



The Calling

Robert Swartwood

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When eighteen-year-old Christopher Myers' parents are murdered, something is written on his bedroom door, a mark in his parents' blood that convinces the police the killer has targeted Christopher as the next victim. To keep him safe, he travels away with his estranged grandmother and uncle to the small town of Bridgton, New York. And it's in Bridgton that he meets an extraordinary young man who has come with his father to stop an unrelenting evil. Soon Christopher learns of the town's deep dark secret, and how his parents' murder was no accident, and how he has been brought to Bridgton by forces beyond his power-faces that just may threaten the destruction of all mankind. Advance Praise for THE CALLING: "THE CALLING is a powerful, gripping and terrifying novel, the sort that possesses your whole life while you're reading it; it'll stalk you through the day, and inform your dreams. Swartwood has delivered a novel that will become a classic." - Tim Lebbon "Robert Swartwood's THE CALLING is a diabolical rocket sled of a psychological thriller. Told through the vivid, almost druggy point of view of a young man on the edge, tangled in a web of tragedy and surreal horror, Swartwood's novel gets under the skin and stays there. Highly recommended." - Jay Bonansinga

The Calling Details

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From Reader Review The Calling for online ebook

Jennifer says

Swartwood delivers an awesomely eerie story of the classic battle between good and evil. Imaginative, yet concise, I was made to stay up late to see where the novel would lead.

I thought the characters were written so well and no one seemed extraneous just to fill space. I particularly enjoyed Sarah and of course, Christopher.

No spoiler alert here but the ending was fabulous. I'm frequently let down by endings. It's as if the author didn't know where to end or how to wrap it up. They should take lessons from Swartwood. This was my first read of his but won't be my last.

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

Kylie says

The day after 18 year old Chris's high school graduation, he awakens to discover his parents have been brutally murdered, and the killer is now after him. Shipped off to Bridport to stay with relatives he has not seen in 10 years while local authorities hunt down the killer, he slowly gets to know the Grandmother and Uncle he has been estranged from all these years. There he meets 10 year old Joey, a young man with very special gifts.

But the relocation has not fooled the killer and soon dreadful things begin to occur in Bridport. Chris starts investigating the history of the town, and discovers a series of awful truths that has brought an evil power to Bridport, one that has the power to destroy the lives of everyone it comes into contact with.

Soon it becomes clear that Chris shares more with Joey than he ever thought possible, and that the killer is beyond the skill of the local authorities to capture. Joey and Chris must face it - alone.

Despite the fact that this is a "young adult" novel, I really enjoyed it. The supernatural plot starts subtly, but grows as you learn more about Chris's family and their history.

I enjoyed the growth of Chris's character. Even though the book runs over the course of only a couple of weeks, he grows up a little bit more with every "encounter" and you can see him change from a reticent teenager to a strong young man.

The Calling was well written, with strong characters and good sub plots. The merging of the slowly revealed history of Bridport and Chris's family with the current happenings of the town give you a real insight into the characters, and how they have all ended up in Bridport at this exact time when evil asserts itself.

If you can move past the fact that the major players are teenagers, I strongly recommend giving this one a go.

Horace Torys says

I enjoyed *The Calling*, and found the characters interesting and unpredictable. The main plot kept twisting and uncovering the character's secrets, and the end satisfied me. The dialogue was particularly readable, and the book's themes stayed with me after I'd finished.

Sluggish prose got in the way sometimes, and many characters' whole backstories were revealed, sometimes told in a single sitting. The book would be stronger if things were edited down.

But, if you want to read a compelling, chilling supernatural thriller with a teen protagonist, then *The Calling* is a great choice.

Dayna Keiser says

Excellent! Slow starter but then I couldn't put it down. It is about the eternal struggle between good and evil. Well written and quite different than anything I have read before.

Karen says

Disclosure: I received this audiobook for free in return for an honest review.

