



# **Kill Switch**

*Chris Lynch*

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**Some things are best left forgotten. A gripping account of espionage and loyalty from National Book Award Finalist Chris Lynch.**

All Daniel wants to do is spend one last summer with his grandfather before he moves away for college and his grandfather's dementia pulls them apart. But when his dear old Da starts to let things slip about the job he used to hold—people he's killed, countries he's overthrown—old work "friends" show up to make sure he stays quiet. Was his grandfather really involved in a world of assassinations and coups, or are the stories just delusions of a crumbling mind? On the run from the police (and possibly something worse) before he has time to find out, Daniel may have to sacrifice everything to protect his grandfather from those who would do him harm.

## Kill Switch Details

Date : Published April 17th 2012 by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

ISBN :

Author : Chris Lynch

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Genre : Young Adult, Thriller, Realistic Fiction, Suspense, Contemporary, Adventure

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# From Reader Review Kill Switch for online ebook

## Eric Kneisler says

I thought this book was ok, but it is not one of my favorites. I didn't like the way it would switch points of view. It was hard to follow at times. I also thought the quick change from normal to violent that happened with the main character was not real. There is no real ending to the story. It is like it is a part of the story, not the whole story. I guess I didn't really get that.

Setting: Boston, a small unnamed village where they try to hide Da, most of the book takes place on the road in a car

Characters:

Daniel Camero - "young man", main character

Da - "old boy", Daniel's grandfather

Jarrood - Daniel's cousin

The main character's name is Daniel Cameron. He is referred to as "young man". He is getting ready for college. He wants to make the most of his summer. He wants to spend time with his grandfather, Da. Da is referred to as "old boy". He is slipping into dementia. He forgets things. He gets lost sometimes. Daniel is not close to either of his parents, so he has really bonded with Da. He decides he will help take care of his grandfather. He thinks it will be a good way to spend time with him. It goes fine until Da starts telling crazy stories about being a spy when he was younger. He talks about assassinations and countries he helped overthrow. Everyone thinks he is lying because they all believed he worked for the Department of Agriculture. They all think it is just the dementia taking over his thoughts and memories.

At first, Daniel thinks these are just crazy stories. He thinks they are part of the dementia and memory loss. But, after a while he starts to believe Da. Pretty soon some of Da's former "friends" start to show up here and there. They want to keep Da from leaking all the secrets that are labeled "classified". Daniel and his cousin, Jarrod believe that Da is in danger. So, they go on an adventure to try to find a hiding place for Da. They settle on a small village. But eventually they are found and Daniel has to get violent to keep his grandfather safe. There are beatings and one person is killed. Daniel finds out that he has the same type of violent "switch" that his grandfather had. When he is pushed, he just switches to kill mode and there is no stopping him. There is no real culmination or climax to this story. When the story stops, they are still going on, Da is still alive, Daniel is still taking care of him until he goes away to college.

All the while this is happening, we learn how hard it is to watch someone with growing dementia. It is hard to read about this at times. You put yourselves in Daniel's shoes, it is very hard.

I think the theme of this book is : how far would you go to protect someone you love? What activates your "kill switch"? Daniel was not a violent person until he was pushed that far to protect his grandfather. His grandfather can't really protect himself anymore. It is almost like Daniel has switched places from child to caregiver and protector and his grandfather has become more child-like.

I think this book is appropriate for kids 12 and up. There is violence and it is too confusing for someone much younger than that.

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## Jennifer says

This book had a great premise, but really fell short on delivery. Plot was choppy and filled with holes. Hated the ending.

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### **Jessica says**

169 pages of nothing happening, I have not read a book that felt more like a waste of my time. There was an attempt at a plot, but not a good one. Like someone had a vague idea for a story, and immediately wrote it all down in one sitting without putting any real thought into it. The whole thing was just not good.

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### **Rich Rosell says**

There's a blurb on the jacket that calls this "a compact, frayed-nerve bundle of brilliance". I must have read a different book, because the one I read was very boring....

