

Jane of Battery Park

Jaye Viner

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A chance encounter changes the trajectory of two lives in Jaye Viner's novel *Jane of Battery Park*.

Eight years ago, Jane and Daniel met and connected in Battery Park. She saw a cute surfer dude. He saw a gorgeous girl. And the man watching them saw Daniel as a threat.

Jane and Daniel's plans to meet the next day were derailed when Daniel was kidnapped by the Vanguard, a group of conservative religious domestic terrorists who take celebrities whom they feel showcase base morals and stream their "trials." Consequences for a guilty verdict are immediate.

The Vanguard are also Jane's family. Jane escapes them; in the present, she works as a nurse in California, where she stays under the radar. When her newest patient turns out to be Daniel's mother, she holds slim hope of reconnecting with him. But a bet between brothers brings Daniel and Jane together again. At the same time: the Vanguard find Jane, and will do anything to bring her back into their fold.

The book's focus on Jane and Daniel is tight, but its secondary characters are also rendered with verve. The narrative transitions with ease between Jane's growing certainty that her family has found her, and Daniel's increasing suspicion that Jane knows something about his kidnapping. He suffers from severe panic attacks and PTSD, and he wears a prosthetic leg.

The book holds the tension between Jane's knowledge of her family's wrongdoings and her need for self-preservation without demonizing her, but also makes space for Daniel's mental health needs upon his realization that Jane's family were his attackers. The abrupt ending suggests that there is more to their story.

Jane of Battery Park is an atmospheric novel centered by its characters' determination, regret, and second chances.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (July / August 2021)

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