



# The Matters at Mansfield: Or, The Crawford Affair

*Carrie Bebris*

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After their recent adventures with hidden treasure and secrets from the past, Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam Darcy are looking forward to enjoying a quiet spell at Pemberley with their new daughter, but their hoped-for peace is short-lived.

Darcy's aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, is eager to arrange a lucrative and socially acceptable match for her daughter, Anne. Of course, Lady Catherine has not taken into account such frivolous matters as love or romance, let alone the wishes of her daughter. Needless to say, there is much turmoil when the young bride-to-be elopes.

In pursuit of the headstrong young couple, the Darcys speed to Mansfield Park - where the usually intricate game of marriage machinations becomes even more convoluted by lies and deception. The Darcys know that love and marriage can be a complex and dangerous business - one that can even lead to murder.

Anne's betrothal is further complicated by codes of honor, rival lovers, and mistaken identity. The Darcys must sort out the matters at hand in a manner that is quiet enough to avoid scandal - yet swift enough to avert disaster.

The Darcys take center stage as the Regency era's answer to *The Thin Man's* Nick and Nora, searching for truth between tea times, amidst the social swirl of Jane Austen's England.

## **The Matters at Mansfield: Or, The Crawford Affair Details**

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## From Reader Review The Matters at Mansfield: Or, The Crawford Affair for online ebook

### Georgiana 1792 says

#### Le ire di Lady Catherine

Decisamente la migliore finora fra le quattro indagini di Mr e Mrs Darcy apparse in Italia. E' un giallo vero, non ci sono circostanze misteriose spiegabili solo con fenomeni paranormali, come nei casi precedenti. I personaggi sono fedelissimi al modello della Austen, di cui la Bebris si conferma profonda conoscitrice (azzeccatissime le citazioni dai romanzi e dalle lettere all'inizio di ogni capitolo), anzi, ci sono delle schermaglie verbali fra i coniugi Darcy che sembrano quasi uscire dalla penna di Jane Austen! Molti colpi di scena, come in ogni giallo che si rispetti... sebbene i protagonisti del matrimonio finale siano già stati 'accoppiati' da altre scrittrici (Amanda Grange in 'Darcy's Diary' e Colleen McCullough in 'L'Indipendenza della signorina Bennet'... Beh, in realtà è una scelta azzeccata!).

Anche se non vi sono piaciuti i precedenti, o non vi interessano i gialli, ve ne consiglio la lettura: non vorrete mica perdervi le ire di Lady Catherine De Bourgh per la fuga d'amore di Anne!... (anche se accade all'inizio del romanzo, non vi svelo con chi!!!)

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### Jen3n says

Cute. I could copy and paste my review of the other Carrie Bebris book I read in this series, it's essentially the same. This series supposes Mr and Mrs Darcy after their marriage accidentally stumbling into mysteries in a Nich and Nora Charles type of way, and using characters from all the Austen books in one way or another, not just the ones from Pride and Prejudice. Usually the sort of thing my snobby, 19th-century-literature-obsessive mind would rebel against, but for some reason Ms Bebris makes these books gentle and natural. the story almost never seems forced and the language and attitudes feel genuine.

They're cute books. Not high-art and not particularly thought-provoking, but just the sort of senseless candy a mind likes to taste while dozing in a hammock in the late spring.

recommended, if you're in to this sort of thing.

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### Annie says

"Hold, sir! I am armed." ? Great Elizabeth moment.

The rest was a convoluted tale of Gretna Green elopements, bigamy, duels, mistaken identity, and falling for the person who has always been there.

At least I can get this off my shelf and into the Goodwill bin. It was from my stack of cheap used paperbacks I planned to read before our UK trip.

