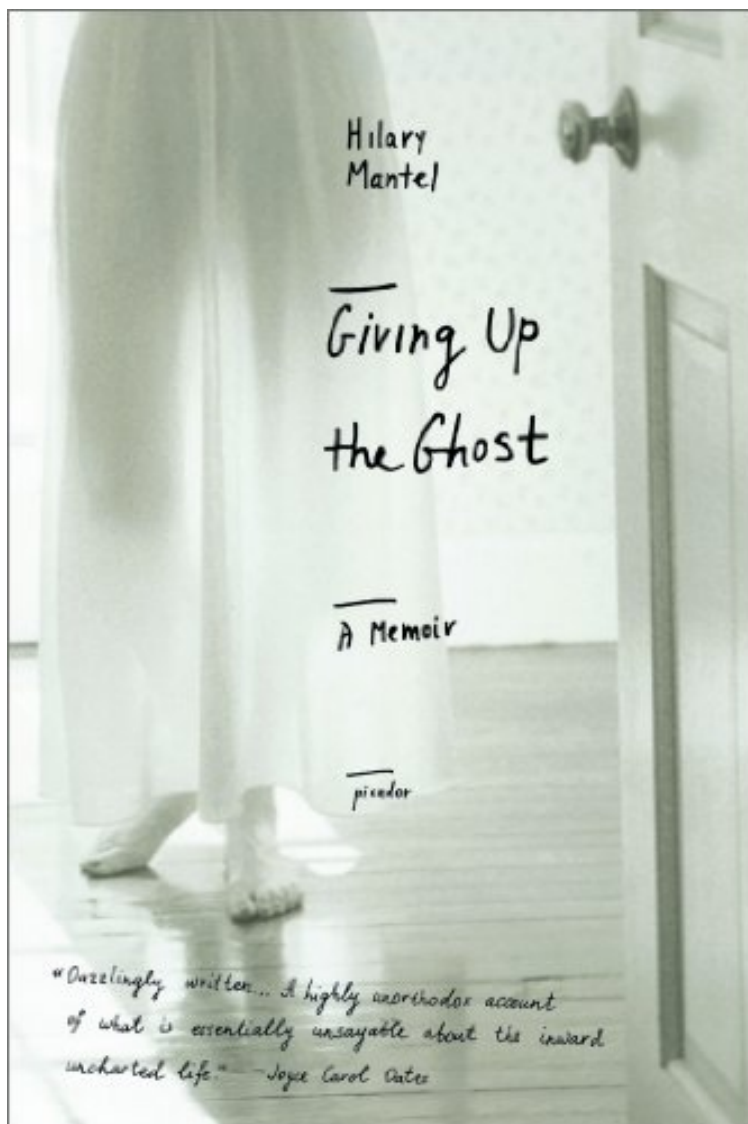


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# Giving Up the Ghost: A Memoir



Par Hilary Mantel  
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**Description :** Description du produitIn postwar rural England, Hilary Mantel is a fierce, self-possessed child, schooling herself in "chivalry, horsemanship, and swordplay" and convinced that she will become a boy at age four. Catholic school comes as a rude distraction from her rich inner life. At home, where fathers and stepfathers come and go at strange, overlapping intervals, the keeping of secrets becomes a way of life.

Her late teens bring her to law school in London and then to Sheffield; a lover and then a husband. She acquires a persistent pain-which also shifts and travels-that over the next decade will subject her to destructive drugs, patronizing psychiatry, and, finally, at age twenty-seven, to an ineffective and irrevocable surgery. There will be no children; instead she has "a ghost of possibility, a paper baby, a person who slipped between the lines." Hormone treatments alter her body beyond recognition. And in the middle of it all, she begins one novel, and then another.Hilary Mantel was born to write about the paradoxes that shimmer at the edges of our perception. Dazzling, wry, and visceral, Giving Up the Ghost is a deeply

compelling book that will bring new converts to Mantel's dark genius.

Prsentation de l'diteurIn postwar rural England, Hilary Mantel is a fierce, self-possessed child, schooling herself in "chivalry, horsemanship, and swordplay" and convinced that she will become a boy at age four. Catholic school comes as a rude distraction from her rich inner life. At home, where fathers and stepfathers come and go at strange, overlapping intervals, the keeping of secrets becomes a way of life. Her late teens bring her to law school in London and then to Sheffield; a lover and then a husband. She acquires a persistent pain-which also shifts and travels-that over the next decade will subject her to destructive drugs, patronizing psychiatry, and, finally, at age twenty-seven, to an ineffective and irrevocable surgery. There will be no children; instead she has "a ghost of possibility, a paper baby, a person who slipped between the lines." Hormone treatments alter her body beyond recognition. And in the middle of it all, she begins one novel, and then another.Hilary Mantel was born to write about the paradoxes that shimmer at the edges of our perception. Dazzling, wry, and visceral, *Giving Up the Ghost* is a deeply compelling book that will bring new converts to Mantel's dark genius.From Publishers WeeklyAs she approaches midlife, Mantel applies her beautiful prose and expansive vocabulary to a somewhat meandering memoir. The English author of eight novels (*The Giant*, *O'Brien*; *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street*; etc.) is "writing in order to take charge of the story of my childhood and my childlessness; and in order to locate myself... between the lines where the ghosts of meaning are." Among the book's themes are ghosts and illness, both of which Mantel has much experience with. She expends many pages on her earliest years, and then on medical treatments in her 20s, but skips other decades almost entirely as she brings readers up to the present. At age seven she senses a horrifying creature in the garden, which as a Catholic she concludes is the devil; later, houses she lives in have "minor poltergeists." The first and foremost ghost, though, is the baby she will never have. By 20, Mantel is in constant pain from endometriosis, and at 27, after years of misdiagnosis and botched treatment, she has an operation that ends her fertility. Her pains come back, she has thyroid problems and drug treatments cause her body to balloon; she describes these ordeals with remarkably wry detachment. Fans of Mantel's critically acclaimed novels may enjoy the memoir as insight into her world. Often, though, all the fine detail that in another work would flesh out a plot-such as embroidery silk "the scarlet shade of the tip of butterflies' wings"-has nowhere to go.Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.From The New YorkerThis bleak memoir by a prolific British novelist recounts her upbringing in the North of England in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. Mantel's domineering stepfather has contempt for her intellectual aspirations and for her constant nausea and migraines. When, at college, she takes her symptoms to a doctor, he prescribes antidepressants and sends her on to a psychiatrist, who, in turn, suggests that she give up her studies to work for her mother selling dresses. Finally, at twenty-seven, she is diagnosed with severe endometriosis. Her uterus is removed, and hormone replacements cause extreme weight gain. For most of her life, she has struggled with emaciation, but strangers increasingly assume she is pregnant, now an impossibility. While Mantel's prose shimmers with suppressed anger, the reader might have preferred a story more plainly shaped, and one that gave some sense of the growth of her remarkable imagination. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker