



## **A Will of Iron**

*Linda Beutler*

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# A Will of Iron

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From the Author of The Red Chrysanthemum.

Only days after his disastrous proposal, the untimely death of Anne de Bourgh draws Fitzwilliam Darcy and his cousin Colonel Alexander Fitzwilliam back to Rosings Park before Elizabeth Bennet has left the neighborhood. Their return finds Rosings swathed in mourning. In death, Anne is revealed as having lived a rich life of the mind, and she plotted rather constantly to escape her loathsome mother, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Anne's journal—spirited into the hands of Elizabeth and Charlotte Collins—holds her candid observations on life and her family. It also exposes her final, and sadly fatal, means of outwitting her mother. Anne's Last Will and Testament, with its peculiar bequests, sends Lady Catherine into a tailspin and throws into turmoil every relationship amongst the Bennets, Darcys, Fitzwilliams, Collinses, and even the Bingleys! Was Anne de bourgh a shrewder judge of character than Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy combined?

Includes mature content.

## **A Will of Iron Details**

Date : Published July 6th 2015 by Meryton Press (first published June 30th 2015)

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Author : Linda Beutler

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## From Reader Review A Will of Iron for online ebook

### Monica says

4.5 stars - Review now up at Austenprose

<http://austenprose.com/2015/07/14/a-w...>

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### Vaarin says

Thrilling and captivating page turner with a unique plot but it was the humorous banter and the sarcasm that made it exquisite.

Although the story itself was kind of morose with ample body count, I found myself laughing out loud, repeatedly.

Enters after DHP (disastrous Hunsford proposal) and lady Catherine's nephew's leave Rosings only to be called back a few days later as Anne had passed.

The reason for her passing was most shocking and her ironclad will even more outrageous.

The disinherited mother uses every weapon up her sleeve to alter it while the ladies of the Hunsford parsonage peruse the late Anne's diaries, looking for answers.

The secrets of Miss Bourgh are slowly revealed through her writing while love blooms with several of the characters although mostly unrequited, it would seem...

All will be well at the end but I loved the way Beutler fooled me into thinking a pairing was happening, just to turn it upside down moments later. I do love surprises.

Elizabeth change of heart was particularly beautifully written.

Another surprise in this book was Jane, this portrait of her was fabulous and she had some very clever witticisms of her own.

The evilness of lady Catherine, I have rarely seen the like of. She rises to new heights in that department which was rather entertaining.

Ends in an enticing and explicit description of ODC's wedding night.

Heartily recommend this book!

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### Blodeuedd Finland says

The author was unhappy with my 3 and my horrible, and negative review (I actually liked the book, though not anymore) \*eyeroll\* Be warned, if you give her a bad rating she or her friend might come after you.

For the actual review go to my blog since I won't support this book here anymore.

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### Leslie says

This book could be subtitled Three Weddings and just as many if not more funerals. This is a really unique

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twist on P&P that goes wildly off canon but results in a vary satisfying story. There is a significant portion of the book that contains adult content and themes and may be unpleasant for sensitive readers. It also takes many dark twists.

In this P &P what if, Anne de Bourgh is not the truly sickly young woman but an angry hypochondriac who seeks only to punish her over bearing mother. She yearns to escape Lady Catherine without marrying and becoming a pawn of her husband. So she decides to flout society and be ruined, undeniably and unquestionably. Her decision leads to her demise.

Her death returns Darcy and Col. Fitzwilliam (in this story named Alex as opposed to the more popular Richard) to Rosings. The reading of her diaries and eventually her last will and testament sets off a chain of events that will stun and surprise most P & P fans.

If you want a P & P variation that will surprise you and present fresh versions of the characters you already know then you will like the book. If you are a P & P purist this probably isn't the book for you.

And last 10% of the story consists of the detailed deflowering of three maidens on their wedding night.

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### **Mary says**

A journey detailing the lengths Anne de Bourgh went to.....her sheer determination to be governed no longer by her arrogant and seemingly mad mother.....a series of unfortunate events incorporating tea parties and cake.....a comically high body count ( yes,you read that correctly!!!)  
.....a rekindling of affections for ODC and a HEA for two other happily matched couples.....  
yes,these elements all add to this sometimes dark,sometimes funny and all too readable tale!

Highly recommended for those who yearn for a tale with a twist.....in both characters' personalities and plot line!

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### **J. W. Garrett says**

“For mad I may be, but I will never be convenient.” Jennifer Donnelly, Revolution

How do I start this review? OMG!!! Oh-my-gosh seems so lacking at the shock and awe of this story. Man, Beutler pulled no punches as she created a story to amaze and delight.

Rating: MA-R: Mature Audience, R-rated. It gets fairly explicit and graphic in places as our characters talk around subjects of a sexual nature.