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## **Meredith (Austenesque Reviews) says**

Poor Anne de Bourgh, at the age of twenty-eight she still remains single, friendless, and under her mother's management. For twenty-eight years she has been subjected to her mother's dictatorial and domineering personality and has been forced to play the part of an invalid. Furthermore, because her mother went around proclaiming to everyone that she was the next Mrs. Darcy, Anne feels all the humiliation of her cousin's recent marriage to Elizabeth Bennet. If that's not enough, the future doesn't look very promising for Anne either, as her mother is arranging her marriage to the ill-tempered and abusive Neville Sennex. What is Anne to do? After some kind words of encouragement from Elizabeth, Anne decides to take matters into her own hands. Little did Elizabeth know that her advice would result in Anne de Bourgh sneaking off to Greta Green in the middle of a ball and eloping with none other than Henry Crawford!

When Anne's flight and destination are realized, Colonel Fitzwilliam and Darcy travel in pursuit of the couple and are instructed to bring them to Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is most seriously displeased by this whole affair! But matters become more complicated when a carriage accident that injures Anne detains them in a village called Mansfield, the last village Mr. Crawford would ever want to set foot in again! As soon as word gets out that Mr. Crawford is in town with a Mrs. Crawford, he encounters unpleasant and hostile reunions with all whom he has wronged: an indignant Mr. Rushworth and his mother are first to come pay their respects, followed by a furious Maria Rushworth and Mrs. Norris, and an unforgiving Edmund Bertram. In addition, Lady Catherine comes barreling into Mansfield with Elizabeth Darcy to add to the merry group and have her turn at berating Henry Crawford...

Unfortunately, Lady Catherine's berating will have to wait as more mysterious happenings commence in Mansfield: the arrival of a mysterious woman, the discovery of a dead body, and the disappearance of Mr. Crawford! While it is true that many may want Mr. Crawford dead, would any of these wronged people commit murder? Or perhaps, Mr. Crawford wanted to avoid facing the consequences of his own actions? Or was there a duel of honor with the very dishonorable Mr. Crawford? The evidence is very equivocal and it appears it will take some shrewd deduction and surreptitious investigation by Mr. and Mrs. Darcy to solve this mystery.

I am very much enjoying this series by Carrie Bebris and I love her diligence and dexterity in incorporating characters from other novels seamlessly and satisfyingly. I loved how this novel took us back to Mansfield to visit with some of our old friends, and I enjoyed seeing Mr. and Mrs. Darcy encounter the likes of Mrs. Norris! However, I was a little disappointed that Fanny did not make an appearance in this novel.

While I was very pleased with the author's treatment of Anne de Bourgh in giving her a delightful spirit and story, I was a little dissatisfied with her portrayal of Henry Crawford. Is he a scoundrel? Is he reformed? Is he in love? It was as if he had many personalities or characters and I felt as if I never got to the true Henry Crawford. Aside from that, "Matters at Mansfield" was truly an enjoyable read and I highly recommend this series to fans of Jane Austen and the mystery genre.

Austenesque Reviews

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## **Maria Grazia says**

Would you ever expect to meet Miss Anne De Bourgh suspiciously wandering at night? Not in *Pride &*

Prejudice , but in this lovely mystery story by Carrie Bebris this is exactly what happens to Mrs Darcy. Her strange night meeting with Darcy's former betrothed opens a sequence of surprising facts which will bring Mr and Mrs Darcy to an engaging investigation.

Carrie Bebris is very good at reproducing the witty language style and the atmospheres we Janeites are well acquainted with. Don't you agree?

The Matters at Mansfield is the fourth of the Mr & Mrs Darcy's Mystery series and is the latest translated into Italian as " L'Enigma di Mansfield Park" - but not the latest publication by Bebris - which is, instead, The Intrigue at Highbury ( my review here ) . I got this translation directly from TEA, Italian publisher of Bebris's Mysteries.

As I wrote while reviewing The Intrigue at Highbury , it is a delight to be back among our favourite characters and see them act and speak as we remembered but it is even more delightful to see them interact and intermingle in a new and unexpected way.

Let's go on with some questions? Would you ever think Anne de Bourgh may elope and secretly marry a fascinating rascal? Moreover, would you imagine four different men desiring to get her as their wife? Incredible? Not if you read The Matters at Mansfield.

Lady Catherine De Bourgh is eager to arrange a lucrative and socially advantageous match for her daughter, Anne. Of course, her ladyship has not taken into account such frivolous matters as love or romance, let alone the wishes of her daughter.

