



Lake Charles

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Brendan Fishback coming home from a rock concert ends up the next morning in bed with a corpse, his dead girlfriend Ashleigh Sizemore. He has no idea how she died. But the local sheriff closing in targets Brendan as the prime suspect for Ashleigh's murder. Time is running tight. Going on a Lake Charles outing with his twin sister Edna and best pal Cobb Kuzawa, Brendan mulls things over.

That night when Edna turns up missing, Brendan and Cobb take off to find her. Events heat up after they stumble on a well-guarded pot farm. Blood spills in the violent clash. Staying one jump ahead of the local authorities and an enraged drug cartel, Brendan picks up unexpected aid.

Cobb's dad Jeremiah is a decorated Korean War vet and ex-CIA operative who applies his own rough ideas of justice. Veera Grant, a tough lady DEA agent working under cover, also joins in Cobb's quest for the truth. Told in a stylish, taut prose, LAKE CHARLES set in the vibrant Great Smoky Mountains tells how a young man when pushed to the extreme defends himself against overwhelming forces on both sides of the law--and wins, but on his own terms.

Lake Charles Details

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From Reader Review Lake Charles for online ebook

Pamella says

Finally got my copy yesterday - probably would have finished it last night but I needed a little sleep so I could go to work today. -FANTASTIC- I am wanting to skip ahead but I am forcing myself to read it through- biting my nails! ---OKAY FINISHED! Actually 4 1/2 stars but the rate tool would not let me leave a half star. Wonderful Ed! Now I've got to get your other books.

Randy says

It's 1979 and Brendan Fishback is facing a murder charge. He'd hooked up with Ashleigh Sizemore, daughter of a prominent lawyer, at a rock concert and wakes up to a dead body in the motel room. He rushes out to call the cops and is arrested when PCP, angel dust, is found in the room and is what Ashleigh died of an overdose from. The night was hazy from a lot of drinking and pot smoking, but Brendan knows there was no angel dust in with them.

Brendan goes on a fishing expedition with his twin sister, Edna, and his best friend, Cobb Kuzawa, Edna's husband to relax. It makes for a confusing time as the pair are separated and torn between reconciliation or divorce. After an argument, Edna takes off on her jet ski and it's only hours later, as night approaches, Brendan and Cobb begin to worry.

They go looking, but the only thing they find is some patches of marijuana plants and they begin to suspect what happened. Deciding to stay overnight to get an early start in the morning, they are attacked late, killing one and driving the other off. No name, but the face is familiar.

Jerry Kuzawa, Cobb's father joins the hunt. A man with a shadowy past, serving in the Korean War, rumors of a career as a government op, he comes loaded with weapons. When they hook up with a beautiful undercover agent, she reveals some facts that start to shed light on the whole mess. Brendan's murder charge and Edna's disappearance are connected.

Good one and due for release in late June.

Linda Rowland says

Good story. Wound up really liking the main character. I could not figure how things might work out okay for him but pleased that it did. Thanks Ed.

Stephen Gallup says

For someone who has lived many years in a major city, as I have, there's a latent wish to escape to the purity of an uncomplicated rural environment. *Lakes Charles* is the antidote for that, in the same way *Deliverance*

was. In fact, I'm probably safe in saying that certain parts of this are a deliberate homage to *Deliverance*.

I think this is Lynskey's best work to date. No disrespect intended to the trusty private eye who stars in other whodunnits, but I preferred getting the story from the point of view of an ordinary person--somebody who simply has trouble thrust upon him, as opposed to encountering it in the line of work. Also, the writing has notched up in quality. Lynskey has a distinctive voice and sentence structure. It doesn't feel entirely natural to me, with its oddly placed modifiers and minimal use of commas, but it certainly did not detract from my enjoyment of a ripping good story.

Bryan Kornel says

Good murder/mystery.

Eric says

Lake Charles by Ed Lynskey is an entertaining thriller detailing the friendship between Brendan and Cobb in backwoods Tennessee during the 1980's. Brendan has recently been released on bail for the murder of the daughter of a wealthy influential resident and one he denies committing. Edna is the twin sister of Brendan and currently is the estranged wife of his best friend Cobb. To take their minds away from Brenden's legal troubles, the three decide to spend a day fishing at Lake Charles, a man-made lake that is slowly being reclaimed by nature.

