



## **The Calling**

*Amber Foxx*

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**The Calling** Amber Foxx

Alternate Cover Edition: B00IA8TB3G

## The first Mae Martin psychic mystery

Obedying her mother's warning, Mae Martin-Ridley has spent years hiding her gift of "the sight." When concern for a missing hunter compels her to use it again, her peaceful life in a small Southern town begins to fall apart. New friends push her to explore her unusual talents, but as she does, she discovers the shadow side of her visions— access to secrets she could regret uncovering.

Gift or curse? When an extraordinary ability intrudes on an ordinary life, nothing can stay the same.

## The Mae Martin Series

No murder, just mystery. Every life hides a secret, and love is the deepest mystery of all.

## The Calling Details

Date : Published April 1st 2015 by Createspace (first published December 2nd 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Amber Foxx

Format : Kindle Edition 396 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery

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# From Reader Review The Calling for online ebook

## Ed Morawski says

The Calling (Mae Martin Mystery #1)

The first Mae Martin psychic mystery

'The Calling' is without question well written. There is not a typo or grammar faux pas to be found. The characters are all deep and well fleshed out. The main character Mae is pretty naive though and the setting in northeastern North Carolina (an unfortunate mouthful) is strictly country.

There are two problems:

1. It is subtitled 'The first Mae Martin psychic mystery' but there's not much mystery to be found.
2. The pacing is about as speedy as a glacier.

For page after page I kept waiting for something to happen. About 25% of the way into the book two cats had been found through Mae's psychic powers. That's it. Most of the novel is taken up by mundane details of Mae's family problems, mother problems, job problems, money problems, her night class situations, some odd professors, and random characters used mainly to flesh out the book I think. I felt a little smothered by Mae's situation and found myself dreading to pick it up and continue reading. I stuck it out because I am interested in the paranormal (psychics, not vampires or werewolves, which were thankfully absent) but still not much happened.

This is in no way a bad book. Many readers (mostly, I suspect, women) will probably find it entertaining.

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## Charles says

Rhoda-Mae Martin is a psychic. She lives in a crossroads town in northeastern North Carolina and she is eager to leave the place. Her talent offers a way out. Unfortunately, her mother and husband think it's immoral and want her to stop it. Her mother-in-law isn't happy about it either — an organic farmer, she wants to run for mayor, but in this town no one will vote for her if she has witchy associations. The townspeople, if they were to know about it, would grant her wish to leave town.

Mae's particular talent is to see into places where others can't. This is useful for finding lost cats, but as she begins to acknowledge her abilities she discovers that she is capable of much more. With the help of an object belonging to someone she is able to enter their life and discover intimate details. Finally, when she acquires some crystals, including those which once belonged to her grandmother, a shaman and healer, she learns to enter the spirit world completely.

Complications build up. Mae wants to get certified as a personal trainer, but she can't afford the tuition. Her mother agrees to help, but when she finds out Mae is psychic she withdraws it. So Mae takes a job as a psychic at an alternative medicine center. This brings her into contact with some people at the college who teach alternative medicine, and in particular with the Chair, Charlie Tamm. Charlie is psychic himself, a student of shamanism. Also complicating matters are another professor, a student, a teaching assistant, an old black man who threatens to expose Mae, an ex-husband, a competing psychic —

At this point the book finds its true voice as a story about relationships, the struggles of people with love, power, prejudice, and each other. The psychic superstructure falls away, or rather is transformed into the plight of a person with a creative talent which no one understands and everyone wants to destroy.

The book can be read in several genres. As a thriller — we hurry toward the end in expectation of the obligatory life and death confrontation between Mae, the heroine, and the sinister Charlie. We get it, but strangely muted. As a soap opera — we linger, enjoying the proliferation of new characters and their troubles and the intricate relationships which it becomes increasingly hard to believe the author will be able to sort out. As a detective story — of sorts, with Mae as the detective, a criminal, various possible victims of uncertain crimes, plenty of bystanders to confuse matters, and the required quest for truth and retribution. As a romance, a bildungsroman, an ordinary literary novel about people's troubles with life. Don't try to choose. It's all of them.

