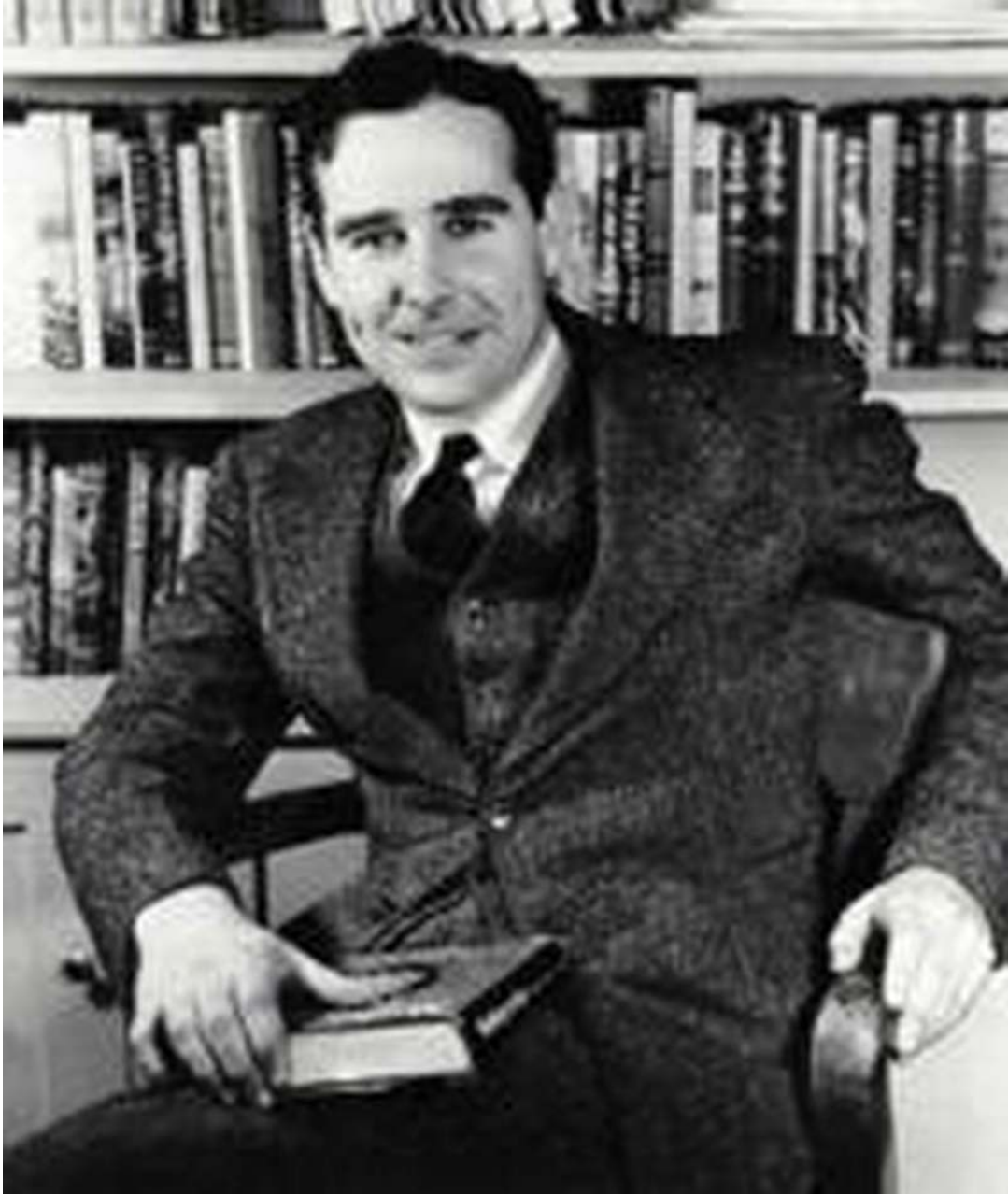


The Life And Death Of Ross Lockridge Jr - Author Of Raintree County

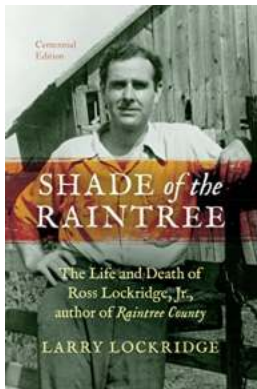


When it comes to American literature, there are certain authors whose names immediately come to mind – Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, and so on. But there are also talented writers whose works may have gone under the radar for the general public. One such author is the late Ross Lockridge Jr, known for his

masterpiece, *Raintree County*. This article delves into the fascinating life and tragic death of Lockridge, shedding light on the genius behind *Raintree County*.

A Promising Start

Ross Franklin Lockridge Jr. was born on April 25, 1914, in Bloomington, Indiana. From an early age, he showed a prodigious talent for writing and storytelling. His passion for literature was fostered by his father, Ross Lockridge Sr., who himself was a famous author and academic. Ross Jr. was encouraged to pursue his dreams and proved his worth by winning several writing contests during his school years.



Shade of the Raintree, Centennial Edition: The Life and Death of Ross Lockridge, Jr., author of *Raintree County* by Barbara B. Levin (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 4460 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 542 pages
Lending	: Enabled



Lockridge attended Indiana University, where he further honed his literary skills. He became a member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa honor society and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. His academic success granted him a scholarship to attend Harvard University, where he completed his Master's degree in English. During his time at Harvard, Lockridge developed a deep

appreciation for American history and began crafting the idea for his magnum opus, *Raintree County*.

