



## **The Lake**

*Sheena Lambert*

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## **The Lake** Sheena Lambert

A gripping murder mystery, with a compelling family drama at its heart.

September 1975.

A body is discovered in the receding waters of a man-made lake, and for Peggy Casey, 23-year-old landlady of The Angler's Rest, nothing will ever be the same.

Detective Sergeant Frank Ryan is dispatched from Dublin, and his arrival casts an uneasy spotlight on the damaged history of the valley, and on the difficult relationships that bind Peggy and her three older siblings.

Over the course of the weekend, Detective Ryan's investigation will not only uncover the terrible truth behind the dead woman's fate, but will also expose the Casey family's deepest secrets.

Secrets never meant to be revealed.

## **The Lake Details**

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Author : Sheena Lambert

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## **From Reader Review The Lake for online ebook**

### **Kathryn Laceby says**

Originally reviewed at Novel Escapes

The story takes place in a small village in Ireland in the 1970's where a body has been discovered down by a man-made lake. The question surrounding the body, and where it came from, is being investigated by a detective from Dublin and he quickly finds himself intrigued by the young woman running the pub.

There were theoretically two plot lines in *The Lake*, the attraction between Frank and Peggy and the mystery of the body. I felt like the focus was on Peggy in the pub and the undeniable connection between her and Frank rather than this poor deceased sole but at the same time Lambert also brought in a host of villagers who slowly gave details about the village and it's past. Upon reflection there were a lot of details in *The Lake* that I only absorbed having finished it. I was reading it with the purpose of finding out about the body but there was a lot to explore that would benefit from a second read.

Sheena Lambert created a visual of the village and the time period with wonderful wording and language and brought in problems of the era and the unease of the time period in Ireland. It was much more than a mystery novel for me. And while I enjoyed the character development and liked the mystery in the plot the novel was too short. I felt as if I was just beginning to know the characters and then the novel wrapped up and left me feeling a little bereft! I want to know what happened to Peggy and her family – there was a twist at the end that I wasn't expecting at all and I wish I knew what happened next.

Thank you to the author for our review copy. All opinions are our own.

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### **Trish at Between My Lines says**

This review was originally posted on Between My Lines

The blurb for *The Lake* immediately grabbed my attention with its 1975 setting in a rural Irish village and the creepy discovery of a body found in a lake. Two things guaranteed to make me want to dive straight into its pages!

#### **First line of *The Lake* by Sheena Lambert:**

"Frank. Phone call."

#### **My Thoughts on *The Lake* by Sheena Lambert:**

I thoroughly enjoyed *The Lake* as there was a lot going on that made me curious and that I needed to see resolved. It's also relatively short and so I ending up reading it very quickly as once I started I wanted to keep going. The bits I loved were:

- An insight into Ireland in the 1970s when having a television was a novelty and everyone was all up in everyone else's business. It all felt very authentic and I loved the setting so much.
- Complex family relationships. The main character Peggy is running the family pub and has ideas for where she wants to take it. But she has to put up with a family that aren't really interested and a village that resists change.
- The history of The Lake. It was all kinds of creepy even without the dead body that had lain there for decades. The lake was actually a village that had been flooded back when electricity came to Ireland and the thought of the houses rotting away at the bottom of the lake just captured my imagination.
- There is a quiet romance going on. It doesn't take over the mystery theme and isn't sizzling hot but it's believable and hopeful.
- The mystery! Left me GOBSMACKED! I had to read the reveal page twice to take it in. It just wasn't what I was expecting.

As for the things I didn't like, there weren't really any. It was an enjoyable book but I thought it lacked a certain oomph that would make it one that I love. I was entertained while I read it, intrigued by the history of the lake but it just isn't a book that is going to stand out in my memory.

Still I thought it was good for a debut novel and I know I'd like to read more by this author in the future. Especially as she managed a twist that took me by surprise.

