



The Trickster

Muriel Gray

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He is a shape-shifter. He is as old as time. He kills without mercy.

Life is good in Silver, a small town high in the Canadian Rockies. Sam Hunt is a lucky man. with a loving family and an honest income, he has everything he wants.

But beneath the mountains a vile, demonic energy is gathering strength and soon it will unleash its freezing terror upon Silver. In the eye of the storm, one man struggles to bury the private horrors of his childhood. He knows nothing, yet seems to know everything: Sam Hunt.

All he loves may be destroyed by an evil beyond imagining. An evil from the buried, hated past. An evil named the Trickster.

The Trickster Details

Date : Published June 18th 2015 by HarperVoyager (first published 1994)

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Author : Muriel Gray

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Genre : Horror, Fiction, Mystery, Fantasy, Supernatural, Suspense, Science Fiction

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From Reader Review The Trickster for online ebook

David says

Everything in this novel was cold.

The Setting was cold, the prose was cold, the plot was cold, even the love making scenes were cold.

The way that Native Americans were portrayed was cold, as incestuous, Homosexual, drunken Savages.

Muriel Gray's writing style was hard to follow at times, her grammar incorrect, even down to paragraph structure. Often I had a hard time determining which character was speaking and thinking. I'm sure the ending of this novel was spectacular, but I had difficulty determining what was happening.

The Trickster's Character was amazingly similar to that of Anne Rice's character Lasher. Possibly a little plagiarism here. Even to the details of how Trickster attains, or tries to attain, human form.

Aside from all the coldness, and difficulties reading it, this book was impossible to put down.

The gore factor of the scenes will be memorable. I am still afraid of dark places now. I will watch small animals such as chipmunks and kittens with caution. Also I will be wary of the upcoming winter months. (hehehehe)

A good read for a rainy or snowy day.

Steve says

Golden yellow dollar coin? With a DUCK on it? Are you serious? Come on.. do a little research about Canada before writing a book that takes place there. And the truck driver at the start... why is he driving a load of frozen lobster through Alberta to the _east_ coast of Canada? I guess those Nova-Scotians hate fresh out of the ocean lobsters :|

Putting aside Gray's lack of knowledge of Canada and Canadian culture, this is still merely an 'ok' book. I think it's her first horror novel so, I could give her some slack there but she's just trying too hard to be scary (she even goes as far as to have a line in there saying something similar to: "that's the sort of thing that would make Stephen King say 'Yuck'").

This book isn't very suspenseful, and it's almost impossible to identify with the main characters -- especially Sam.

The synopsis on the cover made it sound like a much better book.

Pam Baddeley says

[the husky dog (hide spoiler)]

Noodlefox says

So first off I want to say that I can't speak for the accuracy of Native Canadian mythology that's presented in this book. I know nothing about the topic so everything could be very accurate or it could be a load of hogwash. Depending on how much you know and how accurate the book is will probably change how much you enjoy it.

This being said I personally loved the book. It was very engaging and well written I thought, and I really enjoyed most of the characters and the mythology presented. The creature and nightmarish situations it created were exactly what I would hope for in a story about ancient demons and while it didn't necessarily leave a lasting impression on me after any given reading session it was still intimidating and did the job well while I was in the book. It was an enjoyable read and I would defiantly recommend it to any friends that were a fan of the genre.

If I had any criticism it would be in the son. Every time Billy appeared in the story or any amount of time was dedicated to his character it pretty quickly took me out of everything entirely. I didn't find his reactions, his thoughts, or his emotions to be believable for a child of his age. He felt more like a grown adult in a kid's body and I don't feel like he added anything to the book story wise to justify the part he played in it. Even during parts where it's mentioned that he's acting like an adult or a man felt forced or like an excuse to cover up his unrealistic character. Of course this might be a personal preference since I tend to dislike young children in horror as a general rule, mostly for the reasons stated above. I don't have children myself though so my base of judgement may be way off, take all of this with a grain of salt.

