



The Red Church

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The church was constructed in the 1860s under the guidance of Reverend Wendell McFall. His sermons declared the existence of God's Second Son- whose mission is to undo all of Jesus work on Earth. McFall had the church painted red to summon the First Son to defeat the Second. But when he sacrificed a child to support his rantings, his congregation hung him from the rafters of his own sanctuary...

For twenty years, the red church has stood empty. Crumbling to ruin, it has become a site for Halloween pranks and the setting for ghost stories- including one about the thing that lives in the bell tower, a creature being blamed for a brutal murder that occurred in the church's graveyard...

Now, Archer McFall has purchased the church to house his Temple of the Two Sons, whose zealous worshippers will stop at nothing to see the Second Son return to his rightful glory...

The Red Church Details

Date : Published January 5th 2010 by Smashwords Edition (first published September 1st 2000)

ISBN : 9781907190926

Author : Scott Nicholson

Format : ebook 352 pages

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Thriller, Fantasy, Paranormal, Mystery

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From Reader Review The Red Church for online ebook

Matt Schiariti says

It would be easy to say The Red Church is a horror novel. I guess at its core that's as good a label as any, but it's really a mixing of genres. Part ghost story, part thriller, part mystery, part psychological drama, part crisis-of-faith story.

I think the most frightening aspect of the story isn't the supernatural aspect of the 'false prophet' type villain. It's not the gore (while there is some, Nicholson uses it for effect, not for shock value..which is nice..it doesn't come off as a cheap thrill tactic). No, what's most frightening about this book is how true it could actually be. You take out the horror and the supernatural elements and you get what can and has been very real. That being, what lengths people will go to to follow their faith no matter how twisted their interpretation of it may be. And I don't mean religion (although that does play a central part in the book). I mean in anything. It's truly scary what people will sacrifice and how they will justify just about anything if they believe in a cause or ideology enough. Even if the core of their belief is good or right, never underestimate a person's ability to twist and pervert it no matter the cost.

/Cynical..hehe

Seriously though, this is a great book that's well written and really has an unnerving aspect of suspense to it that should have you turning the pages until you hit the last one. A creepy small town setting, a supposedly haunted church with centuries of bloody history, great dialogue and fantastic characters. Nicholson is a great writer and this book is a perfect example of that.

Amy says

This book was recommended to me, so I thought I'd try it, the horror fan that I am. I couldn't put it down, a fast-paced storyline where the Reverend Archer McFall is believed to be God's Second Son and Jesus a liar, creepy! The characters were not very complex, with the exception of Ronnie Day and Sheriff Frank Littlefield, the good guys, but that is to be expected with your average horror novel. Frank is haunted with guilt over the death of his little brother, a Halloween prank gone terribly wrong, and Ronnie is terrified of the Bell Monster in the haunted red church. This novel was a Bram Stoker Award First Novel Nominee in 2003, great page-turner, scary! I look forward to reading more of Scott Nicholson's work very soon.

Char says

I originally rated this 3.5 stars, rounded down to 3.

his is one of those generational tales where the family in the present has to pay for the sins of the family in the past. The character development was excellent, I thought. The plot was engaging and there is no doubt Mr. Nicholson has an excellent imagination.

The only thing that bothered me about this one is the fact that I think it got a little "churchy" at the end. A

little more "churchy" and Christian themed than I normally would enjoy. But hey, what else did I expect from a book with the title of The Red Church, right?

All in all, I did enjoy this novel and I have found that I've been thinking on it and turning it over in my mind since I finished and that's the reason I revised my original rating up to 4 stars. Recommended!

William says

Scott Nicholson's The Red Church is fast paced, scary, and damn good fun... everything a good horror novel should be. It's also more than that. It's insightful, thoughtful and sometimes downright poetic. The tale of a search for meaning, and the meaning of faith resonated with this lapsed Church of Scotland reader, and got me thinking about things I hadn't considered since my own teenage years. Scott's skillful use of several viewpoint characters, each with their own take on what is happening, only tightens the tension. I read this on the Kindle version, but I need to seek out a hard copy. This one's a keeper

The Behrg says

This book's been on my radar for years, finally had the chance to dig into it, and glad I did. Instead of just uncovering a quick treasure that's been buried underground and has maybe lost some of it's shine, this was like unearthing a fossil only to realize that you're standing not over a single specimen but an entire burial ground that could fill museums. Reminiscent of early King, Nicholson is a master wordsmith, and his imagery is as haunting as it is poignant. At times the religious aspects of the book felt a little heavy handed, but the final picture painted is worth every stroke of the artist's brush.

Far from your run-of-the-mill supernatural horror story, this is one that will sit with you long after you've digested it. Will be looking into more of Nicholson's work for sure.

"When you have one of those waking nightmares, when you think bad things in the dark and can't go to sleep, you think happy thoughts. Cartoon dogs, fat clowns, things like that. Except sometimes the cartoon dogs bite and the fat clowns grow sharp smiles."

Alondra says

3.5 Stars

When does religious fervor cross the line?? At what point is your passion an obsession beyond reasoning?? More importantly, who is to say that your belief is right and/or the belief of your fellow man is wrong??