### **Who should read *The Lake* by Sheena Lambert?**

I'd recommend this to those of you that like small town settings, historical settings that aren't that long ago (1970s) and mysteries with a twist. I think if you are a fan of cozy mysteries that you will also appreciate this one. Fans of Agatha Christie should consider reading it too.

Thanks to Sheena Lambert for giving me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

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### **Sid Nuncius says**

I enjoyed this book. Although the discovery of a body drives the plot, this is really a character study of Peggy, its main protagonist, and a vivid portrait of life in a small Irish town in the mid-1970s.

The story is a simple one: a body, apparently buried 20 years or so ago, is discovered in Crumm, a tiny place in Ireland and a detective from Dublin is sent to investigate. This unearths not only old history – which is very interesting, by the way – but the arrival of the detective provokes emotions and change in the pub which Peggy, the 23-year-old, youngest member of the Casey family runs on behalf of herself and her three siblings. The investigation is really only a minor sub-plot to the main story – that of Peggy, her heart, her ambitions and her family.

It could be dreadful, but it's very well done. Sheena Lambert writes very well in easy, unflashy prose which conveys intense emotion very well. Her insights and character creations are very good, so we really come to feel we know these people and are involved in their lives. The background and sense of place are also very well done, and there is a nicely understated romance which runs through the book.

I didn't think this was quite the fabulous creation that many other reviewers do, but it is very good and an enjoyable rewarding read which I can recommend.

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### **Ellie M says**

A body of a young girl is found by a lake in the village of Crumm, Ireland. It's the scorching hot summer of 1975 and the man-made lake has dried to reveal a secret from the past. Part murder-mystery, part family saga, *The Lake* is a tale of who the girl was and the connections back to the village. This is a story of secrets; those current and secrets kept from years before. There's a touch of romance, a touch of mystery, and lots of banter amongst the characters.

I found this a very easy novel to read; the story of the Casey family flowed well and the four children of the family were well-developed, well drawn characters. Peggy, the youngest manages the family pub whilst her older siblings work away. The story is centered around her. Whilst she loves the pub, when Detective Frank Ryan, from Dublin, arrives in the village to solve the case, her mind and heart are open to new possibilities. Her siblings arrive, each with their secrets, and each secret challenges what is expected and accepted. As the story develops some secrets are revealed whereas others remain a secret and the reader is left guessing.

I'm glad to be introduced to this author via Netgalley. Thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for the opportunity to read this novel.

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### **Andrew says**

As I read this, I found that it grew on me. The clever interplay between the family life of Peggy Casey and her siblings at *The Angler's Rest*, and DS Frank Ryan's investigation into the finding of the body on the shores of the lake, makes this a good read.

I like the way the book is set in a small timescale, set in 1975. As the weekend progresses, we learn that a crime is suspected. Then we learn that there are tensions between Peggy, the landlady and Clara her sister. Later, when Jerome and Hugo, her brothers arrive, there are more tensions evident.

Which are clues and which are red herrings? Military dog tags, a post sack?

There are a host of interesting characters throughout. I found the storylines involving Coleman and how his life changed with the building of the dam and creation of the reservoir, particularly interesting. How close is he to the discovered body?

To the end, the mystery and intrigue kept me guessing. I didn't spot this ending!

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### **Chris Curran says**

It's 1975 and the end of a long hot summer in the village of Crumm in rural Ireland. Peggy, the youngest of the Casey siblings, runs the local pub. It's a quiet spot smelling of cut grass and hay and overlooking a lake.

The Angler's Rest is a cosy place where the old boys from the village prop up the bar as they sup their pints and the Delaney brothers entertain with fiddle and tin whistle in front of the turf fire, while Peggy's Irish stew bubbles away on the kitchen Aga.

