



Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel (Matthew Corbett Book 1)

By Robert R. McCammon

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Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel (Matthew Corbett Book 1) By Robert R. McCammon

Murder sparks a witchcraft charge and mob fury in this “absorbing historical mystery” set in seventeenth-century America from a *New York Times*–bestselling author (*Publishers Weekly*).

It's 1699 in the coastal settlement of Fount Royal in the Carolinas when Rachel Howarth is sentenced to be hanged as a witch. She's been accused of murder, deviltry, and blasphemous sexual congress, and the beleaguered, God-fearing colonial village wants her dead. But Matthew Corbett, young clerk to the traveling magistrate summoned to Fount Royal to weigh the accusations, soon finds himself persuaded in favor of the beguiling young widow.

Struck first by her beauty, Matthew believes Rachel to be too dignified, courageous, and intelligent for such obscene charges. The testimony against her is fanatical and unreliable. Clues to the crimes seem too convenient and contrived. A number of her accusers appear to gain by her execution. And, if Rachel is a witch, why hasn't she used her powers to fly away from the gaol on the wings of a nightbird?

God and Satan are indeed at war. Something really is happening in the newly established settlement—of that Corbett is certain. As his investigation draws him into the darkness of a town gone mad, and deeper into its many secrets, Corbett realizes that time is running out for him, for Rachel, and for the hope that good could possibly win out over evil in Fount Royal.

From the award-winning author of *Boy's Life* and *Gone South*, *Speaks the Nightbird* is, in the words of Stephen King, “a rarity in popular fiction, a book that manages to be thoughtful as well as entertaining.”

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A trial for witchcraft proves the tip of an iceberg of intrigues in this absorbing historical mystery, the first newly published novel in 10 years from McCammon (the book was written in the mid-'90s), a bestseller in the 1980s with such supernatural novels in the Stephen King tradition as *Usher's Passing* and *Baal*. Set in 1699 in Fount Royal, a coastal settlement in the colonial Carolinas, this latest unfolds the adventures of magistrate Isaac Woodward and his assistant, Matthew Corbett, who have been summoned to the struggling town to adjudicate in the trial of Rachel Howarth, a young widow accused of devilry that is blamed for murders, wretched weather and other calamities driving settlers away. Though town leaders press for swift execution, Matthew is persuaded by Rachel's dignity and fortitude that she's innocent. Using skills honed living by his wits as an orphaned child, he pursues inconsistencies in testimony and throwaway clues and uncovers an elaborate plot involving pirate booty, animal magnetism and deadly deceit at the highest levels of town organization. This robust tale is as historically detailed as it is long, and its recreation of an era where superstition held its own with enlightenment is among its strongest achievements. Anachronisms, improbably fortuitous coincidences and private dramas that make Fount Royal seem a pre-Revolutionary Peyton Place lard the plot, but Matthew's race against time to save Rachel with the rudimentary tools to hand makes a compulsively readable yarn. McCammon's loyal fans will find his resurfacing reason to rejoice. (Sept.) Forecast: Those who enjoyed the author's last three novels (*Mine*; *Boy's Life*; *Gone South*), studies of the human condition that transcended genre labeling, will snap this one up, too. But McCammon also lost readers with these novels because in them he turned away from the horror themes that made his reputation. This latest could well gain him new fans, but it won't win back any horror readers.

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From Library Journal

After a ten-year absence from publishing, McCammon (*Boy's Life*) returns with this historical novel of colonial Carolina. In 1699, legal clerk Matthew Corbett accompanies magistrate Isaac Woodward to Fount Royal, where he has been summoned to decide whether a witch is living in the newly established settlement. The two are immediately thrown into danger, even before they reach the town. And once there, they must deal with the inhabitants, some of whom stand to gain if Rachel, the accused, is executed. Soon it becomes obvious to Matthew that everyone has secrets, even the magistrate. In the end, he alone must try to unravel the mysteries. While many of McCammon's prior novels dealt with the supernatural, his latest contains horrors that are more real. McCammon also provides extensive historical detail, re-creating the legal procedures, medical practices, and everyday existence of the time. The language and situations are often disturbing, especially because many of the accusations against Rachel are sexual in nature, but McCammon tells a compelling story that should find a wide readership. Highly recommended for popular fiction collections. Joel W. Tscherne, Cleveland P.L.

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Review

"Speaks the Nightbird is a rarity in popular fiction, a book that manages to be thoughtful as well as entertaining." —Stephen King

"No one can paint word pictures as vividly as Robert McCammon, and never has his palette had such depth as in *Speaks the Nightbird*." —Sandra Brown

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Peggy Hahne:

This *Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel* (Matthew Corbett Book 1) book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is actually information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. That *Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel* (Matthew Corbett Book 1) without we comprehend teach the one who looking at it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't be worry *Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel* (Matthew Corbett Book 1) can bring when you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even telephone. This *Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel* (Matthew Corbett Book 1) having great arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

Arlene Oliver:

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David Smith:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read any book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent the whole day to reading a guide. The book *Speaks the Nightbird: A Novel* (Matthew Corbett Book 1) it is very good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. In case you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book possesses high quality.

Mark McKinney:

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