



## Fourth of July Creek: A Novel

*By Smith Henderson*

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In this shattering and iconic American novel, PEN prize-winning writer, Smith Henderson explores the complexities of freedom, community, grace, suspicion and anarchy, brilliantly depicting our nation's disquieting and violent contradictions.

After trying to help Benjamin Pearl, an undernourished, nearly feral eleven-year-old boy living in the Montana wilderness, social worker Pete Snow comes face to face with the boy's profoundly disturbed father, Jeremiah. With courage and caution, Pete slowly earns a measure of trust from this paranoid survivalist itching for a final conflict that will signal the coming End Times.

But as Pete's own family spins out of control, Pearl's activities spark the full-blown interest of the F.B.I., putting Pete at the center of a massive manhunt from which no one will emerge unscathed.

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## Fourth of July Creek: A Novel By Smith Henderson Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From [Booklist](#)

**\*Starred Review\*** Dedicated social worker Pete Snow lives in remote, impoverished Tenmile, Montana, in part because he's hiding out from the fallout of his own fractious divorce and in part because he knows that poverty breeds dysfunctional families, and there are plenty of kids who need his care. When he is summoned to open a file on Benjamin Pearl, a nearly feral 11-year-old boy who is suffering from malnutrition, he comes into contact with the boy's father, Jeremiah, a paranoid survivalist who mints his own money and is convinced that the end-time is near. Pete soon learns that the FBI is also interested in Jeremiah, targeting him as a homegrown terrorist. Meanwhile, Pete's own family is in crisis; his teenage daughter has vanished, and his ex-wife can't do much more than drink and pray. First-novelist Henderson not only displays an uncanny sense of place—he clearly knows rural Montana and its impassable roads, its dank bars, its speed freaks and gas huffers—he also creates an incredibly rich cast of characters, from Pete's drunken, knuckleheaded friends to the hard-luck waitress who serves him coffee to the disturbed, love-sick survivalist. Dark, gritty, and oh so good. --Joanne Wilkinson

## **Review**

"First novels don't come much more confidently written or fully imagined than this." (New York Times)

"This is a hell of a great book."- (Esquire)

"Breathtaking...heartbreaking...Henderson's immersive, colorful style makes this scenic journey worthwhile. He's a curious kind of hard-boiled poet - part Raymond Chandler, part Denis Johnson." (Entertainment Weekly (Grade A))

"The best book I've read so far this year...Henderson choreographs these parts so masterfully that the novel is never less than wholly engaging... All week I was looking for opportunities to slip back into these pages and follow the trials of this rural social worker." (Washington Post)

"...a masterful debut...we find ourselves rooting for these deeply human characters in the end." (The Oregonian (Portland))

"Fourth of July Creek is an extremely dark book, but Henderson's lyrical sentences lend an elegance-an importance-to the lives of his fictional children. By tenderly portraying horrible family secrets, Henderson is able to illuminate the richness and possibility in even the most painful lives." (Kirkus Reviews)

"On a political level, Henderson skillfully presages the contemporary political environment in his portrayal of the America of three decades ago. On a deeper level, this dark, compassionate novel finds in Jeremiah's- and Pete's-pain a mirror of everyone's. This is a significant debut." (Library Journal)

"Born and raised in Montana, author Smith Henderson knows the terrain and its people, crafting a profoundly American tale that explores our love for freedom, our individualism and the price people sometimes pay." (AARP)

"[A] remarkable first novel..." (Shelf Awareness)

"This book left me awestruck; a stunning debut which reads like the work of a writer at the height of his

power...Fourth of July Creek is a masterful achievement and Smith Henderson is certain to end up a household name.” (Philipp Meyer, New York Times bestselling author of *The Son*)

“Fourth of July Creek knocked me flat. This gorgeous, full-bodied novel seems to contain all of America at what was, in retrospect, a pivotal moment in its history...Smith Henderson has delivered nothing less than a masterpiece of a novel.” (Ben Fountain, author of *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*)

“Fourth of July Creek cannot possibly be Smith Henderson’s first book. Its scope is audacious, its range virtuosic, its gaze steady and true. A riveting story written in a seductive and relentlessly authentic rural American vernacular, this is the kind of novel I wish I’d written.” (Claire Vaye Watkins, author of *Battleborn*)