From there, in separate bass boats, Brendan and Cobb journey out onto the lake, while Edna joins them on her jet ski. Along the way and after a spat with Cobb, Edna mysteriously disappears and the story unfolds as Brendan and Cobb try to find her in the swampy area of Lake Charles.

Eventually, Mr.Kuzawa, a mysterious war veteran and the father to Cobb, joins in the search and adds his own ambiguous witticisms of knowledge during the search.

Lynskey introduces a wide range of characters in the tale and is quite adept at describing the Tennessee backwoods in a novel that is often described as "redneck noir."

Recommended to those in search of a decent thriller and for fans of writers like Joe Lansdale and his Hap and Leonard characters.

Richard Godwin says

This novel is spellbinding in its tight narrative control. As you read it you feel someone has greased the slide on a helter skelter.

From the opening, where Brendan Fishback's sister disappears while on vacation, to the tight ending this is a highly readable brilliantly written page turner.

Ed Lynskey has an assured narrative voice that inhabits Noir and thriller writing equally.

He has believable well drawn characters and he always keeps it real with dialogue.

In that sense he is a highly skilled author who lets the characters tell the story.

Ed Lynskey's prose has an almost lyrical quality that lifts it off the page and reminds me of Tom Waits at times

"I cadged a complimentary green matchbook with a gold bird icon from the Bell canning Jar. Later we'd use the matches to light our spliffs. My fingertips tapped the stem to the gizmo that dinged a bell. Nobody came out. Wrong signal, so I did two bell rings. No response prompted me to tap out a series of bell rings."

This is a Noir classic.

The location of the backwoods of Tennessee evokes the dark atmosphere against which the ambiguous and dark prose ignites this story.

As Brendan begins to search for his sister he encounters police corruption.

The story deepens at this point. The corruption goes deeper than this and involves a complexity of socio-economic and familial issues which are deeply rooted within the infrastructure of heavily engineered social mores. To disclose more would be to reveal the plot.

This is a well structured novel which will keep you guessing until the end. It knows exactly what it's doing.

Ed Lynskey also writes evocative prose

"After traversing Yellow Snake's main street, we doubled back, and juddered down an alley behind a Lebanese restaurant, staying sharp-eyed all the way. No furtive sedans dogged us. Mr. Kuzawa liked my idea, so we moored opposite the yellow Snake Courthouse where I'd last frog marched into while tricked out in irons for my bail hearing."

If you like street-hard crime fiction with a twist, read 'Lake Charles'.

Maggie says

My first noir fiction - an enjoyable read. Good plot, great characters and wonderful details about that part of Tennessee. From my goodreads friend Ed Lynskey.

Marti says

I have just finished reading a pdf copy of my Goodreads' friend Ed Lynskey's latest book which I really

enjoyed. The only other one that I read several years ago was The Blue Cheer, so I was glad to have the opportunity to read another. There is a LOT of action in this one, which is set in Tennessee. The title refers to the location of a lake where the main character, Brendan Fishback, his twin sister Edna, and Cobb Kuzawa--Edna's ex and Brendan's best friend go for a getaway weekend. Brendan is out on bail, accused of murdering Ashleigh Sizemore, whose father Ralph owns much of the land around. Edna disappears on her jet ski, and all kinds of other problems ensue, but I'll stop there before giving away more of the plot. If you like adventure, you will probably like this book.

Adam Light says

This was a pleasant surprise. Coming-of-age noir mystery mashup set in eastern Tennessee in 1979. The prose was occasionally too purple for my taste, but not so much that it bothered me. I bought it because the cover art jumped at me. Glad I did. This is a good yarn.

Kevin Farrell says

Hard boiled crime fiction is not my favorite genre. But that is what this book is and I read it anyway. When I say not my favorite, I mean to say it is not my least favorite either. Just not the first thing I grab.

I needed you to know that first.

I started reading this and was quickly moving along with the story and the characters. I enjoyed how the descriptions of the surrounding wilderness was woven into every part of the story. At first I was willing to give this one about 3 stars. To my surprise this is a story that builds like a snow ball rolling down a mountain. By the end it was really hauling ass - as Branden might say. Plus I like the way it ended. It was a good wrap-up but not predictable.

At 190 pages you should take this one on the airplane with you. Just right.

