



## Bunny Lake is Missing (Femmes Fatales)

*Evelyn Piper*

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This latest entry in the acclaimed “Femmes Fatales: Women Writing Pulp” series builds on the spectacular 2003 launch, featured on NPR, *The New York Times* and more than twenty trade and consumer publications.

Blanche Lake is not like the other mothers who come to collect their children at the local nursery school on New York’s Upper East Side. She lives alone, has a job, and has never been married. It’s the first day of school when this story begins, and Blanche is eager to see how her daughter, Bunny, has fared away from home. But her expectant waiting becomes a mother’s most dreaded nightmare: Bunny never materializes. Neither teachers nor students recall the small girl, and soon Blanche is engaged in a frantic search for any trace of her missing daughter. And the worst part is . . . no one believes her.

In this fraught and at times freakish tale of suspense, Evelyn Piper takes us deep into the psyche of the 1950s to explore American fetishes, fallacies, and fears around motherhood and sexuality. Even the police refuse to help Blanche search for Bunny, lacking evidence of the girl’s existence. Emerging from the book’s moments of hysteria as a new kind of heroine—the hard-boiled mom—Blanche Lake turns 1950s psychology on its head. Her unbridled, red-blooded instincts win over the psychologist, Dr. Newhouse, and expose the creepiness of anti-sexual social norms. No wonder the film version of *Bunny Lake Is Missing* was reset in swinging 1960s London. Directed by Otto Preminger and starring Carol Lynley and Laurence Olivier (with music by the Zombies), the film reexamines motherhood and sexuality with a new plot twist that pins the problems on men.

**Evelyn Piper** was the pseudonym of **Merriam Modell** (1908-1994). After graduating from Cornell in the late 1920s, Modell worked as a model, as a secretary for a harmonica quartet and lived in Germany for a time. She published short stories in *The New Yorker*, starting in 1941, and her novels include *The Lady and Her Doctor* (1956), *Hanno’s Doll* (1961), and *The Nanny* (1964).

**Femmes Fatales** restores to print the best of women’s writing in the classic pulp genres of the mid-20th century. From mystery to hard-boiled noir to taboo lesbian romance, these rediscovered queens of pulp offer subversive perspectives on a turbulent era. Enjoy the series: *Bedelia*; *The Blackbirder*; *Bunny Lake Is Missing*; *By Cecile*; *The G-String Murders*; *The Girls in 3-B*; *In a Lonely Place*; *Laura*; *Mother Finds a Body*; *Now, Voyager*; *Skyscraper*; *Stranger on Lesbos*; *Women’s Barracks*.

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