



Mirror Lake

Andrée A. Michaud

J. C. Sutcliffe, Translator

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Mirror Lake might appear to be a mystery at first glance, but Andrée A. Michaud's sometimes confounding, sometimes funny novel defies easy categorization. Recently relocated to an isolated lake in Maine, crotchety Robert and his dog Jeff would like nothing more than to be left alone, but their solitude is interrupted by neighbors from across the lake: a man named Bob, and his dog, Bill. Their reluctant friendship is interrupted by a mysterious stranger who steals Robert's boat and apparently drowns in the lake—but was this “John Doe” more than he appeared to be? And what's with the thriller novel that Robert is reading, which contains characters whom he bumps into in real life, including himself?

Presenting events from Robert's addled, maybe insane perspective, the book charges into existential and metaphysical territory. It is full of tortuous metaphors and visions, references to films, and obsessions with onions, Humpty Dumpty, and 400-million-year-old rocks. *Mirror Lake* comes to symbolize the thin line between reality and imagination in Robert's mind. He confuses himself figuratively, and eventually literally, with Bob, and identifies other characters by the celebrities they resemble: a cop duo looks similar to Tim Robbins and Indiana Jones, and a would-be girlfriend is called Anita, after the actress Anita Ekberg.

Soon events in Robert's book, including a murder, threaten to spill over into the real world, and the discovery of John Doe's body sets off a chain of bizarre happenings. The book's tone veers towards absurdist comedy. While its dense, often enigmatic prose can be difficult to parse, the book's outlandish plot turns end up leading to a strange, touching conclusion.

Mirror Lake is intriguing and perplexing in equal measure, with rewards for those willing to roll with its idiosyncratic rhythms.

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