

Hilary Mantel

Quotes

*Thinking, Book, Writing, People, Years, Running, Father, World, Mother, Ideas,
Novelists, Real, Mind, Historian, Lying, War, Home, Children, Generations,
Males*

I dislike pastiche; it attracts attention to the language only.

~Hilary Mantel

It is the absence of facts that frightens people: the gap you open, into which they pour their fears, fantasies, desires.

~Hilary Mantel

Write a book you'd like to read. If you wouldn't read it, why would anybody else? Don't write for a perceived audience or market. It may well have vanished by the time your book's ready.

~Hilary Mantel

Fortitude. ... It means fixity of purpose. It means endurance. It means having the strength to live with what constrains you.

~Hilary Mantel

Feminism hasn't failed, it's just never been tried.

~Hilary Mantel

It is better not to try people, not to force them to desperation. Make them prosper; out of superfluidity, they will be generous. Full bellies breed gentle manners. The pinch of famine makes monsters.

~Hilary Mantel

Truth can break the gates down, truth can howl in the street; unless truth is pleasing, personable and easy to like, she is condemned to stay whimpering at the back door.

~Hilary Mantel

If you have a good story idea, don't assume it must form a prose narrative. It may work better as a play, a screenplay or a poem. Be flexible.

~Hilary Mantel

I didn't cry much after I was 35, but staggered stony-faced into middle age, a handkerchief still in my bag just in case.

~Hilary Mantel

The things you think are the disasters in your life are not the disasters really. Almost anything can be turned around: out of every ditch, a path, if you can only see it.

~Hilary Mantel

You're only young once, they say, but doesn't it go on for a long time? More years than you can bear.

~Hilary Mantel

Some of these things are true and some of them lies. But they are all good stories.

~Hilary Mantel

'Show up at the desk' is one of the first rules of writing, but for 'Wolf Hall' I was about 30 years late.

~Hilary Mantel

Florence and Milan had given him ideas more flexible than those of people who'd stayed at home.

~Hilary Mantel

Imagination only comes when you privilege the subconscious, when you make delay and procrastination work for you.

~Hilary Mantel

Hindsight is the historian's necessary vice.

~Hilary Mantel

I'm one of these children who grew up at the knee of my grandmother and her elder sister, listening to very old people talk about their

memories.

~Hilary Mantel

To a Brit of my generation, one of the most objectionable things about [Margaret] Thatcher is her falsity. She is a total construct. For one thing, she had a made-over accent.

~Hilary Mantel

In my 20s I was in constant pain from undiagnosed endometriosis. With no prospect of a cure, I decided I needed a career - writing - that could accommodate being ill.

~Hilary Mantel

God takes out your heart of flesh, and gives you a heart of stone.

~Hilary Mantel

Once you're labeled as mentally ill, and that's in your medical notes, then anything you say can be discounted as an artefact of your mental illness.

~Hilary Mantel

Insight cannot be taken back. You cannot return to the moment you were in before.

~Hilary Mantel

I am not a historian. I don't see what I do as being a rival to biography.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] scorned and despised other women, and predicated her values entirely on the values of her father, a small town shopkeeper.

~Hilary Mantel

You don't get on by being original. You don't get on by being bright.

You don't get on by being strong. You get on by being a subtle crook.

~Hilary Mantel

Sometimes peace looks like war, you cannot tell them apart.

~Hilary Mantel

Fear of commitment lies behind the fear of writing.

~Hilary Mantel

Every leader operates under the threat of assassination.

~Hilary Mantel

She is very plain. What does Henry see in her?" "He thinks she's stupid. He finds it restful.

~Hilary Mantel

Beneath every history, another history.

~Hilary Mantel

I do myself think that history is a set of skills rather than a narrative.

~Hilary Mantel

But an experienced reader is also a self-aware and critical reader. I can't remember ever reading a story without judging it.

~Hilary Mantel

People who wrote literary novels about the past probably didn't want them pegged as historical fiction. Certainly that was true in England.