But Frank Ryan hasn't come for the fishing, the Guinness or the food. He's Detective Sergeant Ryan sent to investigate a body exposed when the lake retreated under the sun. And the body isn't the only secret given up by the water. The ruins of a neighbouring village appear too, bringing painful memories of homes and livelihoods lost when the valley was flooded to build a dam. Peggy and her sister and brothers are too young to remember much from that time, but the scars run deeper and spread wider than anyone can imagine.

We're used these days to expecting crime novels to be fast-paced with climactic show-downs and twist endings, but this is a more delicate and thoughtful kind of story-telling and I found it enormously refreshing.

The novel is as much about family dynamics and a fractured community that has only partly healed as it is about the crime. There are no car chases, no overt violence, but the ending is both surprising and very satisfying. Sheena Lambert writes beautifully and within quite a short book she gives us a subtle and touching romance, a fascinating snapshot of a very particular time and place, and an absorbing murder mystery.

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### **Melanie Byrnes says**

A good blend of romance and mystery.

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### **Sharon says**

Set in Ireland in 1975, in the sleepy village of Crumm where nothing ever really happens.

Peggy Casey runs her family bar, with little help from her siblings. Wild sister Carla is too busy causing trouble to help out, flamboyant brother Jerome seems to be more at home in Dublin, and brother Hugo is working in London. This leaves Peggy to deal with the day-to-day running of the business, condemned to a life serving the people she grew up with - one she isn't entirely unhappy with.

On the weekend of the All-Ireland final, something finally happens in Crumm. A body is found on the shore of a lake that was created years ago when the old village was flooded. Detective Sergeant Frank Ryan is summoned down from Dublin to try and find out what happened - but although the locals are willing to cooperate, nobody seems to know anything about the young woman who was found.

But one person knows. And they know that it will have a devastating effect on one Crumm resident when the truth comes out.

I really, really liked this book. It wasn't long, it didn't take ages to read, but it flowed well. I liked the writing style a lot. The characters were appealing - I felt for Frank and Peggy, for Jerome, and even for Carla at times. I liked the character of the young guard, Michael, too. I would really love to read more about this little village and about the residents - I'd love if this were turned into a series!

The author didn't go for the obvious ending here, which I was thankful for. It was left very much open should she get the urge to write a follow-up. Still, the main mystery came to a satisfying conclusion and we weren't left wondering.

My copy was provided in exchange for consideration of review. As always, if it were crap, I'd tell you. Thankfully, it's not. It's quite good and I would recommend it as a holiday or weekend read. I will definitely read more from this author in the future.

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## **Margaret Madden says**

Ireland, 1975. A body has been found at the edge of a lake which covers a forgotten village. Under the calm waters lie ruins and secrets. The corpse has obviously been there for many years, and this makes it all the harder for Detective Sergeant Frank Ryan to uncover the mystery of the unidentified remains. The sleepy town of Crumm pricks up its ears at the arrival of the Dublin Garda and the local pub, The Anglers Rest, is the perfect place to discuss the gruesome facts of the case. Residents compare notes and feed Frank whatever information they have. The publican, Peggy, is delighted to have some customers coming and going and begins to enjoy the company of the young Detective Sergeant. Can the body be identified after all these years? Is there a connection to the underwater village or is it something more sinister? The story unfolds via an eclectic mix of characters and the cosy surroundings of The Angler's Rest.

Sheena Lambert has written not only a crime thriller, but also a flashback to rural Ireland in the 1970s. Set mostly in a small family run pub, in a sleepy midlands town, the atmosphere is full of turf fires, Irish Stew and warm glass bottles of Coca Cola. Twenty Three year old Peggy has pretty much been abandoned by her family and has the heavy load of running the pub solo. She tries to make a profit by providing hot meals and dreams of owning a colour television, in order to attract more business on match days. The odd group of fishermen, and a hotch-potch of locals, make up her customer base, while her siblings live their own lives in Wexford, Dublin and London.

