



Into the Mist

Lee Murray

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"Cinematic and evocative, Into the Mist is a tension-packed expedition into primordial terror. Murray's writing had me feeling the damp of the forest, seeing the mist curling through the fern fronds, and sensing the danger lurking there. Ancient myths, military men and scientists placed in remote, primordial locations – it had all the right ingredients for me, and it didn't disappoint for a moment. Lee Murray is an author to watch."

– Greig Beck, best-selling author of the Arcadian series

When NZDF Sergeant Taine McKenna and his squad are tasked with escorting a bunch of civilian contractors into Te Urewera National Park, it seems a strange job for the army. Militant T?hoe separatists are active in the area, and with its cloying mist and steep ravines, the forest is a treacherous place in winter. Yet nothing has prepared Taine for the true danger that awaits them. Death incarnate. They backtrack toward civilisation, stalked by a prehistoric creature intent on picking them off one by one. With their weapons ineffective, the babysitting job has become a race for survival. Desperate to bring his charges out alive, Taine draws on ancient tribal wisdom. Will it be enough to stop the nightmare? And when the mist clears, will anyone be left?

"Creepy and addictive, Into the Mist is an irresistible tapestry of military action, dark myths, and an ancient and terrifying horror. A must read for speculative fiction fans."

– Matthew Summers (Smashdragons)

Into the Mist Details

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From Reader Review Into the Mist for online ebook

Jan Goldie says

Fast paced action horror thriller based in the wild New Zealand bush. Addictive reading and thoroughly recommend!

Darren says

I got this as a e book from tbc review facebook page that I am a member of. I enjoyed reading it. It had a good story to it. I liked the variety of characters in it. It is my first book by this author. My review of the next book in this series is next.

Heide Goody says

Rich with evocative detail from New Zealand's landscape and heritage, we see a backdrop of existing tensions and competing personalities. When they are all piled together into a field team to plunge deep into the wilderness, we can expect some fun.

The characters that we follow most closely are Taine McKenna and Jules. Taine is an action hero that I can't wait to read more of, and Jules is a troubled scientist who must call on her inner strength when the group are in deep trouble. There are some excellent supporting characters, including a Maori seer, who helps from a distance, while struggling to explain to his concerned family why his behaviour is so erratic.

What about the beast that threatens the group? It's a full-on monster. It's the biggest, baddest thing that you could ever expect to meet in the forest, and it possesses reserves of cunning and intelligence that the group do not expect. This is a horror story, and lots of blood gets spilt, but more than that it's a classic chase thriller, something like the ones that Dean Koontz is famous for.

Lilyn G. | Sci-Fi & Scary says

Lee Murray's Into the Mist was the creature feature I'd been needing. I love me some good old-fashioned chomp'n'stomp, and this definitely fit the bill. Unlike a few of my recent monster reads, this one was brimming with atmosphere, felt completely real to the area it was staged in, and kept me thoroughly entertained. I learned some new words that I have a feeling I won't be forgetting anytime soon. I got to witness a very satisfying death of the resident This Book's Douchebag. (Though there was one more person I wouldn't have minded getting at least a proper squishing.)

Into the Mist delivers on several levels; it has believable characters, tension, and mysteries. It's also very well-written, with just a handful of errors missed by the copy-editing. While sometimes it can be fun to see your average Joes go up against the resident Godzilla, it's a little more satisfying when its soldiers versus monsters. You feel like the scales are a little bit more equal, and maybe there's not going to be some egghead saving the day. Also, even though I tend to roll my eyes at the kissyface that tends to pop up in these books, I

was very much a fan of the male and female protagonist. I also appreciated that it wasn't "Oh, my dahling, how I've been waiting for you! You complete me." Immediately. (Or ever, really.)

And did I mention the chomping? I was very happy with the chomping. Even when a doggo got nommed, I wasn't in any particular distress. Mayhaps because the gullet-gulping was one heck of a mental image.

Pretty much the only thing I didn't care for wasn't necessarily something that was wrong with *Into the Mist*. It just wasn't an aspect that appealed to me personally. (But I can't say what it was because it will spoil something for you if you haven't read it yet.)

