

# Forcing Her Hand

*author: Carrie Mollenkopf*

---

2026-06

## Synopsis

---

authori¼š	Carrie
Mollenkopf	
readByi¼š	Virtual
inLanguagei¼š	english

“Fitzwilliam Darcy, you are a complete idiot!” Elizabeth snapped before slamming the now filled trunk. The motion, so sudden, spooked the cat who leapt from his place to rub circles around her limbs. Scooping the mewling creature into her arms, Elizabeth rubbed her face into its fur, finding a measure of comfort.

“No wonder lonely old women keep cats; they are much better than husbands,” she insisted, wondering if Charlotte would part with the cat.

Three weeks had elapsed since she had arrived in Hunsford, and Elizabeth had seen enough. Charlotte, by her own admission, was perfectly happy, and although Elizabeth would not have wished for the same situation, she believed her. It was time to go home. The journey back to Hertfordshire would take several hours and one change of coach, but by nightfall, she would sleep in familiar surroundings, and hopefully, forget that Fitzwilliam Darcy ever existed.

But less than an hour later, as the carriage bore her away, a messenger arrived at the vicarage, bearing a letter addressed to Elizabeth. It had no postal mark, nor a return address.

“I am afraid you have just missed her. Shall I send it along to her home in Hertfordshire?” Reverend Collins inquired, curious as to who would send personal correspondence in such an expensive manner.

“No sir, I was instructed by Mr. Darcy to give it to her myself,” the young man admitted, his countenance bearing a worried frown now that his task could not be completed.

“Indeed. Are you aware that I am cousin to Miss Bennet? Surely your master will trust my personal delivery? I give you my word as a man of God. You do trust me, don’t you?”

The vicar’s eyes glittered with power and he clutched the cross about his neck, watching with glee as the boy trembled slightly before handing over the letter. Mr. Darcy might have given him a sixpence, but what was that to the cost of his soul? He was a god-fearing person.

“I’ll suppose that would be fine.”

“Of course, it is,” Collins agreed and snatched the folded parchment to his

chest before shutting the door without another word.<br />Inside, and in the privacy of his own home, the Reverend William Collins retreated to the security of his library. It was the one place that Charlotte never ventured. And for that, he was thankful, for while she was all that a wife should be, he could not forget the comely figure of Elizabeth Bennet. Breaking the seal, his eyes devoured the confession inside, but felt no sympathy for either party. So, this was the person that had captured her attention? Reading on to completion, he smiled to himself with satisfaction before refolding the letter. It seemed that every family, even those as high and mighty as the Darcys had their secrets. Now, he wondered with considerable amusement, was his esteemed patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, aware of them? Did she know how dangerously close to scandal her niece had been? It was information that he would guard with his life. That is, until it the time came when it might prove useful. But until then, let Elizabeth Bennet believe what she might about Mr. Darcy, it was just desserts for her own snobbery.<br />

## Reader's comments

---

comment 1:

â€"â€" ()