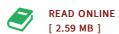




Grb 090417b and Its Host Galaxy: A Step Towards an Understanding of Optically-Dark Gamma-Ray Bursts (Paperback)

By Stephen T Holland

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at least 2130 s and a multi-peaked light curve at energies of 15-150 keV. It was optically dark and
has been convincingly associated with a bright star-forming galaxy at a redshift of 0.345 that is
broadly similar to the Milky Way. This is one of the few cases where a host galaxy has been clearly
identified for a dark gamma-ray burst and thus an ideal candidate for studying the origin of dark
bursts. We find that the dark nature of GRB 090417B can not be explained by high redshift,
incomplete observations, or unusual physics in the production of the afterglow. The Swift/XRT Xray data are consistent with the afterglow being obscured by a dense, localized sheet of dust
approximately 30-80 pc from the burst along the line of sight. Assuming the standard relativistic
fireball model for the afterglow we find that the optical flux is at least 2.5 mag fainter than
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