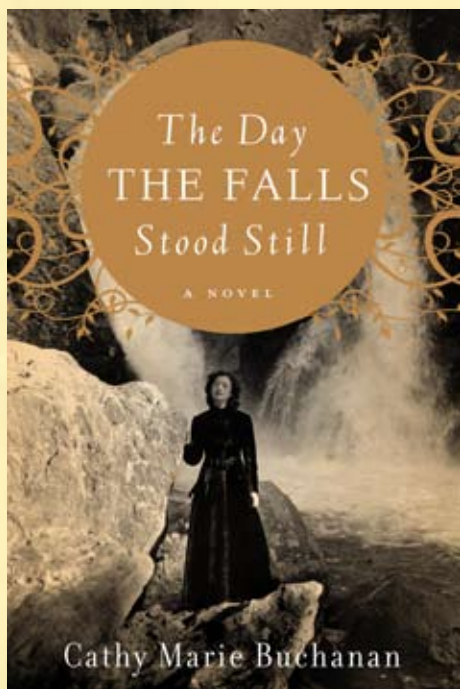




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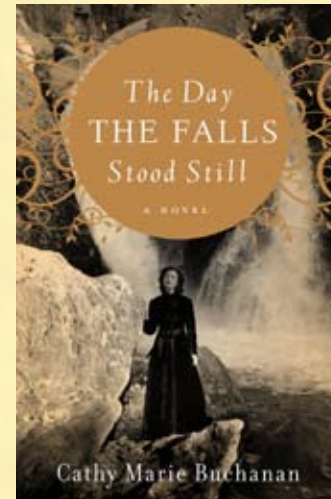
THE PHYSICK BOOK OF DELIVERANCE DANE
Katherine Howe

The Power of Nature. The Power of Love.

Tom Cole, the grandson of a legendary local hero, has inherited an uncanny knack for reading the Niagara River's whims and performing daring feats of rescue at the mighty falls. And like the tumultuous meeting of the cataract's waters with the rocks below, a chance encounter between Tom and 17-year-old Bess Heath has an explosive effect. When they first meet on a trolley platform,

Bess immediately recognizes the chemistry between them, and the feeling is mutual.

But the hopes of young love are constrained by the 1915 conventions of Niagara Falls, Ontario. Tom's working-class pedigree doesn't suit Bess's family, despite their recent fall from grace. Sacked from his position at a hydroelectric power company, Bess's father has taken to drink, forcing her mother to take in sewing for the society women who were once her peers. Bess pitches in as she pines for Tom, but at her young age, she's unable to fully realize how drastically her world is about to change.



Set against the resounding backdrop of the falls, Cathy Marie Buchanan's carefully researched, capaciously imagined debut novel entwines the romantic trials of a young couple with the historical drama of the exploitation of the river's natural resources. The current of the river, like that of the human heart, is under threat: "Sometimes it seems like the river is being made into this measly thing," says Tom, bemoaning the shortsighted schemes of the power companies. "The river's been bound up with cables and concrete and steel, like a turkey at Christmastime."

Skillfully portraying individuals, families, a community, and an environment imperiled by progress and the devastations of the Great War, *The Day the Falls Stood Still* beautifully evokes the wild wonder of its setting, a wonder that always overcomes any attempt to tame it. But at the same time, Buchanan's tale never loses hold of the gripping emotions of Tom and Bess's intimate drama. The result is a transporting novel that captures both the majesty of nature and the mystery of love.

An Excerpt from *The Day the Falls Stood Still*

When I notice the faint rumble of the Niagara River rumbling through the gorge, I move closer, to the front of our property, and listen to the Whirlpool Rapids far below. I stand with my eyes shut, imagining great waves of surging green crashing and toppling to masses of frothy white. When I open my eyes, the fellow who carried my trunk is passing along River Road, likely returning from his camp at the whirlpool. He tips his cap, and I quickly turn away, embarrassed at the thought of myself a moment earlier, listening to the river.

As I reach for the screen door, I look over my shoulder intending to wave but, too late, see only his back. Three fair-size fish hang from a line slung over his shoulder. His bedroll swings back and forth in time with his gait. When he is far enough away that I can no longer tell his collar from his cap, I see him look back toward Glenview. I wave, and it seems he nods, though I cannot say for sure.

About the Author

Born and bred in Niagara Falls, Ontario, the setting of *The Day the Falls Stood Still*, Cathy Marie Buchanan grew up "awash in the lore of William 'Red' Hill, Niagara's most famous riverman," as she explains in the Author's Note that concludes her book. Like her character Tom Cole, and his grandfather Fergus before him, the historical "Red" Hill could read the river with preternatural apprehension, anticipating shifts in the weather and sensing when people would be trapped by winds and water. In all, Hill saved twenty-nine people and countless animals from drowning. *The Day the Falls Stood Still* was inspired by two of Hill's heroic rescues, which Buchanan thrillingly recreates.



