



## The River Burns

*Trevor Ferguson*

Download now

Read Online ➞

# The River Burns

*Trevor Ferguson*

## **The River Burns** Trevor Ferguson

The River Burns tells the story of a small town in crisis, the mistakes people make, and the courage it takes to heal a community after a horrific act of destruction.

Wakefield is a small town where a unique collection of longstanding citizens has lived mostly in harmony, accepting of each other's foibles. But underneath the picture perfect exterior a battle rages between those who wish to preserve the historic single-lane covered bridge across the river, and the loggers who want it replaced with a modern alternative. As the days pass with no change in the dispute, tensions begin to boil over, friends turn against one another, and the town seethes with potential violence.

Family man and second-generation logger Denny O'Farrell has been leading the charge to modernize the bridge. When the bureaucratic route fails to produce results, Denny and his friends need a new plan of action. But local police officer Ryan O'Farrell, Denny's brother, is very worried about exactly how much Denny and friends are willing to risk in order to win the war. Swept up into the dispute, lawyer Raine Tara-Anne Coghill, a newcomer hiding from her big-city past, hasn't bargained on getting caught up in a summer of violence.

## **The River Burns Details**

Date : Published April 22nd 2014 by Simon & Schuster Canada

ISBN : 9781476751849

Author : Trevor Ferguson

Format : Hardcover 480 pages

Genre : Drama, Fiction

 [Download The River Burns ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The River Burns ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The River Burns Trevor Ferguson**

---

# From Reader Review The River Burns for online ebook

## TrudyAn says

This novel is inspired by a true Canadian event, that being the loss by arson of the covered bridge at Wakefield, Quebec. Here, the reader is immersed in a fictionalized account of the town's inhabitants and the fallout from this event. This is a story of a divided town's overcoming adversity and conflict, of loss and rebuilding, and of community strength.

The story is rife with conflict. There is heated conflict between environmentalists, the logging industry and the town's tourist industry, internal conflict within many of the characters, and conflict between family and duty. Ferguson brings the town's discord to life, and the reader is presented with many shades of grey on the issues, though of course some of the characters see only black and white.

There are many likeable characters in the book, but I also had a lot of empathy for the unlikeable ones, especially poor Jake. Some of the characters, most notably Tara and Skootch, I found entirely unbelievable and their way-over-the-top personalities distracted from the otherwise believable narrative. I also found Denny unbelievably short-sighted, although I suppose he had to be, in order to move the story along.

Although the book is more than 450 pages in length, the narrative flows freely, and as the events began to unfold in the latter part of the book, I wasn't able to put it down. I did find the ending a bit too tidy, as I like a book with a few loose ends.

I have never lived in small town North America, but the community of Wakefield is what I imagine it would really be like. All told, I enjoyed this book by a Canadian author previously unknown to me, and I plan to search out his other books.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher as a Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

---

## Evelyn says

I received this book through a goodreads giveaway, and am so glad I did! What first really drew me into this book was the writing, it was so lyrical. My favourite line was near the beginning where Denny is "having a moment", he described driving his truck "like gliding on a breath of summer" I loved that, partly because it has been such a long winter and the day I read that was one of the first nice summery days we have had, and partly because I had been completely drawn into the whole descriptive scene. As the story progressed and the crime had been committed, I really couldn't see a happy ending. I am having a hard time accepting the resolution. In a case like this where the criminal is a "good guy", a part of me does hope he get's away with it - but how wrong is that?! I am distressed by the coercion the police used to get an innocent man to confess, however, as was pointed out to him, the penalty for the crime he didn't commit was much less than the penalties for the crimes he did commit. I don't think this was simply a case of a small town sacrificing an outsider in order to save one of their own, it didn't seem like Denny had that much support from the town. I felt very sorry for Jake, he really was in the wrong place at the wrong time, however, the decisions he made make him less of a victim than it looks. Overall, this book is not at all predictable, I loved the writing style, and I will definitely be seeking out more books by Trevor Ferguson.