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### **Richard says**

This is an excellent novel, more interesting and intricate than one might suppose from its understated title. The author's prose is really first rate throughout. The copy-editing is also excellent. Self-published, it stands well above 90% of what you'll find in Indy-land.

I don't usually read paranormal novels, especially the popular dime-a-dozen books. But this is *not* typical of that genre, I think. It's a "psychic coming out" novel about an intelligent, though not particularly school-educated, young woman in rural North Carolina who reaches a point in her life where she refuses any longer to hide or deny what she is, and what she can do with her psychic abilities. She was oppressed and closed-off; she breaks through; and a lot of her life blows up as a result. It's a thoughtful and well-developed realistic novel about a woman's life, which happens to include psychic phenomena. But it's also a novel about how Mae's personal relationships develop and change. And I think that is its strongest aspect. The characterizations and inter-relations of the characters are wonderful; well wrought and realistic.

I first stumbled over the author's profile via a comment in one of the GR groups; went to look at the preview. At the end, I wanted to keep reading, so I bought it intending to set it aside just until I finished two other things I'm currently reading. But once I loaded it on my e-reader and went to book-mark where I had stopped reading the preview, I couldn't stop reading again. I just kept going on, and the hours passed. The story ends in a good place, but it's also apparently a sort of "pilot episode" for a series, so I suspect the author already must have completed at least one more novel about Mae. And there's a lot of material for further development. I'm waiting to see where it goes from here.

My advice du jour: skip your coffee and scone today. Buy this book instead.

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### **Barb VanderWel says**

I love this & I can't wait for more.

I will be also leaving a review on Goodreads @ Amazon.

And letting everyone know about it.

So i gave it a 5 Stars.

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## **M.L. Eaton says**

Well-researched and easy to read, this is a fascinating account of a young woman finding her own identity. While coming to terms with her inherited psychic and healing gifts, she experiences danger and fear on many levels, not least the fear of ostracisation for being 'different'. The characterisation is good and the plot gathers pace very satisfactorily. After this intriguing introduction to Mae Martin, I look forward to reading the next books in the series.

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## **Barbara Hackel says**

We hear or read about people with psychic abilities, and the imagery of the fortuneteller comes to mind. However in this book, Mae doesn't begin to fit that preconceived notion. In fact Mae is a southern woman who is interested in becoming a trainer and helping people make their bodies stronger. The fact that her Granma was a healer seemed to work against her as far as her family was concerned. The bulk of this book is about Mae educating herself as a trainer, but also as a psychic healer along the way. She has so much opposition from family and acquaintances in town that she is eventually pushed away from her life and must set out on her own to do what is right in her heart for her.

This is a beautiful story of growth and self trusting. It turns out there are more kinds of evils in the world than Mae realized. She learns to trust and loses nearly everything before she is able to balance out her talents and life.

I was impressed at the author's authoritative and creative approach to this topic

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## **Mikela says**

I received The Calling as a Booklikes Author Giveaway with no obligation review it, but with the hope that I would read and write an honest review of the book upon completion. The description looked so interesting that although this is not a genre I was very familiar with, I thought it an excellent place to broaden my horizons and take me into the world of psychic mysteries. Much to my surprise and delight I was a lucky winner!

Mae Martin, our narrator, is attempting to understand and develop her psychic ability to help people while still retaining her moral integrity. It is about her personal growth as she gains financial independence, confidence in herself as a person and in her abilities, and the changing relationships within her family.

On the day thirteen-year old Mae moved across the country with her mother she discovered that she had the ability to find her beloved cat that had escaped from their new home. She is delighted to have her cat back but confused as to how she could possibly know exactly where the frightened cat was and how to navigate herself there to rescue it, particularly as this was a town she'd never been in before that day. Happily Mae returns home with her cat and she relates how she found it to her mother only to be met with her mother's hostility and horror, who told her it was the devil's work and made her promise not to use "the sight" again. Now frightened, Mae abandons "the sight" until many years later when on one very cold night events force

her to once again use it. Her husband, Hubert, and his parents refuse to believe that anything other than coincidence was responsible for Mae knowing the missing person's whereabouts but she is determined to prove to them that her gift is real.

