



The Governess of Highland Hall: A Novel (Edwardian Brides Book 1)

By Carrie Turansky



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Worlds lie between the marketplaces of India and the halls of a magnificent country estate like Highland Hall. Will Julia be able to find her place when a governess is neither upstairs family nor downstairs help?

Missionary Julia Foster loves working alongside her parents, ministering and caring for young girls in India. But when the family must return to England due to illness, she readily accepts the burden for her parents' financial support. Taking on a job at Highland Hall as governess, she quickly finds that teaching her four privileged, ill-mannered charges at a grand estate is more challenging than expected, and she isn't sure what to make of the estate's preoccupied master, Sir William Ramsey.

Widowed and left to care for his two young children and his deceased cousin Randolph's two teenage girls, William is consumed with saving the estate from the financial ruin. The last thing he needs is any distraction coming from the kindhearted-yet-determined governess who seems to be quietly transforming his household with her persuasive personality, vibrant prayer life, and strong faith.

While both are tending past wounds and guarding fragile secrets, Julia and William are determined to do what it takes to save their families—common ground that proves fertile for unexpected feelings. But will William choose Julia's steadfast heart and faith over the wealth and power he needs to secure Highland Hall's future?

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

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Q&A with Carrie Turansky

Your book features the fictional Highland Hall. Was this grand estate influenced by any real life British estates?

I was picturing two famous British estates: Highclere Castle, where “Downton Abbey” is filmed and Tyntesfield, which is in Somerset, England. I found Tyntesfield through my online research, and I fell in love with it after I watched a documentary about its history. There are many photos of Tyntesfield online, and that is the manor house pictured on the cover of *The Governess of Highland Hall*. It’s now owned by the British National Trust and is open to visitors. I hope to visit there next spring.

You recently traveled to Britain and visited several places that inspired “The Edwardian Brides Series.” Can you share a few highlights from your trip?

Last summer my husband and I took a wonderful trip to England. We rented a car, and he drove over 400 miles on the wrong side of the road, seated in the wrong side of the car. He is an amazing man! We landed in London, then toured the Oxford area and visited Highclere Castle and gardens where “Downton Abbey” is filmed. That was one of the highlights of the trip for me. We also toured the Cotswold’s, which has several farms and lovely little villages that look very much like they did 100 years ago. We ended our time in England up in the Peak District, where we visited Chatsworth, which is an amazing estate with a very large and elaborate house and gardens. It was used as Mr. Darcy’s home in the latest version of “Pride and Prejudice.” We also attended a country fair on the ground of Chatsworth. We learned that an English country fair is very different than our American version. It is focused on country life: hunting, horses, fishing, dogs, and more dogs! It was a lot of fun, and we felt like we had a true taste of England that day. All of these travels gave us some wonderful memories, and they were a great inspiration for my books.

As fans of the popular BBC show “Downton Abbey” know, there is a prominent divide between the upstairs family and the downstairs help. Where does the main character, Julia Foster, fit in to this hierarchy as a governess?

A governess had a unique position. She was usually an educated, respected woman from a middle-class or upper class family, but she was still a paid member of the staff and considered below the family. She reported to the housekeeper, but she was above the other female staff. She usually ate her meals with the children in the nursery, so she didn’t spend very much time with the rest of the staff. In *The Governess of Highland Hall*, Julia Foster became close friends with Sarah Ramsey, the sister of William Ramsey, the master of Highland and hero in the story. But she is also close friends with Ann the nursery maid, so we see her connected to those upstairs and those below stairs.

Julia Foster was a missionary in India before her family returns to England because of illness. Was her character inspired by a real life missionary?

Julia was inspired by Amy Carmichael, who was a missionary to India in the early 1900s. I’d read Amy’s

biography, *A Chance to Die*, a few years ago, and when I wanted to write a book set in England in the early 1900s, I remembered Amy's story and took it down from my bookshelf to read again. I wanted to understand the mindset of Christians at that time and learn what prompted her to go to India and spend her life there. Amy's true life experiences provided a rich background for my heroine, and I enjoyed bringing some of the elements of Amy's faith and character into my story.

Sir William Ramsey, the widowed master of Highland Hall, is consumed with saving the estate from financial ruin. Was this a common problem during this time period? What did the English see as the solution to the problem?

There were many changes taking place in England in the late 1800s and early 1900s. An agricultural depression placed a financial strain on many large estates. Wages for servants were increasing. When death duties were introduced and then expanded, the financial pressure on aristocratic families increased. Death duties were a type of inheritance tax, and when the master of an estate died and passed it on to the next generation, the new owner was sometimes unable to pay the duties. Some aristocrats sold their paintings, antiques, and valuables to raise the funds. Some married into wealth to save their estates. But for some there was no solution, and their estate had to be sold. In some cases the houses were knocked down, and Britain lost some of its most impressive historic homes.

Julia and William are both guarding secrets, which creates a bond between them that is hard to ignore. How do they navigate the divide between the aristocracy and the servants?

The divide between William and Julia is very evident at the beginning of the story, and William resents Julia questioning him about his lack of time with and affection for his children. But as he gets to know her and comes to admire her faith, character and pure heart, the walls between them begin to come down. She becomes his friend and confidant, helping him navigate the struggles he faces in his family and in running the estate.

What can readers expect from the next book in the series?

Tentatively titled *The Daughter of Highland Hall*, book two continues the story of the Ramsey family. The young cousin, Katherine, becomes the heroine. The year is 1912, and eighteen-year-old Katherine goes to London for her debut in society. She hopes to meet and marry the "right" young man, but her goals and dreams change as she gets to know a handsome and dedicated medical student who is intent on caring for the poor in London's East End. It comes out in Fall 2014.

Review

"A heartwarming tale." ---RT Book Reviews

About the Author

Carrie Turansky is the award-winning author of more than a dozen inspirational romance novels and novellas, including *Where Two Hearts Meet* and *Surrendered Hearts*. She has won the ACFW Carol Award, the Crystal Globe Award, and the International Digital Award. Carrie lives in central New Jersey with her husband, Scott.

A classically trained actress in England, Veida Dehmlow has dozens of stage credits to her name. She has appeared in London's West End, national tours, and many regional repertory theaters. Her voice work includes commercials, video games, and the narration of books in a variety of genres.

Users Review

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Jessica Peacock:

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