



The Baum Plan for Financial Independence: and Other Stories

John Kessel

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"Pride and Prometheus," a story in **The Baum Plan for Financial Independence** involving characters from Jane Austen's **Pride and Prejudice** and Mary Shelley's **Frankenstein**, is winner of the 2008 Nebula award for Best Novelette.

A long-awaited collection of fourteen stories that intersect imaginatively with *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and Flannery O'Connor. Kessel, whose story "A Clean Escape" was filmed as part of ABC's *Masters of Science Fiction*, ranges through genres with a lean, graceful style that incorporates everything from future autobiography, alternate history, phone sex, perpetual motion, and his modern classic sequence of four stories about life on the moon.

"In his first collection in a decade, Kessel jumps from place to place like a jolty time machine. In "Pride and Prometheus," *Frankenstein* and Jane Austen intersect in an uncanny Victorian tale of unrequited love, while "A Lunar Quartet" introduces a matriarchal, hypersexual moon colony in the future. But as a group, these stories offer a sustained exploration of the ways gender dynamics can both empower and enslave us. Kessel's wit sparkles throughout, peaking with the most uproariously weird phone-sex conversation you'll ever read ("The Red Phone")." A-

—*Entertainment Weekly*

"Anyone who thinks genre writing can't be literary deserves to have Kessel's hefty new collection of stories dropped on his or her head."

—*Time Out Chicago*

"Dark, wacky, wide-ranging short stories."

—*Charlotte Observer*

"A pleasant callback to the days when science-fiction authors read more than just science fiction."

—*The Seattle Stranger*

"Kessel's blend of dark humor and reality-stretching scenarios is consistently mesmerizing."

—*Booklist*

"These well-crafted stories, full of elegantly drawn characters, deliver a powerful emotional punch."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Kessel proves himself again a master not just of science fiction, but also of the modern short story, crafting compelling characters and following them through plots that never fail to please—or to defy prediction."

—*Metro Magazine*

"One of the best collections of the year."

—*Locus*

"Kessel is a deft stylist and a master of all his tools, whose range is nearly limitless."

—*SciFi.com*

"John Kessel's writing exists at the edge of things, in the dark corner where the fiction section abuts the science-fiction shelves, in the hyphen where magic meets realism. Reading Kessel's wonderful fabulations is like staying out too late partying and seeing strange angels while stumbling home in the dawn's first light. This is one of those too rare short story collections that you can recommend with confidence to both the literary snob and the hard-core computer geek."

—Rich Rennicks, Malaprop's Bookstore, Asheville, NC

"Invest. Invest now.... Your returns will be multitudinous."

—*The Fix*

John Kessel co-directs the creative writing program at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. A winner of the Nebula, Sturgeon, Locus, and Tiptree awards, his books include *Good News from Outer Space*, *Corrupting Dr. Nice*, and *The Pure Product*, and story collection, *Meeting in Infinity* (a *New York Times* Notable Book).

Most recently, with James Patrick Kelly he edited the anthologies *Feeling Very Strange: The Slipstream Anthology*, *Rewired: The Post-Cyberpunk Anthology*, and *The Secret History of Science Fiction*. He lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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