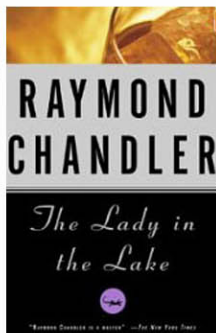


# *The Lady in the Lake*

by Raymond Chandler



I am a huge fan of Raymond Chandler and enjoyed *The Lady in the Lake* immensely, but I would be remiss if I didn't point out a few flaws in this otherwise wonderful story. Although not as well crafted as other Chandler works, it is still a much better read than most of his competition, who can easily be dismissed as imitators. Chandler's strength is in his crafting of well-drawn characters and superior dialogue--often quoted by others--less so with his plot construction.

Undoubtedly this novel was inspired by the Lake Crescent Soap Lady, Hallie Illingworth, who fishermen found wrapped in blankets, bound with rope, in a Washington State lake, in 1940. Chandler runs with the story and pulls Philip Marlowe out of Los Angeles to solve this rural murder. The problems lie with the confusion over who is really whom, and it just seemed implausible that so many people could believe a character to be another individual in this rather small circle of people, who otherwise interacted and should have known each other. I wasn't satisfied with the explanations in the end, but still this story gave Chandler an opportunity to entertain his readers, and that he did, with his characterizations and snappy dialogue, like: "I'm all done with hating you. It's all washed out of me. I hate people hard, but I don't hate them very long." Chandler is often imitated but never bested. A MUST read for Chandler fans. I give it a four out of five.