The male protagonist is Henry Crawford, one of Jane Austen's fascinating rogues. Do you think him capable of redemption? This is what Carrie Bebris wondered while writing this story. Read what she herself said about her Mr Crawford:

*"He is an enigmatic character, Mr. Henry Crawford—so utterly charming, yet so utterly callous. Readers have been debating for two centuries whether this favorite Austen rogue is capable of redemption. I decided to find out.*

*If you have read Jane Austen's Mansfield Park, you have met Mr. Crawford, the charismatic cad who embarks on a series of calculated flirtations that leave more than one casualty in his wake. By the end of Austen's novel, he is a man with numerous enemies: the disgraced Maria Rushworth, her humiliated husband, her scandalized father, her reprehensible Aunt Norris . . . to name a few.*

*And that was before he crossed Lady Catherine de Bourgh. It seems that while Lady Catherine was busy minding the Darcys' business at Pemberley in North by Northanger, she should have kept a closer eye on her own affairs. Or at least, on her own daughter.*

*She now finds herself forced to solicit the Darcys' assistance in resolving a certain matter requiring the utmost discretion. It is one of many matters that challenge Elizabeth and Darcy as they navigate a web of deception to determine which denizen of Mansfield Park harbors the strongest malice toward Henry Crawford"*

If I must find a flaw in this story, I'll honestly tell you I didn't like Mr and Mrs Darcy as a married couple. They seem to have lost all the attraction and tension between them, as it very often happen to any ordinary long-settled couple. I'd have expected more active interaction , more passionate conversation ... even stormy arguments between them. However, on the whole, the plot and the style are lively, the mystery intriguing , the characters engaging and the finale quite surprising . I'm sure you won't regret to choose this novel as one of your next summer reads.

Have a look at my online version of this review at <http://thesecretunderstandingoftheheavens.com/reviews/the-secret-understanding-of-the-heavens/>

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### **Jessica Fure says**

I knew this was a bad idea, and I read it anyhow.

To the tune of "The Humans are Dead,"

This book was so bad,(I knew it was bad)  
This book was so bad,(Don't read it - it's bad)  
I gagged at the pages (I told you it was bad)  
It dragged on for ages (It took forever and was bad)

A remake of Jane  
Why did they do it?  
It caused me great pain  
I wish I could sue it  
It was lame and pointless, I couldn't wait to finish so I could put this mother'uckin' tripe down!

This book was so bad,(Trust me, it's bad)  
This book was so bad,(The whole idea was bad)  
I gagged at the pages (Week-old-fish-level bad)  
It dragged on for ages (Seriously a waste of time - and bad)

This book was bad!

Come on sucker, flip the pages!

Quiet like you're in the library, this book is bad bad bad bad bad bad baddaddaddaddaddaddadddead.....

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### **Lollyletsgo says**

Finally an ACTUAL murder, most foul! And the decedent will not be missed!  
You know what this one really reminded me of? If Agatha Christie were writing Pride and Prejudice episodes, no really, it's set in a small village in northern England- not far from Gretna Green and there are suspects aplenty!

I won't give it away, but it did have me guessing almost till the end. ;]

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### **Dharia Scarab says**

Since I don't normally write reviews unless I have something specific to say, here's the break down of how I

rate my books...

1 star... This book was bad, so bad I may have given up and skipped to the end. I will avoid this author like the plague in the future.

2 stars... This book was not very good, and I won't be reading any more from the author.

3 stars... This book was ok, but I won't go out of my way to read more, But if I find another book by the author for under a dollar I'd pick it up.

4 stars... I really enjoyed this book and will definitely be on the look out to pick up more from the series/author.

5 stars... I loved this book! It has earned a permanent home in my collection and I'll be picking up the rest of the series and other books from the author ASAP.

