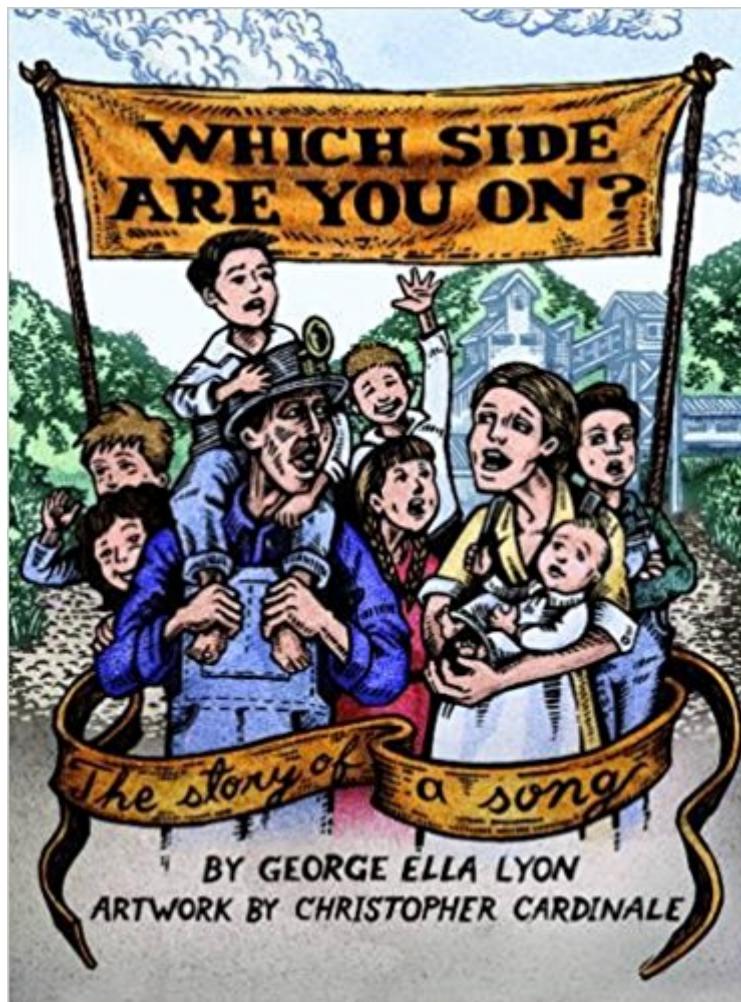


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# Which Side Are You On?



## Synopsis

"The story is a good and important one, and it is well told for an elementary-school audience. . . . Cardinale's folksy, woodcut-style paintings include several memorable images."&#151;New York Times"Cardinale's digitally colored scratchboard art is dynamic. . . . Lyon has given today's readers a stirring story."&#151;Kirkus Reviews

## Book Information

Paperback: 40 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

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Age Range: 3 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## Customer Reviews

"The story is a good and important one, and it is well told for an elementary-school audience...Cardinale's folksy, woodcut-style paintings include several memorable images."&#151;The New York Times"What a perfect time for this picture book" is an old song with new relevance for a generation facing a dubious future."&#151;NY Journal of Books"The story has real power and so do the best of the illustrations."&#151;Booklist"Which Side Are You On? is beautiful, lyrical, and important, subtly showing us the importance of music and even better how anyone can make a difference, no matter their circumstances, as long as they put their heart and soul into it. A treasure."&#151;Silas House, author of Eli the Good" It's a high-stakes account of grace under pressure."&#151;Publisher's Weekly"Cardinale's digitally colored scratchboard art is dynamic" Given that many of the same [labor] conditions exist today, only changed by

mechanization, the music and lyrics included may well find use in the current generation. Lyon has given today's readers a stirring story."&#151;Kirkus Reviews" Lyon and Cardinale make a perfect match for this picture-book homage to a 1931 rallying cry born under duress in Harlan County, Ky. Although this book describes a historical event, it can open a gateway to understanding terms such as "collective bargaining," what that right has meant, and to consider what it means today."&#151;Shelf Awareness --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Front flap: It's 1931 in the mountains of Kentucky. Under a bed, in a rickety coal-company house, seven kids are hiding. Sam, their daddy, is also hiding, somewhere across the mountain. Outside, men paid by the company are shooting at the windows and walls. Florence, the kids' mother, defends her family with the only weapon she has: words. She is writing a song. What's going on here? Don't ask me. Let Omie, the oldest, tell it. Back flap: George Ella Lyon was raised in Harlan County, Kentucky, where Florence Reece wrote "Which Side Are You On?" The daughter of a dry-cleaner and a community worker, George Ella grew up with one older brother in a house full of music, stories, and books. Her first ambition was to be a neon sign maker. Much later, she planned to be a folk singer in Greenwich Village. While she chose the path of words, Lyon still writes songs. Recently she was part of Public Outcry, a band performing to make people aware of the ruin caused by mountaintop removal coal mining. Among Lyon's recent books are *All the Water in the World*; *The Pirate of Kindergarten*, Schneider Family Book Award winner; and *You and Me and Home Sweet Home*, a Jane Addams Honor Book. Married to musician/writer Steve Lyon, she lives in Lexington, Kentucky, and has two sons. Christopher Cardinale had a rootless upbringing following his educator parents through five states from Ohio to New Mexico. Independently, he continued his nomadic life in Guatemala and Mexico, finally settling in Brooklyn, New York. Inspired by Mexican muralism and anarchist punk collectives, Christopher works within marginally defined communities, painting murals whose subjects include the anti-globalization and anti-war movements. His large-scale murals can be viewed in New York, Italy, Greece and Mexico. He illustrated *Mr. Mendoza's Paintbrush*, by Luis Alberto Urrea. It was chosen by Kirkus Reviews as one of 2010's Best Books for Teens. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I had the great privilege to meet the wonderful George Ella Lyon at a Children's Literary Conference in Redlands, California. She is a wonder author, and storyteller. And she plays the guitar and sings too. She was one of the keynote speakers and we got to have one-on-one time with her. She

offered us a lot of insight on the process of writing for children. Which Side Are You On? Is a great story for all ages.

This is an inspiring story of how Florence Reese came to write a song that is sung around the world: "Which Side Are You On?" The writing and the art together depict life in a company mining town in 1931. What keeps this from being a 5-star book in my opinion is that, in order to tell the story to the reader, the author has the children ask questions they wouldn't have asked, because their every-day life experience would have provided the answer. An example is when one child asks, "Why don't the sheriff stop them?" just so that Ma can reply, "The company pays him not to. They own Sheriff Blair as sure as they own this house." It is certainly true that the company owned Sheriff Blair, but I think the kids would have known this and wouldn't have asked the question, at least not this way. That aside, this is a book well worth reading. The way the words of the song are wound around mining tools on one page, and machine guns on another page, help drive home the fact that there are two sides in the struggle of working people for a better life and a better world.

A fun copy

My boyfriend and I bought this for his mother and it is the perfect present for her. I can't wait to see her open it. Came in safe packaging, fast shipping, great price!

When the coal miners in Kentucky form a union and start a strike, a family hides behind its doors. In the meantime, Ma, Florence Reece, writes a song that makes history. Children ages 5-8 will read this historical story book, and learn this song, and will feel empowered to fight for their rights.

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