---

## Sarah says

**\*\*I was gifted this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*\***

The first thing I need to say is that I enjoyed this book way more than I initially thought I would. I was gifted this book from the publisher (Simon & Schuster) in exchange for an honest review, but when I read the back-cover blurb nothing captured my attention. I was told this was going to be a story set in the small village of Wakefield, Quebec that would explore the tension between a group of truck driving loggers and environmentalists as they face-off over what to do about the town's historic single-lane covered bridge. The loggers want a new bridge that will give them better access to the highway, while the environmentalists worry about the impact this will have on the local habitat. When the loggers' petition to the provincial government fails, a small group of them decide to take matters into their own hands.

YAWN, right? I thought so. If I had picked up this book and read the blurb in a book store, I would have put it back down. It just didn't seem like it would be my cup of tea. Plus, given it weighs in at a hefty 465 pages, I thought it was going to be one boring slog. So, I put off reading it. I would pick it up, read a page or two, and then put it back down. I read several other books while trying to find the energy to start this one. Just thinking about reading it made me tired. Eventually, I started to feel bad, since this was a free ARC and I felt some amount of obligation to give the book a fair shot in order to write this review....(read more)

---

## Lynda says

Wakefield was a small town populated with the usual collection of citizens that made small town living unique and memorable. Lines were drawn between its people concerning a wooden covered bridge and emotions ran high over its efficiency and value to the town. Actions by both sides escalated until the unthinkable occurred and cooled minded people came up with a secret plan to correct the wrong tearing the town apart.

Trevor Ferguson's first sentence caught me off guard for its length and forced me to re-read it. As I continued to read...yes the first sentence was definitely a moment. "The River Burns" brought out the unique characters living in a small town and their development throughout the book believable, interesting, and well done. The beautiful descriptive details made visualization easy and I felt like a part of the ongoing canvas of small town life. The pace of the story was leisurely as if floating down a lazy river – very pleasing and relaxing.

Many enjoyable features in the book included the baseball rivalry, rumours, humorous moments, unique characters, and the charming way it's written. The ending left me with a warm sensation knowing "The River Burns" ended harmoniously perfect solidifying the community with a sense of belonging, pride, and love for old time traditions. Readers from a small town, as I am, will notice similarities to what goes on in their town - caring people, gossip, and a closeness.

This review was based on the free uncorrected proofs I won from Goodreads First Reads. Naturally, as uncorrected proofs my edition had spelling errors and the cover was different.

---

## **Kit says**

I received a free copy of this book through Good Reads in exchange for an honest review.

I was unfamiliar with the author but intrigued by the setting - a small village in the Gatineau in Quebec. (I am always pleased with a Canadian authors set a story in Canada rather than disguising a town or village in the US.) The issue of how we treat our history and the impact on communities is interesting. In this case, building on the actual fact that arson was the cause of the burning of an old wooden covered bridge was the inspiration for how it might have happened and how the community responds.

I found it slow to start but I may not have been giving it the attention it deserved but as I got into it, I enjoyed the read. There were interesting characters in the town - both tree huggers and loggers, but at odds with each other. Some very serious ethical issues arise in finding the arson culprits but it feels like overall justice is served. The community comes together but this type of behaviour could so easily go wrong.

I enjoyed it well enough that I will look for other books by this author.

---

## **Lorraine says**

Set in Wakefield, Quebec, there is conflict between loggers and the tree-huggers (anyone who isn't a logger). The old covered bridge is becoming unstable and the loggers driving their heavy trucks across it have to move in single file, one at a time, and often have to wait for the traffic coming in the other direction. They want a new, heavy duty bridge. The townspeople, who make a living from the tourists who come to see the bridge, want the bridge to stay. A group of loggers gets together and sets the bridge on fire to force the town's hand.

This was a Goodreads giveaway.

