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An appetite for celebrity

By [David Sexton](#) [Literary Editor](#) [Evening Standard](#) | 05 April 2012

Alison Jackson gives us all the pictures that every paparazzo has ever dreamed of getting, in this world or the next. Here's Prince William starkers, with just a flannel for cover. Here's Osama bin Laden boozing with Saddam Hussein. Here are Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed handling their first baby. There's David Beckham just after being bloodied by that boot.

To get away with it, Jackson has to make the most solemn disclaimer: "The photographs in this book do not, nor are they intended to, represent any actual event that has taken place, nor that will take place ... These well-known individuals have not had any involvement in the creation of the photographs ..."

It's true, too, in a way. These tableaux, posed with lookalikes blurrily snapped as if caught on the wing, are not really about the celebs at all. They're about us, the consumers. They show us what we most dream of seeing, the famous caught off-guard, the image slipping to reveal them to be just like us, or worse.

These fictions play on our mistaken sense of intimacy with the stars, demonstrating how slight a grip on reality we have. In a pretentious afterword, the critic Waldemar Januszczak calls Jackson's work both Swiftian and Orwellian. Simpler just to say it's the funniest picture book for years.