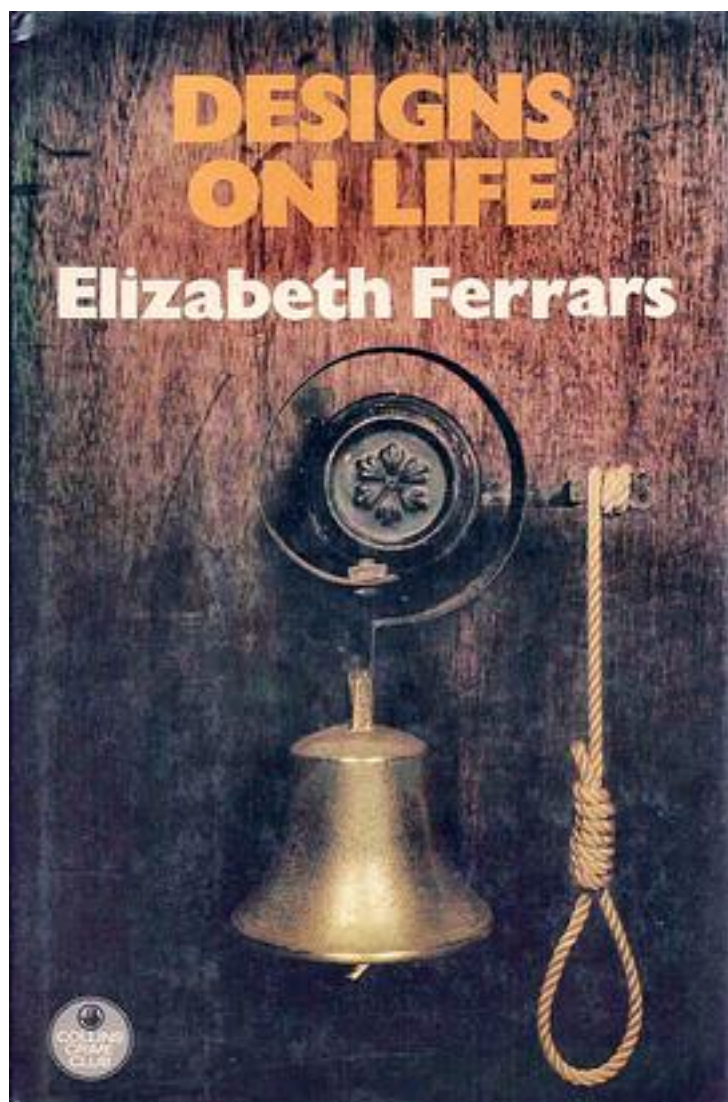


Designs on Life



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著者:Elizabeth Ferrars

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作者介绍:

Elizabeth Ferrars (6 September 1907 – 30 March 1995), born Morna Doris MacTaggart, was a British crime writer.

She was born in Rangoon (currently Yangon), Burma into a Scottish timber and rice-trading family. Her early years were in the hands of a German nanny, and the initial intention was that she should be sent to Berlin to complete her education. The deteriorating political climate between Britain and Germany led to a late switch to Britain instead at the age of six, ending up at Bedales School (1918–1924). She claimed in later years that she never would have been able to write crime novels if she had not learned German as a child from her nanny: the rigorous sentence structure and complex rules of grammar being an indispensable preparation for the architecture of a crime thriller. Unable to study English Literature, because she was never taught Latin or Greek, she took a diploma in journalism at London University (1925–1928),^[1] and wrote two novels under her own name in the early 1930s, when she met and married her first husband. Around 1940, she met a Lecturer in Botany at Bedford College, Dr (later Professor) Robert Brown, and the same year her first crime novel, *Give a Corpse a Bad Name*, was published. She separated from her first husband and lived with Robert Brown in Belsize Park, London, from 1942. However, she did not obtain a divorce and marry Brown until October 1945. She remained on friendly terms with her first husband, who also remarried. In 1951 they moved to Cornell University in the USA, where her husband had been offered a post. Notwithstanding the financial attraction of such a posting in austerity postwar Britain, they returned a year later owing to the atmosphere of McCarthyism. Having seen the rise of fascism in Europe, they were disturbed by witch-hunts against many writers and academics accused of communist sympathies. In 1953, she became one of the founding members of the Crime Writers' Association, and she was its chair in 1977. She was inducted into the famed Detection Club in 1958.

From 1957, when her husband was appointed Regius Professor of Botany at the University of Edinburgh, until shortly after his retirement in 1977 they lived in Edinburgh. Citing the long, cold winters as a reason, they then moved south to the village of Blewbury in Oxfordshire, where they lived contentedly together until her sudden death in 1995. She professed no religious faith and was probably instrumental in turning her husband from distinct evangelism in the 1930s towards agnosticism. She was buried in Blewbury in a non-religious ceremony. Her final novel, *A Thief in the Night*, was published posthumously in 1995. She was survived by a nephew, Peter MacTaggart. In the United States, her novels were published under the name E.X. Ferrars, her US publishers assuring her that "the 'X' would 'do it'". Ferrars was in fact her mother's maiden name.

Though the majority of Ferrars's works are standalone novels, she wrote several series. Her first five novels all feature Toby Dyke, a freelance journalist, and his companion, George, who uses several surnames and is implied to be a former criminal. Late in her career, she began writing about a semi-estranged married couple, Virginia and Felix Freer, and a retired botanist, Andrew Basnett. Several of her short stories also feature an elderly detective called Jonas P. Jonas.

Her extraordinary output owes a great deal to considerable self-discipline and diligent method. Her plots were worked out in detail in hand-written notebooks before being filled out in typed manuscript; she said that they were worked backwards from the

denouement. Like every writer, she based characters and situations on people she knew and things she had seen in real life. She travelled with her husband when his academic career required, for example to Adelaide where he was a visiting professor at the University of South Australia, and on holidays specially to Madeira, which they loved.

目录: The dreadful bell.
After death the deluge
The truthful witness
Go, lovely rose
Drawn into error
Safety
A very small thing
Scatter his ashes
Undue influence.
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标签

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评论

感觉这本与其说是推理小说，更像是悬疑小说多一些。风格有点像布兰德那本《The Spotted Cat and Other Mysteries from Inspector Cockrill》。内容简介：【<http://www.douban.com/note/509737565/>】

挑了几篇看开头比较感兴趣的读了，非常流畅好读，感觉比读翻译过来的作品要舒适的

多。基本没什么推理的成分，只能算比较有趣的犯罪小说，最喜欢的是烟灰那篇。

倒数第二篇最好，看完后念念不忘。其次是最后一篇与第一篇。——2015.09.18

1980年的短篇集。两篇悬疑小说The Dreadful Bell和Scatter His Ashes很厉害，结局余韵无穷，剩下的犯罪小说也都算是水准之作。作为Elizabeth Ferrars的入门书还不错。

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书评

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