WOMEN OF FORTUNE

*Women of Fortune* tells the compelling story of mercantile wealth, arranged marriages, and merchant heiresses who asserted their rights despite loss, imprisonment, and murder. Following three generations of the Bennet and Morewood families, who made their fortune in Crown finance, the East Indies, the Americas, and moneylending, Linda Levy Peck explores the changing society, economy, and culture of early modern England. The heiresses – curious, intrepid, entrepreneurial, scholarly – married into the aristocracy, fought for their property, and wrote philosophy. One spent years on the Grand Tour. Her life in Europe, despite the outbreak of war, is vividly documented. Another’s husband went to debtors’ prison. She recovered the fortune and bought shares. Husbands, sons, and contemporaries challenged their independence legally, financially, even violently, but new forms of wealth, education, and the law enabled these heiresses to insist on their own agency, create their own identities, and provide examples for later generations.

WOMEN OF FORTUNE

Money, Marriage, and Murder in Early Modern England

LINDA LEVY PECK
To my family and friends
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Acknowledgments

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I alone, of course, am responsible for the errors remaining.
## Abbreviations

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<td>Add. Mss.</td>
<td>Additional Manuscripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSP Col.</td>
<td>Calendar of State Papers, Colonial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPD</td>
<td>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEBO</td>
<td>Early English Books Online</td>
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<td>EMLO</td>
<td>Early Modern Letters Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folger</td>
<td>Folger Shakespeare Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCJ</td>
<td>Journal of the House of Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLJ</td>
<td>Journal of the House of Lords</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLRO</td>
<td>House of Lords Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMC</td>
<td>Great Britain. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMA</td>
<td>London Metropolitan Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODNB</td>
<td>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROB</td>
<td>Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCH</td>
<td>Victoria County History (series)</td>
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