---

## **Thebruce1314 says**

\*Received copy in Goodreads giveaway\*

While not the kind of book that I am normally drawn to, I was interested in this because it was described as a story set in small-town Canada; a story that small-town populations will see some truth in. Now, having come from a small town, I have to say that there is nothing here that I can relate to, other than the fact, perhaps, that everyone seems to be in everyone else's business.

I enjoyed the characters, for the most part. I felt like I got to know the main players fairly well, but others remained disappointingly two-dimensional ("Skootch" and Jake, to name two). Character development in the first hundred pages or so kept my interest, but then I admit that I got a little bit bored. There are no surprises in the storyline (at least, not until the very end), and nothing that kept me wanting to turn pages. After the main event, about halfway through the book, I felt like the story was dragging and it took me longer than

usual to get through.

I liked Ferguson's writing style: a nice mix of simple statements and poetic descriptions. Given the above caveats, I did enjoy the book overall, and will miss some of the characters that I got to know.

---

## **Denise MacDonald says**

**\*I won a copy of this book on Goodreads First Reads and I was provided a copy in exchange for an honest review.\***

I was surprised by how much I enjoyed this book. The author writes in a very descriptive, poetic manner. The town and the people he creates and describes could be any small town in Canada. In this book the issue at hand was between the loggers and the environmentalists, historians and tourism industry. But the loggers could be replaced by coal miners, steel workers, fishermen, oil workers- issues that just about anyone in Canada can relate to. Added into all this was the complications of family relationships, love, friendships and small town politics.

I really enjoyed how the author wove baseball into the story. Baseball is a popular game for hardworking, small town folks. It is their recreation, socialization time after a hard days works. The author captured that sentiment perfectly.

The book is quite long and I found it started to drag a bit as I neared the end. There were also a few issues that I thought were not wrapped up or explained. Also, I realize this was an ARC copy but, the binding on my book let go almost immediately. I hope the finished product has a stronger binding.

Overall, this was a great read that I thoroughly enjoyed.

---

## **Sandra says**

This book start off with about five pages describing Denny's morning ritual, from shower to getting in his truck to go to work. I thought to myself, "Oh boy, one of those authors." Then I came to this passage, "Holy sh--! Do you believe this? I'm having a whatchamacallit here, a moment." The person having a moment is Denny, who is one of the main characters of this book. The thing about this that grabbed my attention was that this was a man who at this moment was perfectly content with his life. We all have little moments like these, where everything seems perfect. The author then goes on to create a whole slew of other, memorable characters while describing the setting with words that make you feel like you are right there. The story is, basically, about a bridge. A bridge that some people want to see gone, and others fight to keep. This author paints a picture of small town life that is so real, the people in the book are people you know. Reading about Denny, Ryan, Tara, Mrs. McCracken and others you think, "Oh yeah, I know someone just like that."

The conflict in this book is written with a lot of words unsaid, but this speaks louder than if the author had actually written them. Somehow the whole thing just works. I love the way this author writes! I loved the characters and the story, the book grabbed me and I kept turning pages just to see what was next. In my opinion, these are signs of a great novel.

\*I won this book on Goodreads Firstreads.

---

## Mohawkgri says

I enjoyed this book very much as the characters are very well rounded and are connected to one another, in this small town that deals with the ensuing and subsequent aftermath of an incident that seemingly involves the entire town. The characters are what makes the novel interesting and kept me going back for more.

Although I found it a bit long near the end, I must say that there is a satisfying resolution in the end.

I received an advanced copy (AUP) but the binding was not very sturdy. I will look forward to discovering this author's other novels.

---

## Lianne says

I received an ARC copy of this novel in exchange for an honest review. This review in its entirety was originally posted at **caffeinatedlife.net**: <http://www.caffeinatedlife.net/blog/2...>

*The River Burns* is an interesting novel that utilises its setting to amplify the tension between various parties concerning an old bridge. Both sides make valid points for their respective arguments, and their determination to win the debate drives them to do things that, in any other situation, no one would even think of. And the repercussions of their actions, their anger, really brings out a lot of the ugly in people. The novel ties in themes of the environment, of community and of people's livelihoods quite nicely as the drama unfolds.