~Hilary Mantel

I believe this was [Margaret Thatcher] estimate of the voter: "These people are so stupid that they will vote for me because they think I know how to run the household."

~Hilary Mantel

A statute is written to entrap meaning, a poem to escape it.

~Hilary Mantel

I'm a very organised and rational and linear thinker and you have to stop all that to write a novel.

~Hilary Mantel

My concern is less the monarchy as such than the attempt of a fading colonial power to hang onto grandeur.

~Hilary Mantel

I loved Gore Vidal's Burr. That book gave me courage.

~Hilary Mantel

When I began to read as an adult, my first big enthusiasm was Evelyn Waugh. I read almost exclusively novelists of a generation back. I did the Russians, then I started getting more up to date.

~Hilary Mantel

Insights don't usually arrive at my desk, but go into notebooks when I'm on the move. Or half-asleep.

~Hilary Mantel

Like every writer, I'm drawn by unlikely juxtapositions, precisely-dated and once-only collisions between people from different worlds.

~Hilary Mantel

Over the city lies the sweet, rotting odor of yesterday's unreclected sins.

~Hilary Mantel

It is 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.

~Hilary Mantel

I can't think of any male politician who magnetizes love and hate - mainly hate - the way [Margaret Thatcher] did.

~Hilary Mantel

Like a historian, I interpret, select, discard, shape, simplify. Unlike a historian, I make up people's thoughts.

~Hilary Mantel

The more facts I can have, the better. I can operate very nicely between them, but I am not very good at making things up. I am not sure how ethical it is.

~Hilary Mantel

It was unfortunate for other women who might come after [Margaret Thatcher] that the first woman to become prime minister was a male impersonator.

~Hilary Mantel

No ruler in the history of the world has ever been able to afford a war. They're not affordable things. No prince ever says, 'This is my budget, so this is the kind of war I can have.'

~Hilary Mantel

By the tits of Holy Agnes

~Hilary Mantel

When you are writing laws you are testing words to find their utmost power. Like spells, they have to make things happen in the real world, and like spells, they only work if people believe in them.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] aroused such strong loathing in so many people.

That's the fact that interests me.

~Hilary Mantel

I am sure that all politicians seek the home connection with the voter. But [Margaret Thatcher] carried it to extremes.

~Hilary Mantel

What is it we are hating? It goes beyond politics. I suppose that my fascination with [Margaret Thatcher] is not just with her political record but with her as a phenomenon.

~Hilary Mantel

History is always changing behind us, and the past changes a little every time we retell it.

~Hilary Mantel

Though I have never thought of myself as a book collector, there are shelves in our house browsed so often, on so many rainy winter nights, that the contents have seeped into me as if by osmosis.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] is a woman who, when she wrote her entry for "Who's Who," didn't include her mother. Now whether that was corrected in subsequent editions, I do not know.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] was always talking about what the prudent housewife should do and what the prudent housewife knew.

~Hilary Mantel

Imagine the consequences of having the first woman prime minister who is the milk snatcher. [Margaret Thatcher] takes away the nourishment of the nation.

~Hilary Mantel

When you become published and become a reviewer, piles of books come along and you are pushed by fashion and what you are commissioned to do.

~Hilary Mantel

To me, Hillary [Clinton] looks alright. She looks like the kind of woman I admire. She doesn't seem to have distorted her essential nature.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] was pretending that running a country was like running a household, which she knew wasn't true.

~Hilary Mantel

I've got so many ideas, and sometimes the more exhausted my body gets, the more active my mind gets.

~Hilary Mantel

Much historical fiction that centers on real people has always been deficient in information, lacking in craft and empty in affect.

~Hilary Mantel

Wolf Hall attempts to duplicate not the historian's chronology but the way memory works: in leaps, loops, flashes.

~Hilary Mantel

Memory isn't a theme; it's part of the human condition.

~Hilary Mantel

I think it took me half a page of 'Wolf Hall' to think: 'This is the novel I should have been writing all along.'

