



# Scottsboro: A Novel

*Ellen Feldman*

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**Scottsboro: A Novel** Ellen Feldman

**Set in the 1930s South, this resonant novel of race and class turns on the awful power of a lie.**

Alabama, 1931. A posse stops a freight train and arrests nine black youths, ranging in age from thirteen to nineteen. Their crime: fighting with white boys. Then two white girls, dressed in men's overalls, emerge from another freight car. Though they show no signs of abuse, fast as anyone can say Jim Crow, the cry of rape goes up.

One of the girls sticks to her story. The other changes her tune, again and again. While the NAACP and the Communist Party vie to save the boys' lives and make political hay, and a wily criminal lawyer renowned for defending underworld characters battles age-old prejudices, a young journalist fights to rescue the nine youths from the electric chair, redeem the girl who repents her lie, and make amends for her own past.

Intertwining historical actors with fictional characters and stirring racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism in an explosive brew, *Scottsboro* is a novel of a case and a cause that roiled the nation for almost half a century. No crime in American history, let alone a crime that never occurred, resulted in as many trials, convictions, reversals, and seminal Supreme Court decisions. It destroyed lives, forged careers, and brought out the best and the worst in the men and women who fought for the cause.

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