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The Lady In The Lake: Library Edition



Synopsis

[BBC Radio Full Cast Drama starring Toby Stephens] Fast-talking, trouble-seeking private eye Philip Marlowe is a different kind of detective: a moral man in an amoral world. California in the 40s and 50s is as beautiful as a ripe fruit and rotten to the core, and Marlowe must struggle to retain his integrity amidst the corruption he encounters daily. Derace Kingsley, a wealthy businessman, hires Marlowe to find his estranged wife Crystal, fearing that she may have got herself into a scandal. Rich, pretty, spoiled, and reckless, Crystal is all kinds of trouble rolled into one as far as Marlowe's concerned, but he agrees to take the case and heads to Kingsley's vacation home in Little Fawn Lake to find the lady. And sure enough, one turns up drowned and almost unrecognizable except for her clothes and jewelry. But there's a snag: the body is identified as Muriel Chess, the caretaker's wife. With Crystal still missing and corpses turning up wherever he goes, the case soon turns into one of the toughest Marlowe's ever encountered. Starring Toby Stephens, this thrilling dramatization perfectly evokes the atmosphere of Chandler's fast-paced, absorbing novel. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

THE LADY IN THE LAKE is one of Raymond Chandler's weaker Philip Marlowe novels, if not the weakest. (I say "weakest" as opposed to "worst," because, to paraphrase the cliché, reading Chandler is a bit like sex: Even when it's bad, it's still pretty good.) But that's just it. It's not that this is a bad read by any stretch - it's head and shoulders above the best mysteries taking up space on the bestseller lists, and most of the mysteries ever published. But, because this is Chandler, it's held to a higher standard than disposable airline reads, and by that yardstick, it falls short. The story of

this (the first Marlowe novel written after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor), like all in the series, starts simply enough: Our Hero is hired by a wealthy businessman to find his missing wife. And like all Marlowe stories, the case soon becomes much more complicated, leading Marlowe on a trail of twists and turns through some of the darkest shadows of his world until, at last, all is revealed. It is a fun trail to follow for the reader, if not always for Marlowe. Still, it doesn't match the intense intricacy of FAREWELL, MY LOVELY nor the lurid seductiveness of THE BIG SLEEP - both among the classics of 20th century literature. It even misses the layering of THE HIGH WINDOW, leaving a fun read without as much depth. Worse, the twists, while they might surprise or confuse readers fed on the whodunit simplicity of Agatha Christie, are, for devoted Chandlerites, more obvious. I guessed the titular lady's secret soon after she was found in the lake, and it was not too difficult to tie in several - although, I admit, not all - later twists. Still, Chandler is Chandler. His dry, intoxicating prose is here, as is his mastery of characterization.

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