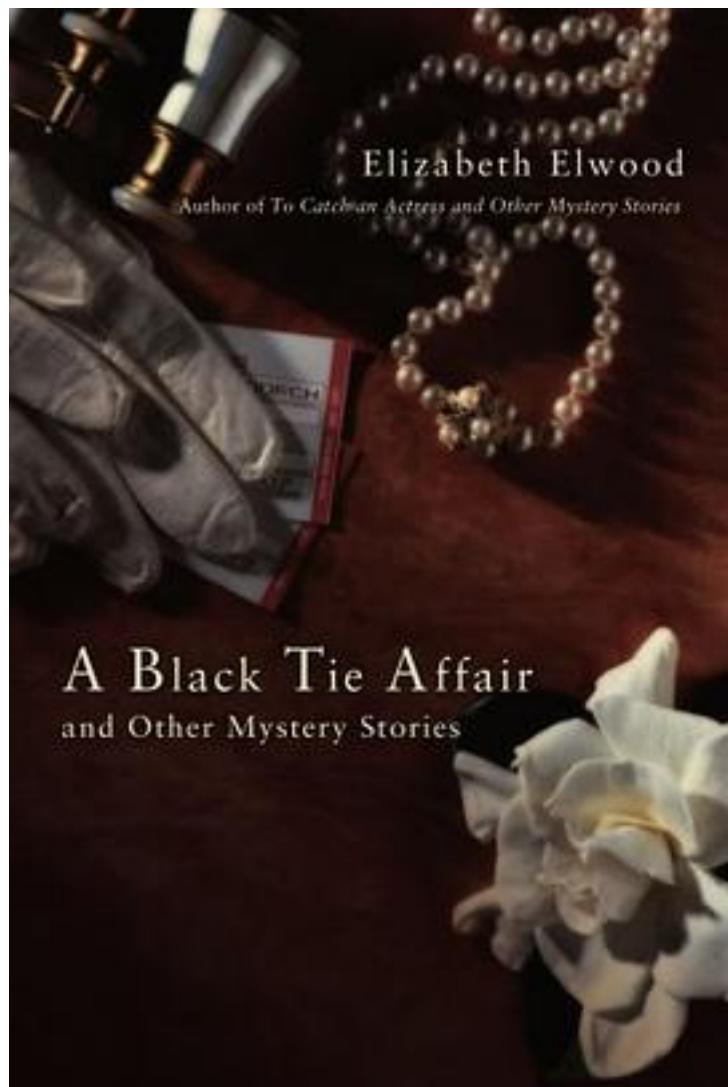


A Black Tie Affair and Other Mystery Stories



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著者:Elwood, Elizabeth

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A lighthearted mystery collection whose main character is an opera singer and inadvertent sleuth. Philippa Beary, who first debuted in *To Catch an Actress and Other Mystery Stories* (2005), appears as the protagonist in these nine stories. Aided by her sisters, a city-councilor father and a formidable mother, Philippa finds herself solving several crimes in myriad settings. In "The Mephisto Waltz Jump," a skater dies in a pool of blood at the rink where Philippa's niece takes lessons. "The Fall of Tosca" occurs at one of Philippa's auditions, where she hears a famed soprano fall to her death from a castle tower. In the title story, Philippa's father thwarts the offstage murder of a lovely prima donna in a performance of *Die Fledermaus*, while Philippa sings and deals with a surplus of suitors. Unlike many mystery writers, Elwood provides relatively sparse physical descriptions of her characters-Philippa has, for example, a "diminutive five-foot frame," and her father an "ample" waistline, but beyond this sort of phrasing, readers are left to imagine the characters' appearances. However, Elwood offers genuine character development through lively dialogue. In addition to puzzling over mysteries, readers get a glimpse into Philippa's relationship with her sisters (she prefers the softhearted animal lover Juliette to the driven lawyer Sylvia) and her parents (her father embarrasses her in his attempts to advance her career, and her mother is demanding and overwhelming). Elwood's settings, whether the coast off Vancouver, refined stage scenes or bustling New York streets, are equally well drawn. Elwood's stories are typically more clever than frightening, and many plot twists depend on a character being in the right spot at the right time, but because she has deftly created a web family of characters and acquaintances, the constellation of murders seems plausible. Well-crafted stories which will delight mystery fans.-Kirkus Discoveries

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