The characters were interesting enough, more so because almost all of them (save two characters) were well-acquainted with each other, either by blood or through the community. Everyone's lives are affected by the debate of the old bridge, as well as their relationships. Ryan in particular was put in a rather awkward position, with the attention going back and forth between what he's going to do and the belief of Denny's role in the events that unfolded. Tara was interesting enough but she didn't quite resonate with me, her backstory seemed a little too far-fetched but I can understand her desire to start anew somewhere else.

*The River Burns* was a fascinating read. The author does a wonderful job in presenting a sense of place and in bringing these characters together in conflict. The town hall sequence was probably my favourite in the whole novel because it really got down to the root of their conflict and it also portrayed the characters quite wonderfully. It's a fairly subtle novel given its location but the drama and the conflict was interesting to read, I couldn't quite stop once things started picking up and falling together.

---

## Rod Raglin says

There's this covered bridge across a river. The bridge is very old, it's what you'd call heritage, it needs to be preserved.

Then there are the truck-loggers. They take felled trees and truck them to the mills. That's what they do for a living. The more trips they make, the more money they make and those big rigs are not only expensive but also cost a small fortune to run and maintain.

The problem is the bridge can only accommodate one-way traffic at a time. So one logging truck waits while one RV with a family of tourists approaches. Then it's the logging truck's turn while a school bus waits on the other side and so on.

Pretty frustrating for everyone, right? Especially the loggers who are watching money go down stream while they wait for their turn to cross. By the way, there is another crossing 20 or so kilometres away they could use but it would add to their costs. Could they not add that additional expense to the price of hauling a load? How did the author miss this seemingly obvious solution?

Anyhow, the loggers want the old bridge torn down and a new one constructed, the townsfolk (we're talking tourist money) want it maintained.

As soon as this conflict was identified I asked the obvious question. Not the first obvious one about trucking rates, the other obvious one - why not build a second new bridge near the old one and make everybody happy? I mean, if a covered wooden bridge can span the river we're not talking about the St Lawrence.

Funny, neither of these no-brainers are considered in Trevor Ferguson's novel *The River Burns*. When an author attempts to build a novel on such a flimsy conflict, I'm suspicious.

I couldn't imagine the characters putting it all on the line for an issue that could easily be resolved, at least in my mind. If that wasn't enough, the clichéd characters spouting didactic passages about environmental issues finished me off.

I got about a third of the way when I abandoned it.

*The River Burns* – me.

---

### **Benoit Lelièvre says**

Take an author I've never heard of, characters I don't know, a setting I don't already like and try and make me love this book. It's going to be hard. Men are creatures of habit and I'm no different than the rest of them. But that Trevor Ferguson guy, he's different. He's John Updike meets Dennis Lehane with a northern country charm.

You read Ferguson for his prose first. Then you read him for his characters and the subtle alchemy between them. *THE RIVERS BURNS* was a little too much sometimes, but it was a sweet, uplifting story about people and the decisions they face at the crossroads. It's a long, winding road and reading this novel was one of the best on-the-fly decisions I've taken so far, this year.

---

### **Wendy says**

"*The River Burns*" which I won from Goodreads Giveaways is a contemporary blend of violence, romance, forgiveness and restoration. It's a story of political upheaval that strips a town of its humanity in a time of severe testing, only to be healed and renewed into a stronger unified community. It begins with a dispute that



has touched the lives of loggers and conservationists for years. An old bridge that's a tourist attraction, and the legacy of the town of Wakefield has caused discord between factions; those that want it preserved and the loggers who want it replaced with a more practical alternative. As the debate escalates tempers simmer and violence threatens to erupt.

In a powder keg of emotion that divides the town Denny O'Farrell leads the charge to modernize the bridge but is stymied at every turn by the conservationists and economic community. With his friends he devises a reckless action plan that could cost them more than they ever imagined. With the help of his brother Officer Ryan O'Farrell and Raine Tara-Anne Cogshill a newcomer to Wakefield Denny must decide if the grave consequences of their actions can be undone or if a war between the loggers and conservationists is inevitable.