While car pooling to the University in Virginia for night classes Mae relates to her friend, Patsy, what has happened on the two occasions. Patsy is delighted and during a class on alternative medicines mentions that she has a psychic friend. Patsy's professor, Charlie Tann, asks for a personal item from each student then invites Mae into the classroom to identify who the item belongs to. Mae not only identifies the student, she tells her personal information she would have no way of knowing without "the sight". This first real acceptance of her gift leads Mae to meet others with gifts of their own as well as people wanting her help.

Mae also learns that she is able to find illnesses in people and even in cases cure them. As her sight develops and strengthens she finds herself at odds with Hubert who now believes in Mae's ability but sees this ability as intrusive and threatening. Is using this gift of sight to help people any better than spying on them. What limits must she place upon herself? Hubert and his parents are supportive of Mae as a person yet frightened of and against her using this gift. Learning more about The Calling, Mae stands the chance of gaining knowledge but losing her husband and the step daughters she loves so dearly.

The author introduced some fascinatingly complex characters. Mae who is determined to break away from her mother's influence and yet is tormented about the reason why her much loved father was taken from her life. She is striving to reach the full potential of her gift yet afraid to lose the family she cares so much about. Bernadette, a native American who teaches herbal and tribal medicine, so strong yet plagued with her own demons. Charlie Tann, the chair of the department and the charismatic teacher with powers of his own. I wanted to hate Mae's mother but found she had her own problems to deal with, ones that helped to explain her "closed mind". I also wanted to learn more about Malba Cherry, a voodoo woman who goes by the professional name of "Breda". Could their rivalry turn into friendship or did Breda put a curse on Mae?

Right from the beginning, Foxx grabbed my attention and kept my interest throughout. I wanted to see how Mae progressed with her gifts, how and if she was able to reconcile using her sight with the privacy of others. The Calling is the first of a series that reads very well as a stand-alone...but I think you'll want to continue on with Mae's journey of self discovery. I'm so glad that I read this book and know its opened up another genre for me to further explore. A very good read that I really enjoyed. Rating this book is extremely difficult for me as I have little of this genre to compare it with. Highly recommend it to readers who enjoy more than the clichéd paranormal novels that are found everywhere...this is not one of them and it won't disappoint.

Originally published on [www/chapterofdreams.com](http://www.chapterofdreams.com)

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## **Jen Warren says**

The Calling is the story of a woman coming to terms with a supernatural ability. This premise was, to me, an intriguing one. Before I turned the first page, I had a set of ideas – possibilities – that I was looking forward to exploring. Imagine discovering a gift, being forced to bury it, then the experience of finally embracing it. There are a thousand questions that arise from the blurb. What does the ability entail? Where is the danger? Conflict is an assumption, excitement a given.

Unfortunately, those expectations are the wrong ones to bring to this novel. Though the setup given had all

the aspects of a thrilling read, true excitement was a long time in coming.

## SPOILERS AHEAD

The author gives us a prologue to show how, at thirteen, Mae discovers a previously unknown ability. This gift is revealed, used, and rejected within a handful of pages. The reasons given didn't wash for me. Would a teenager fail to realize the potential? Would she really abandon that based on nothing more than a word of caution from a parent she isn't close with? I just didn't buy it. Perhaps, if told in snippets through flashbacks, this might have seemed more reasonable. Told live, I struggled with plausibility here - and again when the story begins fresh after more than a decade.

In more than ten years, Mae has never used her powers. She's had two husbands, neither of which were even aware of them. It's a secret. It's evil and dangerous. She does NOT talk about it, at all. And yet...

