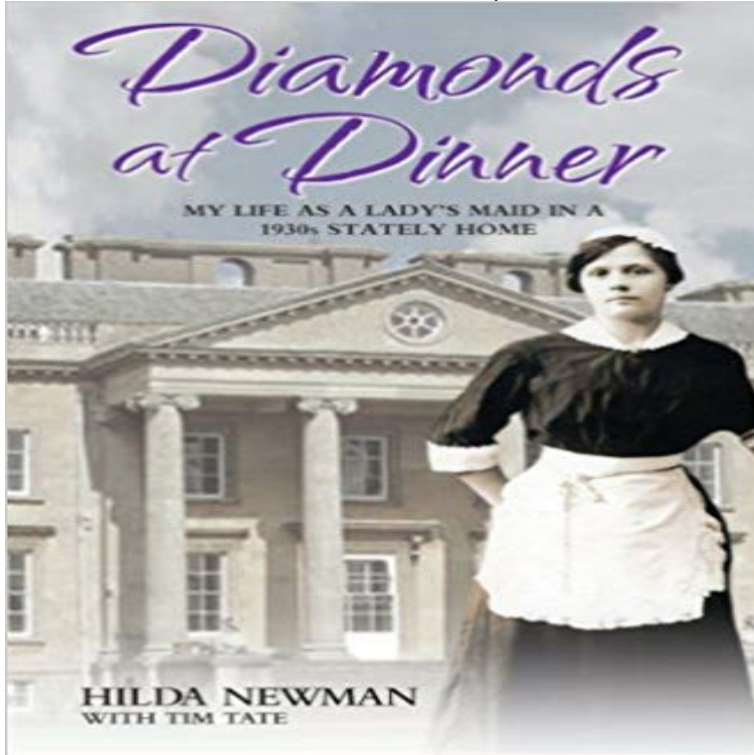


Diamonds at Dinner - My Life as a Ladys Maid in a 1930s Stately Home



I THOUGHT ID GONE TO A PRISON This was Hilda Newman's first impression when, at the age of 19, she left her parents' little terraced cottage in Lincolnshire and embarked on a new life as a lady's maid at Croome Court, the enormous stately home of Lord and Lady Coventry. The year was 1935: the twilight of the English aristocracy. It was a time of wealth and glamour; of lavish balls and evening gowns; of tiaras and a Coronation. As personal maide to Lady Coventry, Hilda had a unique insight into the leisured life of one of Britain's most noble families. In her fascinating memoir of life upstairs and down, Hilda takes us back to a gilded era which would be brutally swept away by the Second World War. Hers is a very personal story of being transplanted from a tiny house with no bath or hot water to an eighteenth-century Neo-Palladian mansion surrounded by parkland landscaped by Lancelot Capability Brown. But it also the remarkable story of the family who service she entered - and that of Croome Court itself: during World War Two, it housed the Dutch Royal Family - who had fled the Nazi occupation - and it was also home to the top-secret RAF base where radar was developed. This is Hilda's story.

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