

The Lady in the Lake; a Ghost/Love Story

LOGLINE: Will a woman choose a downgraded version of love or the one true love of her dead soulmate?

EXT. LAKE, 1923 - DAY

An EMPTY ROW BOAT sits in the middle of an empty lake. Oars are deep in the water, hanging by the grips at the oarlocks.

Waves lap against the boat. Birds chirp and the breeze blows.

The boat fades and is replaced by...

EXT. LAKE, 2023 - DAY

A GROUP OF MEN AND WOMEN, kitted out in scuba gear, sitting on the edge of a larger outboard motorboat in the middle of the very same but busier lake. The senior of them speaks.

SCUBA LEADER

So we have newbies with us today alright, so everybody keep eyes on each other. Jim, you're leading and I'll take the rear and stay up top.

The other divers check their gear but listen intently.

SCUBA LEADER (CONT'D)

It's a murky lake, didn't used to be, clear for miles twenty years ago, so stay on the line and we'll see if we can get you to bottom. You know it's deep, but first timers will still be surprised. 232 meters at its deepest. Not quite that here but close, I think.

(scans group)

We good?

All thumbs up as they begin to flip over into the water.

Our vision skirts from the boat along the lake to a park at the beach with sunbathers, then a busy street beside a high rise condo unit that fades and is replaced by...

EXT. STREET, 1923 - DAY

A narrower street and a quaint, two story hotel. A painted sign reads THE LAKEVIEW HOTEL.

A WOMAN, young, well put together, a broad brimmed hat and a drop waist dress under a coat, stands at the entrance.

She stares out at the lake. Stares.

Finally she turns to the hotel. Her white gloves hold a cardboard suitcase in front of her. She takes a deep breath and pushes through the doors to...

INT. LAKEVIEW HOTEL LOBBY, 1923 - DAY

She walks up to the front desk and is greeted by a local staff trying to look like they know what they're doing.

FRONT DESK
Afternoon ma'am. May I help you?

WOMAN
I'd like a room please.

FRONT DESK
Just yourself?

WOMAN
Is that a problem?

FRONT DESK
(long beat)
Not at all. Don't see many single women staying in hotels is all.
(pushes guest book at her)
If you could sign in then.

The front desk attendant steps away.

The woman removes her gloves and reveals a wedding ring. She drops her hand below the counter before the front desk staff turns back, sliding the ring off the finger, palming it.

She signs as the attendant returns with a key.

FRONT DESK (CONT'D)
Top of the stairs, on the left.

A teenage boy reaches for her suitcase. She grabs it, panicked, holding it to the ground as he lets go.

WOMAN
Thank you. I'll be fine.

EXT. PARK, 1923 - DAY

From a distance we can see the Woman standing at a run down outside counter and a rack of canoes and rowboats. She is looking for cash in her small purse that she gives a man as another man drags a rowboat to the water for her.

She runs to the boat and hops in. The man pushes her out. She grabs at the grips of the oars and, facing us, begins to row. We look out in the direction she is headed as she fades and is replaced by...

EXT. LAKE, 2023 - DAY

Our scuba leader who is the last one on the surface. He gives a thumbs up to the two in the boat letting out the rope and we descend with him.

Bubbles and murkiness looking down at the rope to guide us down and down and down. We catch up to other divers. We keep going. Our scuba leader wasn't joking. This lake is deep.

On the surface, the rope on the floor of the boat continues to spool out as it fades and is replaced by...

EXT. LAKE, 1923 - DAY

The Woman who is laying on the floor of the boat facing up at us. Oars hanging at the oarlocks. She is crying. Sobbing.

EXT. BIG CITY, SUBURBS, 1920 - DAY

She is sobbing. A concerned MAN has her by the wrist and is taking her from the front porch of a house to a parked car.

MAN

Emily, we can't live like this. Now you gotta get hold of yourself.

He gets her into the car and shuts the doors.

INT. CAR, 1920 - DAY

MAN

We're here now. Just us. All of that is behind us. This is your new life. I promised I would love you and take care of you, I would take you away from all of that awful...

He's not very good at this. He knows it.

MAN (CONT'D)

And you promised you would love me.
(beat)
Do you love me, Emily?

The sobbing is tempered. She looks at him. Afraid.

MAN (CONT'D)

You can tell me Emily. Tell me anything. Everything.

She works up the courage but can't look at him.

WOMAN

He calls for me. I hear him.

He is devastated but dedicated to her.

MAN

He's dead, Emily. You loved him, and I know you did and I'm never going to take that away from you. But you don't have him anymore, and I know, it's a tragedy, and it's awful. But you have someone right here with you who loves you, who wants to do right by you. Someone who's taken you away from all of that, taken you away from that town and that lake. You don't have to see that no more.

She looks up into his eyes.

WOMAN

I can hear him. He calls for me. He's calling for me.

MAN

(holding her hands)

It's not real, Emily, those voices. The doctor explained it all to us.

(beat)

Maybe it's time for the procedure. The doctor says it's state of the art; modern medicine is figuring out the brain and how to fix it all. Says it's completely safe.

She is pleading with her eyes but he's not listening. He's not able. She resigns herself. Nods. He kisses her forehead.

INT. LAKEVIEW HOTEL ROOM, 1923 - DAY

The room is untouched. The woman's coat is draped on the bed. The suitcase is open. We look inside and see only the pair of gloves and her wedding ring. Nothing else was packed.

EXT. LAKE DEPTHS, 2023 - DAY

Down further. A different world. We descend past the last of the divers and catch up to Jim in the lead with the rope. He keeps forging ahead into a darkness.

EXT. LAKE, 2023 - DAY

The coiled rope is no more. It springs taut, tied to a latch on the side of the boat. It makes the boat list a little before it rocks back and forth. The boat fades and is replaced by...

EXT. LAKE, 1923 - DAY

The Woman's boat which rocks gently as she lay there. She has stopped her sobbing. Does she hear something?

A change comes over her demeanour. She screws up her courage. She closes her eyes. She smiles. She opens her eyes.

WOMAN

Yes.

She dissolves. She doesn't fade. She isn't replaced by anything. Dematerialization. Her body disappears. The broad brimmed hat and drop waist dress remain. Empty.

Waves lap against the boat. Birds chirp and the breeze blows.

EXT. LAKE DEPTHS, 2023 - DAY

Divers under water find Jim at the end of the rope. Not bottom. They gesticulate to go further. Jim waves them off. Waves them up. He gives them room to turn and kick their fins to move back up the rope. When the coast is clear, Jim looks around and heads up himself.

We stay with the knob at the end of the rope. Then we drop just a little further. A little bit. To the bottom. A silty, shifting lake bed floor.

We see her. And him. Her lover. They twirl, naked, entangled together, amidst the detritus and debris and churning water. Holding one another.

They fade into the darkness.