



# Down in the City: Text Classics

*Elizabeth Harrower*

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Esther Prescott has seen little of life outside her wealthy family's Rose Bay mansion, until flashy Stan Peterson comes roaring up the drive in his huge American car and barges into her life. Within a fortnight they are living in his Kings Cross flat.

Moody and erratic, proud of his well-bred wife yet bitterly resentful of her privilege, Stan is involved with his former girlfriend and a series of shady business deals. Esther, innocent and desperate to please him, must endure his controlling ways.

This story of a troubled and obsessive marriage, set against the backdrop of postwar Sydney, is devastating. First published in 1957, *Down in the City* announced Elizabeth Harrower as a major Australian writer.

**Elizabeth Harrower** was born in Sydney in 1928. Her first novel *Down in the City* was published in 1957, and was followed by *The Long Prospect* a year later. In 1959 she began working for the ABC and as a book reviewer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In 1960 she published *The Catherine Wheel*, the story of an Australian law student in London, her only novel not set in Sydney. *The Watch Tower* appeared in 1966. Her work is austere, intelligent, ruthless in its perceptions about men and women. She was admired by many of her contemporaries, including Patrick White and Christina Stead, and is without doubt among the most important writers of the postwar period in Australia. Elizabeth Harrower lives in Sydney.

textpublishing.com.au

'*Down in the City* marked the arrival of one of the sharpest authors of psychological fiction in Australian literature. Many of the things that happen in the novel are unpleasant, but are rendered with such intensity and psychological insight that the experience of reading about them is thrilling.' *Australian*

'a triumph from Text's project to recover forgotten Australian literature. Doused in melancholy and written from an accessible yet unnerving third-person perspective, Harrower's debut is a light read with weighty resonance.' Readings Bookshop

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