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## DOWNTON ABBEY

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“Work is love made visible,” my mother always told me. In the film version “Downton Abbey,” directed by Michael Engler we see just how important that postulate is when the Earle of Grantham, Robert Crawley (Hugh Bonneville), his wife Lady Crawley (Elizabeth McGovern) and their entire staff must receive with a great amount of sweat and toil a last minute imposition - The King and Queen have

chosen their home for dinner. It’s 1927, and the previous seasons of this historic English PBS Masterpiece Theatre series has reached its end. No one questions why Downton Abbey has been chosen, or how they should respond. Respond they must, and everyone puts their shoulders to the wheel in preparation - nobility and servants working together — even in an evening rainstorm rescuing chairs for the villagers to sit in the next day during the parade, all out of a royal kind of love for their King and Queen. As Anna Bates (Joanne Froggatt) must convince Lady Mary Talbot (Michelle Dockery) who is considering leaving Downton Abbey and retreating into a common household somewhere away from all the endless fuss — “Downton Abbey is the heart of the community...you cannot abandon it as long as there is blood pumping through your veins.” Is this film version the beginning of yet another season?

At the center of the conflict is a rebellion: when the Royal Court shows up with their own entourage of servants chef Monsieur Corbet (Philippe Spall) and Mr. Wilson (David Haig) declaring they alone are the chosen ones to serve the King and Queen. Anna Bates organizes her staff to undermine their work with their own servants and feisty chef Mrs. Patmore (Lesley Nicol), locking chef Corbet and Mr. Wilson in their rooms. Meanwhile Bates must bribe a petty thief who is the Queen’s Seamstress to make adjustments over night on a gown for Princess Mary (Kate Phillips), who is trying to find her way back into the arms of her Machiavellian husband, Henry Lascelles (Andrew Havill). But the dames who rule the house are, in the end, Violet Crawley ( Maggie Smith) and Maude Bagshaw (Imelda Staunton) who must settle an old argument over an heir to their estate. Violet Crawley plays wit to wit with everyone around her, avoiding sarcasm which she demeans as the lowest form of wit, and going for the jugular with Maude Bagshaw who has been hiding a rather large secret - her servant is actually her daughter, Lucy Smith (Tuppence Middleton) from a secret love affair. And now Lucy and Tom Branson (Allen Leech), chauffeur turned nobleman through a marriage that left him widowed, are now about to fall madly in love. Will their love affair be enough to bring bring back Downton Abbey to its next season on PBS Masterpiece Theatre. We shall see. Perhaps that will be in the hands of Mr. Carson (Jim Carter) who has been called out of retirement to save the day in this film, and maybe the next television season. When there’s love in the house, there’s a lot more work to be done at Downton Abbey.