



# Catcher's Keeper

*J.D. Spero*

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**What if Holden Caulfield were around when John Lennon was shot?** In 1980 John Lennon was killed by Mark David Chapman, who believed he was Holden Caulfield, narrator of the classic "The Catcher in the Rye." After the shooting, Chapman remained on the scene calmly reading the book, which he later offered to police as his statement. "Catcher's Keeper" asks the question, "What if Holden could have met Chapman, learned of his plan, and tried to prevent the assassination?"

## Catcher's Keeper Details

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# **From Reader Review *Catcher's Keeper* for online ebook**

## **Sue Ross says**

I found the concept of this book intriguing. For the first couple of chapters, I found it difficult to engage with any of the characters and I thought that it might not be a book that I would enjoy. After a slowish start and more background being revealed, I began to want to get to the next page and find out how the story developed. I started to care about what happened to each of the characters. For the first time that I can remember, I found that I cared about each main character equally. I can only surmise that this is due to the author's skill in using the narrative to reflect each of Jerry, Fiona and Alden's perspectives. It felt real and not forced. It gave me a much fuller picture. It is a clever tactic and the author pulled it off very successfully. I had to keep reading to see how it was all going to turn out. That means 4 stars from me.

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## **Samantha Thompson says**

### **Magnificent!!**

A pure page turner! I could barely put it down. This book brought all the emotional elements of life, love, and loss. It was mysterious and spellbinding. Alden's life was pure to the core and I felt like I knew him myself. Bravo Johanna for another masterpiece in writing.

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## **The Author Visits says**

The debut novel, *Catcher's Keeper*, by the uber-talented JD Spero, has created quite a stir. Recipient of the 2013 Amazon Breakthrough Quarter Finalist and 2014 National Indie Excellence Finalist Award is no small feat for an up-and-coming writer. But there is a reason *Catcher's Keeper* has garnered such accolades. It is a magnificently written book with a premise that is captivating and genuinely creative.

What if Holden Caulfield was around when John Lennon was shot? What if Holden could have met Chapman, learned of his plan, and tried to prevent the assassination? *Catcher's Keeper* answers that question, taking a chapter from history and re-inventing it.

Written from the points of view of Alden, his brother Jerry and their sister Fiona, their story is a study in family dysfunction, of betrayal between siblings and ultimately, finding resolution and fixing what was broken between them. It is through this conflict the groundwork for the culmination of the story is laid.

A secondary antagonist, Mark David (MD) counters the internal-conflict of familial dissension between the three with his lunacy, creating an outer conflict best answered when the siblings merge their intentions to stop MD and serves as a means to resolving the turbulence between them.

JD is a gifted writer. She uses language ripe for the time and paints images that brought me back to my own childhood. My preferred genre is paranormal and urban fantasy. However, I picked this book up for a myriad of reasons, most importantly because of premise. This novel is all literary and wickedly brilliant.

JD's ingenious weaving of character points of view was nimble, giving a three dimensional look into the experiences that broke then bridged Alden, Jerry and Fiona's relationship together.

The author's voice is fresh – unique in its deliberateness and profound in its choice use of words specifically is describing Alden's perspective of the world, molded by the loss of Allie, the years in solitary, his betrayal by Jerry and the unconditional love of his sister Fiona.

It took me less than two days to finish the book, eager to see how JD would change history. The end to *Catcher's Keeper* was both endearing and heart breaking, an apt conclusion to a book that took me by surprise and held my attention until the very last word.

My rating – a must read. Throw caution to the wind and give in to the hype - it is so worth the read.

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## **Joe says**

This was a really interesting idea - what would Holden Caulfield do if he knew that Mark David Chapman was using his story as his inspiration to kill John Lennon? Unfortunately, it's not a very good book and the plot is cliched and predictable.

There are spoilers coming next, so if you're going to read the book stop here. If you want to read this instead of the book, I think you'd be better off.

Spero imagines the characters in *Catcher in the Rye* as real people. Older brother D.B. is now Jerry, a struggling screenwriter in Hollywood who is recently divorced and sort of black balled. Holden is Alden, twenty five years removed from the psychological therapy hinted at in the end of *Catcher*. Phoebe is now Fiona, still the mature one, living in Massachusetts and trying to have a baby with her husband.

Alden shows up to live with Jerry in California and try to sell his book about their other brother, Allie, who died at the age of eleven. Instead, Jerry finds Alden's journal, the text of *Catcher in the Rye*. And if you have been paying attention at all to the book at this point you know that through convoluted circumstances Jerry will end up publishing it as his own work. Family drama ensues.

Fiona, an out of work PR person, is hired by Jerry to run his book tour through Boston and New York. At this point the book really goes off the rails. The characters are no longer true to their selves and everything gets sloppy - both the writing and the plot. They meet Mark David Chapman, he's crazy, a plot is hatched to kill John Lennon, blah, blah, blah.

