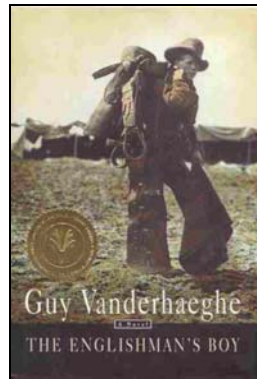




Reader's Guide to Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*



The Englishman's Boy has been made into a four-hour miniseries starring Bob Hoskins and Nicholas Campbell. The series will air on CBC-TV in 2008. Visit the website below to watch the trailer.

<http://www.mindseyeinternational.com/dramaeb.html>

Introduction

One Book, One Community is a reading program for the entire city and surrounding area. Adults and teens are invited to read a selected book and then come together for a weekend of discussion and activities surrounding the book. The book we have selected for Medicine Hat's fourth community-wide read is *The Englishman's Boy* by Guy Vanderhaeghe. Copies of the book are available at the public libraries of the Shortgrass Regional Library System, the Vera Bracken Library (Medicine Hat College), and Coles The Book People (Medicine Hat Mall).

The Englishman's Boy brilliantly links together Hollywood in the 1920s with one of the bloodiest, most brutal events of the nineteenth-century Canadian West – the Cypress Hills Massacre. Vanderhaeghe's rendering of the stark, dramatic beauty of the western landscape and of Hollywood in its most extravagant era – with its visionaries, celebrities, and dreamers – provides vivid background for scenes of action, adventure, and intrigue. Richly textured, evocative of time and place, this is an unforgettable novel about power, greed, and the pull of dreams that has at its centre the haunting story of a young drifter – “the Englishman's boy” – whose fate, ultimately, is a tragic one. *Courtesy of Random House of Canada*

Awards

Winner of the 1996 Governor General's Award for Fiction
Winner of the 1996 Saskatchewan Book of the Year and Book Award for Fiction
Finalist for The Giller Prize
Finalist for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award

Reviews

"It is a wonder and a glory – written by a man who has plundered the language for all its treasures. The story of the Englishman's boy and his journey into hell and back is absolutely riveting."

–Timothy Findley

"*The Englishman's Boy* is one of the finest historical novels ever written by a Canadian, an impossible-to-put-down adventure story that also packs some keen insights into the way civilization works...."

–Macleans

"A stunning performance. Highly enjoyable. I couldn't put it down."

–Mordecai Richler

"The canvas is broad, the writing is vivid, and the two story-lines are deftly interwoven to contrast cinematic 'truth' with history as it happened. An intense and original piece of writing."

–*The Bookseller* (U.K.)

Author Biography

Guy Vanderhaeghe was born in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, in 1951. He is the author of four novels, *My Present Age* (1984), *Homesick* (1989), co-winner of the City of Toronto Book Award, *The Englishman's Boy* (1996), winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction and the Saskatchewan Book Awards for Fiction and for Best Book of the Year, and a finalist for The Giller Prize and the prestigious International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and, most recently, *The Last Crossing* (2002), a long-time national bestseller and winner of the Saskatoon Book Award, the Saskatchewan Book Awards for Fiction and for Book of the Year, and the Canadian Booksellers Association Libris Award for Fiction Book of the Year, and a regional finalist for the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book. *The Last Crossing* was the winner of CBC Radio's *Canada Reads* 2004. It was also a selection for the BBC's television program *Page Turners*. Vanderhaeghe is also the author of three collections of short stories, *Man Descending* (1982), winner of the Governor's General's Award and the Faber Prize in the U.K., *The Trouble With Heroes* (1983), and *Things As They Are* (1992). He recently received the Writers' Trust of Canada's Timothy Findley Award and the Harbourfront Literary Prize, both for a body of work.

Acclaimed for his fiction, Vanderhaeghe has also written plays. *I Had a Job I Liked. Once.* was first produced in 1991, and won the Canadian Authors Association Award for Drama. His second play, *Dancock's Dance*, was produced in 1995.