A short book, it take off from page one, and the reader is almost like a fly on the wall in the warm pub in Crumm. The characters come to life from the get go and as most of the action takes place in the bar, it feels more like a play than a novel. Reminiscent of *The Playboy of the Western World* or similar rural based plays, there is a feeling of a stage, and its actors, about it. The pulling of pints, emptying of ashtrays and calling last orders are subtly present and the sights, sounds and smells of the country pub jump off the page. Peggy and her older siblings are the soul of the story (except the eldest, Hugh, who lives in London and only makes a brief appearance). The visiting Garda adds some spice to Peggy's dull days and she finds herself allowing herself to dream again. Dream of travel, love, a life outside Crumm.

This may be a short read (under 200 pages) but by no means is it lacking substance. The narrative is a clever mix of 70's nostalgia and moody, atmospheric scenery, but the heart of this novel is within its stage-like setting. The day to day activity in the small pub is where the story is. A story of family, expectations, secrets

and denial. The hidden history and newly surfaced body are just the added bonus. There is room for further expansion of the characters at a later stage and should the author decide to write a sequel, or indeed a series, I would be on the pre-order list. My only (small) qualm was the short length of the book and the move from slow, steady character based chapters to an almost rushed ending with less emphasis on the players and more on the need to finish up.

Overall, a pleasant, theatre like experience that I would recommend to lovers of Irish fiction, past and present, and for less than the price of a pint!

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### **Karen says**

I really enjoyed this book. I thought the characters were well drawn and the story well paced. I recognised rural Ireland and it's characters. The mystery, developing relationships and family dynamics all worked and flowed around each other seamlessly. well worth a read

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### **Amalia Gavea says**

This was one of the most atmospheric books I've read in a while. What impressed me was the fact that we witness the murder mystery being unfolded through the eyes of two very interesting characters, the Detective Sergeant Frank Ryan and Peggy Casey, a young woman whose strength and persistence stayed with me long after I read the novel. The descriptions of the Lake -which becomes a character in itself-are eerie and haunting, and the characters are realistic, the kind you meet in every small town in every country. Without spoiling anything, the end caught me completely by surprise.

If you want an extremely well-written mystery with a memorable, strong heroine, embellished with aspects of the Irish daily life and culture, then I recommend *The Lake* unreservedly, it will not let you down. And I hope we read more stories with Peggy, she deserves it.

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### **Kate says**

A compelling yet almost cosy mystery set in a quiet Irish village in the mid 70s. I found its style bewitching.

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### **Damaskcat says**

It is 1975 in Ireland. A valley was flooded over twenty years ago to make a reservoir but this year there is little rain and the water level drops and a body is revealed. A detective is sent to investigate. Peggy Casey - landlady of The Anglers' Rest - is soon aware of the body and interested to find out more.

Someone must know how the body got there but at first no one is talking. Peggy and her brothers and sister are squabbling as they usually do because Peggy does most of the work of running the family owned bar and



the others flit in and out as they choose.

This book ought to have been good but somehow it didn't gel for me. Is it a crime story? Is it a love story? Is it a mystery? I don't think the author could decide. I didn't feel the characters came to life on the page. The background did - the small claustrophobic village in Ireland where everyone knows everyone else.

The relationship between the brothers and sisters did come to life too but the story didn't grip me and I was quite relieved when I finished the last page. Others may enjoy it but I found it pretty run of the mill. I received a free copy of the book from NetGalley for review.

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

Beautifully atmospheric and tense mystery set in the 70's with a stunning sense of place and time and some really well drawn characters.

Full review to follow.

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### **Annette says**

Set in The Irish Republic in the mid 1970's. At first I thought this book was a crime thriller as it started out with a body being found on the banks of a man made lake where part of a small village had been flooded to supply water to the rest of the area. The story however is much more and revolves around a family who run the local pub its customers and the policeman who has been sent down from Dublin to investigate the murder. I enjoyed reading The Lake and particularly the surprising ending

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