Julia says

I just couldn't get into this. The writing was disjointed and juvenile. The worst part was how Sam, the native Indian, saw prejudice in everyone around him. I am not saying there was no prejudice in this book, because there was, but Sam really had a chip on his shoulder. For example, he and his son wave at a passing train. The conductor doesn't wave back. Sam immediately thinks that it is because he is Indian. He couldn't believe that maybe the train conductor was preoccupied with driving the train and didn't see him (which is what was happening). He only saw the worst in people and it got annoying since he was supposed to be the hero of the story. The story didn't hold my interest at all, so I decided to bail on the book.

Meagan says

An absolutely amazing book. So scary and disturbing at times, you want to check and make sure that Stephen King didn't write it. But this book isn't about some white guy/girl in Maine, this is about a Native Canadian, struggling with the internalized racism he has absorbed over the years over his race, heritage, culture, and who finds himself horribly unprepared when something dark, ancient, and terrifying reappears. He is in the only one who can fight it and save the earth from it's tendrils of hate and destruction, but how can he ever do it if he refuses to even say the word, 'Indian', much less let himself remember any of the magic he was taught when he was younger. An amazing book. Amazingly well-written and touching, this book is an absolute must-read-- though, just a warning, it can be rather gore-y at times.

Randolph says

Ms. Gray used to be (is?) a television and radio presenter for the BBC. I remember her in the good old '80s on The Tube trying to make the likes of The Jam and Sigue Sigue Sputnik behave for British telly viewers. Anyway the multi-talented Ms. Gray turned her hand to horror novels for a bit and Trickster, the first, is probably the best of the trio she wrote. Muriel is from Scotland but that didn't stop her from taking on a novel set in Alberta, Canada and largely based around native Indian folk mythology and trying to make it all believable and entertaining. I thought at 707 pages this was going to get dull somewhere with all the minutiae involved but it never did. The suspense was maintained throughout.

The characters were where the writing excelled. The author presented great depth and empathy in a large cast of characters. The novel had a lot of flashbacks and these really presented a novel within a novel, particularly the 1907 interludes, were almost as important and suspenseful as the "main" contemporary story line.

I'm not big on North American bogeymen like the Wendigo but the adversary here, the Trickster, is every bit as menacing as Lovecraft's Dunwich Horror. The menace is of the older than old type so it predates all mythologies and is sort of susceptible to all sorts of exorcisms but in our modern scientific times few remain who know how to trick the Trickster so to speak. Sam Hunt, who denies his Indian heritage, is going to have to step up big time if anyone is going to get this thing back in Pandora's box. But he has his young son, an old drunk, his wife, and a skeptical police officer to help so this should be no problem. Oh and there is the blizzard of the century to deal with as well.

Well at least he has a better chance of getting the jin back in the bottle than Scottish preacher James Henderson does in 1907. Someone keeps letting this guy out!

Be careful with editions here. The icy cover is a greatly edited version of the novel. The real deal is the big fat green covered paperback.

Erin Moxam says

There were some things I liked about this book and some things I didn't. The most detrimental part was the constant point of view switches in the middle of conversations, no chapter break, no line break, just total head hopping - whoever let that get through editing should be fired. The story itself wasn't bad, and the characters weren't bad either. It was a little longer than it needed to be in my opinion, but if you just want an easy read to kill a train ride with, you could do worse.

This is also the first book I have ever read that was set in Canada that was not written by a Canadian or at least a long time resident of Canada, which for me was interesting in itself.

Kilgallen says

I was very impressed with the research that Muriel Gray obviously put into this novel. The setting of the novel is a fictitious ski resort town but the surrounding landmarks and cities are real (and I happen to live in one of them!) The story itself was well written and kept my interest throughout.

