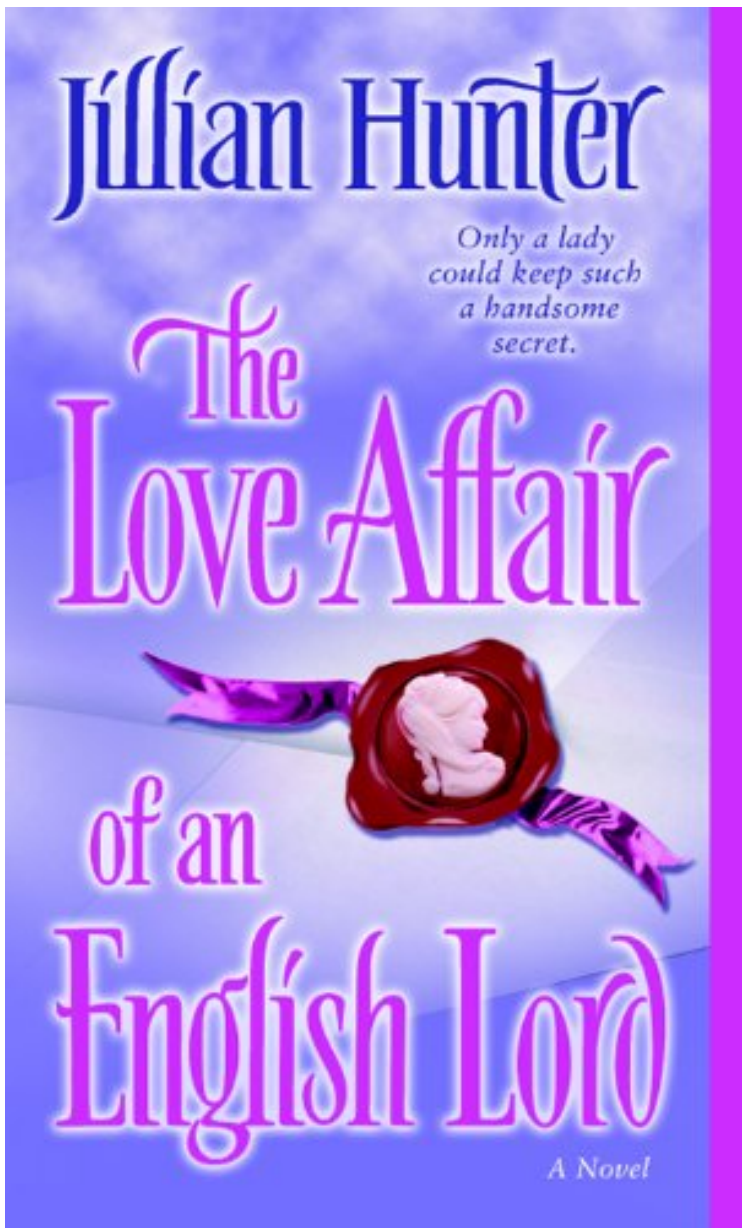


# The Love Affair of an English Lord: A Novel



*Par Jillian Hunter*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAward-winning author Jillian Hunter both amuses and delights with another irresistible tale of scandal and seduction.When Chloe Boscastle is caught indiscreetly kissing a man in a park, her brother Graysonthe protective patriarch of the Boscastle familysends her off to a country manor to stay until the scandal in town subsides.Soon after Chloes banishment begins, she is shocked to learn that her neighbor Dominic Breckland, the devilish Viscount Stratfield, has been killed in his bed. But she is even more stunned to discover the dangerously handsome victim taking refuge in her lingerie closet one night. By some

