



# **The Last of the Duchess: The Strange and Sinister Story of the Final Years of Wallis Simpson, Duchess of Windsor**

*Caroline Blackwood*

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In 1980, Lady Caroline Blackwood was commissioned by *The Sunday Times* to write an article on the aging Duchess of Windsor, who was said to be convalescing in her French mansion in the Bois de Boulogne. Yet what began as a curiosity was to become for Blackwood one of the most challenging experiences of her writing career, launching her into a battle of wits with the Duchess's formidable lawyer, Maître Suzanne Blum.

Maître Blum refused to let Blackwood near the Duchess, spinning elaborate excuses as to why she was unavailable and threatening anyone who dared suggest that she was in anything other than the best of health. Still, while Blum's machinations restricted Blackwood's ability to publish a frank interview, it only served to pique her interest in the bizarre relationship between the infamous Duchess—a woman who once inspired a king to abdicate his crown—and her eccentric, domineering gatekeeper. Sixteen years later, Blackwood turned her experiences into this riveting and excoriating modern classic about the frailties of old age, the foibles of society, and the dual-edged nature of celebrity.

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