Overall, *Into the Mist* easily slots itself into my Top Ten Creature Feature Books. Maybe even the top 5. Lee Murray does a monster good. I can't wait to read more from her. I'll admit, I was even hoping for a little bit of a Lake Placid ending before I was even nearly done with the book!

Nicholas Diak says

Lee Murray's *Into the Mist*, published in 2016 by Cohesion Press, is a novel that is a mix of the "men on a mission genre" with the "animals run amok" genre with a small peppering of fantasy in the form of Maori mysticism and spiritualism. The story concerns Sergeant Taine McKenna and his men of the New Zealand Defense Force as they accompany a team of scientists into the Te Urewera Forest to validate a gold discovery and assess its impact on the regional flora and fauna if exploited. Separatists, drug runners, corporate schemers and natural obstacles are the least of their worries as the group is hunted by a taniwha, a malevolent spirit in the form of a gigantic tuatara reptile. With their modern weaponry ineffective, McKenna and cohorts must find a way to survive and outwit the beast as it picks off the team one by one.

Into the Mist leverages the same elements that make movies such as *Predator* and *Dog Soldiers* successful: competent and well-developed military men trying to combat a monster that is beyond their capabilities, forcing them to come up with unique solutions and methods of working together. The protagonists receive the most character development, while the "less desirable" characters receive enough development that the readers know why they do what they do. McKenna, the star of the show, is certainly written and depicted that way, and readers are definitely anchored and invested into him.

Gorehounds will appreciate the New Zealand-levels of evisceration as the taniwha dispatches scientists and soldiers alike, though the book doesn't reach *Dead Alive* splatterpunk levels of bloodshed. The novel's action does a tremendous job at driving the book, with chapters broken down into different, though chronological, subsections that sometimes switches to a different character's perspective.

The most unique quality of *Into the Mist* is its unabashed embracing of Maori legends and lore. The book comes with a glossary of terms to assist, yet the narrative is well written enough that it is not necessary: readers are able to suss out what is what based on Murray's strong descriptions and applications. The terms may seem foreign, but they are accessible, and really add a unique element to the story to differentiate it from other military thrillers.

One of the most stand out scenes in the book actually happens away from the soldiers, and focuses on a seer, Temera, who has a face-to-face meeting with the taniwha on the spiritual plane. This is a rare opportunity to get insight into the monster's motives, and it's chilling: *Into the Mist* is not simply about a monstrous animal behaving like an animal on a predatory instinct. There are sinister undertones to the beast.

There are only two elements that are not *Into the Mist*'s strong suit. The first is the character of Jules, the main female protagonist and the object of affection of a few men in the group. Though the primary female-lead, Jules is uninteresting and ineffectual. Her partial ineffectualness comes from her backstory of a climbing expedition gone awry, leaving her friend in a vegetative state that she blames herself for. Jules never really overcomes this internal obstacle, and her role in the narrative is reduced to the two-dimensional damsel-in-distress/monsterbait role. Even with a somewhat developed backstory, she simply isn't depicted interesting enough, so her being the story's paramour is quizzical.

The second element is the story's hidden agenda involving planted gold and corporate mischievousness that works to get the characters to the Te Urewera Forest. There's only a few paragraphs in the whole novel that concern this plot point, and it's not really needed for the story. These sections are so far removed from the action that they could've been excised from the narrative and it would've been perfect.

Aside from these minor two elements, *Into the Mist* is an otherwise great read. Murray is adept at keeping the action engaging, interesting, with readers really rooting for the soldiers. As a martial-thriller, the novel is excellent, and even with the specialized Maori terminology, it is more than accessible. Just shy of three hundred pages, the book is easily conquerable, unlike the taniwha inside.

Yvonne Davies says

I think the majority of people have heard of Godzilla and King Kong. Larger than life creatures that had remained undiscovered until an expedition group came across them.

