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BOOK CLUB
SEASON 23/24

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What's
your
story?

Discussion Questions: *Wolf Hall*

Folger Book Club—August 2023

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? If asked, what would you say this novel is about?
2. Were you familiar with any of the historical figures in this book? If so, how did their depiction relate to your previous impressions of them? Does this novel inspire you to find out more about these people/this time period?
3. Which characters, if any, did you find most sympathetic? With so many larger than life figures, why do you think Mantel chose to focus on Cromwell?
4. Why do you think she chose to call it *Wolf Hall*? Were you curious about the title while reading? How did you feel to learn it was the name of the Seymour home? Did learning this change your understanding of the events in the book?
5. There is a significant time jump between the first two chapters of the book. Why do you think Mantel chose to include this part of Cromwell's life and yet skip so much else?
6. How does Cromwell's upbringing affect how he views and interacts with Henry's court? Do you feel one experience in his youth was more informative to his characters than the others?
7. What is the significance of Guilio's memory machine?
8. Mantel's narration occasionally shifts to include the reader, such as on page 365 when she writes "If they sing obscene songs, we will simply refuse to understand them." Were you conscious of these changes? Who did you take to be the speaker at such times? What is their impact on the reader?
9. Does Cromwell have any specific religious convictions? Or is he more driven by convictions of common decency and personal loyalty?
10. Compare Katherine and Anne. What are their chief motivations? How do they attempt to achieve their aims? Which one's approach do you admire more? What would you have done differently if put in their positions?