Alan Williams says

It's the summer of 1979 and Brendan Fishback, his sister Edna and brother-in-law Cobb Kuzawa are heading to Lake Charles to do some bass fishing and have a good time.

Brendan has the spectre of a murder charge hanging over his head, a crime that he didn't commit, and this might be the last chance he gets to cut loose before his trial.

Lake Charles isn't the same place that it was though, once a haven for leisure, it's now run-down and in a bad way, and it isn't long before Brendan's situation goes from bad to worse. His sister disappears and Brendan and Cobb run up against some back-country marijuana growers while trying to find her.

"Lake Charles" is told by Brendan in the first person and also through the clever use of flashbacks in dreams in Brendan's mind's eye. In this way Ed Llynskey writes a novel that oozes evil and violence by turn. As the story unfolds you are caught time and again by another punch to the guts in terms of a twist in the plot or a

revelation that you didn't see coming. Page after page, I found myself thinking about things I wanted to include in this review, but without giving too many spoilers that would have made this review too long, and given away too much of the plot.

The story carries an air of realism, and is grounded with the practicalities of the late '70s, this gives it an edge in terms of pace and dialogue that wouldn't have been possible with a more modern setting. The characters feel complete and as a result as the plot turns, you become embedded in what is happening to them and wondering what the next shock will be.

This is the first novel I have read by this author, but I will certainly be looking out for others, and would recommend "Lake Charles" if you like a good crime or mystery.

Connie Haag says

'Three things were certain in my life: death, taxes and Mama Jo's one rule to say nothing of Angus Fishback under her roof.'

It's a risky journey to scramble up a murder mystery with classical coming-of-age elements, but in his latest novel accomplished author Lynskey never steps wrong. Nineteen-year old protagonist Brendan seems a nice enough guy, a somewhat unreliable charmer in his half-baked reluctance to fully grow both up and out of drugs (yes, it's the 70s).

The story jumps right into the heart of things when the reader learns that Brendan is out on bail awaiting murder trial charged with killing his girlfriend Ashleigh Sizemore, pampered daughter of the richest man in a small Tennessee town.

Plucky enough to face shambles if with disbelief and muted horror, he sets off on a fishing trip, heading out to Lake Charles with his running mate Cobb and his twin sister Edna. Lynskey cleverly goes through the ritual of telling this scene of comradeship and small adolescent asides while operating in another, subtle way: of course things are going to pan out nasty. Of course Brendan cannot clear his mind, because his sister suddenly disappears. It's nice to see how the author avoids to go for effects, but lets the impact calmly come to the reader when drugs, the filth of a limited small town world and phoniness enter the picture.

The story unfolds evenly paced, with great clarity, an ear for dialog and the loneliness of an adolescent who grew up fatherless and unconsciously still seems to seek a person in his life to take the place of his absent Dad. The truest scenes in the book come when Brendan, haunted by nightmares, battered by goings-on and struggling with issues of right and wrong, finds solace in the Company of Cobb's father, a Korean War veteran (Jerry Kuzawa) who has seen it all and most of the time doesn't even seem to know how tough he sounds. His hard-boiled ways work like the homeopathic remedy for Brendan's unapologetic loneliness, though their lines of dialog never overdose on sincerity and roughness. Quite the reverse, they even manage to leave room for tender truths.

Ashleigh Sizemore's death works like the catalyst to rocket the story's hero into adulthood - a place far more complicated than small town Umpire, Tennessee throughout the late 70s, vividly depicted by the author of this thoroughly enjoyable, well-functioning Story.

Connie Haag

Gregg says

Moody and atmospheric, Lack Charles takes place in the hills of Tennessee in 1979. You can almost smell the feculent and foul waters of the lake as the characters are drawn back to its shore and hills over the course of the story. The lake is almost like a rotten tooth that you just can't help probing with your tongue.

Brendan Fishback's life, and the lives of his sister and best friend are abruptly influenced and affected when Brendan hooks up with the wrong girl and things end very unfortunately for both of them. Small town corruption, drugs, guns and the Feds all play a role in this dark and interesting mystery.

Diane Perry says

A very enjoyable read! This was my first book by Ed Lynsky and was not sure what to expect. I got great characters, interesting storyline and enough mystery that kept me turning the pages. The dialog between the characters had me laughing out loud at times. I will certainly look for more books.
