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Stories of True Crime in Tudor and Stuart England

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Stories of True Crime in Tudor and Stuart England is an original collection of thirty stories of true crime during the period 1580-1700. Published in short books known as chapbooks, these stories proliferated in early modern popular literature. The chapbooks included in this collection describe serious, horrifying and often deeply personal stories of murder and attempted murder, infanticide, suicide, rape, arson, highway robbery, petty treason and witchcraft.

These criminal cases reveal the fascinating complexities of early modern English society. The vivid depictions of these stories were used by the English church and state to describe the proper boundaries of behaviour, and the dangers that could result from the sins of avarice, apathy, vice or violence. Readers will learn about the public interest and involvement in crime and punishment and the way the criminal justice system was used to correct and deter criminal activity and restore social boundaries such as rank, gender, family, religion, and physical boundaries of person and property.

Perfect for the student reader, this collection provides guided access to these exciting sources. Each transcription is modernized and annotated and is preceded by a brief discussion of key historical context and themes. Including an introductory essay on the topic of the English criminal justice system in the early modern period, as well as a glossary of key terms in English criminal law, this is an ideal introduction for students of crime and criminal justice in England.

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