

Bridget Jones Diary

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This article is about the fictional character. For the actor and writer, see [Bridget Jones Nelson](#). For the English musician Bridgette Jones, see [Fluffy \(band\)](#).

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Bridget Jones is a [franchise](#) based on the fictional character with the same name. English writer [Helen Fielding](#) started her *[Bridget Jones's Diary](#)* column in *[The Independent](#)* in 1995, chronicling the life of Bridget Jones as a thirtysomething single woman in [London](#) as she tries to make sense of life and love with the help of a surrogate "[urban](#) family" of friends in the 1990s. The column [lampooned](#) the obsession of women with [women's magazines](#) such as *[Cosmopolitan](#)* and wider social trends in Britain at the time. Helen Fielding published the novelisation of the column in 1996, followed by a sequel in 1999 called *[Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason](#)*. Both novels were adapted for the big screen in 2001 and 2004, starring [Renée Zellweger](#) as Bridget Jones, and [Hugh Grant](#) and [Colin Firth](#) as the men in her life, Daniel Cleaver and Mark Darcy. After Fielding had ceased to work for *The Daily Telegraph* in late 1998, the feature began again in *The Independent* on 4 August 2005 and finished in June 2006.

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[\[edit\]](#) **Plot summary**

[\[edit\]](#) **Original column and novelisations**

Bridget Jones graduated from [Bangor University](#). She is a single, thirty-eight-year-old woman whose life is a satirised version of the stereotypical single London thirty-something in the nineties. She has some bad habits - smoking and drinking too much - but she annually writes her [New Year's resolutions](#) in her [diary](#), determined to stop smoking, drink no more than fourteen alcohol units a week, and eat more [pulses](#). In the two novels and screen adaptations, Bridget's mother is bored with her life as a housewife in the country and leaves Bridget's father. Bridget repeatedly flirts with her boss, Daniel Cleaver. A successful barrister named Mark Darcy also keeps popping into Bridget's life, being extremely awkward, and sometimes coming off a bit rude. After Bridget and Mark reach an understanding of each other and find a sort of happiness together, she gains some self-esteem and cuts down on her cigarette consumption. However, Bridget's obsession with [self-help books](#) plus several misunderstandings cannot keep the couple together forever.

[\[edit\]](#) Return to the *Independent*

The new *Independent* column was set in the then-present day of 2005 and 2006, with references being made to events such as [River Thames whale](#),^[1] and has dropped some of the motifs of the original diary, particularly the [alcohol unit](#) and calorie counts. Despite the time advance, Cleaver and Darcy were still the two men in Jones' life^[2] ("I'm not sleeping with them both at once," she explains later to her friend Shaz. "I accidentally slept with each of them separately"),^[3] and the plotline launched into a [pregnancy](#). As author Helen Fielding said, "she's heading in a different direction."^[4] The column is continued into 2006. In the last entry, Bridget Jones gave birth to a baby boy, fathered by Daniel Cleaver. She moved in with Daniel.^[5] However, Mark was not entirely out of the picture, as he previously suggested that he would like to adopt the child.^[6] The column finished with the note, "Bridget is giving every attention to the care of her newborn son – and is too busy to keep up her Diary for the time being."^[5]

[\[edit\]](#) History

[\[edit\]](#) Original column

In the mid-nineties, [Charles Leadbeater](#), at the time the features editor of the English newspaper *The Independent*, offered [Helen Fielding](#), then a journalist on *The Independent on Sunday*, a weekly column about urban life in London designed to appeal to young professional women. Fielding accepted and Bridget Jones was born on 28 February 1995.^[7] The instantaneous popularity of the columns led to publication of the first book, *[Bridget Jones's Diary](#)*, in 1996.

The column appeared regularly every Wednesday on the pages of *The Independent* for almost three years: the last one was published on 10 September 1997. A couple of months later, on 15 November 1997, Helen Fielding resumed her weekly diary on *[The Daily Telegraph](#)*.^[8] Fielding ceased to work for *The Daily Telegraph* on 19 December 1998.

[\[edit\]](#) Novelisations

Main articles: [Bridget Jones's Diary](#) and [Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason](#)

The column was made into a [novel](#) in 1996, *Bridget Jones's Diary*. The plot is loosely based on *Pride and Prejudice* by [Jane Austen](#). The second book, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, was published on 1998, and was based on the plot of another of Austen's novels, *Persuasion*.

