

Faithful bedfellow

**Jean Scott**

**c.1548-after 1593**

Jean was raised in the Scottish Borders while her family was involved in a brutal feud with the Kerrs.

In 1552 her father, Sir William, was killed in a skirmish.

When a peace deal was agreed in 1565, Sir Thomas Kerr refused to sign up.

Ironically he and Jean then married in 1569.

Despite being an arranged marriage it was one built with love.

Sir Thomas, who became laird of Ferniehirst, was someone who stuck to his principles where others would look for safety and personal advantage.

This landed him in trouble several times. At one point he was forced into exile for his support of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Jean, a trusted go-between for the queen and her son James VI, persuaded the king to allow his return.

But for much of the time she was running the family estates and dealing with her husband's debts.

A surviving letter to her husband was signed, 'Your humble and faythfull bedfallou till deith, Jene Scot'.

Sir Thomas finally died in 1585, leaving her with four children, one of whom was a favourite of the king and became Earl of Somerset.

A portrait of Jean shows her in deep mourning following the death of her husband.

Inscribed above her head are the words, 'Ubi amor, ibi fides' – 'Where there is love there is faith'.

- Read the Oxford DNB biography here: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/dnb/69922.html>.