



Fate of Ravens

Tiina Nunnally

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In Norse mythology the god Odin had two ravens, Muninn and Huginn. It was their job to go out into the world and bring back information. One of the ravens stood for Thought and the other for Memory. Odin feared that one or both of the ravens might never return. He feared most that Memory would not return.

This wonderful novel combines the modern world of a Seattle interpreter of Scandinavian languages, Norse mythology and the Nazi occupation of Denmark during World War II. Margit Andersson typically makes her living translating documents, but one day a week she works at the Seattle Sea-Tac Airport translating for passengers from the Scandinavian countries. One day, Margit is alarmed to see an elderly woman stagger off an escalator and collapse to the floor. Margit reaches the woman who exclaims, "It's him!" in Danish and dies of a heart attack. When the police question Margit a day later, they also ask if she could translate some documents from a crime scene—the apparent homicide of another elderly Scandinavian woman.

By poking and prodding and translating mysterious coins and diaries and notes, Margit uncovers a history of the Danish underground, spies, couriers and treachery. Why did the two women call themselves Huninn and Muginn? Were they once spies?

This novel, the second in a series, is a delight. The writing is clear and elegant, the character of Margit Andersson very pleasant company, indeed. Its only shortcoming is that it is too short, and in many ways, not sufficiently complex; more twists and turns would have made this fast-reading book even more enjoyable.

MARK TERRY (July / August 1998)

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