



Jane Goes Batty: A Novel (Jane Fairfax)

By Michael Thomas Ford

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After two hundred years undead, Jane Austen still has bite. But will her most recent literary success be her last?

Life was a lot easier for Jane when she was just an unknown, undead bookstore owner in a sleepy hamlet in upstate New York. But now the world embraces her as Jane Fairfax, author of the bestselling novel *Constance*—and she’s having a killer time trying to keep her true identity as *the* Jane Austen a secret. Even the ongoing lessons in *How to Be a Vampire*, taught by her former lover Lord Byron, don’t seem to be helping much. Jane can barely focus on her boyfriend, Walter, while keeping him in the dark about her more sanguine tastes.

To make matters worse, Walter announces that his mother is coming for a visit—and she’s expecting Jane to be Jewish. Add in a demanding new editor, a convention of romance readers in period costume, a Hollywood camera crew following Jane’s every move, and the constant threat of a certain bloodsucking Brontë sister coming back to finish her off, and it’s enough to make even the most well-mannered heroine go batty!

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Editorial Review

Review

"A rollicking second installment in the adventures of Jane Austen, vampire...Less *Pride and Prejudice* than *True Blood*—not that there's anything wrong with that—and a witty demonstration of how beautifully the dilemmas of being Jane Austen and a vampire can comport with the tropes of chick lit. You'll thirst for the conclusion of the trilogy."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"It's impossible not to love Ford's sharp-witted, sharp-fanged Jane Austen."—Seth Grahame-Smith, author of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*

"Ford's follow-up to the acclaimed *Jane Bites Back* doesn't just provide another chance to hang out with one of the most likable vampires ever created; there are also unexpected plot twists to keep readers engaged to the end. Verdict: References to classic and contemporary books will appeal to bibliophiles, pop culture asides will catch trend watchers, and classic physical comedy scenes could make anyone chuckle."--*Library Journal*

"*Jane Goes Batty* really does have a little something for everyone. I think fans of Jane Austen as well as readers who enjoy mysteries and witty writing will enjoy this novel as much as I did."--Booking Mama

"Filled with sly humor and fast-paced quips, this delightful romp sees Jane and Byron solving an unexpected murder while an old adversary makes a startling comeback. In a tale that unfolds with panache and elan, Ford's Jane is as lovely and as ladylike as ever, her vital spirit a perfect reflection of literary heroine chic."--*Curled Up With A Good Book*

"Ford delivers an original take with a sharp and well-formed wit. I found myself laughing and groaning in no time at all."--January Magazine

"This book works, and not because I am a big fan of the mashup genre--vampires, zombies, werewolves--Oh My!...[*Jane Goes Batty* is] funny. I was laughing out loud while reading it and that's a rare treat."--Jane Austen Addict

"Michael Thomas Ford is a wicked wit with a scoop of irony on top; a devilish combination that Austen whipped up and has been wowing us with for centuries."--Austenprose

"A hilarious romp...This book is definitely worth picking up and reading and I can't wait to read the third installment in this building series."--The Obsessive Book Worm

"A funny, smart, well-crafted book that will keep you glued to the pages and chuckling at Jane's adventures, or should I say misadventures...This book has a little bit for everyone. If you like the classics, you'll enjoy the references. If you like physical comedy, you won't be disappointed. And, if you're enjoying the rapid rise of the vampire genre, *Jane Goes Batty* is your cherry on the top. Pick up your copy today."--Romance Reviews Today

"Hilarity and hi-jinks ensue in a series that will have Jane Austen rolling in her grave... with laughter...[*Jane Goes Batty* is] the kind of book you can start reading late at night and fight off sleep just so you can keep reading...I highly recommend this book and its prequel. It will have you dying to meet your favourite

authors."--Bibliomantics

"This romance mystery, this rollicking, witty, good time of a read ends like all Austin novels—the heroine defies the odds and finds true love. Fabulously fang-tastic!"--Out Smart

"I loved the humor and the drama. It's just very clever. I especially liked the scenes about the movie. How it is being "adapted." I loved the references to *Twilight* too! Very funny! It's just great fun to read these books!"--Becky's Book Reviews

"A fun, humorous weekend read!..It [made] me laugh out loud. Ford does a fantastic job capturing the spirit of Jane Austen."--Vamp Chix

"It's a shitstorm of ideas across multiple genres, but at least Ford's tongue is planted in his cheek (someone is spied wearing a Team Edward T-shirt). The book's chirpy tone owes more to *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the first of this brand of mash-up, than to either *Emma* or *Dracula*. 4 stars."--*Time Out New York*

