16. The Rule in *Rylands v. Fletcher*

This chapter examines the rule in *Rylands v. Fletcher*, a rule which remains controversial to this day. The rule states that anyone who, in the course of a ‘non-natural’ use of his land ‘accumulates’ thereon for his own purposes anything likely to do mischief if it escapes, is answerable for all direct damage thereby caused. It discusses the requirements for liability, the various controlling mechanisms used to limit the scope of the rule; what and whose interests are protected by it; and the relationship between *Rylands v. Fletcher* and private nuisance. The chapter also explores the important questions that the rule in *Rylands v. Fletcher* raises about the nature, and future, of strict liability in the law of tort in general.
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