



Through the Keyhole: Sex, Scandal and the Secret Life of the Country House

Susan C Law

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The potent allure of sex, money and power has always created a public appetite for juicy tales of scandal in the hidden private lives of the English aristocracy. Millions of viewers are captivated by the television series Downton Abbey and screen versions of Jane Austen novels, while visitor numbers to National Trust stately homes have never been higher. The real and fictional dramas being enacted inside country houses were just as compelling for audiences in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the cultural media of the day exploited stories of aristocratic adultery for commerical and political motives in newspapers, novels and satirical prints. But such attacks on the aristocracy's moral fitness to rule ultimately undermind traditional hereditary power and marked the first stops towards its decline. This book draws on a rich collection of original sources, bringing vividly to life a cast of engaging characters and their stories of infidelity - passionate, scandalous, poignant and tragic.



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