The Making of a Masterpiece

Published in 1948, *Raintree County* is a sprawling novel set in rural Indiana during the American Civil War era. The story follows the life of John Wickliff Shawnessy, a passionate young man striving to understand the complexities of his country and find his purpose in life. Lockridge poured his heart and soul into creating this 1,060-page epic, which was instantly hailed as a literary triumph.

Raintree County captivated readers with its vivid descriptions, lyrical prose, and profound exploration of the human condition. The novel cemented Lockridge as a rising star in the literary world, earning him critical acclaim and a devoted following. Many believed he would become one of America's greatest writers.

A Tragic End

Despite the initial success of *Raintree County*, Lockridge's personal life began to crumble. He struggled with alcoholism, mental health issues, and the weight of expectations placed upon him. The pressures of living up to his father's legacy took a toll on Lockridge, and he started experiencing severe bouts of depression.

On a fateful day in March 1948, just months after the release of his magnum opus, Ross Lockridge Jr. tragically took his own life. He was only 33 years old. The literary world was left stunned, mourning the loss of a promising talent and wondering what other literary marvels he could have gifted the world had he chosen to fight his demons.

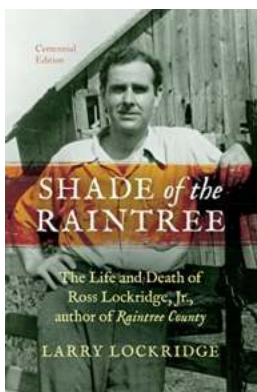
The Legacy Lives On

While the ending of Ross Lockridge Jr.'s life was heartbreaking, his contribution to American literature cannot be understated. Raintree County remains a timeless classic, cherished by those who appreciate its rich storytelling and poignant themes. The novel's exploration of love, loss, and the search for meaning resonates with readers to this day.

Lockridge's work continues to be celebrated by literary enthusiasts, and his tragic story serves as a reminder of the importance of mental health and the challenges that creative geniuses often face. His brief but impactful career has left an indelible mark on the literary landscape.

In

The life and death of Ross Lockridge Jr. is a haunting tale of a talented author who left an indelible mark on American literature through his magnum opus, Raintree County. From his promising start to his untimely demise, Lockridge's story serves as a reminder of the struggles and pressures faced by creative individuals. Raintree County remains a testament to his literary genius and a captivating read for anyone who appreciates exceptional storytelling.



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This true story of literary stardom and sudden tragedy is “a riveting book, shattering and shot through with the powerful poignancy of a life undone” (Detroit News).

Raintree County, the first novel by Ross Lockridge, Jr., was the publishing event of 1948. Excerpted in Life magazine, it was a Book-of-the-Month Club Main Selection, won MGM’s Novel Award and a movie deal, and stood at the top of the nation’s bestseller lists. Unfortunately, Lockridge’s first novel was also his last. Two months after its publication the thirty-three-year-old author from Bloomington, Indiana, took his own life. His son Larry was five years old at the time.

Shade of the Raintree is Larry’s search for an understanding of his father’s baffling act. In this powerfully narrated biography, Larry Lockridge uncovers a man of great vitality, humor, love, and visionary ambition, but also of deep vulnerability. The author manages to combine a son’s emotional investments with a sleuth’s dispassionate inquiry. The result is “a book that is, in its own way, as remarkable and compelling as Raintree County” (Milwaukee Journal).

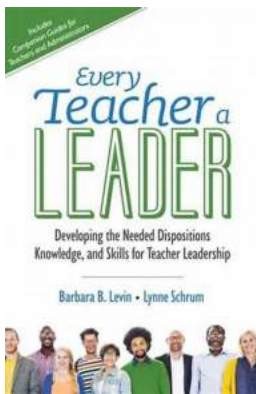
“Larry Lockridge here faces the double tasking of writing a biography of his father and of finding out what drove him to a ruthless act of self-destruction. An immensely moving book, deserving of the Pulitzer Prize.” —Kirkus Reviews

This edition includes a new preface by the author.



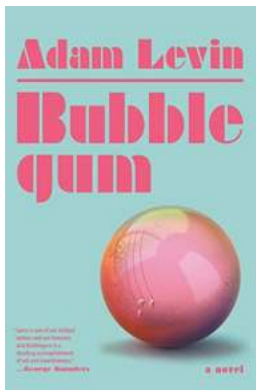
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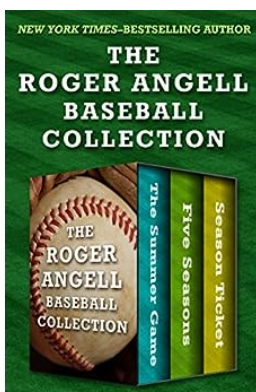
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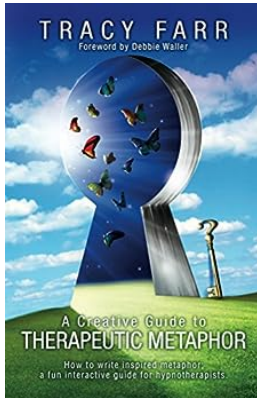
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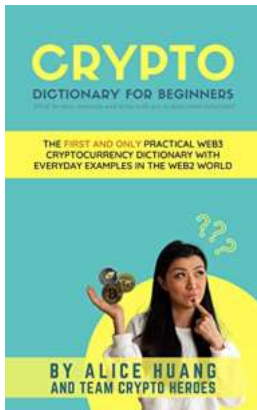
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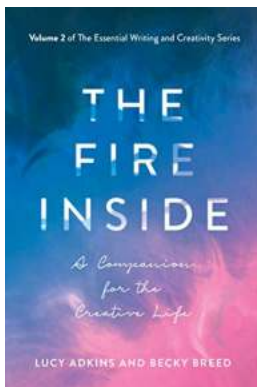
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