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# Montacute House

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

~~New Talent~~

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

As an illegitimate child, 13-year-old poultry maid Cess is lucky to have a job at all. Life is hard for her and her mother who are shunned by their prosperous and 'respectable' relatives but rebellious Cess finds it hard to accept being socially ostracised. Her employer the Earl of Montacute, a nobleman at the court of Elizabeth I, has just rebuilt his grand family house and is preparing to receive the Queen herself. However, mysterious events in the village - the discovery of a murdered boy, the disappearance of Cess's friend William and tensions between protestant and catholic - lead the local priest to suspect that witchcraft is at work and Cess falls under suspicion.

This action-packed murder mystery is full of interesting period detail woven into the narrative with a light hand. While the impact of events in the outside world on life at Montacute, the house and the village, is convincingly depicted, Jago's plot becomes overloaded at times and some of her characters, particularly the villains, are rather one dimensional. However, her engaging heroine and the unfolding drama of this debut novel carry the reader along at a cracking pace whilst also inducing a longing to see the real life Montacute House (now a National Trust property) for oneself as soon as possible.

Running Order:

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