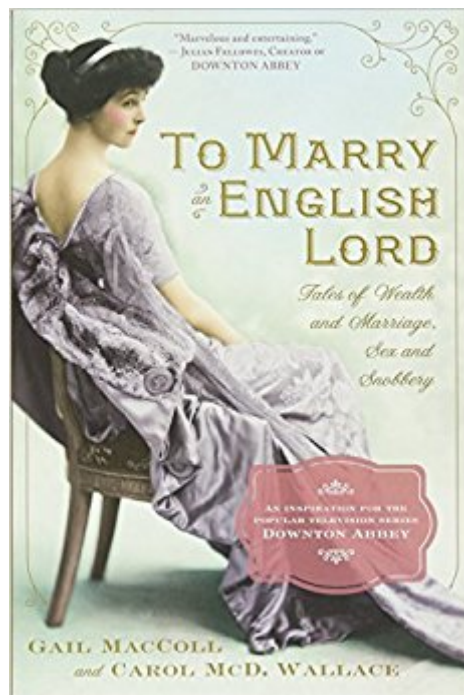




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# To Marry An English Lord: Tales Of Wealth And Marriage, Sex And Snobbery



## Synopsis

From the Gilded Age until 1914, more than 100 American heiresses invaded Britannia and swapped dollars for titles--just like Cora Crawley, Countess of Grantham, the first of the Downton Abbey characters Julian Fellowes was inspired to create after reading *To Marry An English Lord*. Filled with vivid personalities, gossipy anecdotes, grand houses, and a wealth of period details--plus photographs, illustrations, quotes, and the finer points of Victorian and Edwardian etiquette--*To Marry An English Lord* is social history at its liveliest and most accessible.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This delightful account of how American heiresses in the post-Civil War era packed up their trunks and went husband-hunting in England demonstrates that our national infatuation with British aristocracy is nothing new. The young women had good looks and big bucks; the often debt-ridden Brits had titles, castles and a society that was "more stimulating and more permissive, more leisurely and more sophisticated than Old New York." MacColl and Wallace (editor of and contributor to, respectively, *The Preppy Handbook*) chronicle the lives of the rich and famous on both sides of the ocean, dishing up spicy gossip, pithy social commentary (by 1910, "Society in America became more sure of itself. Social climbers no longer needed titles for legitimacy") and obscure historical tidbits (because they were almost never allowed to sit in Queen Victoria's presence, her ladies-in-waiting "habitually bought shoes a size too big since their feet swelled so badly"). The book also includes witty profiles of leading American ladies and their British lords,

piquant period photographs and handy tips on proper etiquette, such as "Any man who reverses changes the direction in which he's spinning his partner during a waltz is a cad." BOMC alternate. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Large fortunes were made in post-Civil War America. Young heiresses, cold-shouldered by an entrenched aristocracy that scorned new money, looked across the sea to find husbands among titled young Englishmen who were long on status but very short of cash. Nancy Astor and Jennie Churchill are the most famous of more than 100 of these trans-Atlantic brides. This light-hearted bit of social history is lavishly illustrated and bedecked with sidebars and boxes of charts, lively quotes, and other supplementary material. A full register of these enterprising young ladies and a "Walking Tour" are included. Not only fun, but a definitive round-up of the players. Recommended.- Nancy C. Cridland, Indiana Univ. Libs., Bloomington Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

