

In The Kingdom Of Mists - Jane Jakeman

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London, 1900: while Monet paints the wintry mists over the Thames, the bodies of two young women are dragged from its murky depths arousing fears of a return of Jack the Ripper. By now a celebrated and successful artist - despite the controversy stirred up by the Impressionist movement - in the early months of the new century, Monet returned to London to paint his famous Thames series. Prompted by memories of an earlier visit in 1870, the old man recalls his youthful struggles, his beloved first wife Camille and his scandalous relationship with Alice Hosched. And now, in a frenzy of creative activity he paints the haunting canvasses that act as a backdrop to a series of grizzly, psychopathic killings. Oliver Craston, a fledgling diplomat, by chance is present when a horribly mutilated body is pulled from the Thames. Mindful of the need to steer clear of controversy, he is unwillingly drawn into the police investigation. Furthermore, with the Foreign Office nervous over French sympathies with the Boers, Oliver's new acquaintance with M. Monet and his son, who are staying in the luxury of the Savoy Hotel, is likely to raise an eyebrow or two. But on the floor above the Monets' suite, given over as a hospital for wounded officers, stalks a far greater danger. . . and across the river in the backstreet slums of Lambeth are visions of horror beyond even the intuition of the artist. As the naive young diplomat becomes entangled with bohemian society and the seamier side of London that the investigation exposes him to, a disturbing and unfamiliar world opens up to him. This compelling and multilayered novel is an atmospheric exploration of the life of an artist, a murder thriller and, like *Tulip Fever* and *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, a triumphant example of 'art fiction'. It is illustrated with 12 reproductions of the paintings themselves.

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