The plot is well-written and engrossing, proceeding at a steady pace as events unfold and tension mounts. With a stroke of the pen Trevor Ferguson brings the controversy between conservationists and the logging industry to life, shaping an unpredictable and volatile situation. With artful description he personifies the bridge, giving life to its beauty and heritage and making its destruction an act of barbarism and its resurrection an act of redemption. Even the inclusion of baseball in the story is an artful device juxtaposing the competitiveness of the loggers and tree huggers on the playing field with the contentiousness of the political issue the factions battle.

The core characters are well-developed with all their flaws, faults and secrets. Denny O'Farrell, impetuous and intense in his beliefs and love of family is starkly contrasted with Officer Ryan O'Farrell who's generous of spirit, clever and level-headed. Their father Alexander Gareth O'Farrell a legend on the river is a strong and stoic personality while Willie Howard is fastidious, malleable and mean spirited. But, of all the colourful characters that bring power and drama to the plot I loved Mrs. Alice McCracken the strong-willed, acerbic former teacher and Raine Tara-Anne Cogshill, the feisty, clever, complicated lawyer. And the reader can't help but feel compassion for Jake Withers, the young, weak-willed salesman who wants to achieve so much and because of his choices, fails.

I rated this book five stars and highly recommend it. "The River Burns" is a page turner from beginning to the end.

---

## **Gillian Raymond says**

I received a copy of this book from the publisher as a Goodreads First Reads giveaway. This review is based on my own, honest opinion of the book.

This review first appeared in its entirety on Your Library Card

The crisis referred to in the book description is the burning of the town's historic covered bridge. As one of the main features drawing tourists to Wakefield, Québec, the future of the covered bridge is a polarizing topic. It pits the loggers who want a new four lane bridge to speed up their work and increase their earnings against the local tree-huggers and the townspeople wanting to preserve the history and nostalgia the bridge offers.

The main characters in the book fall on either side of the debate with one O'Farrell brother leading the

charge for the loggers and the other O'Farrell brother as a police officer responsible for upholding the side of law and order. Thrown into the mix is the beautiful newcomer to town Tara, who immediately captures the attention of Ryan O'Farrell the police officer. Secondary characters include the O'Farrells father Alex and the old retired schoolteacher Mrs. McCracken.

Having read all of Louise Penny's Armand Gamache series of mysteries set in Québec I have a particular fondness for stories set in that province. Trevor Ferguson does a really good job of setting the scene and if you have ever spent any time in a small town you really feel as though you know this one intimately. By starting the story from the perspective of Denny O'Farrell, the logger, the reader is enticed to his side of the argument by his obvious affection for his family and work ethic into having at least some measure of sympathy for the cause of the loggers. It is only through the introduction to Mrs. McCracken that the reader becomes more integrated into the townspeople's side of the argument.

Ferguson's writing style keeps the reader on the fence as to which side they are "supposed" to have sympathy for and this kept me engaged in the storyline even after the bridge has burned and I knew who the culprit was. My only complaint about the characters is that Tara (the newcomer) was a bit over the top in her escape from her "big city" life. There just wasn't enough realistic justification to explain her move to Wakefield for me. My favourite characters were Alex O'Farrell and Mrs. McCracken. Their actions, speech and descriptors were appealing and I found myself reading their parts of the story with more interest than those of the main characters.

Overall I enjoyed reading this book. It was a bit slow to start but then once I got pulled into the characters I read it very quickly. It is a light enough to be considered a "summer read" with a bit of mystery and a bit of romance but there is also a satisfying theme of redemption and justice that wraps up the book and all the loose threads nicely.

I had not heard of Trevor Ferguson prior to reading *The River Burns* but I am always excited to discover new (to me) Canadian authors. I will be adding more of his books to my "to-read" list.

---