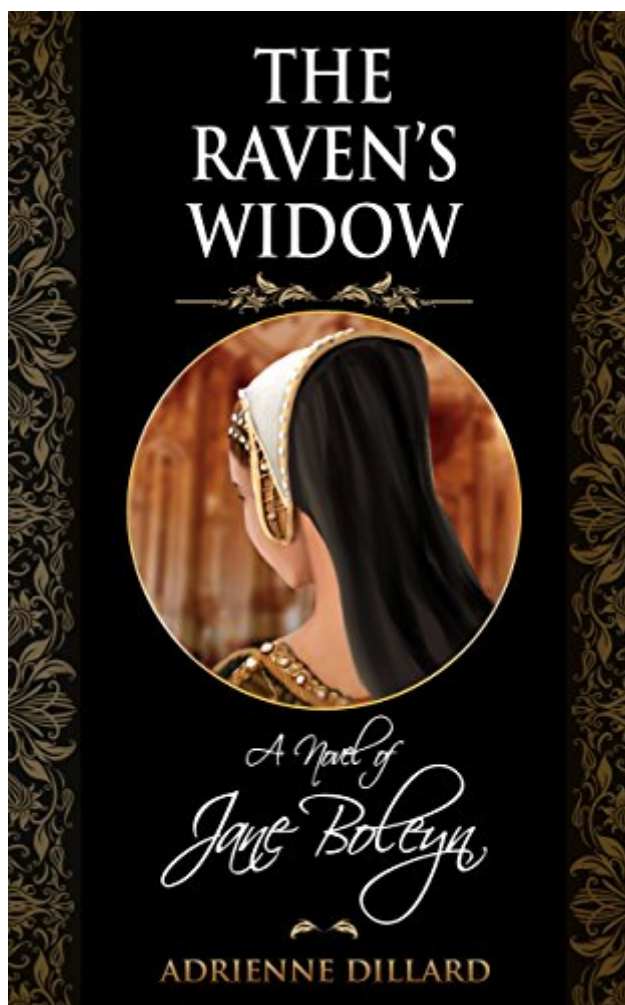


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# The Raven's Widow: A Novel Of Jane Boleyn



## Synopsis

The river was as calm as I had ever seen it. Ordinarily, the tide would have been wild by this time of year, and woe unto any man unfortunate enough to fall into the fierce currents of the Thames. Tonight the tides were still, and the surface of the water appeared glassy. When I peered down into the dark depths, I saw my tired, drawn face wavering in the reflection. I quickly turned away as I fought back a wave of nausea, frightened by the anguish I saw etched there. "Only a few moments more my lady, the Tower is just ahead." Jane Parker never dreamed that her marriage into the Boleyn family would raise her star to such dizzying heights. Before long, she finds herself as trusted servant and confidante to her sister-in-law, Anne Boleyn; King Henry VIII's second queen. On a gorgeous spring day, that golden era is cut short by the swing of a sword. Jane is unmoored by the tragic death of her husband, George, and her loss sets her on a reckless path that leads to her own imprisonment in the Tower of London. Surrounded by the remnants of her former life, Jane must come to terms with her actions. In the Tower, she will face up to who she really is and how everything went so wrong. "Jane Boleyn is finally given the thoughtful and poignant story she has long been denied" - Olga Hughes, Nerdalicious.com.au "An absorbing story that draws you into a vividly created world" - Amy Licence, Best-Selling Author and Historian

**Author Interview** What makes *The Raven's Widow: A Novel of Jane Boleyn* special? *The Raven's Widow* is special because it is a well-known story told from a completely new perspective. This is the first time we've seen Jane Boleyn as she truly is - a sympathetic woman sacrificed as collateral damage to the whims of a mercurial king, King Henry VIII.

**Who was Jane Boleyn?** Jane Boleyn was the daughter of Baron Morley, one of Lady Margaret Beaufort's most favoured courtiers. She married George Boleyn shortly after joining the household of Catherine of Aragon and then went on to serve his sister, Anne Boleyn. After the execution of her husband and sister-in-law, Jane Boleyn returned to court to serve Henry VIII's next two wives. It is for her service to his fifth wife, Katherine Howard, that she is most known. Jane was caught up in Katherine's indiscretions and found herself joining her mistress on the scaffold. Jane was executed on 13th February 1542, alongside her queen.

**Is your Jane Boleyn different from other fictional portrayals?** My Jane Boleyn is quite different than anything readers have ever seen before. Unlike Philippa Gregory or Hilary Mantel's versions, my Jane truly is a victim of circumstance. You won't see her selling out her husband and sister-in-law to Thomas Cromwell or the Duke of Norfolk. You'll also see her in a loving relationship - a romance - with her husband, George Boleyn, one based on factual evidence, not like the marriage shown in the movies or on shows like *The Tudors*. Why should

readers give your historical fiction novels a try? Historical accuracy in fiction has always been important to me. That's why I spend years researching everything that goes into my novels. I work hard to vividly recreate the people and places of Tudor England while keeping my story grounded in the historical record. The goal of each novel is to shine a light on the hidden or maligned figures of the royal court. The Raven's Widow ebook categories Historical fiction Historical romance Tudor fiction Historical fiction bestsellers Historical novel

