



# Queen Victoria's Mysterious Daughter: A Biography of Princess Louise

By Lucinda Hawksley

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**Queen Victoria's Mysterious Daughter: A Biography of Princess Louise** By Lucinda Hawksley

The secrets of Queen Victoria's sixth child, Princess Louise, may be destined to remain hidden forever. What was so dangerous about this artistic, tempestuous royal that her life has been documented more by rumor and gossip than hard facts? When Lucinda Hawksley started to investigate, often thwarted by inexplicable secrecy, she discovered a fascinating woman, modern before her time, whose story has been shielded for years from public view.

Louise was a sculptor and painter, friend to the Pre-Raphaelites and a keen member of the Aesthetic movement. The most feisty of the Victorian princesses, she kicked against her mother's controlling nature and remained fiercely loyal to her brothers-especially the sickly Leopold and the much-maligned Bertie. She sought out other unconventional women, including Josephine Butler and George Eliot, and campaigned for education and health reform and for the rights of women. She battled with her indomitable mother for permission to practice the "masculine" art of sculpture and go to art college-and in doing so became the first British princess to attend a public school.

The rumors of Louise's colorful love life persist even today, with hints of love affairs dating as far back as her teenage years, and notable scandals included entanglements with her sculpting tutor Joseph Edgar Boehm and possibly even her sister Princess Beatrice's handsome husband, Liko. True to rebellious form, she refused all royal suitors and became the first member of the royal family, since the sixteenth century, to marry a commoner. She moved with him to Canada when he was appointed Governor-General.

Spirited and lively, *Queen Victoria's Mysterious Daughter* is richly packed with arguments, intrigues, scandals, and secrets, and is a vivid portrait of a princess desperate to escape her inheritance.

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### Editorial Review

Review

“[I]lluminating Hawksley conveys Louise's story fully and clearly, but just as importantly, she shows the devastating damage Queen Victoria inflicted on her extensive family” *?Kirkus*

“[A] sympathetic portrait of Queen Victoria’s 'unconventional' daughter... Hawksley shows that Louise was “ahead of her time” in supporting women’s rights and was “one of the most intriguing of Victorian women” *?Publishers Weekly*

“Strong in its presentations of its subject’s personality and social circles” *?Library Journal*

"Hawksley gives a lucid description of Princess Louise's life as well as a rare glimpse into the backstage workings of the Victorian Era, particularly as it applies to the early 20th century. The book is a very entertaining read and is bound to intrigue those with an appetite for Royalty and Royal gossip." *?Rochelle Christopher, Executive Director Victorian Vanities, Inc.*

“It's these whispers that make Lucinda Hawksley's new biography such an intriguing prospect.... Satisfyingly replete with eye-popping stories of life at the various palaces.... [I was] caught up with this improbable princess, a beautiful, charming woman.” *?The Observer*

“Lively, engaging and buoyantly enthusiastic, Hawksley's gallant but necessarily speculative book should encourage the royal archivists to stop being so protective.” *?The Sunday Times*

About the Author

LUCINDA HAWKSLEY is a writer and lecturer on art history and nineteenth-century history. She has written biographies of the pre-Raphaelite muse Lizzie Siddal, Charles Dickens, and Katey, one of Dickens' children. She is the great, great, great granddaughter of Charles and Catherine Dickens and is a patron of the Charles Dickens Museum in London.

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