~Hilary Mantel

One of the ideals [Margaret Thatcher] grew up with was self-denial and postponement of gratification, and yet she went about to create a

greedy, short-term society. It is a paradox.

~Hilary Mantel

I think I would have been a reasonably good lawyer. I have a faculty for making sense of mountains of information.

~Hilary Mantel

I spend a lot of my time talking to the dead, but since I get paid for it, no one thinks I'm mad.

~Hilary Mantel

You think you're writing one historical novel and it turns into three, and I'm quite used to a short story turning into a novel - that's happened through my whole career.

~Hilary Mantel

If I am feeling broken, I can pick up one of [Ivy Compton-Burnett] books and the next morning I can write again. It puts my mechanism back.

~Hilary Mantel

History is a set of skills rather than a narrative.

~Hilary Mantel

In terms of essays, I would say Oliver Sacks. His breadth of hard knowledge and imagination and empathy seems to constitute the perfect mind to me.

~Hilary Mantel

There is so much else in the world that is more interesting [than monarchy].

~Hilary Mantel

I think the monarchy today is.â€‰.â€‰. mildly interesting and largely harmless. I can't find I can get very heated about it. In the next couple

of generations, it is bound to go.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] assumed somehow that this would get the woman voter and all those juvenile male voters who wanted a well-regulated household with a woman who knew what she should be doing.

~Hilary Mantel

People will identify with a persecuted minority without asking themselves what they are identifying with.

~Hilary Mantel

He turns to the painting. "I fear Mark was right." "Who is Mark?" "A silly little boy who runs after George Boleyn. I once heard him say I looked like a murderer." Gregory says, "Did you not know?"

~Hilary Mantel

I think it is going to take another fifty years for the report to be in. If I were to give a preliminary report, I would say that [Margaret Thatcher] wrecked this country.

~Hilary Mantel

Those who are made can be unmade.

~Hilary Mantel

For many imaginative writers, working for the press is a fact of their life. But it's best not to like it too much.

~Hilary Mantel

I only became a novelist because I thought I had missed my chance to become a historian.

~Hilary Mantel

As a writer, you owe it to yourself not to get stuck in a rut of looking at

the world in a certain way.

~Hilary Mantel

My first career ambitions involved turning into a boy; I intended to be either a railway guard or a knight errant.

~Hilary Mantel

For historians, creative writers provide a kind of pornography.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret Thatcher] admitted to being the daughter of her father but not the daughter of her mother!

~Hilary Mantel

I am usually protective of my work, not showing it to anyone until it has been redrafted and polished.

~Hilary Mantel

[Margaret] Thatcher could fake her class background, but she couldn't fake the quality of her mind.

~Hilary Mantel

[T]he heart is like any other organ, you can weigh it on a scale.

~Hilary Mantel

If you are without impulses, you are, to a degree, without joy..." 469

~Hilary Mantel

I am very happy in second-hand bookshops; would a gardener not be happy in a garden?

~Hilary Mantel

In order to successfully impersonate men, the woman [Margaret Thatcher] launched a war.

~Hilary Mantel

This was an idea peculiar to Camille, Maximilien thought, that the worse things get, the better they get. No one else seems to think this way.

~Hilary Mantel

It is almost a joke, but a joke that nobody tells.

~Hilary Mantel

The worship of Thomas More goes beyond Catholics.

~Hilary Mantel

For what's the point of breeding children, if each generation does not improve on what went before.

~Hilary Mantel

You learn nothing about men by snubbing them and crushing their pride. You must ask them what it is they can do in this world, that they alone can do.

~Hilary Mantel

[H]ope takes you by the throat like a stranger, it makes your heart leap.

~Hilary Mantel

Watching live actors onstage, in something that changes night by night, real people picking up cues from each other, it concentrates you on the process rather than the result.

~Hilary Mantel

At New Year's he had given Anne a present of silver forks with handles of rock crystal. He hopes she will use them to eat with, not to stick in people.

~Hilary Mantel

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