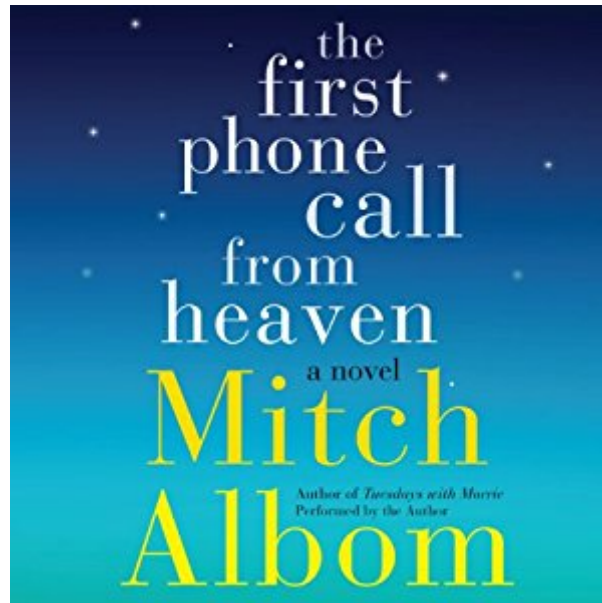


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The First Phone Call From Heaven: A Novel



Synopsis

The First Phone Call from Heaven tells the story of a small town on Lake Michigan that gets worldwide attention when its citizens start receiving phone calls from the afterlife. Is it the greatest miracle ever or a massive hoax? Sully Harding, a grief-stricken single father, is determined to find out. An allegory about the power of belief - and a page-turner that will touch your soul - Albom's masterful storytelling has never been so moving and unexpected. Readers of *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* will recognize the warmth and emotion so redolent of Albom's writing, and those who haven't yet enjoyed the power of his storytelling will thrill at the discovery of one of the best-loved writers of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mitch Albom is one of those authors who could write about any topic under the sun and make it drop-dead amazing. He captivated readers in the past with his original stories, stunning attention to personal detail, and an unembellished, but deeply poignant style, and in his newest novel, he once again works his rare magic, reclaiming his title as my most cherished inspirational and literary fiction writer. *The First Phone Call from Heaven* intimately follows the lives of the chosen children, parents, and spouses of Coldwater whose lives are forever altered when they receive phone calls from those they are mourning... their dead loved ones. Sparking extreme media interest and frenzied support, as well as protest from those who cannot let go of the controversy of divine voices coming through man-made technology, these phone calls become the world's biggest spectacle - except to Sully

Harding, who is past skepticism, and now is just downright angry with the nonsense. The sudden "miracle" is giving his young son false hope, and it's making it impossible for a non-believer like him to come to terms with his wife's tragic death; through town resources and the cooperation of his community members, he is determined to expose the phone calls as an utter hoax. But in the end, we beg to ask: Does it really matter whether the phone calls are actually a miracle from up above, or if they're a worldly intervention? After all, they are the best thing that's happened to Coldwater, and better yet, they're giving lost souls on Earth a chance to reconnect with the lost souls in heaven, and accept the notion of death.

What if you picked up the phone and you heard the voice of a loved one who had passed away? When a few people in Coldwater, Michigan started getting phone calls from their dead family members, there were plenty of skeptics, but the ones who got the calls had no doubt that they were hearing their loved ones' voices, and when word got out, the whole world wanted to hear more. Mitch Albom is best known for his powerful non-fiction, especially Tuesdays with Morrie. In *The First Phone Call from Heaven*, he has some fun imagining the impact a phone call from heaven might have. As word spread, pilgrims overran Coldwater, hoping for their own line to heaven. While few got their call, and some complained about the traffic and inconvenience, "there was also talk about heaven. And faith. And God. There were more prayers said than in years past. More requests for forgiveness. The volunteers for soup kitchens far exceeded the need." Albom plays the calls along, hinting through the doubts of the main character that they may not be genuine, but leaving the reader little reason to think that they aren't for real. He balances the mystery with the reality of lives changed. The hardened reporter for the local paper reflects on whether the calls are good for Coldwater: "Let's see. People are behaving better, eh? We haven't even had a shoplifting incident since all this started. . . . [E]very seat in church is full. People praying like never before. So what do you think. . . ? Is it good?" Yet his cynicism causes him to doubt. With his rich characterizations of both the individual players and of small-town life, Albom tells the kind of story he's known for, full of wisdom, a strong dose of sentimentality, and a warm feeling of satisfaction with the end.

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