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The Bride of Science: Romance, Reason, and Byron's Daughter

Benjamin Woolley

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Published by Macmillan in the U.K. and by us in the U.S. in hardcover to critical acclaim, The Bride of Science tells the story of Ada Byron, Lady Lovelace, the inventor of computer programming and daughter of Romantic poet Lord Byron. Ada's story is that of a woman who came to embody the separation of two worlds: the world of Romanticism and the world of science and machines. Ada's efforts to reconcile these opposites - to create what she came to call a "poetical science" - produced one of the most remarkable careers of the Victorian age. In collaboration with Charles Babbage, the inventor of a clockwork "thinking machine" that predated the computer by over a century, Ada wrote a plan to use the machine for the calculation of Bernoulli numbers. This plan is now regarded as the first computer program, making Ada the world's first computer programmer. It was in her honor that, in 1980, the U.S. Department of Defense named its computer language "Ada." Ada has been iconised as a woman whose contribution to technology has been hidden. That contribution is now revealed in the first comprehensive biography of Lady Lovelace. The Bride of Science is not only a brilliant examination of an extraordinary life in math and science, it is also a fascinating analysis of the death of Romanticism and the birth of the machine age, offering devastating insight into the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between art and science, the consequences of which are still with us today.

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