



# LEEDS CASTLE'S BIG 900

★ A STORY WRITING CHALLENGE ★

Winner of the 5-9 Age Category

## Thomas' Time Traveling Adventure

By Theo Nyland, Age 8

One day my family were having a family trip at Leeds castle. As usual mum had stopped to read one of the 'interesting' information panels:

*29<sup>th</sup> June 1930*

*I am preparing for Lady Baillie's great party tonight and already the Housekeeper is unhappy with my work. I fear that I might lose my position in the house if I cannot complete my tasks and raise a smile on the Mistress' face. What will I tell mum if I return home with no job? I feel desperately sad.*

*Maggie*

The guide managed to pull mum away and finish the tour, but she made a promise to come back to find out what happened to poor Maggie.

Just as the castle was about to close down, my mum noticed she had lost her purse. She told me to run and get it, so swiftly I ran through every room checking. When I got to the library, I saw her purse on the window sill but I was distracted by the beautiful clock by the mantelpiece. I stared at it but I realised this was a mistake because both clock hands were spinning anti clock-wise so fast it was a blur. There seemed to be a blue whirlpool and I was about to be sucked up like water in a plug hole. I tried running but it was no use, I was being sucked into it. The next thing I knew I was back in the library.

This was not normal. There were maids walking around and servants carrying plates and flowers. One certain maid tripped over my foot. Still uncertain about what was happening, I helped her up and apologised.

"The Housekeeper Mrs Jones is going to be really cross with me. I'm so behind with my tasks." She moaned mournfully.

"I can help you." I suggested.

I looked at the girl in front of me, she was wearing a small white hat, a white apron, black dress with long sleeves and black shoes. Her hands were red and sore from all the work she did.

"My name is Thomas." I said. "What's your name?" and I asked her what she needed to do...

"My name is Maggie. Well here are the rules of the castle, you'll need them. You must stay out of sight of the family. If you are working upstairs and you hear someone coming, disappear. Don't walk in the garden unless you're sure everyone in the family is out. No singing, no whistling or talking where the family can hear you. Don't speak until you're spoken to and use as few words as you can when you answer. If you're in the room when the family are having a conversation, pretend you are not listening. If someone tells a joke, keep a straight face and act like a piece of furniture."

I started with lighting the fire in the kitchen and washing the grubby plates and dishes. I was

already exhausted. Maggie had said that Lady Baillie's special brooch had gone missing and I should try to find it. I looked around for an hour but it was nowhere to be seen, so I carried on with my jobs. I had to clean the rest of the utensils in the kitchen and pick, wash and trim the fruit and vegetables. I also had to clean the rest of the house which was taking all day. One of my last jobs was to dust the carpets.

As I was dusting, I noticed something shiny under the carpet. It was a brooch made of gold & platinum, encrusted with beautiful jewels and pearls. Very glamorous. I thought of showing it to Maggie, so I went to get her. Just then Maggie bumped into me and I showed her the brooch. She seemed so shocked I couldn't see her move a muscle. After a while she said it was actually Lady Baillie's long-lost brooch and if someone found it there would be high rewards. She told me to hand it in to Lady Baillie, but I pleaded with her to do it. Maggie marched off joyfully in the direction of Lady Baillie's bedroom.

I went back to the library because my last job was to clean the book shelves. I saw the same clock as before and studied it again, wishing I could get back to my own time as I was missing my mum. Just then, the hands of the clock started whizzing clockwise and the same blue whirlpool appeared. The next thing I knew, I was back in the library grabbing mum's purse. I ran back to her. She was back at the board with Maggie's diary studying the words. It must have been very interesting I thought. She was muttering to herself that a young boy, named Thomas had helped the maid. "Same name as yours Thomas! Listen to this..."

*30<sup>th</sup> June 1930*

*I can't believe it! My job is safe and it's all down to my special friend Thomas. Not only did he help me with all of my tasks, he also found Lady Baillie's brooch for me. My reward was to be promoted to the kitchens and I am allowed a week off to spend with my mum.*

*I wish I could say thank you to Thomas.*

Mum said that Thomas must have been a lovely boy.

"The best!" I said.