

BELGRAVIA | BOOK CLUB

Icebreaker:

- Where are you tuning in from?
- Who got a hard copy of this book and who listened on audio?
- What is your go-to reading spot?
- When do you like to read?
- This book is by the same author that did Downton Abbey; are you a fan of the show? Have you watched it all the way through?
- Anyone have tea or any snacks with them tonight?

Generic:

- What was your initial reaction to the book? Did it hook you immediately, or take some time to get into?
- What was your favorite quote/passage?
- Did you like the voice it was written in?
- Which character was your favorite and why?
- Was there a character that your opinion of them changed?
- Was there a character that you hated?

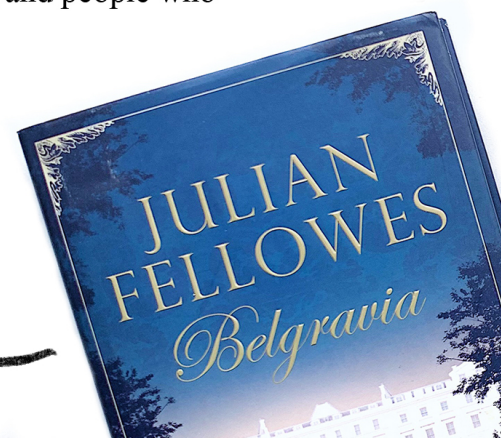
The past, as we have been told so many times, is a foreign country where things are done differently. This may be true – indeed it patently is true when it comes to morals or customs, the role of women, aristocratic government, and a million other elements of our daily lives. But there are similarities, too. Ambition, envy, rage, greed, kindness, selflessness, and above all, love have always been as powerful in motivating choices as they are today. -Julian Fellowes

THE STYLE

Belgravia was written in episode form, because it was originally released one week at a time on an app. They created it as a play based off the same style Dickens used when he released one chapter at a time in the newspaper. You could listen to or read it on the app, and there was a lot of extra information like maps, family tree, historical context, etc...

SECRETS

This whole episode revolves around secrets. A lot of the family drama is brought on, because people hiding the truth. There are people who keep secrets, people who try to uncover them, and people who make new ones. Other than Charles, who is most impacted by these secrets?



EVERYONE HAS PAIN

I've particularly liked the two main female characters, Mrs. Anne Trenchard and Lady Caroline Brockenhurst, in these first episodes. They are apparently rivals and distant, but they are clearly so similar and so close in their hopes and sorrow.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD HUSBAND?

Maria thinking about the difference between Charles Pope and *"His father a soldier, she was thinking, and the cousin of a churchman...what was wrong with that? He might not be a catch, but he was at least a gentleman."* ch7

CULTURAL

There were so many points in this story where I felt like everything was so silly.

- Why can't Maria just marry the man she loves?
- Why can't they just come out with the truth about Charles Pope? Would it really ruin the reputation of a woman who has been dead for 30 years?
- Who cares about titles? It was almost absurd to me that the Trenchards were not accepted by the Brockenhursts simply because they did not have a title.

If someone were to write a book one hundred years from now about our culture, I wonder what would seem absurd to the reader?

DO YOU HAVE SYMPATHY FOR...

- John Bellasis
- Oliver Pope

THE ENDING

How did you like the ending? Was it perfectly satisfying or too perfect?

MOVIE/TV SHOW

If the book were being adapted into a movie/tv show, who would you want to see play each character?
(Claire Foy, the Queen, for Ann Trenchard)

QUOTES

- *"It is better to be gullible than suspicious."*
- *"Anne Trenchard was a practical woman, and one of her chief virtues was that she did not linger over a disaster but sought, almost immediately, to remedy what could be remedied and to accept what could not."*
- *"Oliver did not seem to understand that the only real fulfillment on this earth was to be gained through hard work. Life as a series of momentary pleasures satisfied no one. He needed to make an investment in it, an investment of himself."*