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### **Anna says**

Quick summary: The Matters at Mansfield, or The Crawford Affair is the fourth book in the Mr. & Mrs. Darcy Mystery series by Carrie Bebris. The novel brings Elizabeth and Darcy of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, along with their baby daughter, to Riveton Hall as a guest of Darcy's cousin, the Earl of Southwell. While Lady Catherine is scheming behind her daughter's back to arrange a seemingly advantageous marriage, Elizabeth inadvertently encourages Anne to make her own decisions. After Anne elopes with Henry Crawford, the Darcys, Colonel Fitzwilliam, and Lady Catherine find themselves at an inn near Mansfield Park, and the Darcys soon find themselves sorting through a case of multiple identities, duals, betrayals, and of course, murder.

Why I wanted to read it: I loved the first book in the series, Pride and Prescience, and am intrigued by the Darcys as amateur sleuths.

What I liked: The Matters at Mansfield is the fourth in the series, but it stands on its own. I couldn't bring myself to return this book to the library unread, so I took a chance and was pleasantly surprised by the lack of spoilers from the previous installments. I loved how Anne shocked her mother by running off to get married, and I loved seeing a more sinister side to Lady Catherine. I wasn't sure how Bebris would bring together Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park, but it worked. I figured out who the villain was early on, but that didn't bother me, especially since all the twists in the murder mystery kept me on my toes.

What I disliked: I only wish the characters from Mansfield Park, aside from Henry Crawford, had been featured more prominently.

Final thoughts: This is such a delightful series! The mysteries are complex enough to hold my attention, even if I do manage to pick out the villain fairly quickly, and they are well paced. I enjoy watching Elizabeth and Darcy mature as a couple and as detectives, and I love to see them interact with characters from Austen's other novels. I definitely intend to read the whole series.

Review posted on Diary of an Eccentric

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## Michelle says

This is the 4th book in the Mr. and Mrs. Darcy Mystery series. Darcy and Elizabeth attend a ball and find out that Lady Catherine has plans to wed her daughter, Anne, to a rather odious man who has an estate and title that Lady Catherine covets. They are shocked to find that Anne has run off to Gretna Green to marry Henry Crawford, with Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam in pursuit. All becomes more complicated when a wife, a dead body, and dueling pistols appear at Mansfield Park. Elizabeth and Darcy must figure out what is going on and try to save Anne from a perilous situation. This was an interesting mix in of characters and situations, continuing to develop the series, but without the mystical elements that occurred in the first two books.

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## Ceri says

*Review first published at Babblings of a Bookworm: <http://babblingsofabookworm.blogspot....>*

*Please note, that while the following review doesn't contain spoilers for **The Matters at Mansfield** there are slight spoilers for **Mansfield Park**. Read on at your peril!*

Carrie Bebris has written a number of these mysteries, each with a link to one of Jane Austen's novels and featuring Mr and Mrs Darcy as the investigators. I believe this is the fourth book in the Mr & Mrs Darcy Mysteries series, but it read fine as a stand alone. I was immediately drawn into the story by my affinity with a scene of exhaustion that most parents would be familiar with – dealing with a child going through a spell of teething.

*"It is a truth less frequently acknowledged, that a good mother in possession of a single child, must be in want of sleep."*

Mr and Mrs Darcy are staying at a friend's country house, in company with their infant daughter, Lily-Anne (query – does anybody know when hyphenating names became usual? It seems too modern to me, but I could well be wrong) and her nursemaid. Also at the party are Lady Catherine and her daughter Miss Anne de Bourgh, and Colonel Fitzwilliam. After spending interminable time settling her daughter Elizabeth goes back to her bedroom, still in the early hours of the morning. She bumps into Anne de Bourgh, fully dressed, who proffers some hasty excuses for her presence out of her bed in the middle of the night, though she needn't have bothered, due to poor Elizabeth's sleep deprived state!

