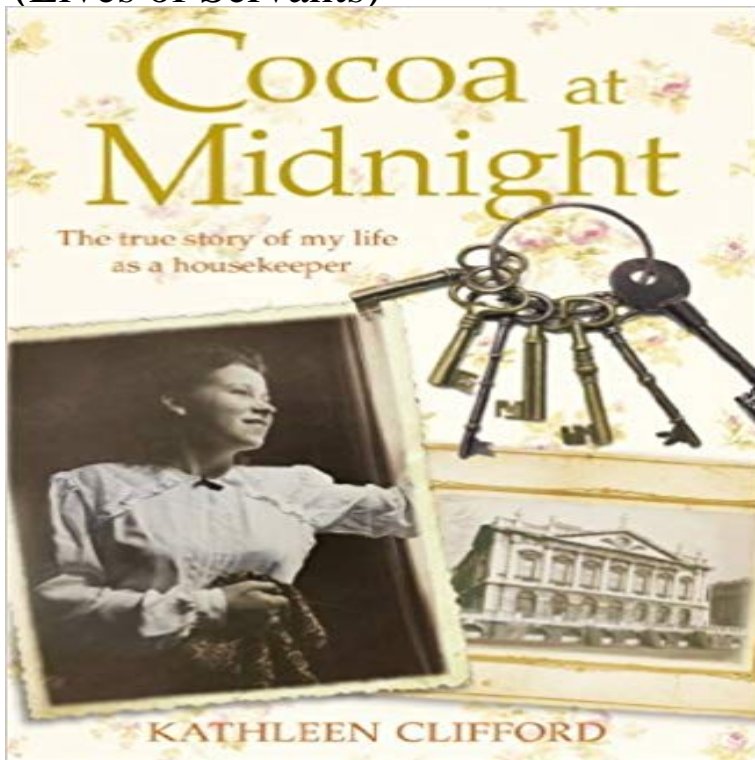


# Cocoa at Midnight: The real life story of my time as a housekeeper (Lives of Servants)



Kathleen Clifford was born in 1909. Her family lived in a tiny flat near Paddington Station and her earliest memories were of the smell of horses and the shrill whistle of steam trains. For a girl from the slums there was only really one option once school was over - a life in service. She started work on 1925 as a lowly kitchen maid in the London home of Lady Diana Spencers family. Here she heard tales of the Earls propensity for setting fire to himself, as well as enjoying the servants gossip about who was sleeping with whom. The Spencers were just the first in a line of eccentric families for whom she worked during a career that lasted more than thirty years and took her from a London palace to remote medieval estates. But despite long hours, amorous butlers and mad employers, Kathleen always kept her sense of humour and knew how to have fun. On one occasion she was almost caught in bed with her boyfriend who had to jump out of the window and run down the drive in his underwear to escape the local bobby.

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