In the hands of a better author, this might have been interesting. Spero sort of stops all pretension of keeping everyone in character once the book tour starts and this reader began to lose interest soon afterwards.

If you read until the end, you will see the ending coming. Actually, you will see it coming well before the end. The end feels like it was written by a young, green, screenwriter going for dramatic and coming up with maudlin.

In my copy of the book, there are discussion questions at the end. The author prints a pretty negative review from *Publisher's Weekly* and uses it to generate a couple of these questions. I admire Spero for her honesty, I just wish I had seen that review before reading the book

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### **Roxanne Kade says**

This was a fascinating read from start to finish. A "what if" story that blended fact and fiction in a compelling manner that held me captive the entire time. Although the climax of this story related to the connection between J.D. Sallinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and John Lennon's murderer, Mark David Chapman, Spero brought to life the characters of Alden, Jerry and Fiona, with plenty of family drama and a few subplots in the build up to that one devastating moment in New York.

Each character was well defined, adding their own voice to the story. I really felt like I was in the head of each character with every shift in POV. This allowed me to feel and better understand their actions and reactions to different events throughout the book. Even though what Jerry did was underhanded, I felt that he still had good intentions. Somehow he thought everything would work out well for everyone concerned, but of course bruised egos and embarrassment stepped in from time to time.

I could feel the excitement build as the book tour began and when MD was introduced into the story and all the puzzle pieces started to fall into place, I was intrigued to see how Spero would shape this story. Would things end true to real life, or would she throw a twist in and change things up a bit? The final result stirred a mix of emotions within me. Throughout the book the tension between Jerry and Alden ebbed and flowed, and just when there was a bit of hope that everything would be okay between them, the unexpected happened and I think my heart broke a little. For both Jerry and Alden.

A fantastic read!

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### **Diane says**

I received this book from GoodReads and at first I just wasn't sure knowing the basic story line and wasn't too sure I would enjoy it. Boy was I wrong !!!! I really found this book to be a good book and totally original. I become attached to the family that are the main characters of this book and kept wondering how it was going to all tie together. This certainly is one talented author and I highly recommend this book

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### **Kristen says**

This was a book club pick and we were having the author attend our meeting so I felt that I had to read this book and had to understand it. I had read *Catcher in the Rye* years ago but did not remember it at all so I decided to start there and am so glad I did. I remember liking *Catcher* when I read it before but this time I found it tiresome and could not wait for it to end. However, it really improved my comprehension of *Catchers Keeper*, which I ended up enjoying. The author did a great job telling the story of these quirky and sometimes unlikable characters 20 years after *Catcher in the Rye*. Bottom line if you are going to read *Catchers Keeper* read *Catcher in the Rye* first.

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## **Sojourner says**

Catcher's Keeper by J.D. Spero was one of the quarter-finalists among the thousands of entries in the 2013 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award (ABNA) contest organized annually by Amazon.com in association with Penguin Group, Hewlett Packard, CreateSpace and BookSurge. It is a spin-off of the highly edgy J.D. Salinger's classic, *The Catcher in the Rye*, which was first published in 1951. *The Catcher in the Rye* follows the cynical adolescent attitude of sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield shortly after he has been ejected from school. It was included among the list of banned books.

In *Catcher's Keeper*, J.D. Spero crafted an incredible story with a hypothetical question: What if Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of *The Catcher in the Rye*, is around when John Lennon was shot? John Lennon was shot on December 8, 1980 outside The Dakota apartment building in New York City by Mark David Chapman, who believed he was Holden Caulfield. While waiting for John Lennon to appear, Chapman read *The Catcher in the Rye*. He also offered the book as "his statement." Interestingly enough, Chapman wrote several letters to a NYPD cop Stephen Spiro and asked him to read the book, hinting that the novel could explain what sparked the Dec. 8, 1980 murder.

J.D. Spero's *Catcher's Keeper* is tantalizingly irresistible with plot twists and turns that defies characterization. In the story, Alden goes to New York to recover the journal stolen by his brother which he published as his own. Unfortunately, one delusional reader misconstrues the meaning of the book and prepares to kill John Lennon. Alden and his brother must do everything within their power to foil the killing.

The story is enjoyable, and J.D. Spero's creativity is astounding. The book raises questions seldom found in a novel. All in all, this book which is inspired by a true story makes for a great.

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## **Arkgirl says**

This is a book about family, ethics and loyalties plus you have the add on at the end which has the link to Lennon's murder - I actually think that latter element felt slightly unnecessary for me as I found the focus on the siblings more interesting. What happens when you are faced with a moral dilemma that will impact your family? This book makes you think about 'what ifs' and then there is the element of celebrity and obsession that rounds off the book - it certainly made me think and I enjoyed the characters ... particularly Alden with his vulnerability and challenges.

