

“A Respectable Role Model” (November 25, 2012)

Clearly our society is obsessed with the newest, youngest, “hottest” actors to hit the screen or stage. Many actors fret over their aging appearance, fearing they won’t be able to land the coveted roles in new films or theater shows. Others, however, age so elegantly that roles seem to be created for them. Maggie Smith is one such actor. While she has an extensive career filmography, her most recent role as Violet Crawley, the Dowager Countess of Grantham on the PBS series “Downton Abbey,” shines. Her quick wit and strong presence in each scene won her an Emmy for best supporting actress at the most recent awards ceremony.

As the matriarch of the Crawley family, she is sought out by family members for advice in sticky situations and relied on for the power and respect she holds in the community to ensure that the name of the family is upheld. While watching the show I can’t help but be reminded that the position of power the Dowager Countess holds is in stark contrast to the role that many elders play in their families today. I have appreciated the opportunity to watch an impeccable older role model fulfill her role with such beauty, wisdom and grace.

While looking for television similar to the “Downton Abbey” series to watch while waiting for the third season to air in the U.S. in January 2013, I came across an essay on the AARP website entitled, “Cure for ‘Downton Abbey’ Withdrawal.” It seems many AARP members are also fans of this wonderful t.v. series! (The article can be viewed here: <http://www.aarp.org/entertainment/books/info-07-2012/substitutes-while-waiting-for-downton-abbey.1.html>)