Her ex-husband is missing. If she was overly concerned about this, I missed the subtleties. What I read was a woman who assumed the man probably just passed out drunk on a hunting trip, but decided on the spot to go ahead and use her forbidden powers to find him anyway.

After more than a decade, she's embracing the magic. I knew this would happen, from the blurb; I just didn't buy the way this part of the story was shown. To me, Mae either believes it IS evil enough to suppress OR she thinks it's something so innocuous that she can tell strangers within an hour of meeting them. It's either here. Both doesn't work.

Characterization is, without a doubt, where I struggled most. Mae's actions were sometimes completely inexplicable and I never really connected with her. Whether that's a failure on my part or not, I couldn't say. Honestly, there's nothing technically wrong with the writing, as many things are a matter of preference. I can testify only that it didn't engage me. Even at the height of conflict, there was a distance between me and whatever situation.

Some of this, I believe, is attributable to the style in which this is written. While not "wrong," I found several issues incompatible with my reading preferences. For example, much was told in narrative - even live scenes, merely to summarize dialogue quickly. There were also unnecessary breaks in action for the addition of narrative I didn't feel served any purpose except to remind the reader that certain characters still existed.

Which is another thing. Countless times during this read, the author lost trust in the reader. From scenes and narrative that could be cut to over-explaining details I grasped quite easily on my own. Example:

"Randi smiled as she said it, as if his threats didn't worry her too much."

Or:

"She often does," he said with a smile, implying Randi put him in his place.

These are things the reader can easily discern, given the rest of the text. The spoon feeding isn't necessary there, and I found it lacking in places I wouldn't have minded more details. Specifically, where Mae gets a job as a psychic, I was quite eager to have my hand held. I wanted the details, yet so much was given in retrospective narrative.

Personal preferences aside, this wasn't a terrible read. I think the setup shortchanged the potential of the plot,

but after the first half this novel did pick up some speed. Though I never related completely to Mae, the storyline became more interesting on its own. I might wish more time had been devoted to the situation with her mother and father, or to more realistically delving into Charlie's past, but by the end I was invested.

I'm rating this at two stars for one reason: the first half was mostly a struggle to get through. Between characterization issues and the slow pacing of the story, I would've rated it only at one. The second half, however, was a solid three. I'm taking the middle road here to say that, on the whole, this was "okay."

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## **Marjolein says**

### READ IN ENGLISH

*Read all my reviews on <http://urlphantomhive.booklikes.com>*

I won a copy of this book in a Booklikes Giveaway.

The Calling is the first book in the Mae Martin Mysteries.

I knew I didn't have to expect a murder or something like that in this story. That I was told before I started reading. But I think I expected a story that could leave an uncanny feeling, and this was not like that.

I'm not sure what the 'Mystery' is that's referred to in the series title, perhaps it's better in the next volume. Mae discovers that she has a gift (this would be a perfect point to start the mystery) but she uses her gift mostly to find lost cats and drunken ex-husbands. After that the story babbles on too long about nothing really, she gets a job, takes a course on personal training. Nothing interesting enough to fill a large part of a mystery with.

Of course, the little community she lived in gave me the creeps. But mostly because I wouldn't be able to stand to live so far away from everything I need and be dependent. It probably won't come as a surprise that the small community isn't really happy about Mae's developing powers.

Near the end a new plot line starts, but at that point it was too late for me to really care. It adds some mystery, but I still got the feeling it was all solved too easy. From all the people on the university, Mae happens to know everyone involved!

I could completely understand why Mae wanted to move away from the town she lives in. What I didn't understand is why she moves from not using her powers unless there is a kitten in distress to using it for everything (including spying on people).

So, this book made me feel depressed but mostly bored. I would say this series is, after this book at least, better called 'Mae Martin Miseries'. Because a lot of misery there is. Perhaps it's better in the second book, but I'm not planning to read that one. I was glad I finished this one.

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## **Victoria Zigler says**



This was an excellent and well-written book, with a fantastic cast of characters. There was less mystery than one might expect to find in the first book of a series where the word "mystery" actually appears in the series name, which is why I hesitate to give it the full five stars. Still, it was an enjoyable read, and I look forward to continuing the series. Perhaps, as I continue the series, the mystery of the presence of the word "mystery" in the series name will be revealed?

