



The House of Green Turf

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When world famous singer Maggie Tressider crashes her car on the way to a concert, she wakes up in hospital, dazed, in a post-operative shock - and haunted. From some secret place in her subconscious arises the awful conviction that somehow, at some time in the past she has been responsible for a death. A psychiatrist, her doctor suggests, might lay the nameless spectre to rest. But Maggie chooses a very different expert to find the truth for her.

The House of Green Turf Details

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From Reader Review The House of Green Turf for online ebook

Jack says

Bunty and George become caught up in a mystery leading to a European adventure.

Kyla says

This was my first non-Cadfael book by Peters and it didn't disappoint. I don't think I missed out on anything significant by jumping into another established series without background. This story begins as a psychological one, then becomes a traditional mystery with an action-filled conclusion. The characters are well-drawn, if a bit dated by modern considerations. All in all this book is a solid and enjoyable read.

George says

#8 in the detective inspector George Felse mystery series. The mystery starts with a renowned opera singer who hires a private investigator to resolve a mystery from her past. That investigation crosses paths with one Felse was involved in. It is also a love story which adds depth to the story.

Margaret says

Possibly four and a half. this book of the Felse series was different. Ellis Peters is able to make these books very different from each other, although nominally about George Felse he is often not the main character. This one is about a famous singer who has a `near death experience` and believes she has killed someone. the story takes place mainly in Austria and is short but exciting.

Robin says

When I first read this book (which wasn't all that many years ago), I was very upset, because I felt it was too like the manuscript I was penning. However, when complete, my work turned out totally *unlike*, and, upon rereading this sometime later, I was surprised to discover it wasn't as good as I remembered. Amazing how tastes change.

Christopher Taylor says

I enjoy Ellis Peters' Cadfael books so I gave this one a try. It was fairly slow starting and odd, with a difficult

to pin down time period. I wasn't as impressed with the story or the writing style, which was different than the Cadfael series. I suppose Peters was trying to set this series apart but it didn't work as well for me.

Sally says

This one was a very mysterious mystery, carried forward by one character's feeling that she had caused someone's death in the past and her trying to find out if it was true or if it was just a dream that seemed true. It's not exactly like one of those stories where someone has amnesia, but more like that kind of thing you often see in mysteries where the crime solver gets a feeling he or she knows the clue to solve the puzzle but can't quite put a finger on it. As in all of Ellis Peter's book I have read, the writing is elegant and descriptive.

Mary says

I have read many Ellis Peters books, but not many of her Inspector Felse series. The good detective only makes a minor, but key, appearance in this book. It is slight in size, but is beautifully written. It reads like a cross between vintage Josephine Tey (Brat Farrar) and Mary Stewart (The Ivy Tree), falling firmly in the psychological thriller category.

When renowned opera singer Maggie Tressider is injured in a car accident, the nagging memory of something in her past begins to haunt her imagination. Perhaps this is due to the after-effect of the anesthesia, but she cannot shake the impression that at some time in her past, she did someone a great disservice. At the recommendation of her surgeon, she engages a private investigator, Francis Killian, to dig around in her past to see what he can discover. A dismissed lover is soon brought to light, and the young man disappeared after Maggie turned him down.

But is there something else to find out about this broken romance? Maggie dismisses with Killian's services, but he is too interested to let it go. He suspects that there is more to learn and so he heads back to the small Austrian village where the disappearance occurred twelve years before. Inspector Felse finds out about Killian's search and finds that it matches up with several missing persons cases he has been trying to solve in the same remote corner of Europe. Maggie decides to search out the truth herself. Soon another mysterious death is tied to the case. But is there something even more sinister afoot?

Peters ties up all the loose ends satisfactorily, infusing the story with musical influences and dark passions. If you enjoy an old-fashioned psychological thriller, far less bloody than modern ones, you might enjoy this classic mystery.

Julie says

Okay, again an extra good rating for a fun read. I love character driven books, and this is a mystery. Ellis Peters writes good books, perfect for a quick vacation read. His characters are always interesting and so are his stories. I don't like the medieval ones as well as the modern ones. Also, there's always a little romance, and what's wrong with that? It's not life-altering or anything, but I enjoyed it and had a hard time putting it down (which is bad if you're on vacation with your husband for a few days).

Ebookwormy1 says

While Maggie Tressidor was somewhat interesting, particularly her experience with anesthesia (which we take for granted today), I found her obsession rather strange. However, the story pulls in nicely around her and Francis Killian, with the always instigative Bunty and George Felse. By the end, I enjoyed all the characters, and was in solid 3.5 stars territory.

This story is inconsonant though, and I think that is what prevents it from being among the best of Peters' Felse Investigations titles. Dissonance arises with plotting taking place in the mid-1950s in fictional towns along the beautiful mountainous border between Austria and Germany, with some reference to Switzerland. Aside from one reference to a secondary character's profession in connection with the war, WWII is not mentioned. German language and culture are unabashedly celebrated, all the idyllic settings are intact, and the characters are wholly unscathed - it's as if the war never happened. Germany continued rebuilding both its international relations and culture as this work was published in 1969, and Cold War disputes among the Allies lingered. These pressures shaped post-war England and prevented Peters herself from traveling to the continent in these years, so we know she was acquainted with these realities. Is this a love song for a world lost? Or are we to image the area too remote for political concerns?

Aside from these historical concerns, the narrative flows nicely through Mahler's Wo die Shonen Trumpeten Blasen/ Where the Fair Trumpets Sound from Des Knaben Wunderhorn/ The Boys Miraculous Horn, and if that seems a little highfalutin, it is, but just a bit – don't let it put you off.