Fielding named the character of Mark Darcy after the *Pride and Prejudice* character [Fitzwilliam Darcy](#) and described him exactly like [Colin Firth](#), who played Mr Darcy in the 1995 BBC adaptation.^[9] Mark Darcy was also partly modelled after a friend of Helen Fielding, Mark Muller, a barrister with chambers in Gray's Inn Square and the Kurdish revolutionary leader that Darcy defends in the movie was inspired by a real case of Muller's.^[10] The character of Shazzer was reportedly based on the director of the film, Sharon Maguire, who is a friend of Helen Fielding.^[11]

[\[edit\]](#) Return to *The Independent*

The feature began again in *The Independent* on 4 August 2005 with a "Sunday 31 July" entry. A book containing all of the original columns was given away with the paper the following Saturday. This relaunch of the column is also printed in the *Irish Independent*. The *International Herald Tribune* reviewed the new column rather favourably, commenting that Fielding's satire was in good form.^[2] The *Daily Mail* reviewed it less favourably, saying it lacked the genuine quality of the first two novels.^[12]

[\[edit\]](#) Connections to *Pride and Prejudice*

Helen Fielding (as Bridget Jones) wrote of her love of the *1995 BBC adaptation of Pride and Prejudice* in her *Bridget Jones's Diary* column during the original British broadcast,^[13] mentioning her "simple human need for [Darcy](#) to get off with [Elizabeth](#)" and regarding the couple as her "chosen representatives in the field of shagging, or rather courtship".^[14] Fielding loosely reworked the plot of *Pride And Prejudice* in her 1996 novelisation of the column, naming Bridget's uptight love interest "Mark Darcy" and describing him exactly like Colin Firth.^{[9][13]} Following a first meeting with Firth during his filming of *Fever Pitch* in 1996, Fielding asked Firth to collaborate in what would become an eight-page interview between Bridget Jones and Firth in her 1999 sequel novel, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*. Conducting the real interview with Firth in [Rome](#), Fielding lapsed into Bridget Jones mode and obsessed over Darcy in his wet shirt. Firth participated in the following editing process of what critics would consider "one of the funniest sequences in the diary's sequel".^{[15][16]} Both novels make various other references to the BBC serial.^[17]

Pride and Prejudice screenwriter Andrew Davies collaborated on the screenplays for the 2001 and 2004 *Bridget Jones* films, which would show [Crispin Bonham-Carter](#) (Mr Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice*) and [Lucy Robinson](#) (Mrs Hurst) in minor roles. The self-referential in-joke between the projects intrigued Colin Firth to accept the role of Mark Darcy,^[13] as it gave him an opportunity to ridicule and liberate himself from his *Pride and Prejudice* character.^[18] Film critic [James Berardinelli](#) would later state that Firth "plays this part [of Mark Darcy] exactly as he played the earlier role, making it evident that the two Darcys are essentially the same".^[19] The producers never found a solution to incorporate the Jones-Firth interview in the second film, but shot a spoof interview with Firth as himself and [Renée Zellweger](#) staying in-character as Bridget Jones after a day's wrap. The scene is available as a [deleted scene](#) on [DVD](#).^[20]

[[edit](#)] Adaptations

[[edit](#)] Screen

Main articles: [Bridget Jones's Diary \(film\)](#) and [Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason \(film\)](#)

The first novel was turned into a [movie of the same name](#) in 2001, directed by [Sharon Maguire](#). The movie starred [Renée Zellweger](#) as Bridget, [Hugh Grant](#) as Daniel Cleaver, and [Colin Firth](#) as Mark Darcy. Before the film was released, a considerable amount of controversy surrounded the casting of the [American](#) Texan Zellweger as what some saw as a quintessentially [British](#) heroine: however, her performance is widely considered to be of a high standard, and garnered Zellweger an Academy Award nomination. A second movie was released in 2004, directed by [Beeban Kidron](#). There are many differences between the books and the films. The production company [Working Title](#) has confirmed that a third movie is in the early stages of production and the film is due to be released in 2013.^[21]

[[edit](#)] Musical

Main article: [Bridget Jones's Diary \(Musical\)](#)

A musical adaptation of the franchise is currently in Workshop productions in London, featuring [Sheridan Smith](#) in the title role. The show is due to open in London's West End in 2012, although no date has been officially confirmed.

[[edit](#)] References

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- ↑ ^{*a*} ^{*b*} James, Caryn (20 August 2005). "[Bridget suffers through a new serial](#)". *International Herald Tribune*. Retrieved 2008-06-22.
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- ↑ "[Bridget Jones back in new diary](#)". *BBC News*. 4 August 2005. Retrieved 2008-06-22.
- ↑ ^{*a*} ^{*b*} Jones, Bridget ([Fielding, Helen](#)). *Bridget Jones's Diary – Saturday 10 June*. *The Independent*.
- ↑ Jones, Bridget ([Fielding, Helen](#)). *Bridget Jones's Diary – Tuesday 21 March*. *The Independent*. "[telephone call] 'Bridget, it's Mark. You know what I said the other night - about adopting the baby? I did mean it you know. It's only the wretched Cleaver element which gets in the way. Maybe we should talk.'"
- ↑ [Independent Columns 1995](#)
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***Bridget Jones* by [Helen Fielding](#)**

Novels [Bridget Jones's Diary](#) (1996) • [Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason](#) (1999)

Films [Bridget Jones's Diary](#) (2001) • [Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason](#) (2004)

Other [Bridget Jones' Diary \(musical\)](#)