Molly McIntosh says

[and suspicious of dogs (hide spoiler)]

Purgatory says

having read some of the reviews here I was in two minds about reading this, however I persevered through the UK edition (the uncut version I understand) and although it was a bit of a slow beginner it did get better

as someone else pointed out there are many grammar and syntax errors throughout the book sometimes making me reread a sentence over and over trying to make sense of it (but personally I think this is an editor problem arent they after all supposed to catch the mistakes before printing?)

by about half way through I was fairly hooked into wanting to find out how it would all turn out and yet even after finishing it I'm unsure if I really liked it or not, its certainly not a book that I would read again (I'm sure we all have our favorites that we read time and again...at least I hope its not just me lol) but I certainly dont regret reading it

nikos says

Πολλες επιρροες απο King αλλα μετριο. Με επιεικεια 3 αστερακια

Helen says

Enthralling horror epic based on Native Canadian mythology, of which I know nothing about (so as far as I know it could be hugely inaccurate), but still enjoyed very much.

Though I thought Gray sometimes went off on a bit of a tangent, she delivers on memorable gory nastiness and there were several interesting (if occasionally confusing), characters.

I'll be checking out more of her work.

Jaime Contreras says

I had never read anything by Muriel Gray prior to reading The Trickster. Ms Gray begins her novel by relating a series of grisly and deadly murders from 1907 before bringing us to the current-day incidents. Her villain, the trickster is based on the Native American mythological god/spirit being with the ability to be an anthropomorphic animal that gets pleasure from playing tricks and behave in a barbaric and counter-societal manner. Ms. Gray holds little back in her writing. The murder scenes and acts of violence are full-blooded. Set in Canada, the story centers on a married (to Katie, a non- Native American) Native American ski lodge worker, Sam Hunting Wolf who also happens to be a former shaman like his father and grandfather. His

character is troubled with identity issues, emotional instability, a bad relationship with his father and an inner calling to his native American roots. As the body count rises and the violence hits close to home, Sam becomes more troubled and the convenient suspect. The book maintains a steady pace of gore and a lot of back story to Sam's horrible and violent childhood and family. But, Ms. Gray's writing is terse, overly-descriptive and at times too fast. This takes away from the novel's pedigree as a horror novel. On the other hand, Ms. Gray spends a lot of energy and time on psychological issues and going back and forth to the early 20th century murders. This almost creates a secondary and slightly more interesting storyline. The ending is jumbled and too quick, but it appears to be formulaic. Overall, I rate it as slightly above-average horror novel.

Chad Mitchell says

For me this is one of those books that I struggled with because I just found it difficult to read. In fact, it took me 5 months to finish this novel. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not slow or lacking in ability or skill at reading, it's just that the way the book is written makes it extremely painful to read. And the sad thing is, this book went through an editor and a publishing agent.

To be clear the story is good, solid even all though there are few things that could have used some tweaking or wrapping up. What was really neat is the use of Canadian Indians which I had never given much thought too. Exploring the challenges of modern day Native Canadians (or Native Americans) and their heritage is an interesting view point that many authors don't explore. For that alone it was refreshing and unique.

The biggest problems with this novel boil down to point of view and the over use of descriptions. A lot of novels written back in the early 90s and prior suffer from a point of view issue where the author writes the story in 3rd person but constantly changes the perspective from one character to another. That's not bad in itself expect when it's done in the same chapter or section and there's no break to clearly show who's point of view your now experiencing. In this case, this book changed characters POV so often it was confusing on who thought what. In some areas the perspective change happens in the same paragraph. That's difficult on the reader and should have never made it past an editor.

The other issue I had was with the over description of things that robbed you of the chance to paint your own picture of a scene but also it created confusion. Usually if there is a paragraph or even a chapter or two like that it's forgivable. In some cases it can be an effective writing style that delivers a great story. In this particular novel, it was the whole book. And as a result, there were many areas that I felt suffered by this writing style.

I'm not saying it's not good, it's just overdone to the point that it affects the flow of the story and distracts the reader. If you've ever read a book that does this, then you'll know what I mean. If not, give this book a gander. You might enjoy it more than I did. Usually I would stop reading and toss the book in the donate pile but as I said there were some interesting aspects to the story line that I wanted to see what happened.