Praise for Michael Thomas Ford's *Jane Bites Back*

"A delightful read . . . Ford gives us an authentic, sympathetic and witty Jane Austen as a modern-day vampire."—*Romantic Times*

"Fang-tastic."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Wickedly funny . . . The literary and historical references really shine."—Austenprose

"Cool, wittily acerbic."—*The Boston Globe*

"Clever . . . warm, witty characters that will appeal to both Janeites and vampire fanciers."—*Library Journal*

About the Author

Michael Thomas Ford is the author of *Jane Bites Back*, *Jane Goes Batty*, and *Jane Vows Vengeance*, as well as numerous other books, including the novels *Z*, *The Road Home*, *What We Remember*, *Suicide Notes*, *Changing Tides*, *Full Circle*, *Looking for It*, and *Last Summer*.

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Chapter 1

"Not again."

Jane Fairfax gripped the steering wheel so tightly her hands hurt. Two dozen women stood on the sidewalk. Three of them were peering in Jane's living room windows. All of them were dressed in imitation Regency period dresses. The thought occurred to Jane that instead of adopting the clothing of her time, they might have chosen to copy the tradition of waiting for an invitation before dropping in unannounced.

A tall, thin woman in a ghastly pink pantsuit emerged from a parked tour bus and called out loudly, "Miss Fairfax doesn't appear to be at home today, but we can still get a lovely photo!"

"It's Beverly!" said a deep male voice beside Jane with lascivious glee. "We should say hello."

"We should not," said Jane, giving Byron a withering look.

Jane had seen the woman--and her pantsuit--before. Her name was Beverly Shrop. A retired kindergarten teacher, Beverly had devoted the past five years to becoming the number-one-ranked reviewer of romance novels on a very popular bookselling site. That her "reviews" consisted largely of regurgitating a book's cover copy mattered little to her readers. Nor did it apparently occur to them that in order for Beverly to have amassed 12,729 reviews she would have had to have read an average of 6.9 books a day.

Beverly had subsequently started a website of her own--ShropTalk.com--on which she not only posted her reviews but also featured interviews with romance writers and kept her readers abreast of what was happening in the world of romantic fiction. This, naturally, had increased her profile even more, to the point where publishers started not just paying attention to her but actively courting her.

When Constance was published, Jane had done the requisite interview with Beverly. She'd found the woman dull and her questions insipid (Do you wear any particular perfume when you write? If you were a flower, what would you be?) and had been relieved when it was over. She'd hoped never to encounter Beverly Shrop again.

Beverly, however, was determined to make the most of her talents. This took the form of offering romance-themed tours to readers who wanted to visit the hometowns of their favorite authors or to visit the locations that had inspired their favorite books. She had several itineraries, among them *The World of Edith Wharton*, *Love and Lust in Santa Fe* (a surprising number of romance writers lived there), and *Jackie Oh!: The People and Places of Jackie Collins*.

Most recently Beverly had designed a field trip around writers of New York and New England. Brakeston was included on the itinerary primarily because of Byron, who the previous year had revealed himself to be the real author behind the very popular novelist Penelope Wentz. Complicating matters, he had chosen to use yet another pseudonym in making his announcement, and so the world at large knew him as Tavish Osborn, a name he now adopted for everyday use.

"You just don't like her because she wasn't going to include you on the tour until I suggested it," Byron said.

Jane snorted. "I hardly think so. I don't like her because she turns literature into a spectacle."

Byron laughed, earning him another fierce look from Jane. "Literature has always been spectacle," he said. "Do you really think we held all of those literary salons so that we could exchange ideas? Of course not. It was so we could gossip about everyone who wasn't there. And don't you remember how James Joyce used to wander through Paris mumbling nonsense words until people recognized him?"

He cleared his throat and in a perfect imitation of Joyce's impish Irish brogue said, "Spifflepond puppetdingle griffintide! Woozlewoozle crumpetpeal dirf! Why yes, I am James Joyce. You enjoyed *Ulysses*? Bless you, madam. Bless you."

Jane stifled a laugh. It was true. Joyce had often wandered back and forth between *La Closerie des Lilas* and the *Dingo Bar*, hoping to be noticed. He denied it, of course, but they all knew.

"It's hardly the same thing," she told Byron, still not giving in.

Byron made a vague noise. Much to Jane's irritation, he reveled in the attention that Beverly Shrop's tours brought him. He frequently welcomed Beverly and her clients into his home, even offering them tea. Jane, on the other hand, avoided them as much as possible, finding the whole business unseemly. Although even her

book publicist had encouraged her to cooperate at least a little.

