

# Snobs: A Novel

By Julian Fellowes



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**Snobs: A Novel** By Julian Fellowes

**From the creator of the Emmy Award-winning *Downton Abbey*...**

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"The English, of all classes as it happens, are addicted to exclusivity. Leave three Englishmen in a room and they will invent a rule that prevents a fourth joining them."

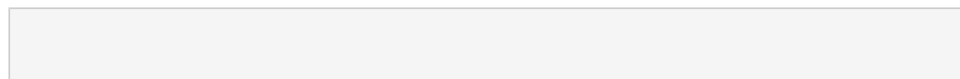
The best comedies of manners are often deceptively simple, seamlessly blending social critique with character and story. In his superbly observed first novel, Julian Fellowes, creator of the Masterpiece sensation *Downton Abbey* and winner of an Academy Award for his original screenplay of *Gosford Park*, brings us an insider's look at a contemporary England that is still not as classless as is popularly supposed.

Edith Lavery, an English blonde with large eyes and nice manners, is the daughter of a moderately successful accountant and his social-climbing wife. While visiting his parents' stately home as a paying guest, Edith meets Charles, the Earl Broughton, and heir to the Marquess of Uckfield, who runs the family estates in East Sussex and Norfolk. To the gossip columns he is one of the most eligible young aristocrats around.

When he proposes. Edith accepts. But is she really in love with Charles? Or with his title, his position, and all that goes with it?

One inescapable part of life at Broughton Hall is Charles's mother, the shrewd Lady Uckfield, known to her friends as "Googie" and described by the narrator---an actor who moves comfortably among the upper classes while chronicling their foibles---"as the most socially expert individual I have ever known at all well. She combined a watchmaker's eye for detail with a madam's knowledge of the world." Lady Uckfield is convinced that Edith is more interested in becoming a countess than in being a good wife to her son. And when a television company, complete with a gorgeous leading man, descends on Broughton Hall to film a period drama, "Googie's" worst fears seem fully justified.

In *Snobs*, a wickedly astute portrait of the intersecting worlds of aristocrats and actors, Julian Fellowes establishes himself as an irresistible storyteller and a deliciously witty chronicler of modern manners.



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## **Snobs: A Novel By Julian Fellowes Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #61812 in Books
- Brand: Griffin
- Published on: 2012-05-08
- Released on: 2012-05-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.12" h x .86" w x 5.79" l, .53 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* Listeners will have little trouble believing that reader Morant was born into the rarified world that serves as the setting for this gossipy tale. He narrates with the lightest of touches, truisms about the English upper crust rolling off his tongue with powerful understatement. Fellowes is the author of the Oscar Award–winning screenplay *Gosford Park*, and his deliciously satiric debut highlights the foibles and snobbery of the contemporary British upper classes. Morant effortlessly embodies the narrator, a jovial unnamed actor content to remain an observer of his own social class, and he does an equally fine job portraying the people under the narrator's purview. With the proper blend of disdain and understanding, Morant gives voice to the social-climbing Edith Lavery, who marries to advance herself, but his interpretation of Edith's mother-in-law, Lady Uckfield, trumps even this achievement. As Fellowes explains, "Googie" always speaks in an intimate, girlish tone, as if she's letting one in on savory gossip, but listeners don't have to take his word for it. Morant tackles this delicious characteristic with gusto while still revealing the three-dimensional character underneath.

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Fellowes, a late bloomer who wrote the script for "Gosford Park," again portrays the British upper class in his debut novel. One Edith Lavery marries up, snagging the Earl of Broughton, a man who lives for his country estates and thanks his wife after each of their brief sexual encounters. Edith soon takes up with a handsome actor and runs for cover from her mother-in-law, the formidable Googie. The polite firefights that ensue are very readable, but their presentation is somewhat muddled. Fellowes, who, the dust jacket reveals, has a son named Peregrine and a dachshund named Fudge, may identify too closely with this social stratum. Although he convincingly portrays the habits of the entitled, they escape the skewering that the title leads us to expect. The result is a watered-down satire that eventually becomes an apologia for Edwardian England, where everyone knew his place and no one was tacky.

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From [Booklist](#)

As the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of *Gosford Park*, Fellowes proved himself to be an arch observer of the quirks and customs of the British upper crust. Fast-forwarding half a century, he turns his attention to more contemporary characters still mired in the same class affectations and divisions. Beautiful Edith Lavery, an unabashed middle-class social climber, hits the jackpot when she snags the heir to an earldom. Not only is Charles Broughton titled but his clan has actually managed to maintain and increase the fabulous family fortune. Alas, life on the ancestral estate is not all that it is cracked up to be, and Edith soon grows weary of her dominating mother-in-law and bored with her stolid husband. After an unfortunate yet titillating dalliance, everyone stiffens their lips in proper public-school fashion and carries on admirably. This delightful comedy of manners good-naturedly lampoons a class of people whose artificiality is so inbred it becomes positively genuine. Veddy British, what? *Margaret Flanagan*

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**Alvin Maltby:**

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