

A Judgment of Ravens

350 pages. Publication date: 1973, Ballantine Books. Author Karen Nightingale. Genre: supernatural romance, with a strong science fictional flavor.

Plot: Clarissa Templeton is a hard-hitting 'electronic journalist' who works the DC beat. She's just uncovered the biggest scoop of her career, involving a shadowy conspiracy at the heart of Capitol Hill; soon, she's drawn into a epic battle between forces Clarissa barely comprehends. She knows that she needs allies, but she also knows that betrayal can come from anyone. So when she meets Connor Mackenzie, CIA officer (who might be an immortal werewolf, or wizard, or **something**), does she listen to her head, or her heart?

...Oh, it's quite the lurid potboiler. Not badly written, as such things go. Karen Nightingale had a definite felicity of style. But it's just so hard to take seriously!

And that's the problem. This book was absolutely written in 1973 (there is plenty of evidence of its physical existence), and while Ms. Nightingale died back in 2007 (of natural causes), people who worked on the book are

still alive, and absolutely remember it. They're also freaking out about it, because *A Judgment of Ravens* is alarmingly accurate about the future. As in, it's set in the current year of the campaign, and **all** of the organizations, companies, and public figures mentioned in it exist, and **under those names**. The only exceptions are "Clarissa Templeton" and "Connor Mackenzie;" everybody else is around.

To give one example: on page 65 Clarissa used her MacBook Pro to access Google and look up Senator Paul Wellstone's death in 2002 as part of her researching an article for her employer [insert least favorite internet news source here]. On that same page, she drinks a Red Bull and then, based on the burst of mental energy it gives her, accesses Facebook to track down a former member of the band Ace of Base who might know something important about the story she's working on. And just then; a call from her iPhone almost makes her drop her mouse. But it's just that annoying staffer from [insert federal politician that you dislike]'s office.

Again, *this was written in 1973*. Apple didn't exist back then, Paul Wellstone wasn't a Senator, Red Bull and Ace of Base both came out the same year, the guy who created Facebook wasn't even **born** yet in 1973, and in

that year a computer mouse was barely cutting edge technology. At the time, *A Judgment of Ravens* was thus just a supernatural romance that had a lot of weird science fiction stuff tacked onto it; today it's an alarming bit of chillingly-precise prophecy.

Worse, it narrates the existence of a magical-horror conspiracy *that the Illuminati has never heard of*. So that gets checked out. Now. Do not pass Go, do not collect twenty tons of flax, go directly to Illumination and get to the bottom of this. Resources aren't going to be a problem; but figuring out who to trust will be. On the bright side, *A Judgment of Ravens* is just chock-full of public figures who you should apparently **not** trust. That's always nice to have as a starting point.

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