



# Carrying Albert Home: The Somewhat True Story of a Woman, a Husband, and her Alligator

*Homer Hickam*

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*Big Fish* meets *The Notebook* in this emotionally evocative story about a man, a woman, and an alligator that is a moving tribute to love, from the *New York Times* bestselling author of the award-winning memoir *Rocket Boys*—the basis of the movie *October Sky*.

Elsie Lavender and Homer Hickam (the father of the author) were high school classmates in the West Virginia coalfields, graduating just as the Great Depression began. When Homer asked for her hand, Elsie instead headed to Orlando where she sparked with a dancing actor named Buddy Ebsen (yes, that Buddy Ebsen). But when Buddy headed for New York, Elsie's dreams of a life with him were crushed and eventually she found herself back in the coalfields, married to Homer.

Unfulfilled as a miner's wife, Elsie was reminded of her carefree days with Buddy every day because of his unusual wedding gift: an alligator named Albert she raised in the only bathroom in the house. When Albert scared Homer by grabbing his pants, he gave Elsie an ultimatum: "*Me or that alligator!*" After giving it some thought, Elsie concluded there was only one thing to do: Carry Albert home.

*Carrying Albert Home* is the funny, sweet, and sometimes tragic tale of a young couple and a special alligator on a crazy 1,000-mile adventure. Told with the warmth and down-home charm that made *Rocket Boys* a beloved bestseller, Homer Hickam's rollicking tale is ultimately a testament to that strange and marvelous emotion we inadequately call love.

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