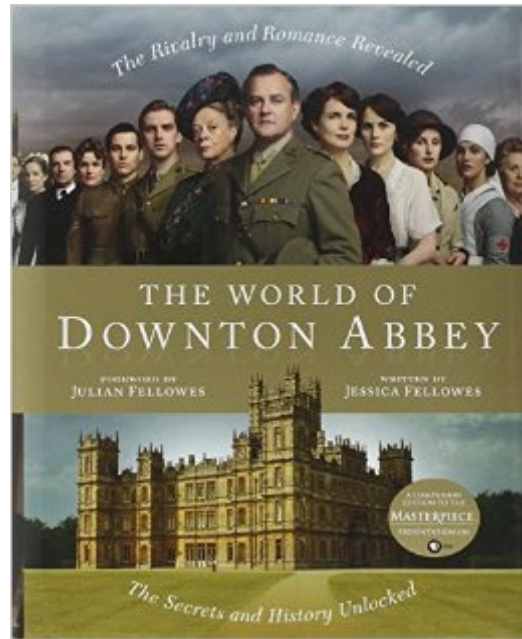


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# The World Of Downton Abbey



## 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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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (461 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

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 Fellow'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 Fellow'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.

From the robin's-egg blue of the actual book, to the luminous dust jacket, to the fonts, and really, the entire book design, everything looks very elegant and Edwardian. If you've followed my blog Edwardian Promenade for a while, or read books about the Edwardians, some of the historical content isn't exactly new per se, but Fellowes does a great job of placing the cold, plain facts of the era in the context of Downton Abbey's inhabitants. The book kicks off with a forward by Julian Fellowes, where he discusses his philosophy towards the series and continues to share his deep love affair with the long-gone society that inhabited the English country house. Fellowes (Jessica, that is), takes us literally through the world of Downton Abbey, starting with family life, touching on society and its changes, life belowstairs, fashion of the age, the function of the country estate, romantic relationships, and war. Last but not least is the chapter devoted to behind the scenes of the series, though the entire book is interspersed with tidbits of the actual production. The amount of work that goes into creating this incredible high drama is astounding, and without pictures of the sets and costumes and crew I would find it difficult to believe this wasn't pulled together with the wave of a wand. Best yet are the mini-interviews from the cast and crew, whose interesting-and sometimes entertaining-recollections of filming series one and two (based on the synopses I've placed on the site, the book hints at happenings up to the second or third episode) are a treat. The one that stands out to me is historical adviser Alastair Bruce's conversation with Sophie McShera (Daisy), who complained that she never got to see the house since, as scullery maid, Daisy rarely left the kitchens!

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