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forcible, *adj.*

Pronunciation: /'fɔːsɪb(ə)l/

Forms: Also 15–17 *forceable*, 17 *forciable*.

Frequency (in current use):

Etymology: < Old French *forcible*, < *force* FORCE *n.*¹ The form *forceable* is as if < FORCE *n.*¹ + -ABLE *suffix*.

1. Done by force; involving the use of force or violence: *esp.* in Law, ***forcible detainer, forcible entry*** (see quot. 1769 at *α.*).

α.

[1391 *Act 15 Rich. II c. 2* A toutz les foitz que tielx forcibles entrees soient faitz.]

c1422 T. HOCCKLEVE *Learn to Die, Joys Heaven* For the kyngdam of heuene souffrith forcible and mighty assautes of vertu.

1527 J. RASTELL *Abridgem. Statutes* 96 Them that make forcyble entre in beneficis.

1555 R. EDEN tr. Peter Martyr of Angleria *Decades of Newe Worlde* f. 273 They prouided for thindempnitie of theyr owne estate by forcible extenuatinge the gooddes..of them whom they desired to kepe in subiection.

1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* II. xxi. 113 That Liberty of Forcible Entry, was taken away by a Statute made in Parliament.

1667 MILTON *Paradise Lost* II. 793 In embraces forcible and foule.

1767 W. BLACKSTONE *Comm. Laws Eng.* II. 390 The stealing, or forcible abduction, of such property as this, is also felony.

1769 W. BLACKSTONE *Comm. Laws Eng.* IV. xi. 147 A forcible entry or detainer; which is committed by violently taking or keeping possession, with menaces, force, and arms, of lands and tenements, without the authority of law.

1815 J. SCOTT *Visit to Paris* (ed. 2) Pref. p. xlvi A forcible dissolution of it [*sc.* the Chamber] was intended.

1837 ADOLPHUS & ELLIS in *Rep. K. Bench Div.* III. 817 A conviction of forcible detainer dated September 3d, 1834.

1846 H. H. WILSON *Hist. Brit. India 1805–35* II. vii. 316 To compel, by forcible means..submission to the authority which was to be substituted.

1868 E. A. FREEMAN *Hist. Norman Conquest* (1876) II. vii. 152 He determined..on a forcible return to his country.

β.

1548 N. UDALL et al. tr. Erasmus *Paraphr. Newe Test.* I. Luke v. f. 19 The shame of forceable breakyng into this or that mannes house.

1683 W. SALMON *Doron Medicum* I. 50 Which is a forceable drawing away.

1688 in *Colonial Rec. Pennsylvania* (1852) I. 236 Praying relief against a forceable Entry and Deteiner.

2. Possessing force.

†**a.** Of persons, material things, natural agencies, etc.: Strong, powerful.

α.

- 1555 R. EDEN tr. Peter Martyr of Angleria *Decades of Newe Worlde* f. 311^v Dryuen by forcyble wynde to an vnknowen lande.
- ?1567 M. PARKER *Whole Psalter* cx. 325 Most forcible, He shall great kyngs: and Cesars wound, In day of wrath.
- 1578 J. BANISTER *Hist. Man* III. f. 42 In the inside of the wrest, is a forcible Ligament.
- 1614 W. RALEIGH *Hist. World* I. v. vi. §11. 765 He prepared a forcible armie to attend him.
- a1676 M. HALE *Primitive Originat. Mankind* (1677) I. i. 29 Those subtil, invisible and forcible Engins which we call the Animal Spirits.
- 1709 M. PRIOR *Carmen Seculare* (new ed.) in *Poems Several Occasions* 159 Like mingl'd Streams, more forcible, when join'd.
- 1803 W. BINGLEY *Animal Biogr.* III. 166 So thick and so forcible was the shoal, as to carry before it every other kind of fish.

β.

- 1561 T. NORTON tr. J. Calvin *Inst. Christian Relig.* II. f. 158 Strong forceable defences, whereby it may be safe against outward violence.
- a1618 W. RALEIGH *Prerogatiue Parl.* (1628) 19 The forceable Lords his enemies.
- a1661 W. BRERETON *Trav.* (1844) 54 The wind..was so forceable as it repelled the waters.

†**b.** followed by *to* with *infinitive*. *Obsolete*.

α.