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### **Liviana says**

I will never forget the name Chris Lynch. *INEXCUSABLE*, published in 2005, was a National Book Award Finalist and one of YALSA's Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults. And I have yet to have anyone tell me something nice about *INEXCUSABLE* in person. So I've never particularly wanted to read that book, but I've been curious about Chris Lynch.

I couldn't resist the blurb for *KILL SWITCH*. You mention assassins and I am there. Of course, it also mentioned dementia. At this point I have to accept that books about dementia are going to keep coming my way and there's nothing I can do about it. Daniel never truly realizes how lucky he is that his grandfather is so coherent. The bad days may be coming, but it's a blessing to have any time between sanity and the bad days. Of course, he doesn't have a ton of time to stop and reflect since he and Da are in danger.

Da used to be a very bad man, a sort of black ops operative. And now that his mind is going he can no longer remember to keep his mouth shut. Thus, his old coworkers want to shush him. Daniel can't let that happen. The close relationship between Daniel and Da gives the spare, predictable plot life. Daniel struggles to understand the new things he's learning about his grandfather, which is something you can understand even if your loved ones aren't former assassins. When affairs are put to order, those affairs come to light.

The slim volume begins to go off the rails in the last third. Normal, shocked-by-the-offer-of-a-gun Daniel suddenly turns into a beatdown machine. Now, I'm not saying the events of the book might not push someone to violence. But Daniel goes extreme and he's good at it. Generally, beating the crap out of somebody takes a bit of practice. (Okay, so it's not that hard with a blunt weapon, but he does it once with his bare hands.)

*KILL SWITCH* didn't make me want to run out and buy *INEXCUSABLE*. It was a pleasant diversion, a clever merging of the family drama and action thriller genres. But it was a bit too abrupt to really get under my skin. And this is a story that needs to get under your skin.

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## Lex W says

It was a really unique and interesting topic. And in the middle I couldn't read fast enough, until it started going no where. And unfortunately that's where it seemed to end.

There needed to be more to this story.

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## Julie A says

Despite others' lackluster reviews, I thought it was a pretty decent YA thriller. No, it doesn't have a race-to-the-end finale; the end was actually pretty subdued, but that didn't make it BAD. In fact, I thought the premise was original, the characters lively and interesting, and the plot had some decent twists.

Daniel loves his Da, and Da seems to have a special regard for Daniel, so the summer before he leaves for college, Daniel is determined to make the most of his time with "the old man," especially seeing Da is slipping a bit more and more from what his ID bracelet calls "Memory Loss." When Da starts behaving strangely and telling wild stories about a past full of world travels and violent deeds, Daniel first thinks it's the brain disorder in action. Until Da's old "work" friends start making appearances in unexpected places, and Da is convinced it won't be long before they come to silence him for good.

On a gut instinct, the "Young man" whisks his Da away in the dark early morning hours, unsure if Da needs protection from outside threats, or from himself. Their travels take them farther from home and safety, as Daniel tries to discern what's real, and Da seems to be preparing Daniel for what's to come.

This was a quick, sometimes funny, captivating read.

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## Terri says

Interesting premise. Poor execution. In the end, "Kill Switch" left me wishing I had killed the switch on this one, instead of sticking with it. Generally, I appreciate Chris Lynch's writing.

Da/Old Boy - Daniel Cameron/Young Man/Danny/Dan/D.C./District of Columbia

Grandfather - Grandson

suffering from memory loss? - sane?

a man with a past? - a seventeen year old boy wanting to create a future

vulnerable? - protector?

docile? - violent?