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the things I liked most about this novel is that the author grasps the difference between fiction and historical evidence. I've read sufficient Tudor research, including Julia Fox's excellent biography of Jane Boleyn, to have an idea of what is actually known about Lady Rochford and what has been presumed. While the facts of Jane Boleyn's life are sparse, Dillard takes these facts and uses them to support her fictional tale in much the same way a trellis supports climbing roses; the end result is beautiful and

as sturdy as human ingenuity can make it. There are things that Dillard has to invent, but they are plausible and they fit the historical record. I am certainly not adverse to suspending disbelief for a good read, much in the way a physicist has to relinquish reality to enjoy Star Trek or Star Wars, but my favorite books are the ones that are both well written and as accurate as possible. If a book has good word-smithing then I will ignore yet another depiction of George Boleyn as a homosexual murderer or rapist, even if my eyes do roll back into my head occasionally with the exasperation. Thankfully, while reading *The Raven's Widow*, my eyes didn't roll back even once. Rather, they teared up at some of the more moving passages, and I was filled with a desperate pain thinking of the agony of seeing a beloved husband judicially murdered for a crime you knew he didn't commit. I also enjoyed the lack of traditional "bad guys" in this novel. I've noticed that writers frequently make Anne Boleyn a monster to support Catherine of Aragon (or vice versa), but this work avoided that oversimplified trap. Instead of paper-thin depictions of manipulative devils, the major characters were drawn with an appealing complexity that made them fully human, with all the good and evil being human entails. This included the central protagonist. Jane Boleyn was not perfect and her mistakes were not all neatly explained away by saint-like altruism, but was instead a person capable of both wisdom and folly, cruelty and kindness. She was fleshed out in an incredibly believable way that didn't sacrifice the readers ability to empathize with her. Finally (and unusually!), I loved the author's notes at the finish of the novel. Dillard explains the paucity of facts she was working with, and is forthright about the fact she wanted to give Lady Rochford her humanity back after centuries of being depicted as a plotting, devious, bawd. Most off all, Dillard proclaimed that, "the most important thing I want you, Dear Reader, to remember is that this a work of fiction. I've made as many assumptions about Jane's life as any other historian, but the choices I've made in my poetic license of telling her story are with the benefit of the doubt. I've interpreted the evidence available in the best possible light." As for the actions that Jane has been so soundly condemned for, such as her presumed testimony against her husband and sister-in-law and her actually testimony against Queen Katheryn Howard, Dillard points out that her "reasons for her behavior died with her so I could only guess as to her motivations." Dillard also cites several books, all of which I personally approve of as a historian, as her source materials. I cannot tell you how refreshing I find this honesty and commitment to the history underlying the narrative process.

Winter is a good time to curl up with a cup of tea, a hooky, and a novel. Dillard's is a very good choice. Jane Boleyn, the wife of George (brother of the infamous Anne), is usually portrayed as a harpy, a shrew, and the woman who condemned her husband and sister in law to death. Later she is seen as getting her comeuppance as the woman in black who helped Catherine Howard, Henry VIII's 5th wife betray him. But this novel gives us a portrait of a young woman, Jane Parker, who marries reluctantly, but loves and lives. Emotions, flesh and bones are given to this woman. And though it is a work of fiction it is the first I've read about her and a good one.

An excellent alternative view of the infamous Lady Rochford. The author stresses several times at the end of the book that this is a book of fiction, which I think is unnecessary. It's a fiction book, and for those who believe it gospel, let that be their issue, not your's, Ms. Dillard. You have created a totally feasible book, a nice change of pace from the usual Jane Boleyn books. We have no proof she was evil personified, and your story is very creative and well written. I look forward to your next novel.

What a great effort to reconstruct the historical facts available to us; Adrienne Dillard's fine research has made Jane Parker Boleyn a sympathetic as well as dramatic figure. I applaud her for that and totally agree; a 10 year marriage, where Jane cohabited with George Boleyn and lived in the court supports this hypothesis. There are many people who were players in, and victims of, Henry VIII's cruel narcissistic rampage through his reign who deserve our sympathies. Jane apparently was one such and I am sure that Mary Boleyn and her children were also. Adrienne's fine first novel "Cor Rotto" sheds light on Mary Boleyn's life after Henry through her daughter Catherine Carey Knollys. This novel has even more depth, character development as well as giving readers historical vignette's back and forth in time. A very fine Author's note take us through the known facts, including many that were unknown up until fairly recently. Jane Boleyn was, and is, a sympathetic figure of course; who would not be who was executed in this time? What the author has done is to make her a vivid and believable heroine who was resilient for as long as she could. I look for more by this fine author. Recommended for fans of those affected by Henry VIII and other novels in this turbulent era.

This book gives you an entirely different picture of Jane Boleyn. Most books make her out to be not a very nice woman and very jealous of Anne Boleyn. While you are reading this book you start to really like her and realize she is a very caring and thoughtful lady. This is, of course, my feeling

about the book while someone else may read it and feel entirely differently. The one thing that stood out for me was that she liked Anne, her sister-in-law, and truly loved her husband, George. I have always enjoyed Adrienne Dillard's books and this one was no exception.

This is an excellent book. It offers a unique perspective of Jane Boleyn and was an enjoyable read, even when it contradicted my previous assumptions about Jane's character and motivations. In all my readings about the Tudors, this is the first book I've read that has compelled me to consider that Jane was more than history paints her, that she was a woman not so very different from me--- that she loved, suffered loss, entertained longings and dreams, experienced all the great joys of marriages along with the challenges, and that she was conflicted and afflicted by circumstances outside her control. Adrienne Dillard's descriptive writing is so excellent that I felt I was an eyewitness to every event of Jane's life. While you may beg to differ with the author's take on Jane, you will certainly enjoy the journey through Jane's life as the Raven's Widow tells you her story in her own words.

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