

企鵝文學經典



英語簡易讀物

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湖中夫人

The Lady in the Lake

雷蒙德·錢德勒 著

RAYMOND CHANDLER



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GLOSSARIES

private	私人的
lit	点燃(light 的过去式)
trouble	烦恼, 困难
stupid	愚蠢的
marry	结婚
lady	夫人, 女士
lake	湖
body	身体
whisky	威士忌酒
suicide	自杀的
murdered	谋杀(murder 的过去式)
shot	开枪
cover up	掩饰, 包庇
drugs	麻醉剂
nurse	护士
scarf	披肩, 围巾
throat	咽喉
pretended	假装, 装扮(pretend 的过去式)

* 注: 以上所列单词为书中黑体字

湖中夫人

The Lady in the Lake

本书讲述了一个曲折的、充满着神秘的谋杀故事。私人侦探菲利普·马洛暗查德瑞斯·金斯利的妻子的行踪。她究竟是死了还是依然活着？那个被暗杀而抛尸湖中的女郎是她吗？

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The Lady in the Lake

RAYMOND CHANDLER

Level 1

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CHAPTER ONE

The man in front of me was tall and strong, with thick dark hair. He sat in an expensive chair behind an expensive desk, and looked at me with cold grey eyes. He didn't have time to smile.

'OK, Marlowe,' he said. 'So you're a **private** detective. One of the best in Los Angeles, I hear. I have a job for you. I want you to find my wife. Think you can do that?'

I sat back in my chair and **lit** a cigarette slowly.

'Yes, Mr Kingsley,' I said. 'I think I can do that.'

'How much?'

'Twenty-five dollars a day. Half a dollar a mile for my car. And a hundred in my hand now, before I do anything.'

He looked at me, and I looked back at him and waited.

Then he smiled. 'OK, Marlowe, you've got the job. But don't talk about it to the police. I have an important job here.' He looked round his quiet, expensive office. The hot July sun didn't get into this room. 'I want to stay in this job, and I can't have any **trouble** with the police.'

'Is your wife in trouble?' I asked.

'I don't know. Perhaps. She sometimes does very **stupid** things, and she has dangerous friends.'

He gave me a drink and told me the story. 'I have a house in the mountains, near Puma Point. Crystal went up there in May. She often meets her men friends up there.' He looked at me. 'She has a lot of men friends . . . you understand? But there was an important dinner down here on June 12th, and Crystal didn't come back for it.'

'So what did you do?'

'Nothing. Because of this.' He gave me a letter and I read it.

El Paso, 14th June

*I'm leaving you and going to Mexico. I'm going to **marry** Chris Lavery.*

Good luck and goodbye. Crystal.

'I wasn't very unhappy about that,' Kingsley said. 'She can have him, and he can have her. Then two weeks later I heard from the Prescott Hotel in San Bernardino. Crystal's car was there and they wanted money for it. But yesterday I met Lavery, here in town. He didn't know anything about Crystal, and he last saw her two months ago. So where is she? What happened to her?'

I thought about it for a minute or two, and then I asked him some questions. We talked for about half an hour. Kingsley gave me a photo of his wife with Chris Lavery – it was a good picture of Lavery, but not very good of the **lady**.

I finished my drink and stood up. 'OK, Mr Kingsley, I'm going to talk to Lavery, and then go up to your house in the mountains.'

My house is at Little ^{iforn: 湖} Fawn **Lake**, he told me. 'A man works for me up there – Bill Chess is his name. And the girl at the telephone desk outside can help you. She knows a lot of my wife's friends. Talk to her. And you can phone me any time – day or night.'

Outside Kingsley's office I looked at the girl at the telephone desk. She was small and pretty, with short red hair and blue eyes. I like redheads. I gave her my best smile.

'Hi, blue eyes,' I said. 'Your boss says you know a lot of people. Tell me about Chris Lavery.'

'Chris Lavery? What do you want to know?'

'Anything. Do you like him?'

'Well,' she said, 'he has a beautiful **body**.'

'And all the girls like a man with a beautiful body, eh?'



I started with Lavery. He didn't want to talk to me, but nobody wants to talk to private detectives.

She laughed. 'Perhaps. But I know nicer men than Chris Lavery. He knows too many women.'

We talked for about ten minutes. Kingsley was right. Redhead knew a lot of people and she liked talking. Perhaps her job wasn't very interesting. I sat on her desk and listened, and smiled into her blue eyes. She smiled back.

Then I stood up. 'Well, I must go. See you again, blue eyes.'

Redhead laughed happily. 'Any time, Mr Marlowe.'

I started with Lavery. He was at home, at 623 Altair Street, down in Bay City. He didn't want to talk to me, but nobody wants to talk to private detectives.

'No,' he told me angrily. 'I didn't go to El Paso with Crystal Kingsley. OK, so we sleep together. But I don't want

to marry her. She's very rich, and money is nice, but Crystal's a difficult lady. I last saw her about two months ago.'

I sat and watched him. 'So why did she write that letter from El Paso?'

'Don't know. She likes playing games – stupid games.'

It wasn't a very good story, and he knew it. I asked him some more questions, but his story stayed the same. I went out and sat in my car outside his house. I thought about Lavery. Perhaps he went away with Mrs Kingsley, and then they had a fight. But where did Mrs Kingsley go after that?

