

The Keeper of Stories by Sally Page

Janice is an excellent cleaner. She keeps her days busy working in the homes of other people, providing clean sheets, well-baked treats and even walking the dog. Her hobby is collecting the stories that are happening all around her as she moves from house to house in Cambridge England. There's Fiona and her son Adam, who are trying to make a new life for themselves without Adam's father. There's Carrie-Louise, a dignified senior citizen who years ago had jumped into a brawl to save someone else and ended up suffering physically for that intervention. And there's Mrs. YeahYeahYeah, and her husband, Mr. NoNoNotNow who are too busy to see Janice as a person. Janice is okay with that. She collects stories, but never plans to share her own.

Keeping her own story a secret becomes more difficult for Janice after she meets Mrs. B., the spry, mouthy mother-in-law of Mrs. YeahYeahYeah. Janice is pretty sure she doesn't need to take on another client, but Mrs. B. is like no other. Her house is a mess, but her history is one fantastic story. Mrs. B's stories draw Janice in, even as she realizes Mrs. B is very clever and plans to learn Janice's hidden secrets, one way or another.

The writing style of Sally Page has been compared to the writings of Fredrik Backman, (*A Man Named Ove*). Mrs. B. brings in a historical twist, with her story about Becky, a courtesan who married and killed her lover, but because of her previous connections within the British Royalty, was acquitted of all charges. The author's end note offers some additional information on the story of Becky, including that the character of Becky was based on Marguerite Alibert, who was rumored to have been a mistress of Edward VIII while he served in France during World War I.