At first, the premise of "Kill Switch" is intriguing. It is the summer before Daniel begins college. He wants to spend it with his grandfather who is supposedly slipping away into dementia. Slowly, Daniel and the reader pick up on clues that suggest something is amiss here. Why do Daniel and his grandfather have such a close relationship, while Daniel's father and grandfather do not? Who are Largs and Zeke, and what is their true intent? Are all of those stories that Daniel's grandfather tells of violence and murder true, or just the imaginings of a sick man? Who really needs protection - Daniel or his grandfather? After a series of increasingly outrageous behaviors and stories from his grandfather, Daniel decides that his "friends, Largs and Zeke are trying to silence him - they once worked together and have horrible secrets that they don't want Da to tell. In desperation, Daniel and Da run away. They join forces with Daniel's strung out cousin, Jarrod.

Lynch's telling of the story is confusing - perhaps this is his intention. We never know what is truth and what is fiction, or who the good guys and bad guys are. I found myself having to reread passages over and over to determine their meaning. The plot moves slowly as a result. Graphic violence appears out of nowhere as Daniel becomes more and more confused as to what is really happening here. And then, in the end, none of the confusion is resolved. The reader is left with no answers. I respect a writer who respects his or her reader's intelligence. But I don't respect poor writing that ends up essentially being a waste of the reader's time.

I will not recommend this to teens in my library. If someone picks it up, great- the title, cover, and premise are certainly enticing. If anyone does pick it up, I will be curious as to his or her response. I don't think most teen readers will stick with this one. Not glad I stuck with this one.

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### **Rebecca says**

Leaving home for college is always a milestone in a young person's life, but for Daniel, the summer after his senior year is all the more unforgettable when he embarks on a danger-filled mission to help his beloved grandfather, Da. Memory loss, confusion, strange tales from the past, acts of violence, and a tendency towards ruthless domineering characterize Da, who has a special bond with Daniel not shared by the rest of the family. To his own son, Da was neglectful and cold, to his granddaughter, Lucy, Da only communicates with sharp-tongued contempt. This fractured family makes the reader question what it is that binds them together, and what could be wedging them apart. Everyone but Daniel ignores Da's fantastical stories of international secret missions, acts of violence in the middle east, clandestine meetings of scientists and government officials. They say it's all a result of paranoid dementia and that he was nothing more than a humdrum pencil-pusher for the Department of Agriculture who now wears a Medicalert bracelet engraved simply, "Memory Loss". But Daniel has reason to believe Da's tales, as figures from Da's past start to emerge, threateningly to silence Da, who seamlessly traverses between past and present, reality and extraordinary. Whisking Da off to a small secluded seaside village to shelter him from these menacing figures, along with Daniel's goofy stoner cousin for comic relief, they embark on a desperate and sometimes violent adventure. A quick read at only 169 pages, Kill Switch at times meanders vaguely through Daniel's emotions and self-doubt, but ultimately it is an enjoyable psychological thriller that may have more appeal for boys and is recommended for all readers age 12+.

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### **Jasmine says**

The book starts off in the summer with the main character, Daniel, taking care of his grandfather. His grandfather (which Daniel calls Da) suffers from dementia. As he slowly succumbs to the disease, Da starts slipping top secret information about his past life that no one knew about. Soon Daniel and Da have to flee from many threats; Daniel is determined to protect Da. Will they make it out okay? Read to find out. I do have a few critiques about the book though. The author included lots of detail, but some parts were confusing to me. I found myself constantly having to re-read sections because they didn't make sense, the wording was weird, etc. However, that could be partly my fault as I wasn't paying attention at some parts. That brings me to my next point though. I feel like I wasn't paying attention because a lot of the book was pretty boring, especially to someone who enjoys action. The plot development of Da could've been more extravagant as well. I would recommend this book to someone who is looking for an easy read and doesn't mind small bits of action.

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## Grace Owen says

The idea behind this book was quite interesting, but Chris Lynch did not execute it very well. The book is dull, and if I'm honest, I was quite confused in many parts. I didn't know who was speaking or what they were talking about. He seemed to be implying things, but I could not figure out what he was implying. In many parts, I wasn't sure if I was reading it correctly. I wasn't exactly sure what he meant. It was confusing and boring. I almost gave up many many MANY many times. But I always stick with a book, especially when it's short like Kill Switch.