There is a double meaning in the title. A Will of Iron can relate to the ironclad will of Anne de Bourgh, written in such a way that it could not be challenged. It can also relate to a will of iron as Anne defied her mother's purpose for her life. Man, talk about the fight of the titans. Lady Catherine applied an iron fist in forcing EVERYONE within her sphere of influence to bend to her will. On the other hand, Anne used a passive aggressive approach and still managed to get things done her way. Totally different approaches and yet both strong willed ladies. Oh-my-goodness, the secrets that these two ladies held is beyond believing.

On the surface of this story we have the P&P characters doing things as they did in canon, living, arguing,

grieving, loving, regretting and desperate for a HEA. We are in Kent, post the Hunsford proposal debacle, and Darcy's bolt for London. Elizabeth is grieving after reading Darcy's letter and accepting that life must go on. Only it doesn't.

The twists and turns in this story are not to be believed. We have the diaries of Anne de Bourgh that chronicle the last year of her life. Yeah, she died and in a way, that is not to be believed. Poor Anne. Charlotte Collins and Elizabeth are reading the diary entries in secret and are shocked beyond belief at what they reveal. They also reinforce what Elizabeth had read in Darcy's letter about a certain person, whose name we do not speak.

Poor Charlotte. The diary she had contained such entries, observations and explicit, graphic scenes that she wouldn't let Elizabeth [a maiden] read them. Anne did not hold back in her opinions regarding Mr. Collins. She was very condemning of the vicar and his new wife. This no-holds-barred opinion must have been very revealing to Charlotte's previous opinion toward marriage. Yeah, I really felt for her.

"I didn't have all the answers, but at least I had a goal. Revenge. Who cared if it would eat me up inside and leave me hollow?" Brandon Sanderson

Anne lead a secret life that we had NO idea about. She had a goal, she had a plan and she implemented that plan. The cost was her life. Poor Anne. I really felt for her.

The Diary: within the pages of her diary were the damning accusations of heinous acts perpetrated by her mother Lady Catherine. OMG!!! That is one crazy maniacal b-witch with no conscious and no remorse. If she wanted something, nothing stood in her way... nothing. She was beyond redemption, beyond reasoning, beyond... sane.

We took forever to get to the HEA part of the story. There were several story threads to follow, and soon the picture began to come into play. As the story unfolded, there were so many surprises that kept unfolding that, at one point, you are saying OMG! OMG!! OMG!!! How is this possible?

In the midst of all the angst, our author was able to bring humor to the table [no pun intended]. As we grieve the loss of Anne de Bourgh, we see her humor in her diary notations and we feel her loss with her cousins and friends. This was a person. She had life, humor, a quirky side to her opinions, and was so kindhearted that she made provisions in her will that shocked and surprised everyone. Oh, I hurt with and for them as they realized that in their avoidance of Lady Catherine, they neglected Anne.

This is a story full of revelations. Some will shock, some are incredulous and some are outright outlandish and insane. However, it is never dull. It did take too long to FINALLY get Darcy and Elizabeth together. I was beginning to get a little frustrated with their attitudes.

I loved our dear Colonel and was a bit perturbed with the author playing around with his feelings and emotions. We don't mess around with our dear Colonel. However, I soon forgave her because she gave him such a marvelous HEA. I totally agree with her decision.

I'm not sure if Mr. Bennet will survive his visit to Kent. In the epilogue, I wanted to hear more about what happened when he went back home. Did he remain indolent or did he clean house with Mrs. Bennet and her blatant disregard to his edict? Her actions could have cost the family greatly. Her overriding actions were serious and he needed to make sure it never happened again.

I am still going WOW over this story. I can't get it out of my head. So, I suggest you read it and decide for yourself. Personal note: although I love almonds, I don't think I will be able to eat almond cake again... ever.

## Sheila Majczan says

To use the author's own words, "And more apt and clever satires are rarely created." "...amateurish and rather ghoulish production of A Midsummer Night's Dream?" "A decidedly macabre lover's lane"

At first I was horrified with the "serial" events, but then as I read on I was Rolling On the Floor Laughing. Do not think me unholy, with all the dire and deadly happenings but this was just so over the top. I read it over one day and, obviously, could not put it down.

As the book description tells you, events commence shortly after Darcy's disastrous proposal at Hunsford. He and the Colonel have left but return as Anne has died. The doctor is called but Lady Catherine throws him out after hearing his pronouncement about Anne's condition – the condition that led to her death? Others are called in or show up and the house is in an uproar. Mrs. Jenkinson is fired, the jewelry is counted and then the magistrate is involved. Lady C. will not bury Anne until the Archbishop is present to conduct the funeral service. And when Lady C. reads of a Mr. C., she takes action. Now who could Mr. C. be? Is it the man in the collar?

