



“With poise and restraint, Rilla Askew’s historical novel *Prize for the Fire* tells the brilliant, multifaceted story of an intelligent, virtuous, and indomitable woman.”

FOREWORD REVIEWS

“*Prize for the Fire* is a triumph.”

MARY ANNA EVANS
author of the Faye Longchamp
Mystery series

“In Rilla Askew’s riveting *Prize for the Fire*, the struggles of this sixteenth-century protagonist echo in contemporary battles over women’s voices and bodily autonomy. A deeply sensitive and ambitious act of historical imagination.”

PAMELA ERENS
author of *The Virgins* and *Eleven Hours*

1. *Prize for the Fire* is about a real historical character, Anne Askew, who was burned as a heretic in the last year of Henry VIII’s reign. What made you choose to read this book?
2. People often talk about the need for likeability in main characters, especially if they’re female. Do you feel that you have to like a main character to enjoy a novel? Do you like or identify with Anne?
3. Regarding the other characters in the novel: who did you love? Who did you hate? And why?
4. Do you consider Anne a victim or a willing martyr? Why?
5. What do you think about Anne leaving her children? Could she have made other choices?
6. What do you think are the main themes of the book?
7. Discuss the Tudor patriarchy and how it affects Anne’s life in the novel. In what ways does she resist? Could she have found other pathways? Elizabeth I came to the throne just 12 years after Anne’s death and reigned as “the Virgin Queen” for 44 years. What parallels and differences do you see in their lives as Tudor women?
8. Religion had a powerful grip on everyday life in Tudor England, a time of violent religious dissension and change. How do religious differences affect the characters in the novel? How do they affect our world today? What parallels do you see between the two eras?
9. Anne’s life is circumscribed by laws specifically affecting women. Consider how laws affect women’s lives today. What about the nexus of politics and religion in the novel? What might be the parallels and differences between then and now?
10. The novel is told in shifting points of view—sometimes in Anne’s voice, sometimes in third person from Anne’s or others’ perspective. Why might the author have chosen multiple points of view to tell Anne’s story? Do you find the method effective? Why or why not?
11. What do you think of the balance between historical fact and storytelling in this novel? Do you feel you can trust the history of Anne’s story? Did you learn anything about Tudor England that you didn’t know before?
12. The author has said that she had one primary question in mind when she started writing this book: how does a person believe in something so much they’re willing to die for it? Do think that question is answered in the novel? Why or why not?