

# Peace Like a River

Leif Enger

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Leif Enger's rhapsodic novel about a father raising his three children in 1960s Minnesota is a breathtaking celebration of family, faith, and America's pioneering spirit. Through the voice of eleven-year-old Reuben, an asthmatic boy obsessed with cowboy stories, Peace Like a River tells of the Land family's cross-country search for Reuben's outlaw older brother, who has been controversially charged with murder. Sprinkled with playful and warmhearted nods to biblical tales, classic American novels such as Huckleberry Finn, the adventure stories of Robert Louis Stevenson, and the Westerns of Zane Grey, Peace Like a River brilliantly incorporates the best elements of all these genres and ultimately earns its own prominent and enduring place on the shelf among them. Reuben Land was born with no air in his lungs, and it was only when his father, Jeremiah, picked him up and commanded him to breathe that his lungs filled. Reuben struggles with debilitating asthma thenceforth, but he is a boy who knows firsthand that life is a gift, and also one who suspects that his father can overturn the laws of nature. When Reuben's older brother, Davy, kills two marauders who have come to harm the family, the town is divided between those who see him as a hero and those who see him as a cold-blooded murderer. On the morning of the trial, Davy escapes from his cell, and when his family finds out they decide to go forth into the unknown in search of him. With Jeremiah -- whose faith is the stuff of legend -- at the helm, the family covers territory far more glorious than even the Badlands, where they search for Davy from their Airstream trailer. By the time the journey is over, they will have traversed boundaries of a different nature entirely. Marked by a soul-expanding sense of place and a love of storytelling, Peace Like a River is at once a heroic quest, a tragedy, a romance, and a heartfelt meditation on the possibility of magic in the everyday world.



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