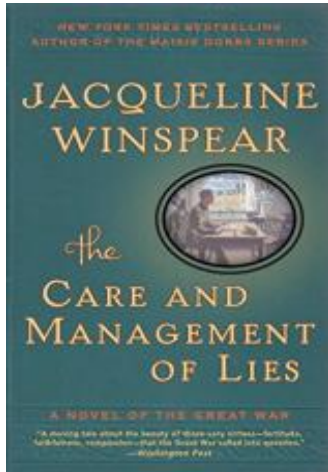


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# The Care and Management of Lies: A Novel of the Great War

by Jacqueline Winspear

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## About the Book

The *New York Times* bestselling author of the Maisie Dobbs series turns her prodigious talents to this World War I standalone novel, a lyrical drama of love struggling to survive in a damaged, fractured world.

By July 1914, the ties between Kezia Marchant and Thea Brissenden, friends since girlhood, have become strained --- by Thea's passionate embrace of women's suffrage, and by the imminent marriage of Kezia to Thea's brother, Tom, who runs the family farm. When Kezia and Tom wed just a month before war is declared between Britain and Germany, Thea's gift to Kezia is a book on household management --- a veiled criticism of the bride's prosaic life to come. Yet when Tom enlists to fight for his country and Thea is drawn reluctantly onto the battlefield, the farm becomes Kezia's responsibility. Each must find a way to endure the ensuing cataclysm and turmoil.

As Tom marches to the front lines, and Kezia battles to keep her ordered life from unraveling, they hide their despair in letters and cards filled with stories woven to bring comfort. Even Tom's fellow soldiers in the trenches enter and find solace in the dream world of Kezia's mouth-watering, albeit imaginary meals. But will well-intended lies and self-deception be of use when they come face to face with the enemy?

Published to coincide with the centennial of the Great War, THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF LIES paints a poignant picture of love and friendship strained by the pain of separation and the brutal chaos of battle. Ultimately, it raises profound questions about conflict, belief and love that echo in our own time.

## Discussion Guide

1. Consider the three epigraphs that begin the novel, one each from the world of literature, politics and domestic society. How is this representative of the story that follows?
2. What is the effect of beginning most chapters with an excerpt from *THE WOMAN'S BOOK*? What changes when, instead, a military manual is quoted?
3. What effects do the various allusions to other works of literature, in particular those of Charles Dickens, have on the novel?
4. Thea comes to resent her Dickensian name to the point of changing it once she becomes an adult. Why does she do this? What's the effect of re-naming a person or place?
5. Consider the title of the novel. In what ways might lies be important or justified? What might it mean to "manage" them?
6. On Kezia's wedding day, her mother gives her a gift of 10 pounds and advises her to always keep "private money" for herself. Why is this important to her? In what other ways is economics involved in the women's struggle for equality?
7. Kezia makes a profound decision to give up the job she loves and become the wife of a farmer. What goes into her decision? How does her life on the farm limit or enhance her independence?
8. Considering her own satisfaction in her life, Kezia wonders if she is being too self-interested. But she is also wary of bartering "character for contentment." How should one balance concern for one's own happiness with a desire to please others?
9. Kezia is described as "a dreamer." What does this mean? In what ways does she prove to be a practical, grounded character? How is her best friend Thea similar or different?
10. What do Edmund Hawkes and his family story bring to the novel?
11. Of what significance is it that in the midst of the war Hawkes struggles to write poetry?
12. In what ways might the small act of throwing a brick through a window in the name of suffrage and the profound violence of the war be similar or different?
13. Discuss the place and role of food in the novel, from the farm to the table.
14. Separated by the war, Kezia writes to Tom extensive descriptions of meals that she might make in his honor. In what ways is this valuable to Tom? To the men in his battalion?
15. What do we gradually learn about Kezia in her lovely descriptions of food?
16. What is the overall effect of including letters as a significant part of the novel?
17. Examine the complex political and emotional experience of having a polite, humble, German prisoner of war on the

farm in Kent. How do you feel about Kezia's decision at the end of the novel?

## Author Bio

Jacqueline Winspear is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers THE CONSEQUENCES OF FEAR, THE AMERICAN AGENT and TO DIE BUT ONCE, as well as 15 other bestselling Maisie Dobbs novels, and THE CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF LIES, a Dayton Literary Peace Prize finalist. Jacqueline has also published two nonfiction books: WHAT WOULD MAISIE DO? and a memoir, THIS TIME NEXT YEAR WE'LL BE LAUGHING. Originally from the United Kingdom, she divides her time between California and the Pacific Northwest.

## Critical Praise

?There is power in subtlety. This one is a stunner.?

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### **The Care and Management of Lies: A Novel of the Great War**

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