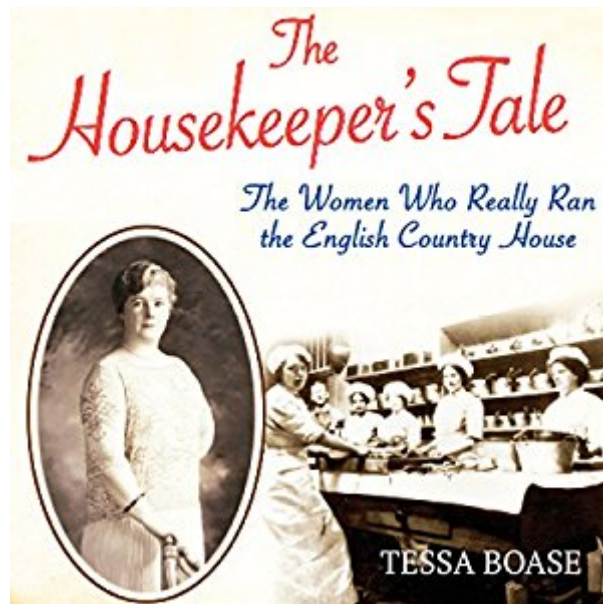


The book was found

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



Synopsis

Working as a housekeeper was one of the most prestigious jobs a 19th and early 20th 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. Using secret diaries, unpublished letters, and the neglected service archives of our stately homes, Tessa Boase tells the extraordinary stories of five working women who ran some of Britain's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. Dorothy Doar was Regency housekeeper for the obscenely wealthy first Duke and Duchess of Sutherland at Trentham Hall, Staffordshire. Sarah Wells, a deaf and elderly Victorian (mother to H.G. Wells), was in charge of Uppark, West Sussex. Ellen Penketh was Edwardian cook-housekeeper at the impecunious Erddig Hall in the Welsh borders. Hannah Mackenzie ran Wrest Park in Bedfordshire, Britain's first country-house war hospital. Grace Higgins was cook-housekeeper to the Bloomsbury set at Charleston farmhouse in East Sussex for half a century. Revelatory, gripping and unexpectedly poignant, *The Housekeeper's Tale* champions the invisible women behind the English country house.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 11 hours and 54 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tessa Boase

Audible.com Release Date: September 8, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01LOSXSAA

Best Sellers Rank: #199 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Europe #218 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Class #783 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Social Science

Customer Reviews

Modern day existence of antiques - ceramics, textiles and furniture is directly attributable not to days-gone-by owners but to those women of sterling qualities and boundless energy;

housekeepers, who worked long hours to preserve the beauty and as near as humanly possible, perfect condition of the objects d'art in their care while running large country houses. Tessa Boase, tells the stories of five British housekeepers who through their labour and devotion to duty made it possible for their employers to live a lifestyle most of us can only dream about. The factual accounts of these extraordinary women's experiences – mostly miserable working conditions with upper class penny pinching employers, spans the 19th century, two world wars, ending in the present time with the examination of the duties of a housekeeper employed by an English aristocratic family, who, to survive financially, open their home and surrounding estate to day trippers and tourists. A housekeeper's lot may not have been an easy or happy one but in the nineteenth and early twentieth century it was relatively well-paid and with live-in accommodation, a sought after career path for single working women and middle-class widows. Researching secret diaries, unpublished letters and documenting excerpts from the service archives of British stately homes, Tessa Boase has written *The Housekeeper's Tale* in an intimate day-in-the-life of style which empathises with each woman's daily grind of duties and provides a vivid commentary on the social niceties and customs of the day.

I found this book captivating from the start and could hardly put it down. The author drew me into the housekeeper/servant world with her compelling writing style, believable scenarios, and thorough research stemming from mostly primary sources, but also contemporary newspaper accounts and advertisements, etiquette books for servants, etc. As she introduced each of the five housekeepers, I could almost envision their quarters in the dark, damp lower levels of the gracious homes they managed and feel the miserable cold the support staff must endure as they dropped into bed in the unheated attic. While deeply appreciating the housekeeper position of stature and security, I felt panicky to imagine the burden and vulnerability of unrealistic expectations piled on each housekeeper, particularly those who must also take on the responsibility of cook. Preparing a sumptuous, unique, and gracious meal for dozens of – or some 100 - guests nightly or every few days, plus manage the female servants, order supplies, handle large sums of money to personally pay vendors, manage accounts, see to all the linens, candles, dinnerware, the preserves, the bread-baking, wine-making, and a myriad of other responsibilities are all beyond my comprehension how one person could be expected to accomplish these many time-demanding tasks. The author's study of diaries, letters, household accounts and archives, portraits, court cases, memoirs, biographies, etc. bring the aristocratic family into focus, particularly the mistress. Not many high born families exhibited the decency towards their servants, condescending though it was, of those

depicted in Masterpiece Theatre's *Downton Abbey*.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

The Housekeeper's Tale: The Women Who Really Ran the English Country House
Talk English: The Secret To Speak English Like A Native In 6 Months For Busy People (Including 1 Lesson With Free Audio & Video) (Spoken English, listen English, Speak English, English Pronunciation)
The New England Cook Book: Or, Young Housekeeper's Guide (American Antiquarian Cookbook Collection)
Tiny Houses: Tiny House Plans & Interior Design Ideas For Living Small But Feeling Big: 22 FREE TINY HOUSE PLANS (Tiny Houses, Tiny House Living, Tiny House, Small Home)
What Really Matters for Struggling Readers: Designing Research-Based Programs (3rd Edition) (What Really Matters Series)
I Really, Really Want It: Celebrity. It's a killer. 50 Maths Ideas You Really Need to Know (50 Ideas You Really Need to Know Series)
What He REALLY Means When He Says... - The Ultimate Guide to Understanding Men, Knowing What They REALLY Think and How to Read Their Minds in Every Situation
London's Country House Collections: Kenwood, Chiswick, Marble Hill, Ranger's House
Tiny Houses : Beginners Guide: Tiny House Living On A Budget, Building Plans For A Tiny House, Enjoy Woodworking, Living Mortgage Free And Sustainably ... Design,construction,country living)
Manor House: Life in an Edwardian Country House
How to frame a house; or, House and roof framing (a practical of laying out, framing and raising timber house on the balloon principle, system of roof framing, the whole making)
House to House: Growing Healthy Small Groups and House Churches in the 21st Century
The English Country House Garden: Traditional Retreats to Contemporary Masterpieces
The Big Ditch: How America Took, Built, Ran, and Ultimately Gave Away the Panama Canal
The descendants of JÃfÂ¶ran Kyn of New Sweden
Biohazard: The Chilling True Story of the Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program in the World--Told from the Inside by the Man Who Ran It
If Disney Ran Your Hospital: 9 1/2 Things You Would Do Differently
Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts
Biohazard: The Chilling True Story of the Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program in the World--Told from Inside by the Man Who Ran It

[Dmca](#)