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### **Samantha Henthorn says**

Really enjoyed this book, and have invested in getting to know the characters, I was glad to find out it is a six book series! Mae is the type of character that you can't help liking and rooting for, her story unfolds when she learns that she has 'the sight' which she presumed she 'inherited' from her paternal grandmother. This makes all kinds of changes for her, because her in-laws are sceptical, her neighbour starts gossiping and her husband initially makes fun of her, but there is real heartbreak to come. Never mind though, because Mae goes on a real mysterious journey and with her 'y'all' accent, I just can't help liking her. No murder, just mystery, Mae gets to the bottom of a mystery about Charlie and all his female interests! I don't read series books one-after-the -other but I will be putting the next in series on my to be read list.

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### **Henry Martin says**

The Calling by Amber Foxx is not my usual reading material, however, my mind was long overdue for a 'lighter' read. The last time I read something in the paranormal genre was . . . hmm . . . ages ago. Nonetheless, intrigued by the positive reviews, I gave it a try. And I'm glad I did.

Right off the start, we are introduced to Mae. The neat little backstory is well developed later on, and any questions left unanswered in the beginning are answered. Mae has a gift she inherited from her grandmother, an Appalachian healer - she is a seer. And kudos to the author for making the distinction between a seer and a psychic (which is also explored and correctly evaluated later in the novel), a mistake too often made by others. Yet, Mae is stifled by her religious mother and promises not to use her gift.

Fast forward to present day, and Mae is all grown up, has some emotional baggage, and uses the gift again. But it is no longer the same Mae. This Mae has some real-world problems and some real-world dilemmas. Living where she lives, being surrounded by the people she is surrounded by, Mae is rightfully apprehensive to use her gift. Nonetheless, Mae cannot escape her calling, and her world slowly begins to spiral out of control.

I shall pause here to address something written by an another reviewer who mentions that The Calling is a "paranormal literary novel."

I disagree. While this is not your typical paranormal tale full of utter nonsense, it is still a work of genre. Unlike literary fiction, The Calling is very much a plot-driven work, and while the author did a great job with character development, it falls short of what I would consider literary narrative. I would say, however, that the narrative in this book is better than most genre works. And that's why it appealed to me.

So, without giving any of the plot away, I will dive into the negatives/positives.

Positives first:

The character development is rather good, both for our primary protagonist - Mae, and for all antagonists and side players.

The setting and scenery is well described, with neither too much details nor any perceived gaps. Having visited that part of the country, I found it believable.

The paranormal aspect of the story - Mae's gift and her family history is also believable and not far-fetched. The author must have done a good amount of research into the paranormal aspects featured in this book, and portrayed them accurately. Whether it was the gift itself, or the Native American healers and their traditions, or the Eastern approaches described later on, none of it came across as unbelievable. Again, kudos for that. The introduction of real-world problems into the paranormal story was a refreshing and welcomed addition. Mae comes across as a real person, and not as a bimbo who one day wakes up to save the world from an impending doom. Good job.

Negatives:

Mystery - where is the mystery? If it was supposed to be her father, then it should have been more explored. If it was meant to be professor Tann, then I would need some closure.

Closure - I needed more of a closure, but that's a matter of opinion. I wished there was a closure with Bernadette, especially. And Charlie's involvement had a great potential for a buildup, but it never came. Instead, it ended with the promise of a better future. Being the first book in a series, I can only assume that some of this will come back later.

I would have liked to see more internal struggle in Mae. I mean, after what happened and the big shift in her personal life, I would have liked to see her vulnerability explored, her inner turmoil, et cetera. But, that would have made it a literary novel, and would have rendered the plot irrelevant.

Overall, *The Calling* was an enjoyable read, and definitely a well-written one. While not my usual genre to read, I embraced the characters and even cared for them. The story itself is quite plausible, and the writing held my attention.

