



# Coal River

*Ellen Marie Wiseman*

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## **Coal River** Ellen Marie Wiseman

In this vibrant new historical novel, the acclaimed author of *The Plum Tree* and *What She Left Behind* explores one young woman's determination to put an end to child labor in a Pennsylvania mining town. . .

As a child, Emma Malloy left isolated Coal River, Pennsylvania, vowing never to return. Now, orphaned and penniless at nineteen, she accepts a train ticket from her aunt and uncle and travels back to the rough-hewn community. Treated like a servant by her relatives, Emma works for free in the company store. There, miners and their impoverished families must pay inflated prices for food, clothing, and tools, while those who owe money are turned away to starve.

Most heartrending of all are the breaker boys Emma sees around the village--young children who toil all day sorting coal amid treacherous machinery. Their soot-stained faces remind Emma of the little brother she lost long ago, and she begins leaving stolen food on families' doorsteps, and marking the miners' bills as paid.

Though Emma's actions draw ire from the mine owner and police captain, they lead to an alliance with a charismatic miner who offers to help her expose the truth. And as the lines blur between what is legal and what is just, Emma must risk everything to follow her conscience.

An emotional, compelling novel that rings with authenticity--*Coal River* is a deft and honest portrait of resilience in the face of hardship, and of the simple acts of courage that can change everything.

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