Towards the end, Dan ends up leaving Da, and my first thought was, "You couldn't stand to leave him alone the entire book, and now you're just going to leave him in some random town with random people, especially when you know there are people looking for him and ready to 'octo-shush' him?" Plus, Jarrod went who-knows-where. The ending was just terrible, in my opinion, at least.

I would never reread this book. I would never recommend this book.

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## Donna says

Oh, man, this book is good. Tightly told and wryly funny book by Chris Lynch. Not a spare word. The blurbs and descriptions claim it's a thriller about espionage. I don't think it's a thriller--it's about the humanity of a grandson for his grandfather.

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## Talia says

Hrrngh. Why would you do this to me, Chris Lynch, why?? I really wanted to like this book; I bought it just because it had his name on it. I read *Inexcusable* and loved it, and I read *Angry Young Man* and loved it. But I just couldn't get into this one.

One of my main issues with the book was that it was confusing. I mean, if you don't exactly get what's going on in a story unless you read the cover blurb, then that's confusing. And after reading the whole thing, I STILL don't quite know what was up with Daniel's grandfather. Also, the character's motivations for their actions were at times very confusing. Maybe that's just me. Maybe I'm not manly enough for this book, I don't know. I just failed to understand a lot of it, even though I technically could tell you what was going on.

My other main issue with it was its characters. *Angry Young Man* was also occasionally slightly confusing, but I didn't care because I loved those characters so much. I even liked his characters in *Inexcusable*, even though most of them were assholes. I can read about mean/violent/crazy people, but I want to like or understand them at least. And at first, I did like the characters. But Daniel turned from a passive everyday kinda guy to a violent person, and I just didn't follow his transformation.

And Da. Don't even get me started. I liked him at first, but I slowly grew to despise him as the book went on. I'm sure there's a trope for the mentor-type figure who abuses the main character into learning some lesson or another, I just don't know its name. And furthermore, *I hate that trope*. Da was arrogant, threw baseballs at Daniel's ears, treated his son like crap, and almost choked Lucy. He also never liked Jarrod, despite Jarrod doing a ton of things to help them out. Maybe that was the point of his character, but I liked the way he

started out, and at that point I could see why his grandson so adored him. By the middle of the book, I wanted Daniel and Jarrod to throw him to the side of the road.

Lucy and Jarrod were my favorite characters, by the way, and they were the most abused. Often for no reason.

And the entire plot made me feel like I missed something. Like I said, motivations were unclear. Like, first Daniel is helping his grandfather miss a doctor's appointment and suddenly they're running for their...lives? I think? With no clear plan/destination in mind? And it's never clear if Daniel even believes his grandfather's wacky stories anyway. I don't know. I just. Didn't. Get it.

But just because I didn't like it in this case doesn't mean it's not good. Some people really liked this book, and maybe they got something I didn't, or connected with the characters in a way I couldn't. Hence the two stars; I hated it, but it wasn't terrible. Read it if it sounds interesting to you, I guess.

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### **Anthony Lara says**

The book I read is Kill switch by Chris Lynch about a girl Daniel going to see her grandfather for the summer that has dementia. Her grandfather also called Da used to work with a government agency. They tried to kill him from spilling some secrets but he got away. This novel is entertaining and tiring because there's lots of talking and not much action but some mysterie. For example halfway through the story, the main character talks about how her life is boring and she doesn't see family which leads to seeing her Da and he lets her know about the action packed things he did. If you enjoy Kill Switch, then you will love Maze runner because they both have a big common relationship how there government in these worlds are doing something very secret and very mysterious.

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### **April says**

Kill Switch is Chris Lynch's latest young adult book. It is a character study about two males – one young and one old- and delves into what makes a person flip their switch into violent mode. Daniel, referred to as Young Man is the narrator of Kill Switch. He spends a lot of time with his aging grandfather, Da, referred to as Old Boy.

Read the rest of my review [here](#)

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