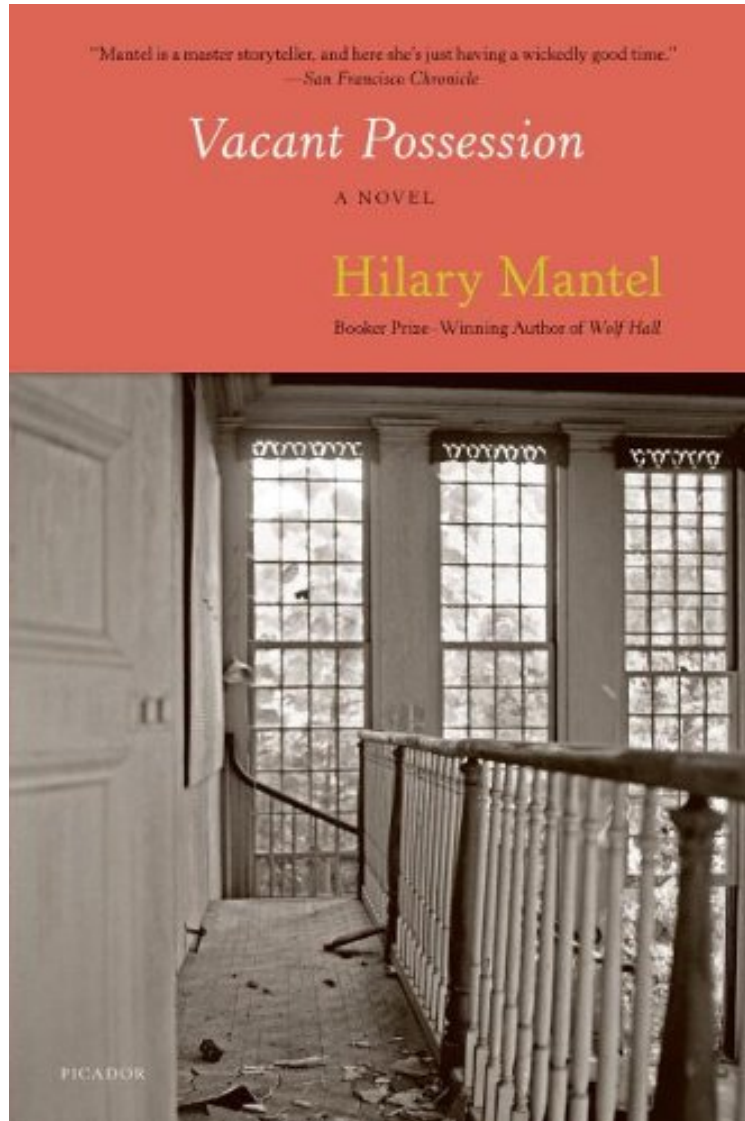


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## Vacant Possession

*Hilary Mantel*

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#1493340 in Books Hilary Mantel 2010-08-31 2010-08-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .58 x 5.50l, .51 #File Name: 031266804X256 pages Vacant Possession | File size: 21.Mb

**Hilary Mantel : Vacant Possession** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vacant Possession:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Timely and accurate description. By elmo Description was accurate and the book arrived promptly. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Read too long ago to remember much about it except that I liked it. By Diane S. Lindquist I CAN'T really remember it now- read it awhile ago--I liked it though. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Another goodie from Hilary Mantel. By Doffo Her characters

are always well-drawn and the situations they find themselves in are real. Reading it, one hopes for a successful resolution of the problems of this family and they can't always be guessed at. An enjoyable read.

Ten years have passed since Muriel Axon was locked away for society's protection, but psychiatric confinement has only increased her malice and ingenuity. At last free, she sets into motion an intricate plan to exact revenge on those who had her put away. Her former social worker, Isabel, and her old neighbors have moved on, but Muriel, with her talent for disguise, will infiltrate their homes and manipulate their lives, until all her enemies are brought together for a gruesome finale. Hilary Mantel's razor-sharp wit animates every page of this darkly comic tale of retribution.

