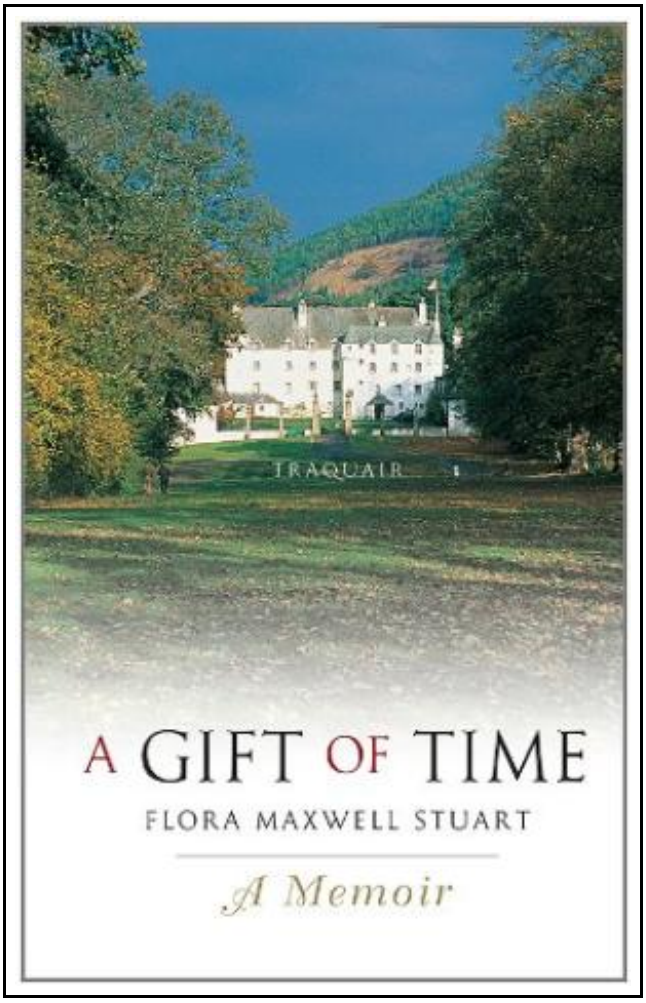
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Birlinn General. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, A Gift of Time: A Memoir, Flora Maxwell Stuart, Flora Maxwell Stuart has devoted most of her life to preserving Traquair, 'the oldest inhabited house in Scotland'. This mantle of responsibility fell on her through her marriage to Peter, the twentieth laird. She was born into a distinguished and eccentric family - her father, a Protestant, became the first principal of the London School of Economics; her mother, a recusant Catholic, had a passion for farming which she pursued even in the confines of Kensington. It was a creative milieu she moved in - privileged, intelligent and intellectual - the Pakenhams shared her parents' house during the war. The main part of the book concentrates on Flora's years at Traquair. In 1962, her husband Peter inherits this romantic Scottish estate and they leave London life behind. The business of Traquair is all-consuming: if they want to keep the house in the family they must turn around their fortunes and they try innovative schemes: opening the house to the public; reconstituting the brewery; the now-famous annual craft fair; weddings; the maze; film location facilities. And then the laird dies. For Flora it is a profound blow: her life companion in triumph and adversity gone. But life doesn't stop and their daughter Catherine proves more than capable of taking in Traqauir. She marries and baby Isabella is born, but Catherine too is suddenly and tragically widowed. The three ladies of Traquair are alone. But there is a joyful ending. Flora and Catherine both fall in love again and remarry. A Gift of Time gives a rare insight into Flora Maxwell Stuart's humanity, inventiveness and courage.

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