miracle Dominic has survived his attack and wishes the world to believe him dead. Can the alluring Lady Chloe keep his secret? Dominic uses all his masculine charm to persuade her as they work together to unmask his enemy. Of course, being caught sheltering a seductive scoundrel could further mar Chloes already tarnished reputation. But, really, whats a little scandal to a lady in love? From the Paperback edition. Extrait England 1814 The late Dominic Breckland, Viscount Stratfield, was returning to life in a sea of womens underwear. From ear to ankle he fought a sensual undertow of lacy shifts and white silk stockings, his muscular arms tangled in the ties and tapes of lavender-scented buckram stays, his heavy thighs wrapped in a pair of dainty French percale pantalettes. Like a wounded beast of the night, he had eluded capture and taken refuge in the last place his pursuer would think to look. Summoning a primitive instinct for survival, he had climbed the sturdy oak tree outside the manor house and hauled his bruised and bleeding six-foot frame over the windowsill. Hopeful he had outwitted the man who chased him, he had then collapsed into an open trunk stuffed with personal female attire and frivolous accessories. He was not too exhausted to appreciate the irony of the situation. For now at least he had managed to escape the man who was hunting for him. Yet moment by moment his lifes blood was saturating an unknown womans muslin petticoats and blush-pink stockings. Pain seared his upper body. Gritting his teeth, he unraveled from his elbow a flimsy lawn chemise embroidered with blue silk forget-me-nots. His gaze unfocused and brimming with devilry, he examined it in the moonlight. If he was going to die, for the second time in a month, he might as well go out on a rousing sexual fantasy. Well, he murmured, what sort of woman are you anyway? Fast or merely fashionable? Do I have a choice? Then give me fast. Unfortunately the maidenly garment failed to inspire a potent sexual image in his mind. The owner did appear to possess a decent pair of breasts, although Dominic was admittedly not capable of objective appraisal in his current condition. God help them both the poor woman would suffer a heart seizure when she found his carcass buried in her drawers. It seemed to him that he had once owned this creaky old manor house, at some time in the murky past, and he tried to remember who had bought it from him. To his frustration his brain refused to focus, images flitting elusively behind his eyes like moths in the shadows. A retired sea captain, wasnt it? Sir Hickory or Humpty Something, his wife and daughter. Their names escaped Dominic at the moment. Bleeding to death, he hoped he would be forgiven the lapse in manners. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall, he muttered. But who the devil was his wife? If he was wallowing in the womens underclothes, he ought at least to know her name. Many would remark that Dominic being found dead in a trunk of petticoats was not surprising for a former English scoundrel who had thumbed his nose at society. His closest friends might even have chosen to bury him in a shroud of female underclothing as a loving tribute to his past sins. Except that Dominic had been officially buried a month ago, mourned by a few, cursed by many. Aside from the persistent rumors of his ghost popping up in the oddest places and doing the naughtiest things, no one really expected to see him again. Not his servants or scattered acquaintances. He trusted only one person. The man who had helped him arrange his own funeral. The late-evening silence of the country estate was marred by thumping footsteps, a bucket being kicked over, and an irate male voice coming from the front of the house. Somebody open the bloody gate! the gardener shouted from the driveway below. The carriage is coming over the bridge! The bloody gate has been open for an hour! the groom shouted back. Company, Dominic said with a mordant sigh, tossing the embroidered chemise over his shoulder. I suppose I ought to tidy myself up if Im expected to entertain. He looked like a nightmare cast up from hell, and he knew it. His lanky frame had lost flesh. The hollows below his cheekbones gave his masculine face a dangerous gauntness. The lugubrious pattern of surgeons stitches that crisscrossed his chest and left shoulder had been torn during his tree-climbing escapade. Taking a breath that burrowed into his lungs like talons, he felt with his uninjured arm for the windowsill and hoisted himself upright for a few moments of enlightening agony. His gray eyes widened in approval as he took stock of his surroundings. Well, isnt this convenient? he said, clenching his teeth against a wave of pain. A room with a view. His own estate lay across the swathe of moonlit road on a wooded rise. Warm beams of candlelight glowed from the bedroom window where he had been brutally stabbed to death three weeks ago. His uncle, Colonel Sir Edgar Williams, had already taken possession of the house, and if Dominic had access to a spyglass, he could have identified the shadowy figure standing behind the curtains. The taunting silhouette belonged to a woman, he thought in cynical detachment. Of that he had no doubt. But whether she was the same lady who had shared his bed while he was callously being stabbed, he could not say. Nor did it matter now. That love affair belonged to a past life and had died along with his previous identity. His feelings for his former mistress were as dead as she believed him to be. The clip-clop of approaching horses, the churning of carriage wheels on the road, interrupted his troubled reflections. Pray

