

**SHE'S BACK**

# Bridget Jones

## The Edge of Reason

'The first, the best, the original,  
the seminal' MAIL ON SUNDAY

Helen Fielding

**Bridget Jones:  
The Edge of Reason**

**HELEN FIELDING**

PICADOR



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## **Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason**

'Bridget Jones's phenomenal success is not just because of her creator's brilliant wit, comic timing and social observation, but because she *captures* what – alas – it is like to be female . . . I laughed out loud many times while reading *The Edge of Reason*. Fielding is excellent at a mixture of perception and comedy, capturing thoughts everyone has but hasn't actually expressed'

**Sally Emerson, *Daily Mail***

'Bridget is probably the most successful comic creation of this decade, the most controversial and talked-about female fictional character since Lolita . . . Bridget terminology has slipped into common parlance . . . She is still on superb form'

**Stephanie Merritt, *Observer***

'Could *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* really be as funny as its predecessor? The answer is yes . . . Bridget, the original Singleton, is on ripping form in the sequel . . . But she is far more than the patron saint of single women: she is everyman, or rather, everyperson'

**Virginia Blackburn, *Express***

'Like that other gifted commentator Woody Allen, she makes modern urban neuroses, if not art, then at least very, very funny'

Carla Power, *Newsweek*

'Fielding has produced a genuinely original fictional voice. Like Anita Loos before her or, perhaps more pertinently, E. M. Delafield in her *Diary of a Provincial Lady*, she has created a devastatingly funny parody of her life and times . . . Any woman of a certain age can recognize elements of Bridget in herself and will have enormous fun trying to spot them in the book'

Rachel Simhon, *Daily Telegraph*

'Bridget Jones is no mere fictional character, she's the Spirit of the Age'

Melanie McDonagh, *Evening Standard*

'Austen, as before, in Fielding's model, radically but affectionately updated . . . There is, to be honest, a bit of Bridget Jones in a lot of the women and men of a certain generation, and to have those aspects so affectionately rendered, and both ridiculed and subversively celebrated, is a welcome treat'

Robert Potts, *TLS*

**Helen Fielding** has written two other novels,  
*Cause Celeb* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, which became  
a worldwide bestseller

Also by Helen Fielding in Picador

**Cause Celeb**

**Bridget Jones's Diary**

**To the other Bridgets**



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# 1

## **Happily Ever After**



## Monday 27 January

*9st 3 (total fat groove), boyfriends 1 (hurrah!), shags 3 (hurrah!), calories 2,100, calories used up by shags 600, so total calories 1,500 (exemplary).*

7.15 a.m. Hurrah! The wilderness years are over. For four weeks and five days now have been in functional relationship with adult male thereby proving am not love pariah as previously feared. Feel marvellous, rather like Jemima Goldsmith or similar radiant newlywed opening cancer hospital in veil while everyone imagines her in bed with Imran Khan. Ooh. Mark Darcy just moved. Maybe he will wake up and talk to me about my opinions.

7.30 a.m. Mark Darcy has not woken up. I know, will get up and make him fantastic fried breakfast with sausages, scrambled eggs and mushrooms or maybe Eggs Benedict or Florentine.

7.31 a.m. Depending what Eggs Benedict or Florentine actually are.

7.32 a.m. Except do not have any mushrooms or sausages.

7.33 a.m. Or eggs.

7.34 a.m. Or – come to think of it – milk.

7.35 a.m. Still has not woken up. Mmmm. He is lovely. Love looking at Him asleep. V. sexy broad shoulders and hairy chest. Not that sex object or anything. Interested in brain. Mmmm.

7.37 a.m. Still has not woken up. Must not make noise, realize, but maybe could wake Him subtly by thought vibes.

7.40 a.m. Maybe will put . . . GAAAAAH!

7.50 a.m. Was Mark Darcy sitting bolt upright yelling, 'Bridget, will you stop. Bloody. Staring at me when I am asleep. Go find something to do.'

8.45 a.m. In Coins Café having cappuccino, chocolate croissant, and cigarette. Is relief to have fag in open and not to be on best behaviour. V. complicated actually having man in house as cannot freely spend requisite amount of time in bathroom or turn into gas chamber as conscious of other person late for work, desperate for pee etc.; also disturbed by Mark folding up underpants at night, rendering it strangely embarrassing now simply to keep all own clothes in pile on floor. Also he is coming round again tonight so have to go to supermarket either before or after work. Well, do not *have to* but horrifying

truth is want to, in bizarre possibly genetic-throwback-style way such as could not admit to Sharon.

