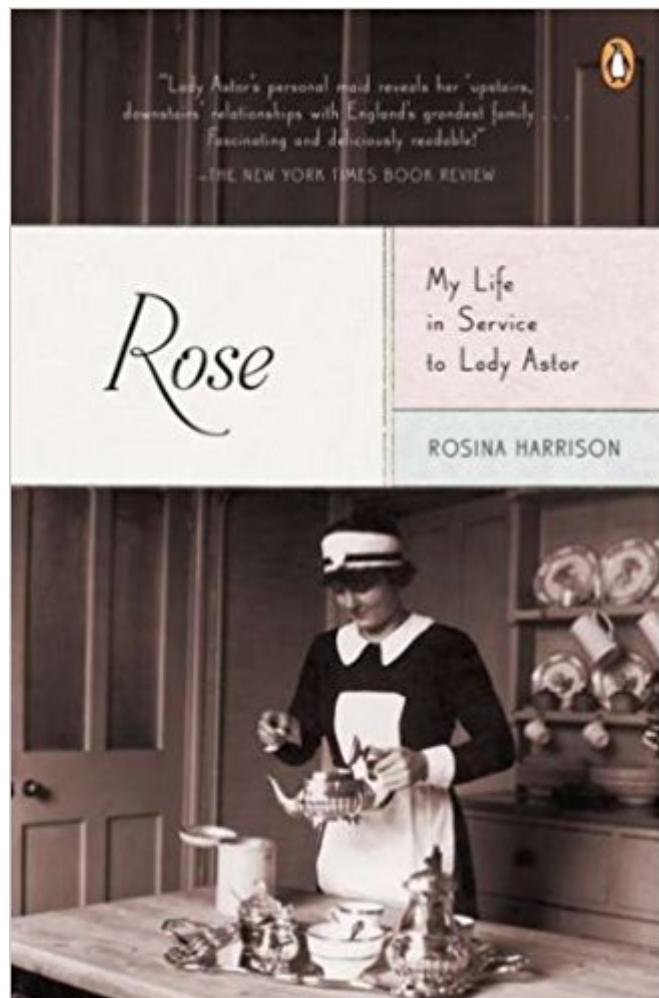


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Rose: My Life In Service To Lady Astor



Synopsis

In 1928, Rosina Harrison arrived at the illustrious household of the Astor family to take up her new position as personal maid to the infamously temperamental Lady Nancy Astor, who sat in Parliament, entertained royalty, and traveled the world. "She's not a lady as you would understand a lady" was the butler's ominous warning. But what no one expected was that the iron-willed Lady Astor was about to meet her match in the no-nonsense, whip-smart girl from the country. For 35 years, from the parties thrown for royalty and trips across the globe, to the air raids during WWII, Rose was by Lady Astor's side and behind the scenes, keeping everything running smoothly. In charge of everything from the clothes and furs to the baggage to the priceless diamond "sparklers," Rose was closer to Lady Astor than anyone else. In her decades of service she received one Â£5 raise, but she traveled the world in style and retired with a lifetime's worth of stories. Like Gosford Park and Downton Abbey, ROSE is a captivating insight into the great wealth 'upstairs' and the endless work 'downstairs', but it is also the story of an unlikely decades-long friendship that grew between Her Ladyship and her spirited Yorkshire maid.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book, under a slightly different title, is a reissue of Rosina Harrison's 1976 memoir, *Rose: My Life in Service Recollections of Life in One of England's Grandest Households*. This is a repeat of my review for it: Rose Harrison's memoir might be of interest to fans of Downton Abbey, even though her experiences occurred a generation later. Rose's longtime employer, Nancy, Lady Astor, was, like Downton's fictional Cora, an American heiress who married into the British aristocracy. Rose,

who served as Lady Astor's personal maid for 35 years, was a Yorkshire girl, born in a village near the town of Ripon. While much is left unsaid, Rose gives plenty of fascinating details of the daily working life of a lady's maid in pre-war, wartime, and postwar Britain. In the first chapters she describes her childhood, education and home life and motivation for her decision to go into service - service as a ladies maid in particular, and why, with that as a goal, it was not a good idea to start out as a housemaid or kitchenmaid. She started out as a "young ladies' maid" - serving the daughter(s) of a household in 1918, then moved up (in both status and pay) to ladies' maid. Her motivations for changing employers and how it was accomplished are also discussed (her account of taking leave of her second mistress, after 5 years, is stunning). She entered service to the Astor's in 1928 and retired with a pension in 1964, on Lady Astor's death. She describes her duties in detail for all three employers (two prior to Lady Astor).

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My thoughts: Rosina Harrison's 1976 memoir was re-issued in December of 2011, right in the middle of the frenzy surrounding our fascination with the BBC's mega-hit series Downton Abbey! Being a fan not only of Downton Abbey, but also Gosford Park and Remains of the Day, I wasted no time in requesting this e-galley through NetGalley! I was prepared to like this book and the author did not let me down! I did keep reminding myself that Ms.

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