(You can listen to a recording from the 1960s here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uzle...>

Credits: Christa Ludwig, Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer Studio recording, London, 17 & 18.III.1964)

The operatic culture doesn't overwhelm the plot, and is similar in context to Peters' masterful Black is the Colour of my True Love's Heart. For me, it alluded to Bodie Thoene's exquisite Vienna Prelude which articulates an even stronger classical music context. You won't learn much about opera, classical music or the performance profession from Peters like you will from Thoene. Also, ironically, Thoene's Vienna Prelude is steeped in the historical context Peters ignores.

The other notable aspect of this particular tale is the Felse connection. Interestingly, Peters seldom lets her heroic family take center stage. The principle characters engaged by crime and their struggles are fully developed, and the Felse family enters into their quandaries. For The House of Green Turf, Bunty is the connection that draws George in by the middle of story, and the couple figures strongly in the resolution. I find this intriguing, as Peters leaves us always wanting more.

Even though this isn't my favorite Felse Investigation due to the above exception, it is still a solid contribution to the series, which I highly recommend in total.

There's more!

Mourning Raga, Peters, 1969

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

You don't have to read them in order. If you like the weaving of music with setting and plot, see Black is the Colour of my True Love's Heart (Felse Investigations #6), Peters, 1967

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

For the history Peters leaves out, with a strong context of classical music, see the marvelous Vienna Prelude (Zion Covenant #1), Thoene, 1989

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Maureen E says

When Maggie Tressider, a world-famous contralto, is injured in a car accident, she is haunted by the idea that once she somehow caused a man's death. The plot is exciting and the characters are beautifully drawn. I'm still not entirely sure what I think about Francis Killian though. [Feb. 2010]

E.L. says

The Felse books are not ones I am able to judge on plot or mystery, despite their genre. Rather, I judge them based on how well they bring out the underlying theme, the thread running through the characters' lives, the deeper human aspect that the mystery only serves to bring forth from the shadows into the light.

This one succeeds very well in all of that, and is a joyful triumph of light and hope over darkness and despair - not in a cheesy, over-the-top way, but in a quiet, thoughtful manner, a wellspring of joy in the heart rather than a cheerful smile on one's face.

Christopher Bunn says

This is a lovely gem of a book. Ellis Peters is mostly known for the Brother Cadfael series, mysteries featuring a Benedictine monk who lives at Shrewsbury Abbey in 12th century England. The Cadfael books are reliably good fun, and also interesting for the larger picture of English history they provide (Edith Pargeter, the real person behind the pen name of Ellis Peters, was a well-known historian, so she knows her history...), but Peters also wrote a fair number of books set in modern days and featuring the English inspector George Felse. The House of Green Turf is one of those.

Green Turf begins with a fascinating setup. A famous singer is in a bad car accident which jars something loose in her memory: she was responsible for someone's death, long ago in her past. The only trouble is, the freshly awakened memory is only partially there and she can't remember who it was, where, or why. Haunted by the memory, the singer hires a detective to sift through her past.

From there, the story weaves an elegant, quiet magic of intrigue and romance, set mostly in the Austrian countryside. Peters knows how to use words in a deft, painterly fashion. Her characters are sympathetic, flawed and, ultimately, very much the sort you want to live with as you read.

I own this book as it is one that deserves multiple readings over the years. There's a freshness and innocence about it that I find sorely lacking in most newer books. Sadly, Peters died in the mid-90s, so there'll be no more stories from her. On the other hand, happily enough, she was fairly prolific during her life, writing 13 Felse books, 20 Cadfael books, as well as a handful of assorted stand-alones. Under her own name, and as a

scholar, she wrote more than 20 books of history. One of the most notable is *A Bloody Field By Shrewsbury*, a fascinating account of the violence that followed the death of Richard II and the battle between Harry Percy and his Welsh allies against Black Prince Henry near Shrewsbury. If you enjoy English history, then I heavily recommend reading this book.

Roxana says

The Felse books are getting more and more melodramatic and less and less either classic English whodunnits or Felse-oriented. I started this series because I liked George Felse as a detective and I like Ellis Peters's elegant writing and I like cozy murder mysteries. But the last few have had hardly any George, hardly any real detective work, and are veering increasingly further away from the cozy murder genre. Am I supposed to care about yet another pale, delicate heroine with big blue eyes and a heavenly voice, and yet another would-be tough guy who falls for her charms? I've seen it before, and I'm getting pretty sick of it.

Also, I don't love the abuse-validating idea at the center of the plot's set-up: that X is responsible for Y's suicide because Y used the threat of it to persuade X into accepting Y's love. The fact that that is central to what turns out to be a fairly weak mystery doesn't endear the book to me any more than its feeble plot or cliched love story.

Still gets an extra star, for all my grouchiness in this review, because Peters IS a good writer in terms of putting words together into pretty sentences, and goodness knows I've read far, far worse. But I'm not sure how many more Felse books I'll be reading if they keep on down this path.

Mary says

Another well-crafted mystery from Peters. If the villain is the story, this story is simply terrific. The villain is in the mold of a Josephine Tey villain: narcissistic and completely amoral. And the main character is likeable and admirable. I also really enjoyed the scenes with George and Bunty. By modern standards, this starts a little slowly, but it's absolutely gripping by the end, and worth reading more than once. Not my favorite of the Felse mysteries; that would still be "The Grass Widow's Tale", but a very good, old-fashioned, British mystery. If you like that type of book, or if you've liked any of the books by Ellis Peters, you will enjoy this.

Note: The jacket flap on the 1960's vintage library book I read claimed that the Vorarlberg is in Czechoslovakia. Fortunately, Peters herself makes no such mistake. The mystery takes place in the English midlands and in a small border triangle between Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. Her descriptions of scenery are always a pleasure.