Some books spend so much time focusing on backstory that I begin to wonder when the action will start. *The Calling*, most decidedly, is NOT one of those books! The story begins with Chris's discovery of his murdered parents and follows his journey after that event. *The Calling* includes references to Bible passages as well as supernatural elements -- those details flesh out the story and also make Chris's journey even more dramatic. I found the narration enjoyable and didn't want to stop listening because I wanted to know how it all ended. *The Calling* is a good story, well-told.

Jay says

This book sounded fantastic. Sadly, I found it lacking in every area.

The characters are dull and the main character seems more concerned with chatting up the local pregnant girl that dealing with, or even having, any emotions he may be feeling about his parents murder two weeks prior.

Sadly, I got half way through and then it went on the Too Dull to Finish shelf.

Cats of Ulthar February Weird Fiction says

Review of The Calling by Robert Swartwood

5 stars

“The Calling” is an exceptionally satisfying novel of the Supernatural. Set in one of the same locales as the “prequel,” “Spooky Nook,” this story is fine as a stand-alone (but I recommend, for the reader’s continued satisfaction, reading “Spooky Nook” as well). Author Robert Swartwood delves into some Supernatural venues not usually the purview of horror writers, makes that choice work excellently, and horrifies readers while keeping us thrilled with the novel’s progress and pace.

Christopher has just turned eighteen and graduated; like many adolescents, he acts out quite a bit and stays out late. The next morning, after oversleeping, he discovers he is the only person left alive in his home: his parents have been slaughtered. Initially suspected of the murders, he is eventually exonerated and sent from his Pennsylvania home town to upstate New York to live near his grandmother and detective uncle. On the surface, his life seems almost normal, but Christopher and his family members have already served a session in hades, so to speak, and as is gradually revealed, nothing is normal about him, his family, or his ancestors-- or the town to which he relocates.

Robert Swartwood keeps the Supernatural heat turned up, yet at the same time we are given a perspective on Christopher’s coming of age, in the emotional, metaphoric, and metaphysical sense. I can’t wait to read more from this author.

Tracy Walters says

This was a crazy.....bizzare and really fun book to read. It was written in a way where it just kept you turning the pages because you just needed to know what's going to happen. There is a supernatural mystery that flows thru the book and each time part of the mystery is answered, another question appears in it's place. This is NOT a feel good happy ending book but you don't feel depressed at the end....just glad to have read it. There were a couple of things that I felt were a bit off and that the ending was a little too neat....but otherwise I really enjoyed this book because of the way it kept my interest all the way to the end.

Alisa Hedden says

I actually got done reading this book yesterday, and had to think about it. I really liked the book, and will read it again, but for as few pages as it contains, Robert manages to get a lot of substance into a small space. Unlike some authors we all know, that use a lot of pages to say very little. Yes, the book is, technically, a horror, but the themes dealt with are not simplistic. They are (and this is just from the first time through, I'm sure I can find more with a second read)choices, consequences, growing up, loss and faith. He approaches these in an unusual, non-preachy way while definitely being thought provoking. If you are looking for a simple book with easy answers, go to the self help section. If you enjoy a book that reads like a good steak dinner and requires a little work on your part, you will enjoy this. I did.

D. Ward says

Atmospheric and dreadful - in a good way. This is the first thing I have read by Swartwood but while doing so, it was apparent to me that he is pretty good at what he does. I got the feeling that this novel had exactly the tone and presented in exactly the way he intended it to. "The Calling" does that thing that I is most important in horror novels that do not rely overly much on gore or shock; it creates a sense of dread in the reader's mind about the underlying cause of all the conflicts presented in the story. It's a highly entertaining supernatural novel rendered by an author who has honed his craft to precision. I would recommend this to anyone who is a fan of the genre.

Ronald Keeler says

Somebody, or something, murdered Christopher's parents. Years ago Christopher's grandfather tried to kill Christopher. But Christopher's grandfather loved him, so why the attempt at homicide? Grandfather even left Christopher a gift, a handwritten bible. There was even an additional chapter that did not appear in the original bible. This all leads to a base for the story involving a crisis of faith. Is there a God or not? Therefore, is there a Satan or not? What about angels, either good or bad? This story takes us on a road that Christopher follows in an attempt to answer these questions. But, it seems that everywhere Christopher travels, people die. Chris knows this, because he gets clues as to how many people will die, sometimes in places where he is and other times it seems he is invited to places where people will die. He gets hints about how many people will die and where, but no additional clues.