This book is an easy read with more photos and line drawings than can be imagined. The vast majority of pages have multiple photos and every couple pages offers a 1-2 page special section with either photos or line drawings demonstrating, for example, the 6 rankings of royalty, 9 types of costume changes, how estate drains work, calling card protocol, etc. I also gained a bigger context of how Astor's 400 in New York created a vacuum, so that young ladies looked elsewhere for fame & fortune, and how Queen Victoria's neurotic refusal to allow Bertie into the business side of being a manager of England increased his demands on the upper classes for expensive & novel entertainment. For me there were only 2 drawbacks: (1) There were so many names bandied about, I totally lost track of who was who. So I just went with the story, without trying to track individuals, which was OK. (2) After tens of pages of tales about wealthy American beauties and their conquest of fiscally poor English nobles, I felt sick of all the (not always, but often) calculated / manipulative bartering of sex, money & privilege. However, I gave the book a break for a while, and then came back to it, and am quite glad that I did. If you can't get enough of English period pieces, and are interested in the woman's experience (at a not very academic, not very feminist) level, you will probably really like this book. If you enjoy reading People magazine, you will LOVE this book.

I already own the 1989 out-of-print version of 'To Marry an English Lord' in my collection and it's one of my absolute favorites! So when I saw that it was going to be republished I thought that there was

going to be new information or pictures (and possibly a color section), but I was mistaken, the only thing new is the lovely cover of Consuelo Vanderbilt-Balsan. On the flip side, I am happy to have it nonetheless, and thanks to the great success of *Downton Abbey* and Julian Fellowes, this gem may have never been back on the shelves. Without giving too much away, the book is full of pictures and information of everything you need to know about the many American heiresses who went across the waters (some by force) to marry a money-poor, land-rich English peer during the late 19th to the early 20th centuries. The book has plenty of background information and images of the American, Victorian, and Edwardian high societies, as well as enlightening and amusing facts concerning these Aristocratic American ladies and their British spouses. In the back there is even a directory of every American heiress (that is at least known) to have married into the English aristocracy.

This is a delightful book that provides the stories behind the stories that Henry James and Edith Wharton mined so successfully in various fictional treatments that addressed the trans-Atlantic phenomenon. Several prominent figures serve to focus this chronicle, Jennie Jerome Churchill, Consuelo Vanderbilt Churchill, Nancy Astor and Mary Curzon. Each was successful in her own way and managed to transcend the role of mere society hostess, Astor was actually the first woman to serve in Parliament. This entertaining book contains much to capture the period and is said to have served as the inspiration for Julian Fellowes' creation of *Downton Abbey*. A good book to read on a Saturday afternoon after a stressful week.

A very "different" read than I was expecting - what a great surprise! This deliciously detailed & described book is as much a comprehensive History of the British social structure from the ground up, as it is an explanation of one of the important economic impacts the United States had on England at the turn of the century to today. Finally, it offers interesting and often little known pieces of information, surprising explanations - and it's just a darn good read! I went back and forth, from the middle to the beginning to the end, then back again, looking at designs, dresses, pictures of the men & woman being discussed, even a descriptive listing of honors & titles. There are helpful indexes in the back, and a brief bio of each person in the English "Who's Who" of this great society, timeless in its uniqueness within the world. A book to keep, this one.

This book doesn't translate to Kindle. Pictures are tiny and in black and white (understandable) and they are nearly impossible to see. The book is organized in a way that is difficult to follow but undoubtedly would be less so in book form. It is the format I dislike, not the book.

Enjoyable. Nothing particularly scholarly about this work, but a nice easy read with a light touch. And lots of pictures, which is great - since they're in BW not all are quite clear, but most are. Nice way to while away an evening. The typos complained of on the Kindle edition don't seem to be present in the softcover.

If you read the product description, you'll know what this book is about. It's a historical account of the American heiresses who went to England to marry into the nobility. It's short biographies of these women, along with sideboxes about British culture. It's a fun read. What it is not, is fiction. I cannot believe the number of people who gave this book a poor review because they thought it was going to be fiction! That's as silly as complaining, 'I thought it was going to be a cookbook, but it doesn't have any recipes in it! It's a terrible cookbook!' So ignore the large number of poor reviews by people who didn't bother to discover that it's nonfiction, not a bodice-ripper romance. If you want a romance, there's plenty out there. But if you want an easy-reading historical/biographical account of the late 19th century, by all means, download this one.

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