



Bellows Falls

Archer Mayor

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Mayor delivers another superb combination of case, characters and local color and brings it all to life without a wasted word. -- starred, "Publishers Weekly"

Honoring a request to conduct a minor Internal Affairs investigation for a small-town police department, Joe Gunther travels upriver to the town of Bellows Falls. But there's more to this case than a young officer's embarrassment. Soon rumors of police corruption, spousal abuse, drug deals and murder begin to engulf the little river town -- and Joe is the one responsible for separating fact from fiction, which is becoming a dangerous task . . .

Bellows Falls Details

Date : Published April 18th 2012 by March Media (first published 1996)

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Author : Archer Mayor

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime

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From Reader Review Bellows Falls for online ebook

Lawanda says

Audiobook performed by Tom Taylorson

David says

Very engaging. Loved Vermont as a setting for a mystery, which had me look at the state differently.

Joanna says

I got exactly what I signed up for with this one. Reasonably engaging police procedural, scenic interest in my own home state, some shenanigans and peril, modest character development.

Ensiform says

In this Joe Gunther novel, he is asked to go to the titular town in order to serve as a disinterested third-party police investigator of allegations of sexual harassment by an officer. What he finds is of course nowhere near so simple: instead, it's a secret web of drug running, frame-ups, and murder, all manipulated by the husband of the supposed victim, a low-grade criminal mastermind.

It's got all the Mayor hallmarks: the labyrinthine plot, the large (sometimes too large) cast of characters, the palpable and intricately researched Vermont landscape, and this time not one but three solo chases where Gunther breaks or loses his radio! The series is predictable, solid, convincing police procedural material, but not vastly superior, and the books are more or less cut from the same cloth; I don't really know why I keep reading it.

Geri says

I liked the fact that the area that this takes place is very close to where I live. Not only that but I have been to Bellows Falls. Interesting read.

Alyssa says

3.5 stars

another great mystery from Archer Mayor. I so enjoy his books, especially since they are set in the community I currently live. It's fun to visualize the exact buildings and streets he references.

Katy M says

I've read one other Archer Mayor book. I liked this one much better. Exciting action sequences. Not quite a mystery as we know who the bad guy is the entire time, but still quite interesting.

Sheldon says

Mayor's Joe Gunther procedural are fun reads. Of course, I listen using Overdrive. The reader is fantastic. Have some old time mystery fun and check out this series. Joe and his crew tough it out, heal people, body and soul and get the bad guys.

Phil says

So far i like this whole series!

PLS says

Mr. Mayor continues to demonstrate his abilities writing a procedural story as well as the best description of action scenes that I've read. For some reason that I can not clearly identify, I do not connect with the characters as well as in other books, hence 4 rather than 5 stars. That being said, I will soon be starting book #9 and expect it will be as enjoyable as the others I've read in the series.

Erik Tanouye says

Got this at Half Price Books in Columbus in July 2018

Jean says

I enjoy the fact that the author writes about real cities & towns in VT. His stories are very well written.

Gail Sealey says

The usual Archer Mayor. Always entertaining and interesting. Love the Vermont locations he references in his books.

MariMel says

The plot line was a little over the top, but generally a well-woven story and set in the lovely state of Vermont.

Michael says

This series seems to be a reliable source of believable and engaging police procedurals that highlight the rural environment of Vermont. Among the four I've read out of 25 in the set of tales featuring Joe Gunther of the Vermont Bureau of Investigation, I sampled the first, last, and a couple in between. Gunther stands out against the crowd of noir detectives with deeply troubled souls and troubles with alcohol and/or violence. I put him mentally with the set of rurally based detectives who try hard to play by the rules but are not quite Boy Scouts. He is not as colorfully comic as Sanford's Detective Virgil Flowers, as stolidly brave as Craig Johnson's Sheriff Longmire, or as tormented as Krueger's PI Cork O'Conner, but he has some off their relentless determination to find justice and casual bravery in the face of danger.

This tale starts with Gunther, at this point a lieutenant with the Brattleboro police, helping with the investigative review of a case of sexual harassment by a police officer of the old mill town of Bellows Falls. The woman involved is a teenaged wife of an older man suspected of being a drug dealer. Gunther's investigations. Joe finds soon himself in tough straits as the criminal elements and the powers-that-be in the town both resist his poking around. He can't tell if the mayor's office and police administration are in cahoots with the criminals or are just obsessive about suppressing any scandal that could hurt the town's reputation and thus its economic outlook. His insights lead him to suspect the drug dealer has a statewide network using young men as local staff, and he gets enough evidence to get himself assigned as leader of a task force out of the Attorney General's office.

There is a modest body count, and Joe ends up making mistakes and getting into some dangerous situations. Luckily, he has a good woman, Gail, to support him through the tough times. Gail is a doctor who works with the medical examiner's office and is able to draw him out to ease the poison of too much darkness. Here he admits that the case is ganging up with old ghosts:

Gail shifted around and slipped her arm across my chest. I could hear the clinical neutrality in her voice as she gently prodded. "Are they saying anything that makes sense?"

I laughed to set her at ease. "Yes, doctor, they all agree I'm going nuts."

She didn't laugh with me. "Are you?"

I moved my own arm around to cradle her head, embarrassed by trying to put her off. We'd been through a lot together. She deserved honesty when she asked for it. "No, I'm just piling on the baggage with this one. I don't know if it's a critical-mass problem, or just these particular people, but I'm feeling more and more weighted down by what I'm finding."

"Like what?"

"Name it: teenage mothers on coke, a young boy in a menage a trois, a cop probably being set up by his addict lover, a guy using kids to run a drug ring. Things're looking pretty bleak ..."

"You've been wading through the dregs for decades, Joe. Some of it's got to stick."

...I had to reach back to my youth on a farm halfway up the state, to recall when most of the faces around me were smiling and unfettered by turmoil.

I love the sense of place and community in Mayor's work. His leaning to a bit of sociology fits with his compassion for victims and some of those led astray to crime and corruption. His crime stories owe their realism to his work as a police officer in Vermont, as well as an EMT firefighter and investigator for the state

medical examiner. His Goodreads profile notes that his many jobs over the years “makes him restless, curious, unemployable, or all three”.