This tale has a spiraling of interconnected happenings. The POV goes from the reading of Anne's journals (which have been spirited out of the house), at first by Charlotte and Elizabeth, to reading of both Elizabeth's and Darcy's yearnings, regrets and suppositions and back to the journals. There are two readings of Wills: point and counterpoint to each other. The characters of Bingley and Jane have more insight and loyalty than in canon. Their words show some wisdom as to observations they have made. And although not all the happenings are exactly as in canon we do have some pairings we expect and hope for but also a one new and surprising one.

We have most of the characters with whom we are familiar: Darcy, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Mr. Collins, Lady Catherine, Anne, Mrs. Jenkinson, Mr. Bennet, Sir Lucas and Maria, Georgiana, Col. Fitzwilliam and his family, Wickham and we hear a little of the other Bennets back in Longbourn. While most of the action is at Rosings, we spend some time at Longbourn and there are mentions of London.

There are descriptions of an intimate nature. Charlotte will not allow Elizabeth to read one journal due to its content and to Lizzy's maidenly sensibilities. MA rating. I was very pleased with the outcome. And although I would not have wished for Anne's demise I was intrigued to read of her observations of the people who came into her circle and of the way in which she sought and planned for her freedom. Her journals are presented sporadically throughout this novel. I do believe some readers may not accept her way of dealing with a mother like Lady C. but if/when you read of the history you may empathize with Anne's plans and schemes.

The cover was apropos with which you will, I am sure, agree with if you decide to read this story. I do recommend such.

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## wosedwew says

### Loved it -- once I recognized the satire!

As I began to read, "A Will of Iron" seemed to be one of those stories where everyone who is unpleasant in

the original tale becomes a murderer.

Instead, this story is a spoof of those amateurish efforts.

I did find I had to read more carefully (i.e. without having a background movie on the TV) because the story moves back and forth in time as Anne's diaries are read.

Pay more attention to the dates than I did at first.

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### **Eliza Baum says**

Re-read 1/10/17

This book is completely insane, and I stand by the things mentioned below that I find silly...but I do love it all the same. It's the ultimate just deserts for all appearing characters. Unrealistic, but *really* satisfying.

Original read 7/18/15

I grabbed this book on a whim, because it was a suggested read after I finished another P&P variation, and I'm really glad I did. I loved Anne's diary and how the book alternated between that and the story. In some books, that might have been tedious, but Anne's voice was entertaining, and you could always see how it fit the section you were reading. I loved that some characters got recompense for being awful, even if (view spoiler) was a bit disproportionate to the crime. I thought Lizzy (view spoiler) was a little silly, and I wasn't overly fond of (view spoiler)...but those are really minor gripes. The flow of the story, the way the characters were portrayed, and the little bits of mystery around Anne's journal were all really good. I'd have read it all in one sitting if I'd been able.

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### **Sara says**

4 stars first read. 3 stars second read. 3.5 stars average.

For some reason, GR didn't tell me I had read this. Upon second read I remembered I had at about 35% through the book. This is a really strange book. All of the characters are exaggerated. I recommend you read Leslie's review for more details.

It honestly wasn't my cup of tea. I enjoyed the crazy antics of many of the characters but also was confused by much of it. The highlight was reading Anne's journals. Lady C is seriously certifiable. Darcy was meek and for some reason kept pushing others to E which makes no sense to me. HAVE A BACKBONE! Then there was Mr. B's crazy tirade. That was weird. Of course he seems to go back to his normal ways soon thereafter. Mrs. B's ability to rewrite the past was always enjoyable though she really is a background character. I didn't understand the ending. What was the point of what we read and then there is just nothing but an abrupt ending on a passage from Anne's journal. I also didn't like the Colonel's romance. It didn't feel believable to me.

All in all, interesting read, but probably not worth a second read and really not that entertaining the second time around.

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### **Meredith (Austen-esque Reviews) says**

Something Is Rotten in The County of Kent!

What if poor Anne de Bourgh's sudden death brought Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam (and Georgiana!) back to Kent before Elizabeth Bennet left?

What if Anne de Bourgh was more aware and intelligent than expected and revealed all her thoughts and observations in her journals?

What if Elizabeth was instructed to remain in Kent because she was included in Anne de Bourgh's Last Will and Testament?

Anne's death not only brings Darcy and Elizabeth back into contact with each other immediately after Elizabeth's vehement refusal of his disastrous proposal, but also brings about a dramatic change in circumstance for several characters in this story. It would appear that poor Anne holds more power and influence in death than in life. And Lady Catherine, who is most seriously displeased with her daughter's secret plans to escape and exertion of control, does not handle these developments and revelations well...and what she does in retaliation is equally horrifying and hilarious!