“Fourth of July Creek is an astonishing read. The writing is energetic and precise. Henderson has a mastery of scale that allows this particular place and these particular people to illuminate who we are as Americans...I could not recommend this book more highly.” (Kevin Powers, bestselling author of *The Yellow Birds*)

“Tremendously satisfying—think Daniel Woodrell’s *Winter’s Bone*...or Jimmy McNulty...set...in...another kind of violent American wilderness...[a] mesmerizing accomplishment. I cannot think of a finer first novel; it’s hard, in fact, to think of a finer second, third, or fourth one, either.” (Antonya Nelson)

“A soul-wrenching debut novel... Henderson’s talents lie in the tenderness and empathy he extends to (almost) every character in the book, no matter how damaged.” (O, the Oprah Magazine)

“Henderson, a Montana native, is a nimble wordsmith... His debut novel gives us flawed people, a bleak setting, and a story that’s impossible to forget.” (Parnassus Books / Musing)

“This is an impressive, bold, ambitious book, an unforgettable epic that confidently navigates big themes and breaks your heart with small tragedies.” (Miami Herald)

“I was blown away by Smith Henderson’s debut novel, *Fourth of July Creek*....” (Dallas Morning News)

“In Henderson’s impressive novel, an overburdened social worker becomes involved with a near-feral boy and his survivalist father in 1980 Montana.” (New York Times Book Review, Notable Book)

“[A] stunningly accomplished debut novel ... Henderson’s narrative enthralls, his dialogue crackles, and on the considerable strength of this, a promising literary career beckons.” (Minneapolis Star Tribune)

“The myth of rugged individualism crumbles...at the side of the body of water that gives Henderson’s debut novel, *Fourth of July Creek*, its name...Henderson’s saga of looking for salvation by way of saving others is lyrical, suspenseful, and heartbreaking. Not all can be rescued, but we can all be redeemed.” (Entertainment Weekly, #3, Year's Best Fiction)

“Another big, gripping novel and fine feat of naturalistic storytelling.” (Janet Maslin, NYT, Top Ten Books of 2014)

“My favorite book of 2014, Smith Henderson’s *Fourth of July Creek*, is out in paperback... which gives me another chance to recommend it. This exciting, beautifully written debut novel describes the travails of Pete Snow, a social worker in Montana struggling to save damaged families - including his own.” (Washington Post, Ron Charles)

"*Fourth of July Creek* is the beautifully written story of a flawed man trying to save children from bad people like himself... a richly satisfying novel and well worth its reader's time." (Tullahoma News)

"Probably the most significant book to come from a Portland writer in the past year is Smith Henderson's *Fourth of July Creek*... one of the most assured and accomplished debut novels in recent memory, right up there with Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*. The book... is both savage and beautiful." (Willamette Week (Portland))

"Henderson's firm understanding of rural Montana and its residents reminds one of Kent Haruf's novels set in Colorado, but, as if Cormac McCarthy has come to town, there's an undercurrent of violence and vice throbbing throughout the story. Henderson understands the explosive possibilities of having those tensions surface." (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

From the Back Cover

After trying to help Benjamin Pearl, an undernourished, nearly feral eleven-year-old boy living in the Montana wilderness, social worker Pete Snow comes face-to-face with the boy's profoundly disturbed father, Jeremiah. With courage and caution, Pete slowly earns a measure of trust from this paranoid survivalist itching for a final conflict that will signal the coming End Times.

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In this shattering and iconic American novel, Smith Henderson explores the complexities of freedom, community, grace, suspicion, and anarchy, brilliantly depicting our nation's disquieting and violent contradictions. *Fourth of July Creek* is an unforgettable, unflinching debut that marks the arrival of a major literary talent.

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Shawn Hunter:**

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite reserve and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled *Fourth of July Creek: A Novel*. Try to the actual book *Fourth of July Creek: A Novel* as your buddy. It means that it can to be your friend when you feel alone and beside that of course make you smarter than previously. Yeah, it is very fortunated in your case. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , let's make new experience along with knowledge with this book.

**Joyce Williams:**

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love *Fourth of July Creek: A Novel*, you are

able to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

**Kevin Diaz:**

Many people spending their period by playing outside together with friends, fun activity with family or just watching TV the whole day. You can have new activity to invest your whole day by reading through a book. Ugh, you think reading a book will surely hard because you have to take the book everywhere? It alright you can have the e-book, bringing everywhere you want in your Cell phone. Like Fourth of July Creek: A Novel which is having the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's see.

**Nancy Brown:**

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