And now Beverly and her minions were preventing Jane from getting into her own house. She seethed. Beverly never stayed less than half an hour, and from the look of things they'd only recently arrived.

"We'll just have to leave until they're gone," Jane said as she began to turn the car around.

"Wait," Byron said. "I have a better idea."

Jane paused. "I doubt it," she said. "But go on."

"This is a perfect opportunity for you to practice making yourself invisible," said Byron.

For the past few months--following an attack on Jane by an undead and very angry Charlotte Bronte--Byron had been teaching Jane more about her vampire powers. Despite living for more than two centuries, Jane had studiously avoided delving into the mysteries of being immortal. She had been convinced, however, that it was in her best interests to learn what she was capable of, particularly in the event of another attack.

Unfortunately, in nine months she had succeeded only in improving the quality of her glamoring. She had long been proficient in the basics--at least enough to seduce those she used to quench her occasional thirst--but now she was able to implant thoughts into the heads of others, as long as her subjects weren't overly bright to begin with.

Invisibility, however, was proving more troublesome. Despite practicing every day, she had so far managed only brief periods of dimness. Her meager results were irritating both to her and to Byron, who just that afternoon had accused her of not trying hard enough.

"I don't know," Jane said.

"Why not?" asked Byron. "Avoiding Beverly is the perfect incentive for vanishing. In fact, I can't think of a better opportunity for you to prove yourself."

"I'm really not in the mood," Jane said. "I have a headache, and--"

"It's time to sink or swim," Byron interrupted as he opened his door. He gave Jane a wink as he sauntered toward the crowd of women. "Beverly!" he called cheerfully. "How lovely to see you."

Jane ducked down. "Horrid man," she hissed. "How I loathe you."

She could just turn the car around and leave. That would be the easiest way out of the situation. But now Byron had made it a matter of pride. If she fled, he would never let her forget it. Which is just what he wants, she thought. He doesn't think I can do it.

"We'll just see about that," she said firmly.

She closed her eyes and took several deep breaths. Imagine you're made of glass, she told herself.

She tried to hold that picture in her mind. Other thoughts intruded, but she brushed them aside. When she could envision her body as completely transparent, she opened her eyes and held up one hand. Behind it she

could see the steering wheel.

"I did it!" she cried, and immediately her hand became solid again.

"Damn!" she muttered.

She closed her eyes and once more let the image of her invisible self fill her mind. Again she opened her eyes, and again she could see through her hand. But this time the illusion held. She sat for several minutes to make sure she wasn't going to pop back into view, then opened the door and got out. She hoped no one would notice the door opening and closing seemingly by itself.

Slowly she approached Beverly and her group, all the while trying to keep her thoughts calm. Several of the women were circled around Byron, but still Jane's path to the front door was blocked. She would have to go around to the back and get in through the kitchen.

You don't have the key to that door, she reminded herself. You never go in that way. Still, she had no choice. Her lawn and stoop were littered with gawkers.

"No," she heard Byron say. "I haven't seen Miss Fairfax. Perhaps you should try knocking again."

Shut up, Jane thought, knowing full well that Byron could tell she was nearby. Something in her vision changed for a second. She looked down and saw that she was becoming visible. She was very faint, but nonetheless there. Panic gripped her, and she grew more solid. She had to get into the house.

She ran, slipping past a woman who was examining her rosebushes. The woman looked up, a puzzled expression on her face. Jane ignored her, reaching the corner just as she winked back into sight.

She tried the door and found it locked, as she'd known it would be. The only way in was through the kitchen window. She went to it and pushed up on the frame, praying that she hadn't locked it. It slid up with only slight hesitation.

Gripping the sill, she jumped as hard as she could. Her head passed through the window, and for a moment she felt the relief of having succeeded. This, however, was a momentary joy, as she now found herself stuck. Below her Tom stared up at her with a mixture of bemusement and disgust.

"Don't look at me like that," Jane told him. "I will not be ridiculed by a cat."

She was hanging over the windowsill, her front half in the kitchen and her back half kicking uselessly at the air. Finally, with enormous effort, she managed to propel herself forward and onto the linoleum, almost landing on Tom. The black-and-white cat stepped neatly to one side, avoiding her. Moments later Jasper, the springer spaniel Jane had adopted after he'd helped her escape from Charlotte Bronte's house, trotted in. Looking at her, he gave a soft woof.

"What a wonderful guard dog you are," Jane told him as she got up and dusted herself off. She turned and shut the window.

