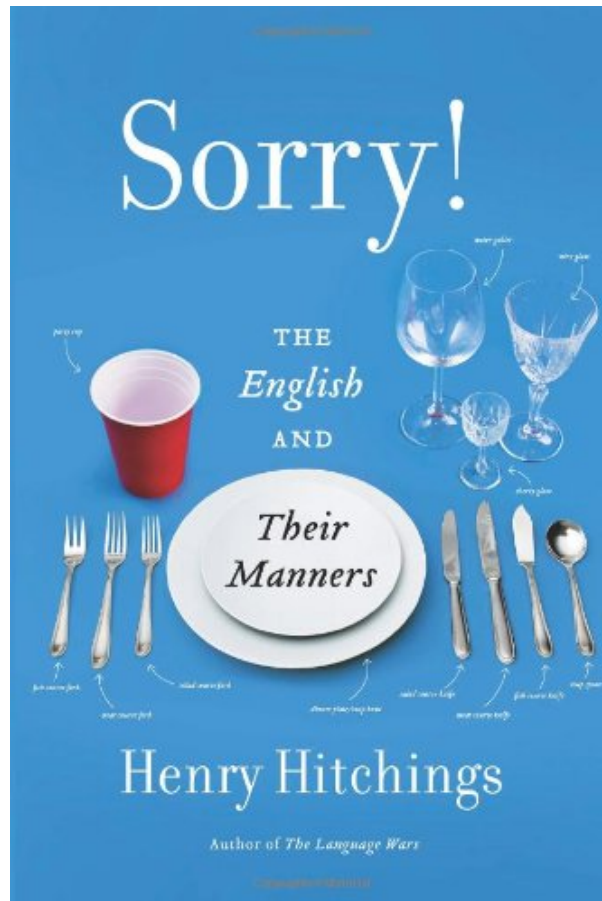
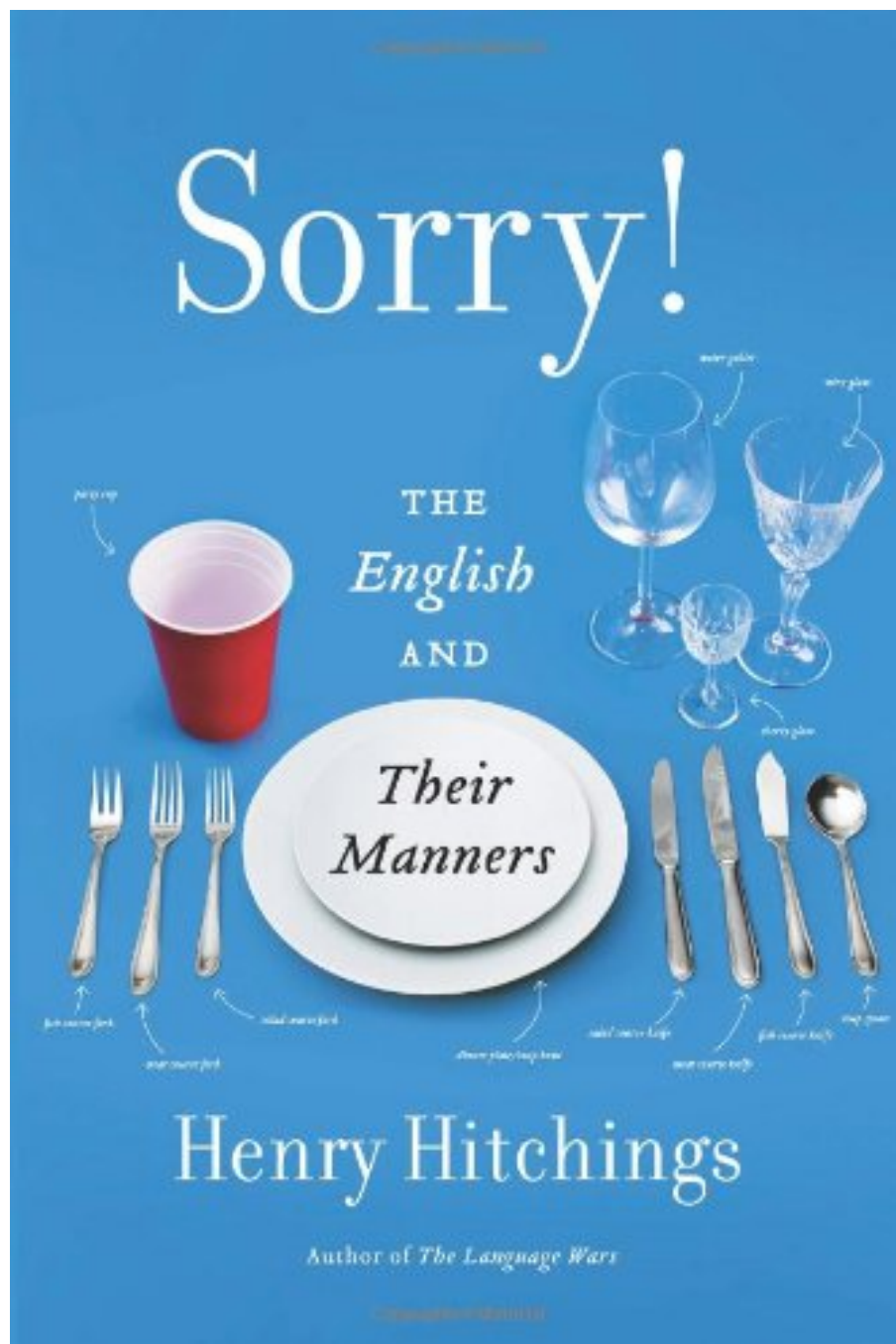


