



The Gods of Newport

John Jakes

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John Jakes, "the godfather of the historical novel" (*Los Angeles Times*), leaves the South to travel north for an epic tale of scandalous doings in one of the world's most famous resorts.

In the late nineteenth century, Newport, Rhode Island, was a cauldron of undeclared class warfare where reputations were made and lost in a whirlwind of parties and fancied slights. Where giant marble mansions called "cottages" arose and where—amid the glamour of yacht races, tennis matches, and costume balls—depression, even madness, sometimes followed social failure.

In 1893, Sam Driver, railroad mogul and one of the few surviving robber barons of the lawless years after the Civil War, knocks on the door of fabled Newport together with his daughter, Jenny, determined not to be turned away a second time.

The first time, his new money was tainted by his rapacious reputation and his dealings with some of the most dishonest businessmen of the era. The Drivers find that some who know Sam's past won't let it rest. One enemy with a pedigree of wealth and position vows to slam every door in Sam's face.

But Sam plunges in, determined to win a place in the strange, rarefied world of Newport's brief summer season, presided over by social gadflies Ward McAllister and the androgynous Harry Lehr, both of whom will assist the Drivers . . . for a price. Sam's daughter wants the best that Newport offers but finds herself drawn into a dangerous romance with an impoverished young Irishman.

The Gods of Newport brings this gilded age of excess to thrilling life. It was a time and place whose extremes of greed, conspicuous consumption, and social striving have an astonishing resonance and relevance for the America we see around us today.

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