I have received *The Calling* by Amber Foxx directly from the author, as part of the screening process for the now defunct *The Source*. The author did not request this review, did not offer me any compensation, and had no influence on my writing this review.

3.5\*

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## **Dina Roberts says**

If I had to label this book I'd probably call it a paranormal literary novel.

It would be like *True Blood*...with Sookie being psychic, but without all the vampires and other dangers. It would be Sookie living her life, struggling with people judging her and trying to fit into the world.

The book is about a woman named Mae who has psychic abilities. She can touch an object connected to someone and see their present and/or past. People in her town have a variety of reactions. Some are skeptical. Some see her as being evil. Then there are those who believe and want her to pursue her gift, but some want her to use her powers in a fraudulent way. Instead of wanting her to be the real psychic she is, they want her

to do what fake psychics do.

Mae struggles to find her place in a world filled with prejudice and expectations.

Then there's a man who is using magic for darker purposes and she tries to help those who are in his clutches.

There's some good family drama...mother/daughter, husband/wife, daughter/father.

I thought the novel was well-written and very interesting. I enjoyed spending time with the characters. The only negative I can think of is that it was a little long...but not excessively so.

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### **Merry Chapman says**

The first book in the Mae Martin series obviously sets the stage for future books. We see Mae and her self-centered dysfunctional mother move to a tiny slow southern town where almost everyone is somehow related to one of two families. She is divorced from an alcoholic with no ambition and married to a sweet auto mechanic with twin daughters he has custody of. His parents are hippy style organic farmers. Mae has a psychic gift of sight. Her mother knows this and thinks it is VERY sinful and convinces Mae to keep it a secret. She can see into the past and present, just not the future. With the girls in school during the day, her husband at the shop and her in-laws working their farm, she becomes restless and wants to do something with herself since she was unable to go to college like she had hoped. She is given the opportunity to go to school and get a certification to become a personal trainer. Here is where she gets a ride with a sort of friend of her mother's, Patti, who takes her under her wing, and then while waiting for this friend who knows she has the "sight" she is called into Patti's class where 2 professors deal with these types of subjects and are trying to convince supernatural powers exist to the class. The professors, one a male, Charlie and the other a female, Bernadette who befriends, Mae challenge Mae to an experiment where she convinces the class she is psychic. Then with some things happening around the town, where Mae couldn't help but use her sight and her husband, Hubert not believing Mae has any sight, that it is too witchy to believe, he grows angry with her and things start to happen in her personal life as she becomes more familiar with her gift. Also, her father who her mother whisked her away from and would never talk about him other than to say he is evil comes back into her life. So much for Mae to take on...but as the book moves ahead, she becomes her own woman. This book is not usually the genre I read, but I am so intrigued to see what could happen with Mae and her new self, I must keep reading this series.

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### **D.J. Adamson says**

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This is the first book read in Amber Foxx's series: Mae Martin Mystery Series. With that said, the elements of mystery were faint if not lacking. However, and don't miss my however, The Calling is a wonderful literary novel of a woman's journey to come to terms with her inherited history. I commend Ms. Foxx for writing this novel. Her subject of a woman being a sensitive, intuitive or having "the calling" is written in

honest terms. Mae Martin, the protagonist, worries for her family's acceptance and society's approval, and triumphs in her acknowledgement that she herself is different. I enjoyed Amber Foxx's honesty in showing how Mae Martin struggled with this belief in herself. I appreciated showing how people who the protagonist opened up to manipulated and used her sensitivities in a way she herself morally struggled to avoid. There are books for pure enjoyment and there are books to be enjoyed and read for learning about ourselves, others, or to continue to evaluate the human experience. Amber Foxx's ability to write is fully disclosed in this novel. Her ability to understand human nature is also fully revealed. I am excited to read more of her work. I am looking forward to buying and reading her other novel Shaman's Blues.

This review and questions answered by Amber Foxx can be read on my blog: [lecouerdeartiste.com](http://lecouerdeartiste.com)

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