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DE BUTLERS

THE BUTLERS

THE NETHERLANDS

Submitting organisation  
BIND

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At The International Butler Academy in Simpelveld, South Limburg, students from around the world and of all ages are taught the fine art of butling in just ten weeks. We follow six students during their training and learn about their backgrounds and motivations for choosing one of the least self-serving professions.

Three times a year, a ten-week course begins at The International Butler Academy, preparing students for the profession. They live on campus at the academy, which is in a former monastery. Consistently in full costume, about fifteen men and women of all ages and nationalities are trained by a team of highly experienced (former) butlers and guest lecturers. The academy is led by director Robert Wennekes, a former butler and the master of the house. Wennekes and his team teach the students – often strictly and sometimes militaristically – based on their practical experience. Subjects include etiquette, cooking, clothing, packing suitcases, and cleaning. The lessons are filled with examples and anecdotes, offering a glimpse into the lives of the world's wealthiest. After training, butlers can work for royal families and the super-rich globally.

Despite the butler facade suggesting otherwise, the students are all very different personalities with their own lives, desires, and emotions. Who are these people who, in this highly individualized era, choose this service-oriented profession? And what motivates them to do so?

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