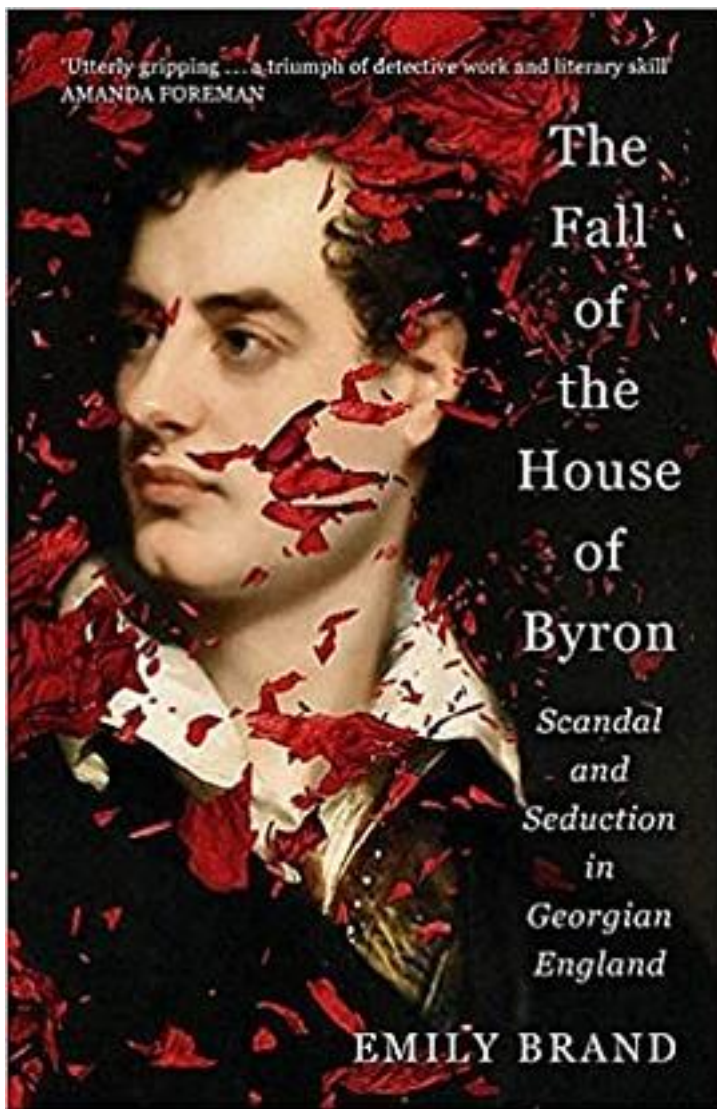


The Fall of the House of Byron



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著者:Emily Brand

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In the early eighteenth century, Newstead Abbey was among the most admired aristocratic homes in England. It was the abode of William, 4th Baron Byron - a popular amateur composer and artist - and his teenage wife Frances. But by the end of the century, the building had become a crumbling and ill-cared-for ruin. Surrounded by wreckage of his inheritance, the 4th Baron's dissipated son and heir William, 5th Baron Byron - known to history as the 'Wicked Lord' - lay on his deathbed alongside a handful of remaining servants and amidst a thriving population of crickets.

This was the home that a small, pudgy boy of ten from Aberdeen - who the world would later come to know as Lord Byron, the Romantic poet, soldier, and adventurer - would inherit in 1798. His family, he would come to learn, had in recent decades become known for almost unfathomable levels of scandal and impropriety, from elopement, murder, and kidnapping to adultery, coercion, and thrilling near-death experiences at sea. Just as it had shocked the society of Georgian London, the outlandish and scandalous story of the Byrons - and the myths that began to rise around it - would influence his life and poetry for posterity.

The Fall of the House of Byron follows the fates of Lord Byron's ancestors over three generations in a drama that begins in rural Nottinghamshire and plays out in the gentlemen's clubs of Georgian London, amid tempests on far-flung seas, and in the glamour of pre-revolutionary France. A compelling story of a prominent and controversial characters, it is a sumptuous family portrait and an electrifying work of social history.

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