

[PDF] The Coalwood Way (The Coalwood Series #2)

Homer Hickam - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Homer Hickam

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Description:

In this follow-up to his bestselling autobiography , Homer Hickam chronicles the eventful autumn of 1959 in his hometown, the West Virginia mining town of Coalwood. Sixteen-year-old Homer and his pals in the Big Creek Missile Agency are high school seniors, still building homemade rockets and hoping that science will provide them with a ticket into the wider world of college and white-collar jobs. Such dreams make them suspect in a conservative small town where "getting above yourself" is the ultimate sin and where Homer's father, superintendent of the Coalwood mines, is stingy with praise and dubious about his son's ambitions. Homer's mother remains supportive, but bluntly reminds him, "You can't expect everything to go your way. Sometimes life just has another plan." Indeed, Hickam's unvarnished portrait of Coalwood covers class warfare (union miners battling with

his authoritarian father), provincial narrow-mindedness (the local ladies scorn a young woman living outside wedlock with a man who abuses her), and endless gossiping along the picket "fence line." These sharp details make the unabashed sentiment of the book's closing chapters feel earned rather than easy. Hickam can spin a gripping yarn and keep multiple underlying themes and metaphors going at the same time. His tender but gritty memoir will touch readers' hearts and minds. --*Wendy Smith*

From Publishers Weekly In his bestselling memoir, *Rocket Boys* (which became the 1999 movie *October Sky*), former NASA engineer Hickam looked back at the mining town of Coalwood, W.Va., when the 1957 ascent of Sputnik prompted Sonny and his teenage pals to launch their own rockets and aim at the stars. This sequel is set in 1959, when Sonny is a high school senior, still sending up rockets at "Cape Coalwood," at local launches that became full-scale social events with numerous spectators: "Even the Big Creek cheerleaders came, dressed in full uniform." Hickam digs deeper into his own family life, recalling an ambivalent relationship with his father, the superintendent of the local mine: "My dad was, in many ways, [a] general, plotting strategy and tactics against an unyielding foe, the mine itself." Hearing the constant miner's cough in her own house, Hickam's mother, Elsie, wants to leave the coal dust-covered community for the "fresh, clean air" of Myrtle Beach, since "she knew very well lung spots never got smaller, only bigger," but Homer Sr. is determined to stay and save the mine. Amid the resulting household tension, Sonny suffers from an inexplicable sadness, despite his growing relationship with a local girl and his various science and writing projects. His recollections are occasionally reminiscent of the youthful exploits in tales by Jean Shepherd and Ray Bradbury, but Hickam's voice is his own. Recalling a lost era—the transition between small-town life and the dawning of the new technological age—he brings his American hometown to life with vivid images, appealing characters and considerable literary magic. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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