*"The thought had not so much as entered Elizabeth's mind, which was primarily occupied with calculating how many hours; sleep she might yet manage to capture if she nodded off immediately upon reaching her pillow."*

However, the next day Elizabeth thinks things over, and comes to the conclusion that Anne needs help to break away from Lady Catherine's control. She raises this with Mr Darcy, who here is shown to have a view of his cousin that I always suspected when reading Pride and Prejudice:

*"To Darcy, his cousin was merely a vassal in Lady Catherine's tightly controlled court. In all the years of their growing up, he had never thought of her as an independent being, and seldom thought of her at all."*

Lady Catherine has plans for Anne, however. Now the upstart Mrs Darcy has blighted Lady Catherine's matrimonial ambitions Lady Catherine must make other plans for her daughter, and this time she is holding out for a titled gentleman, doing her best to manipulate the doddering Lord Sennex into agreeing a match between his son and Anne. However, Anne has been considering whether to break out from her mother's control, and Elizabeth inadvertently encourages Anne to embark on a very rash course of action involving a gentlemen who can be met in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park, the charming Mr Henry Crawford.

Through a series of events including an accidental injury to Anne, many of the party end up stuck in an inn until Anne is enough recovered to be moved. Unfortunately for Mr Crawford, it's in an area of the country where he is about as popular as smallpox – the inn is close to the environs of Mansfield Park! In relation to the events of Mansfield Park we are just about at the end, although for me the timeline didn't quite work, as I think Fanny's marriage wouldn't have taken place until things were more settled with Maria – here Maria is staying with her Aunt Norris, who is trying to effect a reconciliation with Mr Rushworth.

It was refreshing to see Mr Crawford finally be held to account for some of his wrongdoing, he's always got away with things in the past. He is fairly unapologetic for his behaviour, which I thought was exactly in accordance with his character, since he's never tried to behave as he should in preference to behaving as he wants:

*"I realize I have acted badly, but if my attempt to explain is going to elicit naught but hostility I must beg leave to postpone further discussion of the matter."*

It turns out that Mr Crawford has behaved much worse than at first was thought, and his sins are beginning to catch up with him. Soon there is a dead body to account for, which is followed by other deaths... but who is responsible?

I quite enjoy cosy mysteries, and I enjoyed this one, although since I am no Miss Marple I only worked out part of the plot in advance, and the rest of it I realised not long before all was revealed! I am not sure it is true to say in this case that Mr and Mrs Darcy investigated, instead Mrs Darcy was first exhausted with the demands of her child, and then by the demands of her tiresome aunt by marriage! However, the time that Mr and Mrs Darcy spent together was really delightful, I liked to see their close relationship and to see that Mrs Darcy had lost none of her teasing, saucy speeches! There were some lovely humorous parts, mostly in the dialogue between the Darcys or in their private thoughts, e.g.:

*"Darcy shifted in his chair and stole what he hoped was a discreet glimpse at his pocketwatch. Midnight – a mere six minutes since his last covert glance. His suspicions were confirmed.*

*He would die at this card table."*

I am so glad I picked this book up, I really enjoyed it, and I'd like to read other books in the series. There are quite a few of them. In order, they are: Pride and Prejudice: Or, A Truth Universally Acknowledged, Suspense and Sensibility: Or, First Impressions Revisited, North By Northanger: Or The Shades of Pemberley, The Matters at Mansfield: Or, The Crawford Affair, The Intrigue at Highbury: Or, Emma's Match and The Deception at Lyme: Or, The Peril of Persuasion. According to Carrie Bebris' website she is currently writing one related to Sanditon, The Suspicion at Sanditon (Or, The Disappearance of Lady Denham) which is planned for completion in 2014.

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### **wonderwomand says**

Loved the book. Wonderful characters. The author carries on the spirit of Jane Austen in her Darcy mystery series. As usual, this novel was wonderful.

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### **Abby says**

Another great addition to the series. I love this author's writing style. She really has created her own world with these books and it is one that enjoy immensely. I always highly anticipate getting my hands on the next in the series and never want it to come to an end.

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### **Grillables says**

No supernatural twist this time, just social ones - and plenty of them, though perhaps not quite as shocking as the author would like them to be.

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### **Judine Brey says**

I liked a lot of the twists Bebris put into this text, especially Colonel Fitzwilliam marrying Anne DeBourgh. The only thing that bothered me was Henry Crawford's death, which seemed unnecessary in some respects.

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