Oh my! I was immediately attracted to this novel because of it featuring Anne de Bourgh, and Linda Beutler's portrayal of Anne was one of my favorite aspects in this novel. I loved that Anne had a journal that revealed her memories, thoughts, and true personality to the reader. Anne's voice, for me, felt reminiscent of Jane Austen in her candid and sometimes sharp-tongued commentary. I loved how quiet and unassuming Anne saw and understood all, but never let on. Well done! I appreciate how she tries to escape her mother and found that part of the premise (while shocking) to be fascinating. It put me in mind of Jane Austen's allusion to Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey in Mansfield Park* and the starling who cried "I can't get out." Like Maria Rushworth, Anne daringly takes matters into her own hands.

Another aspect of this story I greatly enjoyed was seeing how Darcy and Elizabeth would interact with each other now they are once again thrown together. There aren't many variations that explore this scenario and take place primarily in Kent in the days and weeks following Darcy's failed proposal. I thought both Darcy and Elizabeth were well-drawn in this variation. I liked how Elizabeth was brave enough to overcome her confused feelings and awkwardness to show sympathy and kindness towards Darcy. It was admirable how her concern and compassion prompted her to act, smile, and offer what small help she can. My heart went out to Darcy in his pain and longing. I love how he was constant in his regard and always appreciated

Elizabeth's worth. Their gentle friendship, while masking their faithful and fervent love for each other, was pleasing to witness.

One aspect of the story I didn't enjoy as much as the rest was Colonel Fitzwilliam's quest for a wife. I felt he was being pulled/went in too many directions. Anne and Darcy had some matchmaking schemes in mind for our good colonel which didn't quite set right with me. For Anne it was confusing because she claimed to understand Darcy's affections and yet also had this lady in mind as a possible lady's companion. For Darcy, I felt it was too soon and a little unfeeling. Overall, the colonel seemed to consistently waver with his feelings towards the women in this story and his actions were just a little too precipitous for my taste.

A Will of Iron is delightfully shocking and diverting variation of Pride and Prejudice! It was fun to explore the macabre and sinister doings in Kent. I loved how the author gave Lady C her "just desserts" and laughed out loud at the hand that served it to her! Poetic justice indeed! This tale is full of madness, murder, and matchmaking mayhem and certainly is not to be missed by readers who would love to see more of Anne de Bourgh, Lady Catherine, and explore their family drama!

Note: The last 20-25 pages of the book do include several intimate romantic scenes and occasionally Anne's journal entries contain some more graphic content. Recommended for Mature Audiences.

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## Sophia says

I enjoyed following the tour for this book reading the guest posts, excerpts, and the like so I thought I knew what to expect. Anne de Bourgh writing a scandalous diary, her death, her shocking will, and mayhem commencing from there. Well it was that, indeed, and then some. This was one dilly of a story making its way through several twists and shocking turns.

The story is based on Pride & Prejudice and the familiar characters, but it is a loose variation and begins from the point in the original story at Rosings and Hunsford. It begins from Anne's perspective through her diary, but then continues mingling diary entries and narrative. Anne has a keen eye to what is going on around her particularly between her cousin, Darcy, and Miss Elizabeth Bennet, but along with her observations, she has her own startling plans in place.

The story progresses after Anne's death into a complicated plotting of Lady Catherine working in her own interests, Darcy taking the opportunity to better himself and show Elizabeth that he is, Colonel Fitzwilliam considering his own opportunity at a courtship, and several other players who are affected by Anne's death and the revelations in her diaries.

After I got reading, I realized this is a story with darker edges, but was one that couldn't be taken too seriously either. The historical backdrop is full of authentic details relating to the social norms at the time particularly those surrounding death and mourning.

The romances were engaging. And yes, I do mean that in the plural. Darcy and Elizabeth are the main couple, but there is Bingley and Jane along with another one that surprises everyone. The romances develop at a steady pace and do end up with some spicy honeymoon passion occurring.

It was interesting how this story's twists kept me off balance. I think the slight differences in the characters' personalities as each was introduced was probably the fun part for me. A nastier Lady C was a hoot! But yes,

all the shocking details kept my eyes wide open in astonishment a few times.

All in all, it was engaging and different. Austenesque lovers should keep it in mind if they wish to explore a variation that makes Anne de Bourgh's action the focal point of the story.

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### **Cettina Barbera says**

Original, funny and... twisted. I loved it.

The chapter in which they read Lady C's will (I believe it was the 17, but I could be wrong) was absolutely hilarious, I laughed all the laughter that Mr Bennet had to keep in!

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### **Lyn \*GLITTER VIKING\* says**

How doo i rite review? Is this grammer okay and do i sond lyke adult plz like thxbai :D :D :D

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