SORRY!: THE ENGLISH AND THEIR MANNERS BY HENRY HITCHINGS



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From Booklist

Although most people have some idea of what good (or bad) manners are, it's less likely they know where they come from. Hitchings addresses that through a comprehensive historical review, with some fun tidbits along the way. He brings the perspectives of the past to bear on customs of the present, using examples from writers such as Samuel Pepys, Lord Chesterfield, and Fanny Trollope. This rambling examination is concerned only with English manners, not those of other British countries. Hitchings is affectionate toward typically English mannerisms such as tactfully saying one thing, when meaning another—when told, “We really must have lunch sometime,” does anyone believe it'll actually happen? The book contains some illuminating examples of how manners are a social construct and can vary widely across cultures. The tour of manners encompasses living conditions, language, social structures, innovations, and philosophy throughout centuries. This is not a book of etiquette instruction, but deconstruction. For those who wish to dig deeper into the myriad forces at work behind polite customs, large and small, the book is sure to please. --Bridget Thoreson

Review

“Henry Hitchings, the author of *Sorry! The English and Their Manners* has his work cut out for him. Thankfully, he seems to relish ripping the vanities and entitlements of self-proclaimed behavioral experts to shreds. Hitchings . . . has earned a reputation as that rare nonfiction author who suffuses his rigorous (and at times slightly eccentric) scholarly research with enough wit and lively skepticism to render otherwise dull passages entertaining. This reputation proves accurate: as the author embarks on his colorful, rambling, and critically exacting exploration of the evolution of English rules of behavior, it becomes obvious that he could make a detailed history of the canned food industry sing like a coloratura . . . He comes across more as a scattered but lovable history professor whose classes are legendarily entertaining . . . Not only does Hitchings charm us with illustrative details straight out of the gate, but, as he advances from medieval mores through the Renaissance and on to the Victorian era, he never loses sight of the conflicts inherent in the regulation of human behavior . . . The sharpness of Hitchings's analysis and the intensity of his passion for his subject shine through on every page.” ?Heather Havrilesky, *The Barnes and Noble Review*

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About the Author

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SORRY!: THE ENGLISH AND THEIR MANNERS BY HENRY HITCHINGS PDF

A humorous and charming investigation into what it really means to have proper manners

Most of us know a bit about what passes for good manners—holding doors open, sending thank-you notes, no elbows on the table—and we certainly know bad manners when we see them. But where has this patchwork of beliefs and behaviors come from? How did manners develop? How do they change? And why do they matter so much? In examining English manners, Henry Hitchings delves into the English character and investigates what it means to be English.

Sorry! presents an amusing, illuminating, and quirky audit of British manners. From basic table manners to appropriate sexual conduct, via hospitality, chivalry, faux pas, and online etiquette, Hitchings traces the history of England's customs and courtesies. Putting some of the most astute observers of humanity—including Jane Austen and Samuel Pepys—under the microscope, he uses their lives and writings to pry open the often downright peculiar secrets of the English character. Hitchings's blend of history, anthropology, and personal journey helps us understand the bizarre and contested cultural baggage that goes along with our understanding of what it means to have good manners.

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A disappointment

By Stephen W. McKeever

The subject matter appears almost random. The flow of the text is rambling and the reader is left searching

for a consistent theme. There are a few bright spots in which the reader has a "that's interesting" moment, but these are all too few and mostly the consistent question the reader has in mind while reading is "where is this heading?". The prose is pleasant, but overall the book is disappointing.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Great preparation for Americans visiting the UK

By ben arnold

I found this book to be both informative and hilarious. Hitchings provides the framework for a deeper understanding of the many nuanced rituals of everyday life in the UK.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Worth reading.

By Michael A. Kuhns

A very interesting book. It contains a lot of good stories that are obviously based on a great deal of research. It makes manners something you want to read about.

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