



The Trials of the King of Hampshire: Madness, Secrecy and Betrayal in Georgian England

Elizabeth Foyster

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"Gracefully written."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

"If this were a novel, no one would believe it."

— Sarah Wise, author of *Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England*

"Reveals an aristocratic household turned upside down by scandal and mental illness. Taboos of sex, death, and politeness are routinely shattered, with tragic, sometimes hilarious results. Unputdownable."

—John Guy, bestselling author of *Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years*

The 3rd earl of Portsmouth was a peculiar man but, by most accounts, a harmless one. An aristocrat of enormous wealth, he kept company with England's most famous names, inviting Jane Austen to balls and having Lord Byron as chief witness to his second marriage. For the first fifty years of his life he had moved with ease in high society, but at the age of fifty-five his own family set out to have him declared insane.

Elizabeth Foyster invites us into the most extraordinary, expensive and controversial British insanity trial ever heard. Amid accusations of abductions, sodomy, blackmail and violence, jurors have to decide if Portsmouth is just a shy, stammering eccentric or a sinister madman attempting to mask his dangerous and immoral nature. **The Trials of the King of Hampshire** is both provocative and heart-rending.

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