

Bad Paths

Justin Behrens

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Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (4/08)

Justin Behrens' "Bad Paths," a story of the Dameron family and their hometown of Lost Haven, Iowa, is an extremely dark and quite disturbing novel.

Greg Dameron returns to his hometown after receiving news of his mother's death. He spent his childhood away from it, living with his mother and always on the go. Resentful of such a childhood, he severed all ties with her; and he never had any with the rest of his family anyhow. Lost Haven seems to be strangely wary of him when inhabitants figure out who he is, yet Greg can not explain where such a reaction is coming from.

After meeting his mother's twin sister Katelin and her husband Bill, he learns of how influential and rich his family is, yet that does not bring him any closer to understanding why people behaved so strangely after learning his name. Further stay with his relatives reveals that there are very dark secrets lurking in the family's past, as well as very dark creatures lurking in the woods around the house.

Although Greg is definitely the heir of his family's legacy – in every sense – he is not comfortable with the things he finds out. He is forced to make some scary decisions and to face a lot of demons – of every kind. Will he save himself or will he perish?

Fast-moving story, quaint characters and surprising storyline make "Bad Paths" an interesting read. The amount of violence and gore make it quite unappealing to me; yet that does not mean the book is not a good read – if you are somebody who enjoys reading horror. Novel ways of using a nail gun and cooking steak will stay seared in my memory for a very long time to come. If you are curious about that, by all means have a go at it.