



The First Phone Call from Heaven: A Novel

By Mitch Albom

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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.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Author One-on-One: Nicholas Sparks and Mitch Albom



Nicholas Sparks is the best-selling author of several beloved novels, with over 80 million copies in print worldwide. His most recent release is *The Longest Ride*.

Nicholas Sparks: We first met years ago, when *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *The Notebook* were just out. What's been the most surprising turn for your career since that day?

Mitch Albom: Pretty much everything. *Tuesdays* was the first nonsports thing I had done, and it was written only to pay Morrie's medical bills. I figured I'd return to sportswriting. I never imagined novels or the audience I've been blessed to find. I remember you hoping *The Notebook* would give you more chances to write. I think you've done OK with that, by the way.

NS: Thanks. With this new novel, *The First Phone Call from Heaven*, heaven once again figures prominently—as it did in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. How do you use it differently this time?

MA: *Five People* mostly takes place in heaven, to teach Eddie, the protagonist, to appreciate his life on earth. *First Phone Call* takes place in a small town, with the idea of heaven reaching out to us down here—through the phone.

NS: You wove the story of Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone into this novel. Do you see parallels between that and our modern-day obsession with cell phones? How did this influence your story development?

MA: People scoffed at the telephone's invention. Yet once it was introduced, its growth was astronomical. Same thing with cell phones. I used this to show how the "once impossible" is quickly forgotten. Could the same be true about speaking to heaven?

NS: Hearing from a deceased loved one is such a powerful idea. Whom would you talk to if you had the chance? And if Morrie from *Tuesdays with Morrie* were one, what would you ask him?

MA: My mother is still alive, but has suffered several strokes and can't speak. I wish I could dial to the past and engage in one of our long, impassioned, all-over-the-place talks. And Morrie? Well. He never got to read a page of *Tuesdays*. I'd ask if he is pleased. Am I doing OK by him? Mostly, I'd like to hear his laughter. I think we miss laughter most.

NS: This is the first novel you've written with a mystery/thriller element. Did that change your writing process at all? And is this how you think the world would really react—global fascination—if proof of heaven were somehow revealed?

MA: It felt quite natural to weave a mystery—perhaps from all those years' writing sports that count down and reach a climax. And yes, I definitely think if a town today claimed to be talking to heaven, it would be on twenty-four hours a day on cable news and the Internet. Look at the Susan Boyle story. In a week, the whole world knew of her—and she just sang like an angel. Imagine talking to one!

NS: Small towns—like Coldwater in *First Phone Call*—often paint the backdrop of your novels. Why?

MA: I was raised in a small town—local high school, one great pizza place, everyone knowing everyone. So it's familiar. Also, secrets in a small town are hard to keep—and often shocking when revealed. My stories are about people—and sometimes secrets. A small town is a good canvas.

NS: Now that you have so many more books than just *Morrie*—unlike when we first met—do you have a favorite among them?

MA: *Tuesdays* will always be my favored child—because it so changed my life. But storywise, *Five People* means a great deal, because everyone told me I was crazy—don't write a novel. I broke every piece of advice. And people embraced the story. That's extremely rewarding.

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Albom (*The Five People You Meet in Heaven*) has a nose for thin places: places where the boundary between secular and sacred is porous, and ultimate meaning is easier to encounter. In his new novel, *Coldwater, Mich.*, is this thin place, a town where people who have lost loved ones begin receiving phone calls from the dead in heaven. Sully Harding's wife died while he was in prison, and their young son, Jules, hopes his mom will call, even while Sully smells a hoax. Albom weaves a thread of satire into a narrative braided from the lives of smalltown residents; *Coldwater* becomes a media hotspot as well as battleground for religious and antireligious zealots, all awaiting the revelation they expect. A historical thread—popping into the narrative like a change-up in baseball—deals with Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone and how the instrument came to be the premier human connector. This brisk, page-turner of a story climaxes at Christmas. Another winner from Albom; this book just about shouts Give me for a holiday gift. Agent: David Black, David Black Agency. (Nov.)

From [Booklist](#)

Albom's latest modern-day fable is less philosophical but more emotionally charged than *The Time Keeper*. Wrapping this treatise on communication, human relationships, and the nature of heaven inside a nifty mystery, he once again manages to convert his musings on morality and spirituality into a populist page-turner. When embittered pilot Sullivan Harding returns to his small Michigan hometown after a stint in prison for an act of negligence he did not commit, he has to care for his young son while dealing with his feelings of guilt over his wife's death. As Sully attempts to cope with his own demons, various townspeople

begin receiving phone calls from deceased loved ones. As word of the Coldwater “miracle” spreads in a media-fueled frenzy, Sully attempts to get to the bottom of both the mysterious calls and his own paralyzing feelings of guilt and remorse. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Perennial best-seller Albom ponders the nature of miracles in another thought-provoking, discussion-promoting tale. --Margaret Flanagan

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Maria Kraus:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed The First Phone Call from Heaven: A Novel? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have some other opinion?

Pierre Winter:

The First Phone Call from Heaven: A Novel can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to place every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing The First Phone Call from Heaven: A Novel but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource details that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information may drawn you into brand new stage of crucial considering.

Sherry Holsey:

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