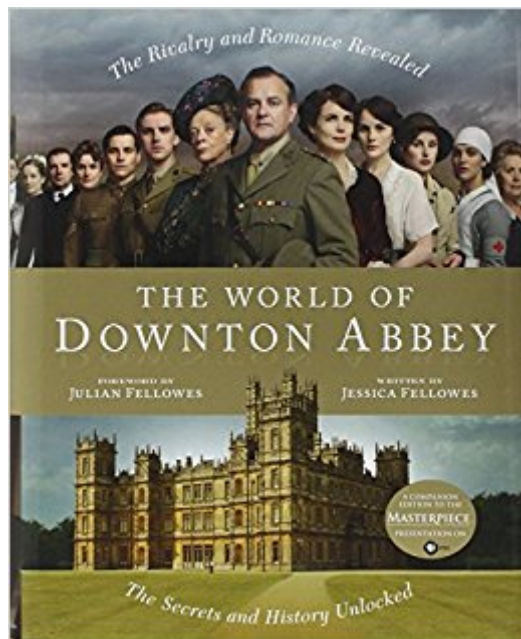


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The World Of Downton Abbey



Synopsis

A lavish look at the real world--both the secret history and the behind-the-scenes drama--of the spellbinding Emmy Award-winning Masterpiece TV series *Downton Abbey* April 1912. The sun is rising behind *Downton Abbey*, a great and splendid house in a great and splendid park. So secure does it appear that it seems as if the way it represents will last for another thousand years. It won't. Millions of American viewers were enthralled by the world of *Downton Abbey*, the mesmerizing TV drama of the aristocratic Crawley family--and their servants--on the verge of dramatic change. On the eve of Season 2 of the TV presentation, this gorgeous book--illustrated with sketches and research from the production team, as well as on-set photographs from both seasons--takes us even deeper into that world, with fresh insights into the story and characters as well as the social history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“This extraordinary upstairs-downstairs drama, written by Oscar-winning ‘Gosford Park’ screenwriter Julian Fellowes, is a dramatic, intelligent, soapy, comic, and wise piece of work.”
—*The Boston Globe* on *Downton Abbey*
“There is no mystery about the potency of this series, slathered in wit, powered by storytelling of a high order.”
—*The Wall Street Journal* on *Downton Abbey*
“Possibly the best show of the year... ‘Downton Abbey’ is all that ‘Upstairs, Downstairs’ was, and more.”
—*The Los Angeles Times* on *Downton Abbey*

JESSICA FELLOWES, is the author of *The World of Downton Abbey*, based on the Emmy Award winning television series, *Downton Abbey*. She is a journalist and the former Deputy Editor of *Country Life*, as well as the niece of Julian Fellowes. She lives in London with her husband and son. JULIAN FELLOWES is the Emmy Award-winning writer and creator of the TV series *Downton Abbey*. He is also the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of *Gosford Park* and the author of the New York Times bestselling novel *Snobs*. He lives in London and Dorset.

This book was released in the US earlier this week; I received my copy today and spent a couple of hours this afternoon looking through it. I wanted to review it right away in case anyone is considering buying it as a present for a *Downton Abbey* fan. It's a beautiful book and one that I'd have been thrilled to get as a gift. It's printed on thick, high quality paper and the photography is stunning. I would note that as Series 2 has not yet aired in the US, if you want to see the show without knowing anything in advance, some of the text is spoilerish here and there. The first instance that I found came at the end of Chapter 2, "Society." The photos are from both Series 1 and 2. There are also a number of "behind the scenes" photos. There are no extensive profiles of or interviews with the principal actors, if you are particularly interested in that, just short (1-2 sentence) snippets, and quotes now and again. There is some history to provide context for the fictional world of *Downton* (American heiresses marrying into the aristocracy, including Julian Fellowes's inspiration for Cora, for example) as well as some information related to the series' production and filming. I did learn things from this that I hadn't heard before, and particularly enjoyed Julian Fellowes's stories about ancestors of his who (unknowingly) inspired or gave him ideas for scenes and characters. Fans who have researched and read a lot about the Edwardian era will not likely learn anything new from the text, but I bought the book mainly for the photographs and information about the series, particularly so was not disappointed at all. In summary, I can't imagine any *Downton* fan not liking this book! The suggestions for further reading are good, though the section on life below stairs could be more extensive. I would second the recommendation of Juliet Gardiner's *Manor House: Life in an Edwardian Country House* (listed as *The Edwardian Country House*, its UK title) for anyone interested in the era's country house life - likewise very beautifully done.

This is a handsome book, whether or not you have seen the *Downton Abbey* series or not - it will make you want to. One can see how this series has enthralled and enchanted many. It contains sections on family life, society, change, life in service, style, house and estate, romance, WWI and behind the scenes. The writer, Julian Fellowes pens an eloquent introduction that sums up the

series and book perfectly..."the shadows of what used to be". A page of portraits introduces us to the characters. This is a story not only of the filming, but a way of life - in fact two ways of life - the aristocracy and those in service. It is well explained, in an interesting manner, the difficulties and advantages both classes had. We learn how and why American heiresses became the wives of many of the English aristocracy and what the differences in philosophies of the two were. The social history is described, again of both classes and why they behaved as they did. There are historical pictures and inserts that are relevant. We learn so completely what this period of Edwardian history was like and also how the filming of this series was accomplished. The creating of the costumes is thoroughly detailed. There are some comments from the actors themselves, but the star of this book is the era itself. This is a book for Anglophiles, fans of Downton Abbey, those interested in English history especially of the Edwardian- WWI period and a social commentary on the English classes, It would be appropriate for anyone interested in filming and costume making also - a book that absolutely countless readers would enjoy.

To watch Downton Abbey is to watch a way of life slowly die with an epic story and it kind of reminds me of *Gone with the Wind*. The best part of the TV show is the personal look into the servants' and nobilities' lives from the early 1900s and how they interacted with each other. You really feel transported to the time period and all the characters are interesting and likable yet flawed. Like any loyal fan would, I bought this book because it had the words "Downton Abbey" on it. I figured I would love it. I did and I got more than I expected. This was more than a behind-the-scenes look at the actors and the locations. Jessica Fellowes takes history and facts from a time period that is kind of overlooked and just makes that time period come alive. You get to go on a journey to see how essentially Jane Austen's time became the world we live in now. She made me care about where the term "weekend" came from and why the Dowager Countess was so baffled by it. Here are a few of the fascinating morsels that I learned: *The whole family will come down for breakfast except the lady because married women get breakfast in bed daily. (Breakfast in bed for Mother's Day anyone?! Now I feel ripped off because it was just something they got EVERY DAY. I'm seriously doubting that our modern world is "better.") *You get to see the beginning of things that have survived to modern times like cornflakes from America. *Country Houses were being torn down left and right after WWI until The Victoria and Albert Museum had an exhibition called "The Destruction of the English Country House" that saved them. (That sounds like the most boring exhibit ever but now I'm depressed that I missed it.) *Cora's back story is from a trend during that time of American women coming to England and marrying English lords. Cora was based on

woman in real life named Lady Curzon from the book "To Marry an English Lord." (Okay, I have to admit that I did not notice Cora was American until I read this book.) I adored reading all the history and the real life inspirations for the show. The pictures are beautiful. The actors give insight into their characters. You get to read about everything from clothing, family, and society to war and change. It's a look into an era that is really the beginning of our modern world and the death of a way of life that had been around for a very long time. This book was the perfect companion to my favorite show.

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