Into the Mist is set in Te Urewera National Park, New Zealand. Gold has been found on ancient ground and the army has been tasked with the protection of the contractors. As the investigations continue, the group are in danger not just from Militant Tuhoe separatists, but something larger than life. Putting the group in danger was an ancient monster from M?ori legend known as a Taniwha. Whilst everyone in the M?ori community had heard of this creature, no-one had seen one.

Sergeant McKenna and his group were good at what they do, but this did not mean that they would survive this mission. They were a close knitted team who played on their strengths. Trying to protect the scientists was not an easy task and whilst Dr Jules Asher had her own personal problems of being out in the field, Dr Christian de Haas and Richard Foster would have made any man turn a gun on them, they were the most pompous pair of characters that I have read about in a while.

Just outside the National Park, Temera was having visions of the danger, an elderly gentleman known as a matakite. Although he was seen as eccentric, he was comfortable with his gift and over time understood what the visions were telling him.

The bond between McKenna and Temera was strong and showed that even though the Sergeant was up to date with modern technology, he still held on to his M?ori heritage. The mixture of the modern and ancient story blended smoothly and it has got me curious about other cultures.

This book was fast-paced, the only time it slowed was when the story concentrated on the separatists, whilst they met the creature, I felt that they did not add anything to the story. The attacks were bloody and detailed which added to the monster ferocity and you could sense just how dangerous the mission was. If you are looking for an adventure into the unknown then this is a good story to get you started and with no cliffhanger an added bonus.

Frank Errington says

Review copy

Into the Mist by Lee Murray gets off to a strong start. From the first chapter...

"Terry shook violently, his body already grasping what his mind hadn't yet understood. Bringing his fingers to his face Terry sniffed at the wetness there. Metallic. It wasn't dew. Terry jerked his hands away in horror. Cam's upper body was missing."

The story takes place in Te Urewera an area of mostly forested, sparsely populated rugged hill country in the North Island of New Zealand. A place of many legends, stories every child knew, stories of "the taniwha—vengeful monsters that slaughtered warriors, kidnapped maidens and ate babies whole." But, they're just stories to get children to obey their parents, right?

A combination of events occur leading to a geological task force being commissioned to investigate a possible vein of gold discovered in the forest, and a military escort essentially to provide muscle, but secretly sent to investigate the disappearance of a previous military team and several civilians.

After the strong start, the story bogged down a bit and at times seemed like a bad B-movie, the kind you'd find on the syndicated Svengoolie horrorfest, but by the time we got to the second half of the book it became a pulse-pounding action-packed thrill ride. Actually, Lee Murray is quite adept at writing action sequences.

All in all, Into the Mist was an entertaining military/monster novel with a touch of mysticism.

Recommended

Into the Mist is published by Cohesion Press and is available in both e-book and paperback formats. If you subscribe to Kindle Unlimited you can read this book at no additional charge and if you are an Amazon Prime member you can read it for FREE through the Kindle Owners Lending Library.

Lee Murray is an award-winning writer of fantasy, science fiction, and horror. She lives with her family in the Land of the Long White Cloud where she conjures up stories for readers of all ages from her office on the porch.

Debbie says

I haven't read much in the way of military horror/thriller but I really enjoyed this compelling novel about military crew accompanying a team of scientists into the Urewera ranges. The characterisation is really strong, you can't help caring about them and I enjoyed how intelligent and competent the team was. I like horror where the danger arises from some inescapable terror rather than characters making reckless decisions, and Into the Mist really nails this with a vicious, terrifying threat.

Lee Murray makes fantastic use of M?ori myth and the eerie isolation of native bush to create a gripping read in Aotearoa . I would love to watch the film adaptation of the book

Bobbie says

Something is stalking hikers/campers in a thick jungle/forest in New Zealand. The Aussie/Kiwi language/references were sometimes hard to understand. I really enjoyed the opening premise of this book and the author did a great job of scaring the reader. I liked the romantic tension between the 2 main characters. But found remembering who was with which group difficult - especially since the author would sometimes use the character's first name and sometimes the last. Also, I was very disappointed with the superstitious/mystical parts. I wanted scientific explanations. Unanswered questions at end.

