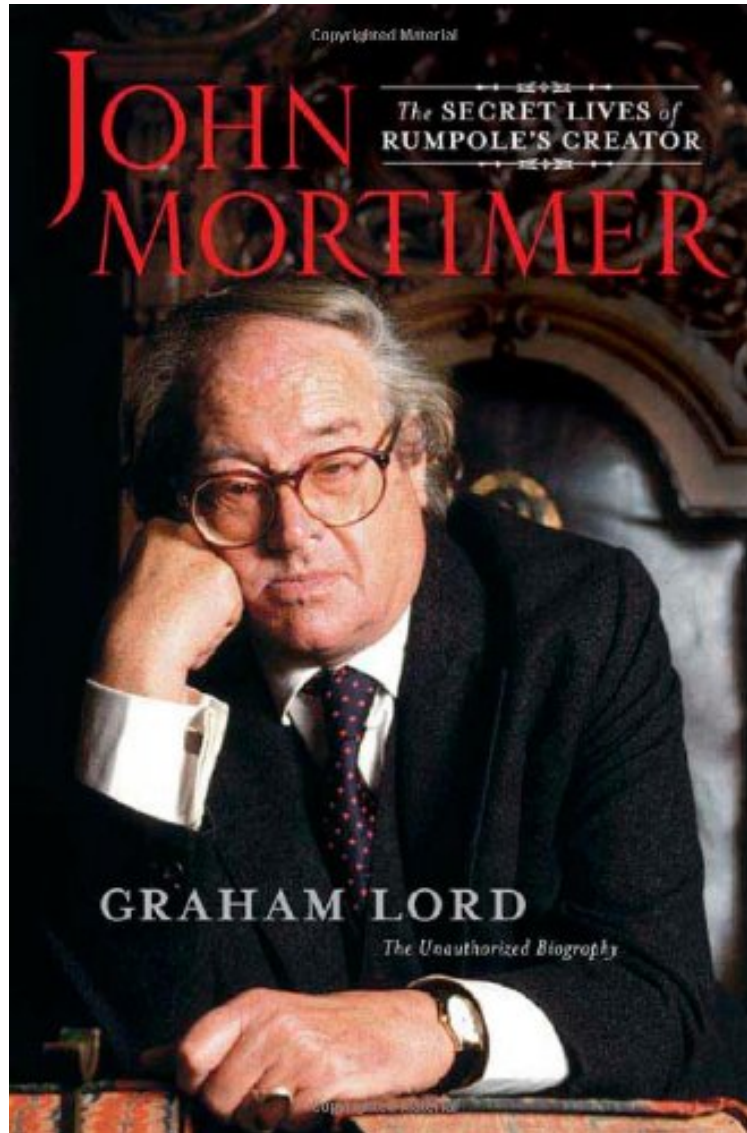


[Download ebook] John Mortimer: The Secret Lives of Rumpole's Creator

## John Mortimer: The Secret Lives of Rumpole's Creator

Graham Lord

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**Graham Lord : John Mortimer: The Secret Lives of Rumpole's Creator** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Mortimer: The Secret Lives of Rumpole's Creator:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A well-researched, miserably edited biographyBy Paul BrittonDidn't Graham Lord have an editor? Even making allowance for the loose punctuation habits of contemporary British authors, this gossipy biography is composed largely of one run-on sentence after another. It's repetitious - the author frequently forgets what he's already told us. Moreover, Graham Lord seems to feel that a biographer is entitled

not merely to summarize and evaluate, but also to engage in crude, gratuitous moralizing. This is the sort of thing any competent editor would red-line. Nor is the author aware that while a biographer may properly incorporate vulgar or obscene language in a quotation, it should be below his dignity to use it himself to discuss his subject. This book reads like a 300-page tabloid article. It stakes out a high moral ground, but relies for reader interest principally on explicit, titillating details of John Mortimer's sexual escapades and his lifelong indifference to the truth. Lord obviously put a lot of effort into researching this book; it contains a great deal of information of interest to those of us who admire Mortimer's work. It's a shame more time wasn't spent cleaning the manuscript up. Like another reviewer, I was greatly annoyed at the publisher's omission of the photographs in the American edition.

In Britain every generation produces a national treasure, a lovable figure so English that he could not possibly be of any other nationality, and Sir John Mortimer is just such a figure.

From Publishers Weekly American fans who may know little about Horace Rumpole's creator will learn from this dismal life of John Mortimer who was enormously successful as both a barrister and a writer and is now a frail 83 that many people bear him grudges, not least Lord himself, whose wounded vanity at having been demoted from authorized to unauthorized biographer is evident in every repetitious swipe at his subject. Do we really need four people who knew Mortimer at Harrow to say that he was "dirty" or "unhygienic" as a schoolboy? Lord (James Herriot) also charges his subject with being a hypocrite, a liar, an ingrate, a snob, a philanderer who fathered more than one illegitimate child and a "champagne socialist" whose liberal views on sex and pornography contributed to Britain's moral decline in the 1960s. Most aggrieved perhaps, with some reason, is the late Penelope Mortimer, the great man's troubled first wife and an eminent author in her own right, who portrayed her husband unflatteringly in such novels as *The Pumpkin Eater* as well as in memoirs. Lord is less partisan in his assessment of Mortimer's literary achievements, but one can only hope that the authorized biography will provide a more nuanced view that relates the life to the work. Photos. (Aug.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Graham Lord is the author of *NIV*, a biography of David Niven. He has written acclaimed biographies of Arthur Lowe, Dick Francis, James Herriot, and Jeffrey Bernard as well as eight novels, an autobiographical portrait of Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and several short stories. For twenty-three years he was the literary editor and weekly books columnist at *The Sunday Express* in London and now lives in France with a painter, Juliet Lewis. Full details of all his books can be found at [www.graham-lord.com](http://www.graham-lord.com).