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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Pride and Prejudice* Retelling wins 2021 Award for Fantasy**

“Miss Bennet’s Dragon” wins prestigious Royal Dragonfly Award with Austen empowered by Dragons

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA, January 31, 2022 —** Retellings of Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice” range from Afro-Latino pride to shambling zombies. In M Verant’s bold “Miss Bennet’s Dragon,” Elizabeth Bennet commands dragons, bookish Mary is an activist, and the story has a message—society’s prejudices have not changed between 1812 and 2022. Now the novel, published by Acerbic Press, is a 2021 Royal Dragonfly Award Winner for Science Fiction and Fantasy.

Jane Austen’s England is usually portrayed with elegant ladies in beautiful gowns, but women’s rights were severely curtailed. Workers protested income inequality. The slave trade was reviled but lucrative. And progressive activism was driven by women.

“I wanted a story that was exciting and romantic, but that showed the social conflict of Regency England,” Verant says. “Elizabeth Bennet is twenty years old. That’s about the age of modern activists like Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai, and X González. So when Elizabeth Bennet’s privileged life collapses, she fights for her rights.”

In “Miss Bennet’s Dragon,” only women can bind the powerful creatures called draca. But England’s patriarchy has used that strength for repression. Women are shunned for impurity, and draca are restricted to the wealthy elite.

“Women have unique power, but England’s establishment has manipulated that for control and disempowerment,” Verant says.

Exploring social issues through speculative fiction fits the era. Reformer and feminist Mary Shelley published “Frankenstein,” a story of moral and technological disruption, only five years after Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice.” There was a lot more to the Regency than gowns and bonnets.

“Miss Bennet’s Dragon” is available now in hardcover, paperback, ebook, and audiobook.

M Verant writes speculative fiction that explores social and political themes. “Miss Bennet’s Dragon” is his second novel. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

For more information about Verant’s book, to request a review copy, or to schedule an interview, please contact Lisa Cooper at [press@acerbicpress.com](mailto:press@acerbicpress.com)

*Praise for “Miss Bennet’s Dragon”:*

“Rarely have I read a book that has captured me so thoroughly. Alongside the ‘draca’ are a myriad of other themes. Female power in a patriarchal society. Radical evangelism. Slavery. Choice and free will. Heavy stuff, but woven seamlessly into the plot. The storytelling itself was impeccable.” – Megami, *Vine Voice*

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