The author's fascination with the lore and legends of the falls is complemented by her interest in the economic and industrial forces at work in the region at the dawn of the hydroelectric era. Also prevalent is Buchanan's meticulous research into the apparel, furnishings, and customs of the social milieu Bess Heath is forced—by circumstance and for love—to leave behind.

A recipient of grants from both the Toronto and the Ontario Arts Councils, Cathy Marie Buchanan is a graduate of the Humber School for Writers. She has published fiction in *The Antigonish Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The New Quarterly*, *Quarry*, and *Descant*. She currently lives in Toronto with her husband and three sons. *The Day the Falls Stood Still* is her first novel.

Get the most out of *The Day the Falls Stood Still* with these reading group discussion questions.

1. The novel is set against the backdrop of Niagara Falls. Is it accurate to say that this natural wonder is a character in the novel? Why or why not?
2. In early 20th-century Ontario, distinctions in social strata created insurmountable boundaries between different groups. Yet Bess, her mother, and several other characters act against the conventions of their time. What compelled them? Would they face the same challenges today?
3. Edward's proposal presents both a challenge and an opportunity to Bess and her family. What did you think of her decision? What would you have done in similar circumstances?
4. The title of the book invokes a rescue made by Fergus Cole, Tom's grandfather, shortly after he arrived at Niagara Falls. Did you find Buchanan's decision to post newspaper clippings of Fergus's heroism effective? Was the force of his legend felt throughout the novel?
5. Although Bess and her family are Methodists, she and her sister attend a Catholic school for girls. What role does religion or belief play in the book? As the novel unfolds, how does Bess evolve spiritually?
6. A secondary theme in the novel pits the idea of conserving natural resources against the quest to harness them for economic and industrial development. Informed by her father's work experience at the power company and by Tom's allegiance to the river, Bess begins to understand both sides of the argument. Did her vote on the ballot measure surprise you?
7. Why is Tom able to predict the whims of the Niagara River? What would Bess say about his mysterious abilities? Does her explanation change over the course of the book?
8. Bess is angry with Tom after the ice bridge rescue, and lashes out at him after the scow rescue. Is her anger warranted? Why or why not?
9. Before abandoning the rope tethered to Jesse and plunging into the waters, Tom says, "Believe in me, Bess." What does he mean by this? Does he know how the events of the day will unfold?

Further Reading:

CITY OF LIGHT by Lauren Belfer

THE FALLS by Joyce Carol Oates

WATERBORNE by Bruce Murkoff

WATER FOR ELEPHANTS by Sara Gruen

FROM OUR BOOKSELLERS

Praise for *The Day the Falls Stood Still*

"With Niagara Falls as the backdrop, this intelligent tale of a woman's strength, and the riverman whose bravery and passion sweep her away, is an unforgettable story of love and family, greed, and hardship. Not to be missed!"
Margie Turkett, Annapolis, MD

"Definitely the best book I've read this year! I could almost feel the mist wafting from Niagara Falls!"
Suzzé Tiernan, Bloomfield Hills, MI

"A wrenching chronicle of the harnessing and destruction of Niagara Falls that paints a poignant picture of a natural wonder we'll never know. Cathy Marie Buchanan has created a moving story linking the dramatic changes experienced by a young woman with the industrialization of the great Niagara Falls."
Debra Francis, Denver, CO

"A compelling and beautiful story of a woman with pluck and a heart as big as the river itself. I loved it even as I cried!"
Amber Stubblefield, Ellicott City, MD

Praise for Previous Barnes & Noble Recommends Main Selections

"Howe hit the perfect balance between spine-tingling thriller and thoughtful questioning of the Salem witch trials. I couldn't, and didn't, put it down."
Doug Britt, Chicago, IL
on *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*

"*Dog On It* was not only unputdownable, it was 'stay-up-all-night-reading, but-save-the-last-few-chapters-for-the-next-day-because-you-don't-want-it-to-be-over' good."
Angela Corpus, Washington, DC
on *Dog On It*

"What a story! The war, the possibility of romance in the most unlikely of places, and best of all, the glowing love of reading and of books—all of it wrapped up in such lovely, unpretentious prose that after every chapter I wanted to hand it to strangers."
Steve Donoghue, Boston, MA
on *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*

"An old-fashioned secluded island murder mystery, updated with complex characters and new technology... Like Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple meet *Cold Case*. Powerful, thrilling, and disturbing."
Jill Borage, St. Louis, MO
on *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

BARNES & NOBLE
RECOMMENDS

— *The Day the Falls* —

Stood Still

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