



## In Certain Circles

*Elizabeth Harrower*

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**In Certain Circles** Elizabeth Harrower

**Winner, Voss Literary Prize, 2015.**

*In Certain Circles* is the long-lost final novel by the internationally acclaimed author of *The Watch Tower*.

Zoe Howard is seventeen when her brother, Russell, introduces her to Stephen Quayle. Aloof and harsh, Stephen is unlike anyone she has ever met, a weird, irascible character out of some dense Russian novel. His sister, Anna, is shy and thoughtful, a little orphan.

Zoe and Russell, Stephen and Anna: they may come from different social worlds but all four will spend their lives moving in and out of each other's shadow.

Set amid the lush gardens and grand stone houses that line the north side of Sydney Harbour, *In Certain Circles* is an intense psychological drama about family and love, tyranny and freedom.

**Elizabeth Harrower** was born in Sydney in 1928. Her first novel, *Down in the City*, was published in 1957, followed by *The Long Prospect* a year later. In 1960 she published *The Catherine Wheel*, the story of an Australian law student in London. *The Watch Tower* appeared in 1966. She is without doubt among the most important writers of the postwar period in Australia.

'*In Certain Circles* [is] a pin-sharp psychological drama about two pairs of siblings, set on the shores of Sydney Harbour. Harrower's searing, spare prose is breathtaking, as is her depiction of dashed promise and the gulf between the sexes.' Di Speirs, BBC Radio Books Editor

'Harrower was right about *In Certain Circles* being well written, but surely wrong to take its superb style for granted, as if mere literary muscle memory. Like the rest of her work, the novel is severely achieved: the coolly exact prose cannot be distinguished from the ashen exhaustion of its tragic fires...The book belongs with her best work, with *The Watch Tower* and *The Long Prospect*...[It] is more explicit than Harrower's earlier work about ideological tensions between men and women. It is also broader in scope and not as angry - wiser and less hopeless.' James Wood, *New Yorker*

'Harrower can pierce your heart.' Michael Dirda, *Washington Post*

'Harrower evokes the waste and futility of a decadent class with all the bite and poignancy of F Scott Fitzgerald.' Eimear McBride, *New Statesman*

'A scandalously overlooked writer.' Michelle de Kretser

'She is brilliant on power, isolation and class.' Ramona Koval, *Australian*

'*In Certain Circles* is subtle yet wounding, and very much alive.' *Guardian Australia*

'Reading *In Certain Circles* gave me the thrill that only comes from the work of a major novelist.' The Conversation

'Harrower's sparse prose is best read with careful concentration; it's easy to miss a brilliant observation or an original turn of phrase... An Australian novelist of extraordinary talent.' Readings

'Her insights into the nature of love, the role of women and the torsions of power in even the most ordinary relationship are bitter and sometimes cruel, wielded in the way that acute honesty may be, like a whip. Yet they are always delivered via the honeyed dipper of her prose.' Geordie Williamson, *Monthly*

'A coup...weirdly thrilling line by line...[its] dense and adult conversation crackles with a sense of moral urgency.' Delia Falconer, *Australian*

'Masterful writing...this is a book that demands reading on its own terms, for its unflinching prose and the surgical precision with which it dissects these intertwined lives encircled by their differences.' *Newtown Review of Books*

'Harrower's lost novel seems like a revelation, an insight into an Australian writer who is world-class and it is thrilling to discover her.' *M/C Reviews*

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