You don't need to have read *Catcher in the Rye* to enjoy this but it might add an extra dimension.

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## **Silvergift says**

Pleasantly surprised at how quickly I got through this book. Every chapter is told from the point of view of one of the three siblings, all of whom have a bit of family healing to do. The last fifty pages or so are where the connection to Chapman and Lennon comes from, with the result that Lennon survives unharmed, Chapman is still arrested, and the siblings have a new wound to nurse.

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## **Justine Lombardo says**

Very well written. I was confused as to how the story was going to come together, but it came together seamlessly. The last few chapters are nail-biting page-turners which I really enjoyed. I guess I would have liked less character development, more action. Now I need to read *Catcher in the Rye* again!

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## **Diana Febry says**

An exceptional and original book. A masterful tapestry of fact and fiction, wonderfully flawed realistic characters and a fresh crisp writing style. One of my best reads of 2014.

I was intrigued by the book's blurb - "What if Holden Caulfield was around when Mark Chapman shot John Lennon and tried to prevent the shooting?" I was a teenager at the time and vividly remember the day John Lennon was killed and my husband and son are avid Beatles fans who make an annual visit to the Cavern Club. (After shooting John Lennon, Mark Chapman stood in the crowd, calmly reading *Catcher in the Rye*. When the police approached him, he held up the book as his reason and defence.)

The book wasn't what I expected but as the story unfolded it far exceeded my expectations. I don't want to give too much of the plot away, but it focuses on the publishing of a book destined to drastically influence the lives of the authors, their family, an obsessed fan and a celebrity. Real incidents are weaved into the fiction seamlessly, but it was the characterisations of Alden, Jerry and Fiona and the relationships between them, that makes this book so special. They each have distinct voices and agendas, make good and bad choices that stretch family loyalties and cross boundaries, hold grudges for years and perceive events differently, making this one of the most realistic and relatable portrayals of older siblings I've ever read. The style of writing is deceptively simple, making the book a pleasure to read. I was captivated from start to finish and highly recommend this fresh and original book to all.

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## **Reece says**

Imagine.....

I loved that this book took me back to my school years, and the original *Catcher*, which was one I had to study for GCE's (not sure I really appreciated it then though, although history has unfortunately brought it some degree of infamy).

The story was well told, exciting, and a mixture of both fact and fiction. Alden and his siblings each have their own sad tales, and when MD is introduced into the book, the tension of 'what is going to happen, knowing what we expect to happen' makes the book even more captivating.

This book was very easy to read, capturing the imagination, and keeping my heart pounding.

A great story, very well written, and one which will stay with me. If only.....

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## **Cal says**

Fascinating and thought provoking read that I enjoyed immensely. Very different to the kind of book I usually read, but the storyline sucked me in from the very first page.

Told from the alternating points of view of Alden, Jerry and Fiona, I felt this worked very well and allowed you to get inside the head of each character throughout the story.

A knowledge of 'Catcher in the Rye' is preferable (I read it many years ago, so my memory of it has dimmed a little over the years), but I do think it could also be read and understood without having previously read the original story.

'Catcher's Keeper' is a good, solid read that kept me interested right up until the final page had been turned. I was eager to find out if there would be a twist and history would be changed, or if events would still happen as they did in real life.

A fascinating and ultimately emotional read that I am glad to have been given the opportunity to read. Thank you to TBC and the author for my ARC of this book.

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## **Majanka says**

Book Review originally published here: <http://www.iheartreading.net/book-tou...>

Catcher's Keeper blends history and fiction, as it poses the question: what if Holden Caulfield, narrator of well-known classic The Catcher in the Rye, met Mark David Chapman, the man who shot John Lennon? For those of you who don't know (and that included me, until I did some research), Mark Chapman was found reading The Catcher in the Rye on the scene after the shooting. He identified himself with the main character of the book as well. In this spin-off story of sorts, Holden Caulfield, renamed Alden here, tries to prevent the assassination.

The book is told from the alternating POVs of Alden and his siblings, Jerry and Fiona. Together, they tell an intriguing story. The Catcher in the Rye was originally written as Alden's high school journal, and his older brother publishes it under a pen name. MD reads the journal, and it inspires him to plan the assassination of celebrities, starting with John Lennon. Alden and MD meet, and the first tries to stop the latter from executing his plans.

While the book had fluent writing, and the story was definitely intriguing, the plot dragged in the middle of the book. The pacing picked up again toward the end though. I liked it most when Alden was doing the talking, and I wouldn't have minded if the entire book had been from his POV. Alden is a difficult character to understand, but that's part of the mystery surrounding him, and which makes him so interesting.

If you read and enjoyed The Catcher in the Rye, then you can't deny yourself the pleasure of reading Catcher's Keeper.

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