomas Culpepper (she is also quite horrified at her behavior with the former queen, Anne of Cleves). Kat is eventually caught and she and Jane are both sent to the Tower and sentenced to death. Once in the Tower Jane apparently goes a bit mad, thinking she sees both George and Anne's ghosts lurking around to torment her. She was executed immediately after Kat.

It was very interesting to read a story solely from Jane's point of view. Most stories about the Boleyns only mention Jane in passing, as the jealous, hateful wife of George whose lies helped send her husband and sister-in-law to their deaths. In most cases where the story is told from the point of view of someone classified as a villain, a reader, at some point, will sympathize with the character. Her portrayal here will do nothing to incite sympathy from the reader. At the beginning of the novel she just comes across as a bit naive, very obsessive, and only slightly jealous. However, as the story moves along she really becomes nasty and vindictive and all the other horrible adjectives that have been used to describe her. Sometimes she is downright hysterical, going so far as to bite a servant on the heel in one of her rages. I absolutely hated her and found myself laughing each time one of her schemes backfired on her. I firmly believe she got her just desserts in the end. Outside of Jane's feeling, thoughts, and actions, there really isn't a whole lot of description about much of anything else. We see all the major players here, of course, but as this story is really focusing on Jane's life, there isn't much delving into their lives or personalities. The author doesn't show Anne as being such an ambitious, mean person as others have shown her; we actually see her in the beginning trying to be friendly with Jane, though Jane is set to dislike her from the start. Despite this, I thought the book was well written and there really was a deep probing into Jane's motivations and feelings, which was certainly new. We see that the harder she tries to gain George's attention, the more indifferent he becomes (and becomes more emotionally cruel), which leads her to become more jealous and hateful. I would caution readers that if you are uncomfortable with some sex scenes, I wouldn't recommend this book. Otherwise, I would certainly recommend this to those that are interested in the Tudors and would like to see another side to the soap opera. It is a much different perspective on a story with which we are so familiar.

Colleen says

I thought this book was awful and I'm not sure why I even kept reading it(I think I was hoping it would get

better). While I understand that it is a piece of historical **fiction**, I'm not quite sure that this author really knows anything about Tudor history other than the very basics and dates. So much of this book deviates from what historians know about this period and the historical figures. When writing historical fiction the author can certainly take some liberties but I just feel like this author tried to change history. And I'm sorry, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard having a lesbian encounter?! Maybe the author felt that by throwing in all kinds of tawdy sex scenes people wouldn't notice her lack of quality writing.

Ashley W says

Oh...my...God...What the heck did I just read?

This book has got to be one of the **WORST** historical fiction books about the Tudors that I have ever opened. If this novel was supposed to make me feel sorry for Jane Boleyn, it did not. I ended up hating her! In the beginning, she decides to hate Anne because her crush and Anne's brother, George Boleyn, pays more attention to Anne than he does to her, even when Anne genuinely tries to befriend her. Jane then goes on to stalk George everywhere he goes and doesn't listen when her father tells her that a marriage to George will end in misery. She's shocked to realize he doesn't love her! Instead of trying to be friends with Anne, which she should've did in the first place, she devises ways to make Anne pay for her imagined pain, going so far as to imagine killing her and ultimately, giving the evidence that sends Anne, her husband, and her husband's friends to their deaths.

Come on, this woman needs some serious therapy! Honestly, I just want to jump in a time machine, smack the crap out of her, and then sit her down to watch *He's Just Not That Into You*.

And this is another book where Anne is depicted as a fierce harpy with the sixth finger and the witch's birthmark. Don't get me wrong, Anne Boleyn was no saint, but still there's no need to portray her as a one-dimensional hag from the deepest pits of hell. The good she did do is never looked at once. However, granted, it is from Jane Boleyn's POV, and she is a really unreliable narrator. Also, once again, her parents are portrayed as pimps trying to put their daughters before the king in order to get some money. Are there any books where her family is loving and/or supports her? And if her father was really that harsh, why didn't she use her power to get him banished from court or something?

Oh, and then there's the infamous honey erotica scene with Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard, and that's when I stopped reading. There's just so much wrong with that scene that I just really don't want to talk about it. Just know that I'm forever scarred for life.

Ugh...If this book hadn't been on my Nook and I trusted myself to build a bonfire, I'd totally be roasting marshmallows with this thing right now.

Penny Dreadful says

The only reason this book got more than one star is that it's so bad it becomes amusing.

I bought that book because it was about Jane Boleyn. I think she was fantastically wicked and tragic.

However upon reading it I discovered that it was actually a book I'd be warned about. If you know only about history then prepare to be slapped in the face.

Almost every character, and i mean EVERY character, ends up psychotic. They all end up screaming and crying and being hysterical and when they're not they are all one dimensionally Jolly or nasty. Jane Boleyn complains about not having a baby then when she gets pregnant with Thomas Cromwell she kills it. Henry VIII makes BREIF appearances. George Boleyn is gay and sleeping with everyone. Katherine Howard and Anne of Cleves are lesbians and have an erotic scene with honey. Henry Percy is a comic character that stutters and trips whenever he takes a step. Thomas Wyatt's a brat. Jane Seymour is in the book for less then ten pages. I could go on with all the insanity this book produces but I won't. You need to not take it seriously or you're brain will explode.

Clare says

If you don't know by now that Anne Boleyn was framed, you simply haven't read enough. But this book - out of the many many Tudor dynasty books out there - is told from the perspective of Lady Jane Rochford, wife to George Boleyn, Anne's beloved brother.

In the same way and for the same reason I didn't enjoy *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, reading about one person's cruelty to another is not a pleasurable experience. Lady Rochford's madness and hatred is uncomfortable often, but offered a sometimes salacious look into Anne Boleyn's life. It followed what i knew of Boleyn's time at court, but then got weird, suggesting that Anne of Cleves was actually clever enough to make herself unappealing to Henry and that she had a lesbian romance with Katherine Howard. Wha, what?

Despite that, it was a pretty good book.

Piepie says

I think I enjoyed this better than *The Ripper's Wife*, and I would've given this one 4 stars if the main character, Lady Jane, had been a bit more likeable and relatable. I was a little bit scandalized with all the scenes that show her to be a bit of a "peeping tom," peering through keyholes at people having sex. I did not like her at all. This is definitely a racy, steamy look at Tudor times ("soap opera," as another reviewer or two have said). I don't mind that a vast majority of this book wasn't true, wasn't based on historical fact, but I don't mind that in my historical novels. I know it's a novel, I know it can be made up, and I like reading about real-life characters in fiction, with made-up details.