8.50 a.m. Mmm. Wonder what Mark Darcy would be like as father (father to own offspring, mean. Not self. That would indeed be sick in manner of Oedipus)?

8.55 a.m. Anyway, must not obsess or fantasize.

9 a.m. Wonder if Una and Geoffrey Alconbury would let us put marquee on their lawn for the recept— Gaaah!

Was my mother, walking into my café bold as brass in a Country Casuals pleated skirt and apple-green blazer with shiny gold buttons, like a spaceman turning up in the House of Commons squirting slime and sitting itself down calmly on the front bench.

'Hello, darling,' she trilled. 'Just on my way to Debenhams and I know you always come in here for your breakfast. Thought I'd pop in and see when you want your colours done. Ooh I fancy a cup of coffee. Do you think they'll warm up the milk?'

'Mum, I've told you I don't want my colours done,' I muttered, scarlet, as people stared and a sulky, rushed-off-her-feet waitress bustled up.

'Oh don't be such a stick-in-the-mud, darling. You need to make a statement about yourself! Not sitting on the fence all the time in all these fudges and slurries. Oh, hello, dear.'

Mum went into her slow, kindly 'Let's try to make best friends with the waiting staff and be the most special person in the café for no fathomable reason' voice.

'Now. Let. Me. See. D'you know? I think I'll have a

coffee. I've had so many cups of tea this morning up in Grafton Underwood with my husband Colin that I'm sick to death of tea. But could you warm me up some milk? I can't drink cold milk in coffee. It gives me indigestion. And then my daughter Bridget will have . . .'

Grrr. Why do parents do this. Why? Is it desperate mature person's plea for attention and importance, or is it that our urban generation are too busy and suspicious of each other to be open and friendly? I remember when I first came to London I used to smile at everyone until a man on the tube escalator masturbated into the back of my coat.

'Espresso? Filter? Latte? Cap: half fat or de-caf?' snapped the waitress, sweeping all the plates off the table next to her and looking at me accusingly as if Mum was my fault.

'Half fat de-caf cap and a latte,' I whispered apologetically.

'What a surly girl, doesn't she speak English?' huffed Mum at her retreating back. 'This is a funny place to live, isn't it? Don't they know what they want to put on in the morning?'

I followed her gaze to the fashionable Trustafarian girls at the next table. One was tapping at her laptop and wearing Timberlands, a petticoat, a Rastafarian bonnet and a fleece, while the other, in Prada stilettos, hiking socks, surfing shorts, a floor-length llamaskin coat and a Bhutanese herdsman's woolly hat with earflaps, was yelling into her mobile headset, 'I mean, he said if he found me smoking skunk again he'd take away the flat. And I'm like, "Fucking, Daddy"' – while her six-year-old child picked miserably at a plate of chips.



'Is that girl talking to herself with that language?' said Mum. 'It's a funny world you live in, isn't it? Wouldn't you do better living near normal people?'

'They are normal people,' I said furiously, nodding in illustration out at the street where unfortunately a nun in a brown habit was pushing two babies along in a pram.

'You see this is why you get yourself all mixed up.'

'I don't get myself mixed up.'

'Yes you do,' she said. 'Anyway. How's it going with Mark?'

'Lovely,' I said moonily, at which she gave me a hard stare.

'You're not going to you-know-what with him, are you? He won't marry you, you know.'

Grrr. Grrrr. No sooner have I started going out with the man she'd been trying to force me onto for eighteen months ('Malcolm and Elaine's son, darling, divorced, terribly lonely and rich') than I feel like I'm running some kind of Territorial Army obstacle course, scrambling over walls and nets to bring her home a big silver cup with a bow on.

'You know what they say afterwards,' she was going on. "'Oh, she was easy meat." I mean when Merle Robertshaw started going out with Percival her mother said, "Make sure he keeps that thing just for weeing with."'

'Mother—' I protested. I mean it was a bit rich coming from her. Not six months ago she was running around with a Portuguese tour operator with a gentleman's handbag.

'Oh, did I tell you,' she interrupted, smoothly changing the subject, 'Una and I are going to Kenya.'

'What!' I yelled.