This is a horror story, yes. So, finding deeper meanings in the conversation maybe far fetched, so you would think; but the questions above still need to be answered, monsters or no. Some of the worst people I have ever met, were "church folk." Also, some of the nicest, most giving, and honest people have been from the church. When do you know that a person (preacher/priest) can be trusted with something so valuable as your individual **faith**?? One of the most important and delicate relationships; is the relationship that a worshiper has with the "man of the cloth." This person is supposed to guide you righteously and keep you from going

astray, but what if he is inherently evil. Remember Jim Jones??? It all sounded good until the Kool-Aid got passed around.

For those of us who consider themselves believers of Christ; some of the language and tone of the book, can rub you the wrong way; and it did for me. There were times that I was completely put off by some of the hateful speech of these believers; then I had to remember that this was fiction only. I needed to keep perspective and see the other side. For those on the opposing side, they see themselves as the righteous ones. Who is to say they are wrong??

Anyway, I enjoyed this book nonetheless and think the author did a good job of allowing the reader to see each characters view of their world and how they saw themselves in it. I wish more folks could do the same. It is not for anyone else to judge this life we are given. We must answer for our transgressions at the end of all things, whether you believe in God, Allah, Buddha, crystals and stars; or nothing at all. In the end, we will all answer to someone/something/someother.

Katy says

A very creepy horror novel that explores ideas of faith, redemption, good vs. evil and how hard it is to tell the difference, and other such thoughts. This is my first Nicholson book and I'm quite impressed not only by his mastery of language but by his character development, plot development, and clean copy editing. Fans of horror and those fascinated by the eternal struggle to understand the human condition should enjoy this novel. Please keep an eye open for my review of the sequel, "Drummer Boy."

ExLibris_Kate says

For twenty years the red church has been nothing but fodder for ghost stories and a place to store hay. No one in the small North Carolina mountain town likes to talk about its grisly past. When people start dying mysterious and horrific deaths, the Sherriff suspects that it has something to do with the return of Reverend McFall. McFall's followers are willing to do whatever is needed, not matter how horrifying, to assure the return of the Second Son.

I don't read a lot of books in the horror genre, and now I know why. This book was scary. Nicholson finds the perfect voice for the cast of characters in this small mountain town. Since there isn't one main protagonist, you are able to view the story from many different perspectives. That technique is part of what makes this book so chilling. I was drawn into the story by learning about the church's terrible past through the eyes of long time residents, and then frightened by the creature that lurks in the bell tower as told by the viewpoint of the children. The zealots who follow McFall tell their story, as well, and you get to peek inside the mind of someone who is rationalizing death and sacrifice in the name of their beliefs.

The church itself is a creepy and terrifying character in this story. From the very first scene, you feel the unease that its presence causes. As you learn its tragic history, its evil grows and becomes the setting for some of the scarier parts of the book. The fact that there is a church that's painted red sets the tone right away and sent chills down my spine every time I thought about it. If you are looking for an entertaining, well written and scary book to read, this would be a good choice!

Misty Baker says

I'm going to start this blog with a disclaimer: When you are about 5% from finishing this book, park yourself next to a church, and finish it in the parking lot. Just trust me on this, I have never finished a book and then felt an immediate need for prayer and repentance as I did when I finished "The Red Church."

Back in 1993 the world was introduced to the cult world by a fairly psychotic man named David Koresh. (For those of you reading this that were born in the late 80's just google him.) Civilization as a whole was aware of cult society, but I think this was the turning point for recognition and condemnation.

I'll admit... that fiery day in Waco rarely crosses my mind (I live 50 miles from there) but every once and a while something sparks that particular train of thought, and off my wild brain goes.

"The Red Church" was (in short form) a look at cult life from the inside.

Whispering Pines is a quaint little mountain town, or at least it is according to tourist. According to its inhabitants, its a town haunted by it's past. Literally. A dead preacher, an evil cult leader, and a monster with "eyes like kidneys." While half of the town is sucked in by Archer (Cult leader and self-proclaimed 2nd son of God) the other half (the sane half) is struggling to do little more than stay alive. Each night a new "sinner" is turning up dead, and the police have no hard evidence to put the killer away. What do you do when you think the killer is a ghost? What do you do when the whole town is against you? What do you do when your "GOD" asks you to sacrifice your own child.

"Nicholson" impressed me a few weeks ago with his latest novel "The Skull Ring" but I still remained skeptical of "The Red Church" for 2 reasons. 1. I was afraid that the writing would be lacking seeing as how THIS novel was actually an earlier work (you know... the whole growth with time and experience thing) and 2. After a few chapters I was afraid the book was going to turn into a sermon instead of the monster thriller I expected. I was...as usual...wrong on both accounts, and I'm actually quite happy to admit to being so. "Nicholson's" writing was not only fluid and amazingly imaginative, but for some reason I think it was actually better than in "The Skull Ring." The narration was multi-perspective which is not only difficult to write but sometimes (not in this case) difficult to read. The multitude of perspectives combined with the flawless character development made the book an easy read, and to top off the pot, his expected (at least by me) glimpse into a mentally unbalanced mind was perfectly executed.

