

## The Housekeeper's Tale - Hannah Mackenzie's Story: The Women Who Really Ran the English Country House

Tessa Boase



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This is Hannah Mackenzie's story, one of the five stories that make up The Housekeeper's Tale.

Hannah Mackenzie's career in domestic service encompassed the Victorian industrialist middle classes, the Edwardian conservative nouveau riche, the liberal aristocracy during the Great War and the American superrich of the Roaring Twenties. This story shines a spotlight on one year of Hannah's profession – 1914 to 1915.

Wrest Park in Bedfordshire was the first country-house war hospital to receive wounded soldiers from the Great War. This first year of the war, with a lifetime's worth of experience, exposed the Honorable Nan Herbert and her housekeeper to all of the horrors of modern warfare. Ultimately, it provides a moving story of great hardship and loss as well as glimpses of happiness and even love, and is a powerful testament to the actions of women when their country needed them most.

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