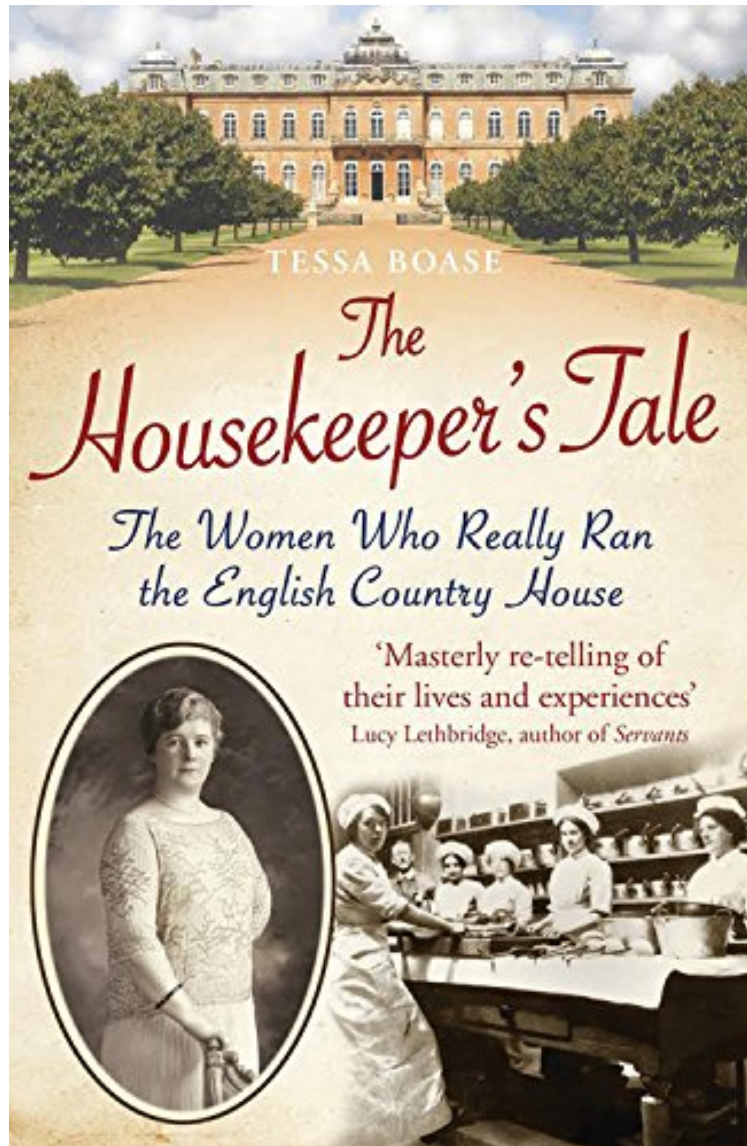


The Housekeeper's Tale: The Women Who Really Ran the English Country House

Tessa Boase

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Tessa Boase : The Housekeeper's Tale: The Women Who Really Ran the English Country House before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Housekeeper's Tale: The Women Who Really Ran the English Country House:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great readBy Victorian Catmom This book is fascinating. I couldn't

put it down. It tells the stories of five very interesting lives and elaborates within each story on estate life in general throughout the whole country at those times. The writing style is very conversational and so full of reflection on the interpersonal dynamics and emotional aspect of the stories. Very balanced accounts, so exhaustively researched with so much actual text from letters and other documents included. Photos too. Highly recommend for anyone who loves to immerse themselves in true history. Will look for more work from this author for sure. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. lived and worked in "Period Houses" you will thoroughly enjoy this book By Mike Davis An insightful and well-written look inside the world of the little people who worked in England's big houses, specifically the indispensable housekeeper (think of Mrs. Hughes from Downton Abbey), over the past 200 years. If you have an interest in the lives of those who lived and worked in "Period Houses" you will thoroughly enjoy this book. Prepare to be shaken, saddened and exhilarated by what you read. Tessa Boase has done her work very well. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Overall, well done By Kindle Customer Although the book is generally well written, it does drag at times. It did show how working below stairs has evolved over the years. I find books of this genre to be fascinating. At the same time, I am turned off by the sense of entitlement that royalty and the aristocracy have simply because of their birth. Carl Roache

Working as a housekeeper was one of the most prestigious jobs a nineteenth and early twentieth century woman could want - and also one of the toughest. A far cry from the Downton Abbey fiction, the real life Mrs. Hughes was up against capricious mistresses, low pay, no job security and grueling physical labor. Until now, her story has never been told. *The Housekeeper's Tale* reveals the personal sacrifices, bitter disputes and driving ambition that shaped these women's careers. Delving into secret diaries, unpublished letters and the neglected service archives of our stately homes, Tessa Boase tells the extraordinary stories of five working women who ran some of Britain's most prominent households. There is Dorothy Doar, Regency housekeeper for the obscenely wealthy 1st Duke and Duchess of Sutherland at Trentham Hall, Staffordshire. There is Sarah Wells, a deaf and elderly Victorian in charge of Uppark, West Sussex. Ellen Penketh is Edwardian cook-housekeeper at the sociable but impecunious Erddig Hall in the Welsh borders. Hannah Mackenzie runs Wrest Park in Bedfordshire - Britain's first country-house war hospital, bankrolled by playwright J. M. Barrie. And there is Grace Higgens, cook-housekeeper to the Bloomsbury set at Charleston farmhouse in East Sussex for half a century - an era defined by the Second World War. Revelatory, gripping and unexpectedly poignant, *The Housekeeper's Tale* champions the invisible women who ran the English country house.

'In this masterly re-telling of their lives and experiences, Tessa Boase breathes vivid life into the forgotten figures of housekeepers. Her forensic research into their stories and her sparkling evocation of their country-house world restores to these working women an individuality often overshadowed by the servant caricature.'