This was a horror book that spouted details with the best of them.

There was immaculate conception, a mysterious half eaten man in a graveyard, a suicidal priest, creepy ambient laughter, finger filled puke, a wacko mommy, little boys with worms in their mouth, a REALLY smelly offering plate (that actually made me a little queasy), and 1 very epic "Come To God" moment in the front of the church.

This book is (of course) not for everyone, if you are looking for mushy make a direct left and choose a different isle, but if you are a fan of horror...saddle up. This one is a must read.

Happy reading my fellow followers and remember: always carry an emergency kit in your car... you never know when you are going to end up in the bottom lake and need to bust a window.

Charlie says

The Red Church is everything a scary story should be! The characters believe with conviction what they see is real and never waver despite the implausibility. Their trust is contagious and because of this, the reader can rely on the accounts. The 'good' vs. 'evil' element is at the forefront, but what makes this theme unique is how it is presented. Is Jesus really the bad guy? Seems ridiculous to consider given America's deeply rooted Christian culture, but Nicholson is able to craft a story that inspires doubt. This in turn illuminates the fragileness of belief, or does it?

This is more than just good vs. evil, but also ventures into the psychology behind influencing groups of people. Most people when they learn of a cult or occult group wonder how people become followers. It seems illogical and for the most part, crazy. The Red Church presents just how confusing recognizing right from wrong and good from bad really can be. When doubt creeps in, alternative answers are sought and honestly, an idea that might seem ridiculous suddenly becomes convincing. There were points in the story where I thought, "Huh, what if that guy is really right?" The nonsensical made sense and I realized how a person could choose an alternative.

Coincidentally, I happened to watch the ID special on the American Occult and came across an episode that featured Jeffrey Don Lundgren, a man who claimed to be a prophet. Eerily, The Red Church cast are similar to the real life happenings that occurred in Ohio.

To read more about Jeffrey Don Lundgren click here: [**A Prophet Born**](#) .

Recommend to those who are interested in psychological horror and the American occult.

Christa says

I am not exactly a "thriller" or "horror" fan, so when I came across The Red Church by Scott Nicholson I hesitated at first, thinking I probably wouldn't like it. After the first few pages into the book, I realized how limiting and inaccurate such labels really are. To be sure, there is plenty of blood-curdling and scary stuff in the novel. However, there is much more to the book than "blood and gore."

The heart of the story is a young boy, struggling with growing up, with his parents' estrangement, with the first tinges of romantic love, and with his own faith. We also get a very accurate depiction of the emotional and mental powers that religious fanatics or new-age gurus can yield over their trusting victims.

A tight, fast-moving plot, vivid, psychologically complex characters that jump off the page and are so real you remember them long after you finish reading make this book a truly fascinating read. I can only recommend it.

Char says

3.5 stars!

Kristin Walcott Figueroa says

Just like the Red Church was forever lurking in the background of this small mountain town, this book has been lurking in my TBR pile for quite some time. Every time I finished book and was looking for my next great read, I'd always pause on this cover in my long list on Goodreads and think, "I really want to read this." Then I'd continue perusing the rest of the list and for some reason always settle on something else. That is until now. I don't know what I was waiting for, but its beckoning has finally been answered. And I'm glad of it.

The Red Church is a story about a boy, a church, good, evil, and faith. It's about growing up, challenges, and choices. Ronnie Day is at the age when girls have become important, little brothers are a pain, and parents still offer a sense of security and safety. Ronnie lives with his family in a small rural mountain town steeped in religion and legend. Every day he has to walk home from school past the haunted red church. His fear is palpable and is born of generations of ghost stories surrounding the church. It is not long before the reader learns that those stories are more than just tall tales.

Nicholson weaves a haunting tale of the ultimate battle of good and evil. His ability to conjure images with descriptive text is masterful. I could easily visualize the gruesome transformations of Archer McFall and often thought this would make an awesome movie.

Throughout the book I was asking myself, who or what is Archer McFall. Is he the anti-Christ? Is he the Devil? Is he a conjurer of evil demons or ghosts? His ability to play on people's fears and weaknesses is scary. And he has a power to overcome a person's sensibilities and place them in some sort of hypnotic trance that renders them completely helpless against him. I was anxious to see how such a monster could be defeated. In the end, there are a few twists and although there is definitely a resolution of sorts, questions still remain.

If you like a good horror story with religious undertones, this is a book for you. I definitely recommend it.

Latasha says

cults? haunted churches? yes please!! I love the idea of this book but somehow it was just ok. it did get pretty religious in some parts and I guess I should've expected that but I was there for the scarier things. I will read more by this author, though. most of his books sound great.

Ed says

This tightly-plotted horror novel involves lots of religious facets, including the idea of a second son of God in addition to Jesus Christ. Nothing is controversial or offensive. This is just a vivid tale of the North Carolina mountains and its inhabitants spooked by "the red church." The intrepid sheriff is perhaps the most interesting of the cast of characters. Enjoyable read to kick off my summer with.

