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## Witches' Night Out

**Silver RavenWolf**
Llewellyn Publications (May 2000)
Unknown $4.99 (240pp)
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Bethany Salem will stop at nothing to find the murderer of her boyfriend Joe. Her father, a New York City police detective, can't stop her. Certainly her father's power-mad lawyer girlfriend, the "Bitch from the East," can't convince Bethany to give up her quest. Not even her circle of friends, Tillie, Nick, Karen, Nam, all members of the coven Bethany had formed, can change her mind.

Not even the Goddess Herself could stop Bethany from barreling down the steep road of vengeance. When her spell to find Joe's murderer unleashes the Hounds of Hell, the celestial dogs who run at the side of the Lord of the Wild Hunt, Bethany must face the consequences of that which she unleashed. For if Joe was not really murdered, if his accident was truly just a tragic twist of fate, the hounds would come after her!

This young-adult tale perfectly captures the poignancy of teen confusion and the energy of youthful quests as it follows the search of sixteen-year-old Bethany Salem and her friends for the murderer of one of them: Bethany's boyfriend Joe. It is a gripping mystery, a rousing "whodunnit" full of twists and turns that will keep the reader on the edge of the seat.

The witchcraft portrayed here has the sparkle of Charmed, as well as the antics and spooky quirks of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Yet the spells and charms Ravenwolf writes are grounded in the real life of a witch: a life of balancing powers on the inner and outer planes, a life of responsibility for all actions. The powers that the witch calls are not to be summoned on a whim. In witchcraft, "what goes around, comes around" is a literal fact. The author conveys this message perfectly. Bethany travels the road from using her skills to satisfy a dark and bitter hate to the use of her powers for the good. She is aided by Ramona, a wise woman from the South her father brought to be their housekeeper.

All the characters are vivid and ring true; the book's pace is swift.

The author includes a real spell to "get rid of bad gossip" at the end for the reader to try.

CAROL LYNN STEWART (April 15, 2000)

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