

Lauderdale House

KS3& KS4: English- Lower Gallery

Welcome to Lauderdale House. Did you know a noblewoman once escape Lauderdale dressed as a man!? Lady Arbella Stuart was cousin to James I and inline to the English throne. She married William Seymour, who also had a claim to the throne in secret. James I didn't like this as he saw them as a threat so imprisoned them both separately. Arbella was sent to Durham, but fell ill on the journey, so came here to Lauderdale House, on 16th March 1612. While here, she plotted her escape to run off to France with William, and dressed in men's clothes so she would not be detected. This was highly unusual at the time as there were strict gender roles, particularly for noblemen and women. Arbella, was captured on her way to France, and sent to live in the Tower of London until she died in 1615.

Imagine you are Arbella planning your escape. How would you come to the decision to wear men's clothes? How do you feel? What is happening around you? Write a short story about your escape in the space below and on the back of this sheet.