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Matt Morris says

Classic, traditional and brilliant. Almost read it in one sitting. I loved it. The New Zealand setting added so much to a classic monster vs military. With a story like this I expected a straight forward plot but there were so many questions waiting to be resolved I had to keep reading. So many of the minor characters were so real I was urging them on. In a story like this you hope the characters will get the ending they deserve, for better or worse. I was very pleased with final scenes.

The lesson we should all take from this book is that you are heading off on an adventure or any kind of trip and an elderly person crosses your path with a cryptic warning DON'T IGNORE THEM.

Greg Chapman says

A solid action romp in the vein of military sci fi tales like Aliens and Predator. Set in the forests of New Zealand, a government funded task force encounters a very dangerous creature linked to local mythology. The blend of Maori mythology kept this story fresh and interesting for me, and made this tale unique. Recommended.

Empress Reece (Hooked on Books) says

I've had the pleasure of reading a lot of good creature features lately. This is another one to add to that list. It had plenty of action, a nice range of characters from a-holes to heroes, a big gigantic predator and the added touch of a little Native American mythology.

It was so good I'm about to start reading book two right now. I'm hoping Sergeant McKenna and Dr. Jules Asher are back. I really liked those two and can't wait to see what trouble they get into next.

Matthew says

As a reviewer one of the greatest pleasures I have in life is when I discover the work of someone new that blows me away. So when I first read the blurb and pre-order information for Into the Mist I was excited. Another military thriller/horror from the amazing Cohesion Press... by the relatively unknown (at least to me) Lee Murray... shut up and take my money!

Six weeks later the book dropped, and now I'm sitting here writing this review after reading it in one marathon sitting.

Into the Mist can basically be summarised by one word.

Extraordinary.

I loved everything about it. Yes, everything.

Into the Mist is a perfect military horror novel in every way, shape, and form. From its ragtag group of scientists and military guardians through to the terrifying monster stalking them, Into the Mist smashed through my expectations and went higher than I could ever imagine.

This book is the epitome of what works when trying to write a scintillating military horror. It has fascinating and varied characters, a world that feels both real and unreal, tension riddled scenes and breathtaking action sequences. It also doesn't pull its punches. You are genuinely mentally assaulted over and over again by primordial and sphincter clenching scenes of terror and dread throughout this story. And fuck me it's glorious! Imagine, for a moment, being stalked and hunted by something that goes bump in the night. Now turn that something into a creature the size of a small bus... with a tendency to bite things in two. Yeah, see what I mean?

Into the Mist is so creepy and enthralling that, as the creature picks the soldiers and contractors off one by one, my wife actually expressed concern for me as I was reading it (apparently I had a look of deep worry on my face). I was so enamoured with Murray's ability to weave a magnificent and cinematic story that I also forgot all about going to bed until I had actually finished the book.

But that's not all that impressed me with Into the Mist. I was also blown away by Murray's inclusion of Maori culture and myths within this story. I adored reading about the Taniwha, and the parts that touched on other facets of Maori culture and magic were both hauntingly beautiful and fascinating. One of the everlasting emotions that this book left me with was that Maori culture should be further explored, honoured, and celebrated by speculative fiction.

I really didn't have any issues with this book, and the ending was a fitting conclusion to what was an evocative and action packed story. Into the Mist resonated with me on so many levels, and was one of the best military horrors I've read since Greig Beck first released Beneath the Dark Ice seven years ago.

Creepy and addictive, Into the Mist is an irresistible tapestry of military action, dark myths, and an ancient and terrifying horror.

A must read for speculative fiction fans.

5 out of 5 stars.

Jill Mccaw says

A great concept but not quite pulled off

I love the idea of this book but unfortunately the author just doesn't quite have the skills to pull it off. There are far too many POV characters which just makes the story confusing. Especially since many of them then get killed. Most characters are very cardboard cut out, to the extent of being completely unbelievable. The premise and subplot that takes this group into the forest just seems lame and wasn't needed. A group of city folks on a work bonding trip could have put a disparate group in harm's way a lot more unbelievably. I did like the Maori mythology part and would have liked more of Temera and his side of things. I did however actually read all the way to the end and I don't always if a book is bad.