A big black Cadillac drove up and stopped at the house across the street. A thin man with a black doctor's bag got out and went into the house. I looked at the name on the door – Dr Albert S. Almore. Doctors know a lot about people. Perhaps this one knew Lavery. I saw Dr Almore at the window. He watched me carefully, and his face was angry and afraid. Then he sat down and made a telephone call, but he watched me all the time.

Five minutes later a green car came along and stopped at the doctor's house. The driver walked across the road to my car.

'Waiting for somebody?' he asked.

'I don't know,' I said. 'Am I?'

'Don't get clever with me,' he said coldly. 'I'm Detective Degarmo, Bay City Police. Why are you watching Dr Almore's house?'

I looked out of my car window at him. He was a big man with a square face and very blue eyes.

'What's all this about?' I asked. 'I don't know Dr Almore, and I'm not interested in him. I'm visiting a friend. What's the doctor afraid of?'

'I ask the questions, not you,' he said. 'Go on – get out of here. Move!' He walked away and went into Dr Almore's house.



'I'm Detective Degarmo, Bay City Police,' he said. He was a big man,
with a square face and very blue eyes.

Back in Los Angeles, I phoned Mr Kingsley and asked him about Dr Albert S. Almore.

'I don't know him, but he was Crystal's doctor for a time,' he told me. 'His wife died a year and a half ago – she killed herself. It was very sad.'

I got into my car again and started for the mountains. Dr Almore was afraid of something, but what?

CHAPTER TWO

I drove through the hot afternoon to San Bernardino, then up into the mountains. Past the village of Puma Point I took the road up to Little Prawn Lake. The road was slow and difficult through the mountains, and soon there were no more houses or people.

When I got to the lake, I stopped at the nearest house and got out. A man came out and walked across to me. He was a heavy man, not very tall, and he had a hard, city face.

'Bill Chess?' I asked.

'That's me.'

'I want to look at Mr Kingsley's house,' I said. 'I have a letter for you from him.'

He read the letter carefully, and then I asked him some questions about the house. He was happy to talk to me.

'I don't see many people up here,' he said. He looked at the blue sky and the mountains, and his eyes were sad. 'No friends. No wife. Nothing.'

I got a bottle of **whisky** from my car, and we sat together in the evening sun and drank. I'm a good listener.

'No wife,' Bill Chess said again. He looked into his glass of whisky. 'She left me. She left me a month ago. The 12th of June.'



I got a bottle of whisky from my car, and we sat together in the evening sun and drank. I'm a good listener.

I gave him some more whisky and sat quietly. June 12th – the day when Mrs Kingsley didn't go back to Los Angeles for the dinner.

'Tell me about it,' I said quietly.

He drank his whisky quickly. It was not his first drink that day. 'I met Muriel a year and three months ago,' he said slowly. 'We married three weeks later. I loved her a lot, but . . . well, I was stupid. Here I am – I've got a good job, a pretty little wife, so what do I do?' He looked across the lake at the Kingsleys' house. 'I get into bed with that Kingsley cat over there. OK, she's as pretty as Muriel – the same long yellow hair, same eyes, same nice little body – but she's nothing to me. But Muriel knows all about it. So we had a fight, and that night she left me. I went out, and when I got home, there was a letter on the table. "Goodbye, Bill," she says, "I don't want to live with you after this."'

He finished his whisky. 'I didn't see the Kingsley woman again. She went down the mountain that same night. And not a word from Muriel now for a month.' He turned and looked at me. 'It's an old story,' he said, 'but thanks for listening.'

I put the whisky bottle back in the car, and together we walked round the lake to the Kingsleys' house. I looked round the house, but there was nothing interesting for me there.

'Perhaps Mrs Kingsley went away with your wife,' I said to Bill Chess.

He thought about it for a minute. 'No,' he said. 'Muriel never liked that Kingsley cat.'

We walked on round the lake. There were only two other houses and there was nobody in them. It was quiet and clean and beautiful by that lake, away from the hot, dirty city. We stopped by an old boat and looked down into the water at the fish.

Suddenly Bill Chess caught my arm. 'Look!' he said. 'Look down there!' His hand was heavy on my arm, and his face was white.

I looked, and about ten feet below the water I saw something yellow. Something long and yellow. It moved slowly through the water. A woman's hair.

I started to say something, but Bill Chess jumped into the lake and swam down under the water. He pulled and pushed, and quickly came up again through the water. The body followed him slowly. A body in red trousers and a black jacket. A body with a grey-white face, without eyes, without mouth, just long yellow hair. It was not a pretty thing – after a month in the water.

'Muriel!' said Bill Chess. Suddenly he was an old, old man. He sat there by the lake with his head in his hands. 'It's Muriel!' he said, again and again.

Down in Puma Point village, the police station was just a one-room little house. The name on the door said, 'JIM PATTON – POLICE'. I went in.

Jim Patton was a big slow man, with a big round face and a big slow smile. He spoke slowly and he thought slowly, but his eyes weren't stupid. I liked everything about him.

I lit a cigarette and told him about the dead woman in Little Fawn Lake.

'Bill Chess's wife – Muriel,' I said. 'She and Bill had a fight a month ago, then she left him. She wrote him a letter – a goodbye letter, or a **suicide** letter. I don't know.'

Jim Patton looked at me. 'OK,' he said slowly. 'Let's go and talk to Bill. And who are you, son?'

'Marlowe. I'm a private detective from LA. I'm working for Mr Kingsley. He wants me to find his wife.'

We drove up to the lake with the doctor and the police boys in the back of the car.



Bill Chess was a very unhappy man. 'You think I murdered Muriel?' he said angrily to Patton.