This is a fast paced story about the world of spirits. According to the story, they sometimes need human form for certain actions, but they discard the body once a purpose is achieved and then go on to new hosts. This is a pleasant fantasy that I will recommend to my high school reading classes as an optional reading assignment.

ADignorantium says

After reading Robert Swartwood's short story, "Spooky Nook", I was eager to dive into "The Calling- A Supernatural Thriller".

If you're a reader of the Horror/Thriller genre, you'll recognize a few familiar plot themes; orphaned teen, unfamiliar surroundings, mysterious strangers, and family secrets.

I wanted to like this book. It received nothing but praise from most of the reviewers on this site.

My big complaint is that it felt a little preachy.

In "The Calling", our hero laments something selfish from his past. The selfish thing he did also happens to be something being hotly debated in the public forum at the moment. Unfortunately, it does little to help further the story along. Some might argue that Christopher only did what he did at the end because of the selfish thing he did in his past. I disagree. I think a trust developed between the two. It's that trust and a shared experience that help to form a bond between them. (Sorry to be so vague, but I really don't want to give it away.)

I wrestled with this. I wasn't sure if I was letting my own personal beliefs interfere with my opinion of the story, So I just set the unnecessary story subplot aside.

Robert Swartwood's character development is solid. I got the impression that Christopher was a relatively good kid, who made some mistakes as a young teen. (Who of us hasn't?)

I'm not going to let my disappointment in The Calling deter me from reading more of Robert Swartwood's books. "Man of Wax" is getting great reviews, so I added it to my "To Read" list.

Jeannette says

Interesting reading.

Slow and steady storyline. I wasn't sure if it was a thriller or religious story. This story was not predictable like many books that I've read.

Bryanna Leigh says

This is definitely one of the more interesting stories I've had a chance to read. The story kept me interested for the most part, there were a few times when I got bored and/or irritated with the content.

Most of my problems with the story came in the formatting. Chapters were too short and several could have even easily put together into one. (A story with 42 chapters does not sound too pleasant even with 329 pages.) The letter with several pages of italicized text was a bit hard on the eyes. There was also several things added to the story that could have Ben left out. I won't go into details to keep from spoilers, but for me they didn't add to the story at all. Also, there was a detail or two that wasn't explained until the connection was made, which seemed to be unnecessary to hold off of. I was confused by the door connection when it came up due to this.

The characters were fun, when it didn't seem like they were being cliched. Some were definitely better than others. Chris bothered me some, but that was mostly due to differing views. Joey might have been my favorite of them all.

Overall, I did enjoy this book. It did keep me guessing what was going to happen. It does have its faults, but what book doesn't? Some things could have been explained better, such as Chris's sudden new powers that seemed to appear out of nowhere. (This is, of course, unless I missed something which is always possible.) I did enjoy Moses and Joey's adventures and story and the telling of Samael. It was a fun, supernatural book and definitely not what I was expecting when first received it.

Lybo Buchanan says

This was a very hard book to put down. I really enjoyed it. 18-year-old Christopher Myers' parents were murdered & something written on his bedroom door in his parents' blood. Convinced that he is the next

target, Chris travels away with his estranged uncle & stays with his estranged grandmother in the small town of Bridgton, New York. It is in Bridgton that he meets an extraordinary young boy who has come with his father to stop an unrelenting evil. Chris is sucked into the town's deep dark secrets and learns that his parents' murdered was no accident. He was brought to Bridgton by forces beyond his power-forces that just may threaten the destruction of all mankind. However, Chris was given a gift. His choice on how to use that gift & which path to follow will determine the fate of many. I'm looking forward to the next book by Swartwood.