Vanderhaeghe's fiction has appeared in numerous anthologies and literary journals across Canada. His books have been published internationally in many countries outside of Canada, where his reputation is steadily growing. Recently he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Member of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Guy Vanderhaeghe lives in Saskatoon, where he is a Visiting Professor of English at S.T.M. College. *Courtesy of Random House of Canada*

Websites of Interest – Guy Vanderhaeghe

“Writing History vs. Writing the Historical Novel”
(a talk by Guy Vanderhaeghe to the Montana Historical Society, 21 October 2005)
http://www.drumlummon.org/images/PDF-Spr-Sum06/DV_1-2_Vanderhaeghe.pdf

“Prairie Storyteller: An Interview with Guy Vanderhaeghe”
<http://aurora.icaap.org/index.php/aurora/article/view/15/26>

Guy Vanderhaeghe - The Canada Reads five-minute interview
http://www.cbc.ca/canadareads/cr_2004/guyInterview.htm

Saskatoon StarPhoenix Interview with Guy Vanderhaeghe
<http://www.saskpublishers.sk.ca/sampler/spotlight/guy3.htm>

Websites of Interest – Historical Background

Aboriginal Links: Canada & U.S.
<http://www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborcan.htm>

The Silent Western: Early Movie Myths of the American West
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/%7EHYPER/HNS/Westfilm/west.html>

The Western: An Overview
<http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue06/infocus/western.htm>

Englishman's Boy: Web Resources for Further Study
http://www.lrc.macewan.ca/pdf/pathfinders/englishmans_boy.pdf

Books by Guy Vanderhaeghe

VBL – available at the Vera Bracken Library, Medicine Hat College
Shortgrass – available through the Shortgrass Regional Library System

The Last Crossing (2003) – VBL, Shortgrass

The Englishman's Boy (1996) – VBL, Shortgrass

The Urban Prairie (1993) – includes an essay by G.V.; VBL, Shortgrass

Things As They Are? Short Stories (1992) – Shortgrass

Homesick: A Novel (1989) – Shortgrass

My Present Age: A Novel (1984) – Shortgrass

The Trouble With Heroes and Other Stories (1983) – VBL

Man Descending: Selected Stories (1982) – VBL, Shortgrass

Books of Interest in the Vera Bracken Library and the Shortgrass Regional Library System

The Company of Adventurers by Isaac Cowie

The Cypress Hills: An Island by Itself by Walter Hildenbrandt and Brian Hubner (Vera Bracken only)

Cypress Hills: The Land and Its People by Walter Hildenbrandt and Brian Hubner

The Hollywood Posse: The Story of a Gallant Band of Horsemen Who Made Movie History by Diana Cary (Shortgrass only)

Images of Indians [videorecording] (Vera Bracken only)

In Palliser's Triangle: Living in the Grasslands, 1850-1930 by Barry Potyondi

The Last Refuge by J.G. Nelson

The Medicine Line: Life and death on a North American borderland by Mary Beth LaDow

Whoop-up country: the Canadian-American West, 1865-1885 by Paul F. Sharp

Wolf Willow: A history, a story, and a memory of the last plains frontier by Wallace Stegner

Scheduled Book Discussions and Activities

Plan to attend the following activities about and discussions of *The Englishman's Boy*.

Friday 1 February 2008

Medicine Hat College Courtyard

6:00 p.m. Traditional prairie dinner catered by Worlds of Women Together. (Tickets available in advance at the Vera Bracken Library and the Medicine Hat Public Library)

Medicine Hat College Theatre

7:15 p.m. Talk by author Guy Vanderhaeghe

Saturday 2 February 2008

Medicine Hat College Crowfoot Rooms

9:30 a.m. Coffee

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Book discussion

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Presentation by Dr. Aaron Taylor on the early Hollywood Western

Medicine Hat College Courtyard

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch catered by Worlds of Women Together. (Tickets available in advance at the Vera Bracken Library and the Medicine Hat Public Library)

Medicine Hat College Crowfoot Rooms

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Presentation by Dr. Laurie Milne on the Cypress Hills

2:00 p.m. – Close Book discussion

For more information visit: www.mhc.ab.ca/library/oboc

Sponsors

Medicine Hat Public Library



<http://www.mhpl.info>

Medicine Hat College



<http://www.mhc.ab.ca/>

Coles The Book People

[chapters.indigo.ca](http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/)

<http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/>

McClelland & Stewart



<http://www.mcclelland.com>

Alberta Foundation for the Arts



<http://tprc.alberta.ca/afa/>