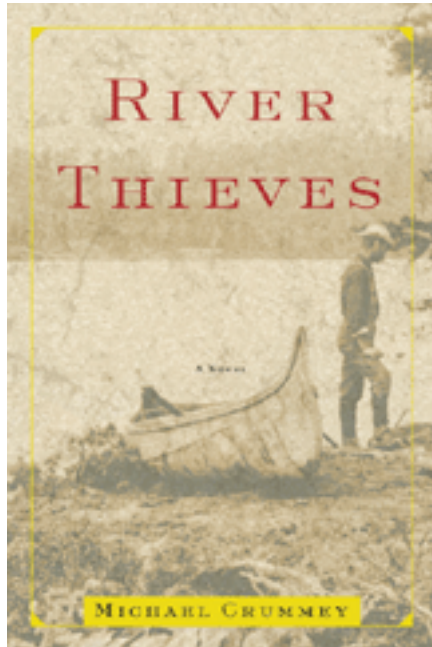


Press Release



River Thieves

by Michael Crummey

- [Introduction](#)
- [About the Author](#)
- [Praise for *River Thieves*](#)
- [Download book jacket](#)

Introduction

In the early nineteenth century, the island of Newfoundland was not really considered a proper colony by the English. Rather, it was a country that existed during the summer months, serving as a fishing station and training ground for naval recruits. While many of the merchants, soldiers, and fishermen returned to England before the autumn, a growing number remained year-round, opening up Newfoundland for expanded settlement. John Peyton, Sr., and his son, John, earn their living from the land, fishing for salmon in the summer and working their traplines in the winter. Sharing the Peytons' household is Cassie, a young woman who escaped the turbulence of her family in St. John's when John Sr. brought her to the wilds of the Bay of Exploits to be his son's tutor. Over the years, she has become a trusted friend to both men. Except for infrequent visits from distant neighbors, the three live in relative solitude, and they are confronted with emotions that grow deeper and more complex with each passing season.

Lieutenant David Buchan has come to Newfoundland with orders to establish contact with the Beothuk, or "Red Indians," the aboriginal inhabitants of the region, who are facing extinction as a result of disease and the loss of their land to the Europeans. Over the years, the conflicts between the Beothuk and the settlers have been numerous, and Buchan hopes that he can play a role in preventing the tragic fate facing the Beothuk. He turns to the Peytons to

help him carry out his task. However, John Sr. is well known for his hatred of the native population, and this vehement disdain has become a major point of contention between the old man and his son. When Buchan, with the help of the Peytons and some of their men, embarks upon an expedition to seek out the Beothuk, the lieutenant soon learns of the web of complicated allegiances and grievances holding the settlers together — a web that seems certain to doom his mission to failure.

Several years later, the Peytons organize another expedition into native country, this time to reclaim a large cargo of provisions that has been stolen. As they prepare to depart, young John Peyton is concerned that his father and the other men in the party have vengeance on their minds. When an encounter with a small band of Beothuk leads to a terrible killing and the abduction of a native woman, the loyalties of friends and family are put to the test. David Buchan is ordered to return to the Bay of Exploits to examine the circumstances surrounding the violent incident. His investigation sets in motion a series of events that will forever change the Peyton household and the small community.

A haunting novel of great scope, yet intimate in its exploration of the lives of its characters, *River Thieves* is nothing less than a triumph, and an extraordinary achievement for Michael Crummey.

About the Author

Michael Crummey is the author of three books of poetry — *Arguments with Gravity*, *Hard Light*, *Emergency Roadside Assistance* — and a collection of short stories, *Flesh and Blood*. He is a winner of the Bronwen Wallace Award and was nominated for the 1998 Journey Prize. In 2001, *River Thieves* was nominated for the prestigious Giller Prize.

Born in Buchans, Newfoundland, Michael Crummey grew up there and in Wabush, Labrador. He now lives in St. John's.

Praise for *River Thieves*

"*River Thieves* is a remarkable achievement — part adventure tale, part meditation on place and history, wholly engaging. The storytelling is rich and strange in detail and incident, and the language is by turns stark and lush.

"This is powerful writing." — Charles Frazier, author of *Cold Mountain*

"This is a splendid novel reflective of a particular place and time. Michael Crummey is a tremendously gifted writer." — Alistair MacLeod

"Michael Crummey's *River Thieves* is a novel of exquisite craftsmanship and masterful artistry that should gain the broad attention it so richly deserves: a novel of intricately balanced storytelling and intriguing location but one also where the keen eye of a poet resides within the language. The writing is simple and beautiful, fully textured and gracefully rendered. Crummey has the rare ability to breathe his characters right off the page and into the reader's mind, where they then lodge, living on well past the final page. *River Thieves* marks the emergence of a powerful, mature talent." — Jeffrey Lent, author of *In the Fall*

"In the tradition of such contemporary classics as *Cold Mountain* and *In the Fall*, this beautifully written novel is both a stunning adventure story and a profound saga of courage and idealism in an imperfect world." — Howard Frank Mosher, author of *The Fall of the Year*

"A stunningly polished and powerful book." — *Maclean's*

"A haunting novel . . . An engrossing and complex story that feels as authentic as a contemporary eyewitness account." — *Elle* (Canada)

"Full of poetic metaphor and memorable images. The language and phrases of the time are richly used, and through meticulous detail it manages to breathe life into past ways. Most of all, it succeeds in creating a vivid portrait of the Newfoundland of another era." — *Toronto Globe and Mail*

[Booksellers Home](#) | [Trade Home](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Trademark Information](#)

[Copyright © 2003 Houghton Mifflin Company](#), All Rights Reserved