And now you're a prisoner in your own house, she told herself. If you'd just step out and say hello, they'd go away.

But she knew they wouldn't. A simple greeting would turn into requests for autographs and pictures. Then someone would ask--ever so sweetly--if they could have just a peek at the room in which she wrote her books. And of course she couldn't say no without seeming churlish, and then it would descend into madness. She imagined hysterical women rifling through her drawers and peering into her bathroom cabinet, and it made her head ache.

The phone rang, startling her. Noting the number on the caller ID display, she picked up.

"Well, you're not going to believe this," a voice said.

Jane was slowly getting used to Satvari Thangavadivelu's manner of launching into a conversation with no preliminaries. At the insistence of her editor, Kelly Littlejohn, Jane had signed with the Waters-Harding Agency to represent her in her business dealings. Satvari was the head of the firm's film department and had shepherded Constance through the Hollywood minefield.

"What won't I believe?" Jane asked.

"They want to film there," Satvari said.

"There where?"

"There there," said Satvari. "Brakeston. They want to film Constance in Brakeston. Well, the exterior shots, anyway. Apparently they've decided it will be more authentic than shooting on a soundstage."

"They're bringing everything here?" Jane said, not quite understanding. "The cameras and . . . and lights and . . . actors?"

"All of it. And they'll be there in a week."

"A week?" Jane exclaimed. "How am I supposed to get ready in a week?"

"Relax," said Satvari. "You don't have to have anything to do with it, remember?"

Jane breathed more easily. "That's right," she said. "I forgot."

"Unless," Satvari said.

Jane heard an unsettling tone in the agent's voice. "Unless what?"

"Unless you want to be involved," said Satvari. "It seems they'd like you to maybe help out a little bit with the script."

"You told me that was a bad idea," Jane reminded her. "You told me not to even see the film."

"I told you not to try to write the script," said Satvari. "But this isn't writing it. It's more like rewriting it. Just a little. You know, some dialogue here and there."

Jane sighed. "Can I think about it?" she asked.

"Of course," Satvari answered. "But don't think too long. If you say no, they're going to ask Penelope Wentz to do it."

"Penelope!" Jane exclaimed.

"Sorry, Tavish Osborn," said Satvari. "And yes, they're going to ask her. I mean him. She's a him, right? I can't keep it all straight."

"I'll do it," Jane said.

"Really?" asked Satvari. "You're sure?"

"Absolutely sure," Jane assured her.

"Great," said Satvari. "I'll work out the details and call you tomorrow." She hung up without a goodbye.

"Penelope Wentz," Jane remarked to Tom, who was sitting in a spot of sun, washing his face. "Honestly. As if Byron could ever do justice to my novel."

"What about me?" Byron materialized in the room, startling Jane.

"Nothing," said Jane. "It's not important."

The doorbell rang, and for a moment Jane almost picked up the phone, thinking someone was calling. Realizing what it was, she was overcome by a desire to go hide in the closet. She had visions of Beverly Shrop standing on her front steps, grinning like the Cheshire cat while her minions crowded behind her.

"I heard you say my name," said Byron. "You might as well tell me."

Again the air was filled with an electric trill. Jane, still ignoring Byron, was beginning to retreat to the bedroom when she saw that the little light on her phone was blinking. Now someone is calling, she realized.

Grateful for the distraction, she picked up without looking at the caller ID. "Hello?"

"It's me." Walter's voice had a strange tone to it.

"Are you all right?" Jane asked. "You sound peculiar."

"I'm hiding behind a hedge," said Walter. "There's a gaggle of Shropheads outside your house."

"I was hoping they'd be gone by now," Jane said. "Best to keep yourself hidden. Beverly knows who you are. If she sees you, you're done for."

"Is that Walter?" Byron called out. "Tell him I say hello."

"Is that Brian?" asked Walter. "What's he doing there?"

Jane heard a slight edge in Walter's voice. Although he and Byron were cordial to each other, Jane knew Walter was still a little suspicious of the man he knew Jane had once been involved with.

"He just stopped over to borrow a book," Jane said.

"Oh," said Walter. "Well, I wanted to do this in person, but I guess this will have to do," he continued.

"Do what in person?"

"I have something to tell you," said Walter. He took a deep breath. "My mother is coming."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Flowers:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each book has different aim or even goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They can be reading whatever they get because their hobby is usually reading a book. What about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, person feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or perhaps exercise. Well, probably you will require this Jane Goes Batty: A Novel (Jane Fairfax).

Brandon Adams:

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Ronald Malone:

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