

THE SAGE/PRIME GENTLEMEN MOVIE

DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE



The world of 'Downton,' admittedly as fantastical as Camelot, still celebrates an ideal of civility that is totally foreign for today's tech bros and one-percenters.

Elegantly directed by Simon Curtis from a deeply felt screenplay by series creator Julian Fellowes, the film I think we all can agree is a triumphant swan song for its marvelous cast, sadly minus the great Maggie Smith, who died a year ago this month. Dame Maggie claimed she never watched the show in which she stole

every scene as the Dowager Countess of Grantham, whose rapier wit skewered hypocrites, rich and poor alike. She missed a lot by not watching, but the finale pays proper tribute to her internal fire and mischievous spirit.

The film opens in 1930 with Downton in crisis. Lady Mary Crawley, played with her customary spiky, sexy assurance by Michelle Dockery, is feeling the hot breath of scandal for the unforgivable sin of –wait for it– divorce, an earthshattering even upstairs and downstairs. Oh, the horror when Lady Mary and her parents, Lord Grantham and his American wife Cora are given the heaveho by a snooty society hostess. Back then, a divorced woman was a social pariah. Luckily, Lady Mary finds an ally in bon vivant playwright Noel Coward whose deadpan barbs rival Dame Maggie's.

Another Crowley problem, besides social disgrace, is complete financial ruin. Cora's brother Harold arrives from the States with news that bad investments have resulted in the loss of the family fortune that has kept Downton going. All seems lost with the Abby on the chopping block. But it doesn't stop frisky Lady Mary –the heir apparent– from indulging in a fling. Lady Mary's shrewd sister Edith contrives a society event in her honor to be attended by Noel Coward and his movie star friend Guy Dexter. No one knows of Guy's secret affair with former Downton servant Thomas so the coast is clear to break a few rules, such as the foolish ban on divorced women. When the chance comes for the elite to hobnob with glittering celebrity, they seize it. How times have not changed.

The Camelot world of Downton represents that ideal that Lord Grantham honors as his fingertips touch toe stone memorial to his mother near the film's end. And we honor the cast and crew of this cinema remembrance for the pleasure of their company and the joy they take in recreating that one brief, shining moment.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2025

1:30PM at the PRIDE CENTER

FREE POPCORN and SODA