From Publishers Weekly  
The haunting sequel to Mantel's *Every Day Is Mother's Day* (see above) offers powerful insight into its precursor. Muriel Axon is the untouchable yet tarnished heroine here, and she selectively reveals her disturbing plans for revenge against all who vaguely knew and despised her. A decade after the close of the first book, Muriel has just been released from the institution where she was housed after her mother's suspicious death, and has since acquired new skills to aid her vengeful mission. Taking on the identity of "Poor Mrs. Wilmot," she rents a room from paranoid Russian landlord Mr. Kowalski and works the night shift as a cleaning lady at St. Matthew Hospital, where, not coincidentally, she assumes an unlikely bedside manner with the elder Mrs. Sidney and her former social worker Isabel Field's bedridden father. Mrs. Sidney's son, Colin; his wife, Sylvia; and their four children have moved into the former Axon home despite its history as a house of violent tragedy. Even after a renovation and the help of a new though odd housekeeper, Lizzie Blank, the house refuses to be maintained. Although Colin ended an affair years ago, the strain of being the breadwinner while being ignored by the civic-minded Sylvia and hassled by his money-grubbing teenagers allows him to entertain the fantasy of finding his lost lover. And he does reconnect, thanks in part to his naive, 18-year-old daughter. Surprise revelations from start to finish mark Mantel as a remarkably clever writer whose second book, paired with her first, makes for wickedly pleasurable reading. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal  
A rundown, and possibly haunted, Victorian house takes center stage in these back-to-back black comedies, written by British novelist Mantel (*The Giant*, *O'Brien*) with a distinct Rendellian flavor. In the first story, set in the mid-Seventies, Evelyn Axon, a terrorized, guilt-ridden widow, lives with her dull-witted daughter, Muriel. Into their lives comes the nettlesome social service bureaucracy, primarily in the person of Isabel Field, the last in a long series of social workers assigned to their case. Isabel has problems of her own, though, the main one being a stagnating affair with Colin Sydney, a married man she has met in an evening class on creative writing. Muriel has been encouraged to participate in weekly workshops for the mentally handicapped at the local community center, but she eludes both her mother and her case workers and manages to get herself pregnant. All these lives intersect at the novel's bizarre conclusion, as Evelyn dies, Muriel is institutionalized, and Colin Sydney's family take up residence in the Axons' house. The second novel opens ten years later as Muriel is caught up in the Eighties trend to deinstitutionalize the mentally challenged. Out on the streets once more, she knowingly adopts multiple personas with the misguided intention of exacting revenge on those she believes have wronged her, principally Isabel Field and Colin Sydney. Slowly, all these entangled lives begin to come undone. Like her fellow Brits Rose Tremain and Penelope Fitzgerald, Mantel continually produces novels that chart fresh terrain and derive from a wellspring of creative imagination. These two early novels herald the promise of the rich and varied literary career that followed. Recommended for most public libraries. -Barbara Love, Kingston Frontenac P.L., Ont. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Kirkus  
The sequel to Mantel's first novel (see above), originally published in 1986, continues the story of retarded woman Muriel Axon's life following her mother's death and her own ten-year incarceration in a mental hospital. Released when public funding disappears and her second "home" closes its doors, Muriel, now 44, uses the animal cunning her sufferings have taught her to assume different personalities: as herself, a hired domestic named Lizzie (after the celebrated axe-murderess) Blank, and the den mother, in effect, of a loose society of former fellow inmates all the while assuring herself "I won't always need to be three people. It's only till I give them their comeuppance." The pronoun denotes those people Muriel imagines guilty of placing on her the blame for her mother's "accident": their inept social worker Isabel (now married, and a mother-to-be) and especially the family of Isabel's former lover Colin Sydney, who has bought the Axons' old house. Muriel now returns there, as (Colin's wife) Sylvia Sydney's hired help. As before, Mantel weaves together the fates of this story's hilariously, inextricably mutually involved characters (including Colin's teenaged daughter Suzanne, defiantly pregnant by the husband of you-may-well-guess-whom) with impressive dexterity. Characters who seemed only marginal in *Every Day*. . . such as Isabel's doddering father Philip Field and Colin's flustered sister Florence here become important linchpins in the construction that is the juggernaut of Muriel Axon, hellbent on punishing those who have assumed her imbecility and robbed her of her due. The narrative gathers fearful momentum as Mantel isolates and makes grim ironic use of several cryptic and crucial found objects: a set of disembodied teeth, a phrenologist's demonstration head, and a tiny skeleton. An ingenious melodrama, and a wintry portrayal of insulted and injured souls that William Trevor might well envy. With this novel Mantel achieved full technical mastery, and she's only got better since. -- Copyright