- 1593 R. HOOKER *Of Lawes Eccl. Politie* III. x. 153 That punishment which hath bene sometimes forcible to bridle sinne.
- 1601 R. JOHNSON tr. G. Botero *Trauellers Breuiat* 104 Cosimus, a kinde of charmed sower mares milke very forcible to turne the braine.
- 1658 R. ALLESTREE *Pract. Christian Graces; or, Whole Duty of Man* x. §8. 210 There being generally nothing more forcible to bring men into any sinful practice, then the seeing it used by others.

β.

- 1576 A. FLEMING tr. Cicero in *Panoplie Epist.* 34 Which reasons of his, are verie forceable to make him yeald to the foresaide matter in question.
- a1641 R. MONTAGU *Acts & Monuments* iii. 222 Nothing is more forceable to convince all forrainers.

1710 T. FULLER *Pharmacopœia Extemporanea* 349 These [pills] are forceable to bring the necessary Pains in Child-Birth.

c. Of actions, words, representations: Producing a powerful effect, telling. Of reasoning: Having logical force, strong, convincing.

α.

1573 G. HARVEY *Let.-bk.* (1884) 47 So forcible an antecedent it was most likeli there would follow as effectual a consequent.

1594 T. BOWES tr. P. de la Primaudaye *French Acad.* II. 527 But that argument of all others is most forcible.

1726 BP. J. BUTLER *15 Serm.* iv. 58 We may observe somewhat very forcible and expressive in these Words.

1790 E. BURKE *Refl. Revol. in France* 105 Reasons, at least as forcible as those which [etc.] .

1864 DICKENS *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) I. I. vi. 57 With the natural need of a strong rough man in anger, to do something forcible.

1874 L. STEPHEN *Hours in Libr.* 1st Ser. 19 One man sees everything in the forcible light and shade of Rembrandt.

1884 R. W. CHURCH *Bacon* ix. 223 His Latin..is singularly forcible and expressive.

β.

1576 W. LAMBARDE *Perambulation of Kent* 394 Againste whiche assertion, that whiche is sayde 10. H. 3...is not greatly forceable.

1612 T. TAYLOR *Ἀρχὴν Ἀπάντων: Comm. Epist. Paul to Titus* ii. 14 Another forceable argument.

1738 W. WARBURTON *Divine Legation Moses* I. 54 In Beasts the Instinct is invincibly forceable.

d. Hence of an author, painter, etc.

1787 G. GREGORY tr. R. Lowth *Lect. Sacred Poetry Hebrews* II. xxi He is at once elegant and sublime, forcible and ornamented.

1791 E. BURKE *Let. to H. Langrishe* in *Wks.* (1842) I. 560 I might have been more forcible and more clear, if I had not been interrupted as I have been.

1828 I. D'ISRAELI *Comm. Life Charles I* II. xi. 286 The most forcible of portrait-painters.

†**3.** Necessary, unavoidable, indispensable. *Obsolete.*

1574 E. HELLOWES tr. A. de Guevara *Familiar Epist.* 109 Their forcible and necessary perilles.

1622 R. HAWKINS *Observ. Voiage South Sea* xxxii. 76 Our forcible businesse being ended.

†**4.** 'Valid, binding, obligatory' (Johnson). *Obsolete.*

1587 D. FENNER *Def. Godlie Ministers* sig. Viii The Lawe was enacted, and stooode forceable.

5. quasi-*adv.* = FORCIBLY *adv.*

α.

1582 N. LICHEFIELD tr. F. L. de Castanheda *1st Bk. Hist. Discouerie E. Indias* iii. 8 b Sea Woulfes..so wilde and fierce, that they do forcible set vpon men.

1601 P. HOLLAND tr. Pliny *Hist. World* II. 621 Neither doth it strike or pierce the sight so forcible as the Rubies do.

β.

1598 J. MANWOOD *Treat. Lawes Forrest* i. f. 6 The more forceable to shew the same, there is vsed this woord.

DERIVATIVES

'forcibleness *n.*

1563 W. FULKE *Goodle Gallerye Causes Meteors* III. f. 24 Either for y^e smal quantitie, & lesse forcibles [? a misprint; or perh. for *forciblesse*].

a1586 SIR P. SIDNEY *Apol. Poetrie* (1595) sig. K4 Bewrayed, by that same forcibleness..of the writer.

a1652 J. SMITH *Select Disc.* (1660) VI. iv. 208 The forcibleness of its operation upon the heart of the Prophet.

1890 T. DE W. TALMAGE *From Manger to Throne* 244 Mark's greater forcibleness of statement.

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