

From the *New York Times* bestselling, award-winning author of *The Dive from Clausen's Pier*, a masterful new novel that explores the secrets and desires, the remnant wounds and saving graces of one California family over the course of five decades.

Bill Blair finds the land by accident, three wooded acres south of San Francisco. The year is 1954, long before anyone will call this area Silicon Valley. Struck by a vision of the family he might create there, Bill buys the property and proposes to Penny Greenway, a woman whose yearning attitude toward life appeals to him. In less than a decade, they have four children. Yet Penny is a mercurial housewife, overwhelmed and undersatisfied at a time when women chafed at the conventions confining them. And Penny will sacrifice anything to become an artist.

Years later, the three oldest Blair children, adults now and still living near the family home, are disrupted by the return of the youngest, whose sudden presence and familiar troubles force a reckoning with their history and set off a struggle over the future. One by one, the siblings tell their stories—Robert, a doctor like their father; Rebecca, a psychiatrist; Ryan, a schoolteacher; and James, the malcontent, the problem child, the only one who hasn't settled down. Taken together, these narratives reveal the intricate ways in which childhood experiences and relationships set the course for adult life and return us to our earliest selves, again and again.

Reviewers have praised Ann Packer's "brilliant ear for character" (*The New York Times Book Review*), her "naturalist's vigilance for detail, so that her characters seem observed rather than invented" (*The New Yorker*). Her talents are on dazzling display in *The Children's Crusade*, her most deeply affecting book yet.

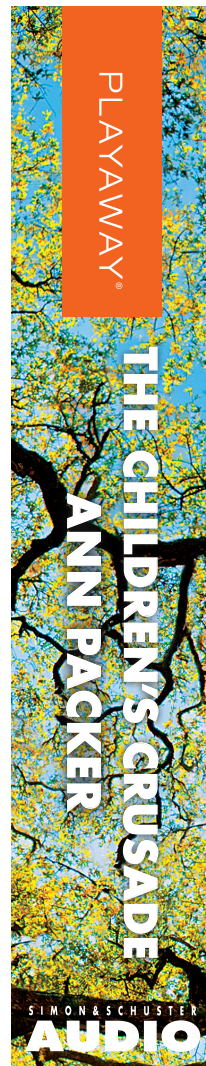
ANN PACKER is the acclaimed author of two collections of short fiction, *Swim Back to Me* and *Mendocino and Other Stories*, and two bestselling novels, *Songs Without Words* and *The Dive from Clausen's Pier*, which received the Kate Chopin Literary Award, among many other prizes and honors. Her short fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker* and in the *O. Henry Prize Stories* anthologies, and her novels have been published around the world. She lives in San Carlos, California.

READ BY COTTER SMITH WITH SANTINO FONTANA, MARIN IRELAND, THOMAS SADOSKI AND FREDERICK WELLER

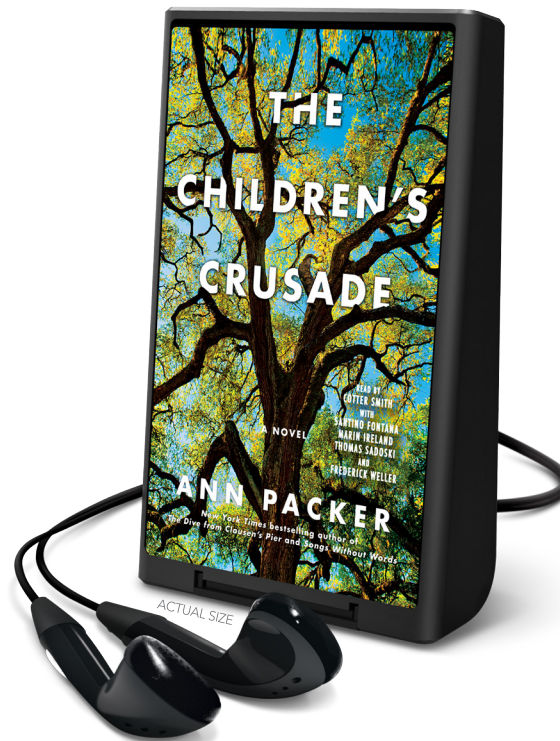
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Running Time: Approx. 13 Hours
Unabridged

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