

Title: Lulie

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There was a time when Louisa Bryson would have looked forward to life, to the balls, picnics, and all the other events that a young woman looks to be a part of after her marriage. Hopes for that future, however, were horribly crushed by the loss of her beloved. David Forrester, lifelong friend and co-conspirator was to have been her husband, her one and only love. Trouble found them together always, and they staunchly defended each other from a myriad of childhood follies. There were the occasional punishments, but the sadness and the contrition never lasted long. With the exuberance of the young, Louisa and David pledged their undying friendship almost from the cradle. With David's untimely death, Louisa has been devastated, and her family worries for her health. Even as the year of mourning expires, Louisa's sister conspires to take her away from the home she has found solitude in, and draw her back into life.

Realizing the toll her sorrow and detachment from the world has had on her family, Louisa, known to her friends and family as Lulie, struggles to defeat the depression threatening her life and her well-being. She decides she will at least make an attempt on the surface, and for her family a lightening of her mother's features rewards the smallest effort. Even the apparent burden lifted from the shoulders of her father leaves him with lighter footsteps, for she realizes he knew how to console others, but not how to relieve the weight of his own daughter's grief. She decides to take her sister's offer of a visit, thus giving her parents some respite. She is a bit ashamed when she comes to the full realization of the effect she has had on her own family, and even David's with her continuous mourning over his death. Even though she does not feel her sadness any less, she tries to hide it to a certain extent, and although she puts on a smile, her heart is not in the same place.

Brash, friendly, and a man who stuck up for those who he considered friends was the way Isaac Thompson remembered his friend David Forrester. More so, he remembered his own jealousy when David fondly recalled his best friend Lulie, and all her wonderful attributes. Not a man used to playing second fiddle, Isaac soon came to respect and in an odd way love Lulie himself. In her devotion and obvious regard for David, and in her intelligence and the joy she apparently brought him, Isaac had to admit he was better off for having Lulie in David's life. Now he felt out of place, desolate and alone. The opportunity to finally meet and spend a few weeks in the company of his best friend's best friend is not something Isaac can turn down. Accompanying David's brother Redford to Clive and Belinda's home for a stay is just what the doctor ordered. He meets the woman who held his best friend and companion in such thrall, and he is himself immediately overcome.

The somber and reserved woman he meets is not as David's joyous tales made her out to be, yet Isaac sees beneath the sorrows and decides that Lulie is still there, but terribly lost. He makes it his mission to bring back the glorious woman who so thrilled and inspired his friend David. It is the least he can do, and so begins his courtship of Louisa, and his attempts to bring her back into the light of life, into the realm of the living instead of the twilight in which she seems to just exist. Isaac is determined to win her respect, her friendship, and if he is lucky enough, and she will truly accept him, her love. He knows he has his work cut out for him, but he has allies. Lulie's sister and brother-in-law, and David's brother Redford are all on his side in this because they hurt just looking upon Louisa's distance from life. he is driven to bring the sunshine back into her life until the war with Napoleon gets in the way...

Jane Dawkins brings to light another wonderful Regency filled with the trials of a life struck with tragedy, yet filled with a new and sparkling love. Drawn together by mutual crushing loss, Isaac and Lulie must learn to live and love again. In each other's company, they learn to share their sorrow, and through the months to come, they develop a friendship based on their love and affection for David, and discover a growing and budding feeling that could be a prelude to love. This is something that both seem to be determined to fight, but when times get tough, and love is in the balance, both Lulie and Isaac, known affectionately by Lulie as "Tom," must decide where they stand. Now the trick is, will the friendship and mutual love and respect they have be enough to build a solid and steady relationship on, one that can survive the storms they are facing, and those they will endure if they are to marry?

There are many people who attempt to write historical and period romances, but one has to realize that only a few handfuls have the talent to draw you deep into the story. Ms. Jane Dawkins is one of those writers whose talent and care packs a period story full of twists, turns, and surprises. Again, she takes us to a place apart, allowing us to live Lulie's dreams, fantasies, as well as her triumphs and sorrows. **Lulie** is a bright and shining example among the best of the historical romances. Rich in character, rife with the trials and sentiments that draw one in, Ms. Dawkins has created a memorable and special tale of love, loss, and finding that wonderful someone with whom you can endure all. **Lulie** is a timeless piece that lets you into the lives Lulie and Isaac are so blessed yet cursed to live, and it makes their story one you cannot afford to miss out on. Ms. Dawkins has again given us a very special book in **Lulie**.

Yours in good reading,

Rose!