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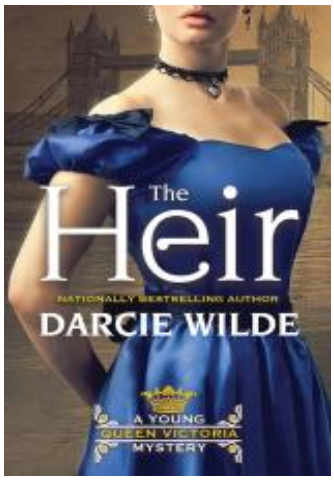
The Heir: A Young Queen Victoria Mystery

by Darcie Wilde



About the Book

For fans of "The Crown," *The Young Victoria* and all things British royalty is a new mystery set in 1830s London and starring none other than the young Princess Victoria --- the future Queen of England --- as a rebellious amateur sleuth.

Destined for a life beyond her wildest dreams, born fifth in succession to the throne, and determined to get to the bottom of a most foul puzzle, the future queen vows to solve the mystery of a dead man scandalously discovered on the grounds of Kensington Palace --- by her!

The young Victoria remembers nothing but Kensington Palace. Arriving as a baby, she has been brought up inside its musty, mold-ridden walls. Others may see the value of Kensington?s priceless artifacts and *objets d?art*, but the palace is a jail cell for young Victoria. Raised with an incredibly strict regimen to follow, watched at all times by her mother, the controlling, German-born Victoire, and Victoire?s prized advisor, the power-hungry Sir John Conroy, the bright 15-year-old is allowed no freedom at any time --- except that which she steals or wheedles for, always in the company of Conroy?s resentful daughter, Jane.

But one fateful afternoon, Victoria slips away from her mother to ride out on her beloved gelding, Prince. With reluctant Jane in tow, the princess gallops out from the palace green. But what would normally be an uneventful trot around very familiar terrain presents the mutinous princess with a most bewildering sight --- a dead man, and on the grounds of the palace, no less.

Determined to get to the bottom of the inscrutable puzzle, young Victoria is met with shocking disrespect and any number of obstacles. Sir John lies to her, her uncles and aunts join with her mother to stonewall her questions and curtail her movements. But Victoria will not be deterred. With Jane Conroy as a tentative and untrustworthy ally, Victoria?s first ?case? is underway.

Discussion Guide

1. Victoria is a popular (and famous!) historical figure. She?s been portrayed in many different films and books. Do you have a favorite version of Victoria? How does Princess Victoria in THE HEIR differ from other Victorias you?ve read (or seen)? How is she similar?

2. Victoria is one of the most well-known British monarchs, and many people think they know her story. Has your perception of Victoria as a person and a queen changed after reading THE HEIR?

3. One of the major themes of THE HEIR is isolation. How does Jane and Victoria?s sense of isolation affect their characters and actions?

4. What gives Victoria the strength to resist Sir John?s (and her mother?s!) attempts to break her spirit?

5. Jane Conroy has the choice to help Victoria or help her father. Why does she make the choice she does?

6. Another major throughline in THE HEIR is the difference between power and control. How do Victoria and Jane navigate this dichotomy? Sir John and the Duchess Lehzen?

7. Why does the Duchess preserve her relationship with Sir John?

8. What drives Sir John? Is it only a quest for power, or is there something else underneath?

9. Through THE HEIR, small decisions are seen to have large consequences. Jane makes several decisions that will affect her entire family and, in some cases, the entire kingdom. What is an example of a decision you agree with? One you disagree with?

10. Does reading about Victoria?s experiences with her family change your perspective on the troubles inside the current royal family? Why or why not?

Author Bio

Darcie Wilde is an award-winning and bestselling author of over 30 novels in multiple genres, including science fiction, young adult, cozy mysteries and historical mysteries. A USEFUL WOMAN --- her debut mystery novel, and the first to feature her popular sleuth Rosalind Thorne --- was a national bestseller, and the sixth book starring the Regency sleuth, THE SECRET OF THE LOST PEARLS, was declared ?a must read? by *USA Today*. THE HEIR is the first novel in her

new *Young Queen Victoria Mystery* series.

Darcie never seriously wanted to be anything except a writer. She grew up in a house surrounded by books, learning to read out of THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ. She was plotting her first seven-book series by eighth grade. At 15, she got her first typewriter. She received her first professional rejection (from *Young Miss* magazine) a year later and has been writing ever since. She sold her first short story in 1986, and her first novel in 1994 and has published at least one book a year since then. Her debut novel, RECLAMATION, won the Locus prize for best first novel. Her second novel, FOOL'S WAR, won the Philip K. Dick award for best original paperback and was also a *New York Times* notable book.

Darcie lives in Michigan with her husband and their son. She remains a history buff and an unabashed nerd girl. When not writing, spends her time reading, stitching and watching far too many competitive cooking shows.

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Publication Date: August 26, 2025
Genres: Fiction, Historical Fiction, Historical Mystery, Mystery
Hardcover: 384 pages
Publisher: Kensington
ISBN-10: 1496750683
ISBN-13: 9781496750686