God whoever owned this trunk would not decide to explore her dressing closet tonight. For if he was any judge of womens underwear, and it so happened that he was, then the delicately proportioned owner of these garments would quite indelicately scream her head off when she discovered a ghost in her intimate garments.

\* \* \*From the stuffy depths of the lumbering carriage, Lady Chloe Boscastle could discern one of her undergarments dangling like a banner of indecency from her bedroom window. She leaned forward, her body frozen in disbelief, her face turning pale. The bulk of her personal belongings had arrived from London just that morning. She and the maid had barely started to unpack them, let alone put them on display from her window. She attempted to close the carriage curtains in a casual manner, hoping the other passengers would not notice this disconcerting sight. Not that anyone would be surprised by such a faux pas from Chloe at this point. She had brought the inglorious label of troublemaker with her from London and was almost expected to continue her worrying ways. Far be it from her to disappoint her growing critics. The errant undergarment heavens above, it rather looked like her favorite chemise could only mean that her scapegrace brother Devon had come and gone while she had been carted off to a country ball in a cavernous cobwebby hall. And what had the rascal pilfered from her room this time? she wondered in alarm. He had already pawned off a good deal of her jewelry to pay off his debts. But surely he had not stooped to stealing her underthings. . . . A more amusing thought jolted her upright. Could Devon be walking about the countryside disguised as a woman? Or had he found a female companion to give him shelter? He was supposed to be lying low with an elderly relative in the next village. Chloe realized her brother, a nobleman who had overnight become a sort of heroic outlaw due to a stupid prank, felt a little desperate. Being a Boscastle, she was a very liberal person herself, but even so, there were limits to decent behavior. Devon seemed to be dangerously testing those limits beyond what a wicked Boscastle would usually dare. She turned away from the window as the ancient carriage labored between the rusty iron gates of the modest estate, making enough noise to raise the dead. A furtive glance at the endearingly blank faces of her aunt and uncle, also ancient in her eyes, reassured her they had not noticed the wayward article in the window of their wayward nieces bedroom. As I was saying, Uncle Humphrey continued to his wife, the cat was only being a cat, Gwennie. He did not drag the dead mouse to the parsons chair deliberately to embarrass you. It was an offering of the hunt. Aunt Gwendolyn gave a delicate shudder, her bosom lifting and falling like a wave. I was mortified beyond words. It happened right when the poor parson was recounting the latest antics of the Stratfield Ghost. Not that deuced ghost again, Gwennie. Not in front of Chloe. Presentation de l'diteur Award-winning author Jillian Hunter both amuses and delights with another irresistible tale of scandal and seduction. When Chloe Boscastle is caught indiscreetly kissing a man in a park, her brother Grayson the protective patriarch of the Boscastle family sends her off to a country manor to stay until the scandal in town subsides. Soon after Chloes banishment begins, she is shocked to learn that her neighbor Dominic Breckland, the devilish Viscount Stratfield, has been killed in his bed. But she is even more stunned to discover the dangerously handsome victim taking refuge in her lingerie closet one night. By some miracle Dominic has survived his attack and wishes the world to believe him dead. Can the alluring Lady Chloe keep his secret? Dominic uses all his masculine charm to persuade her as they work together to unmask his enemy. Of course, being caught sheltering a seductive scoundrel could further mar Chloes already tarnished reputation. But, really, whats a little scandal to a lady in love? From the Paperback edition.