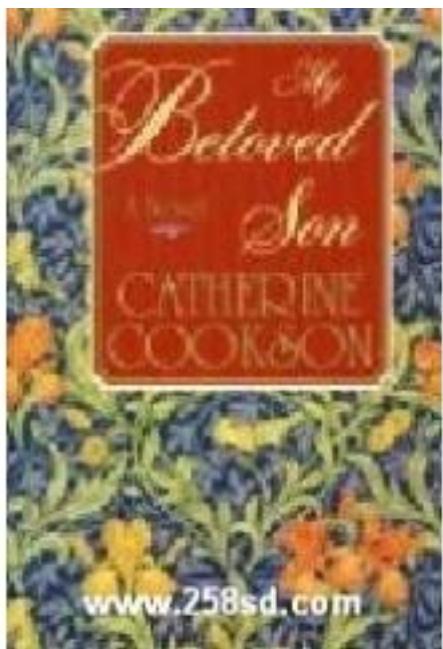


# My Beloved Son



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From Publishers Weekly The latest from Cookson (The Love Child; The Bailey Chronicles) is a perfunctorily plotted novel of tragedy and romance. After his father's death in 1926, five-year-old Joe Jebeau and his tyrannical mother, Ellen, move to his uncle Arthur's estate in northern England. As the years pass, Ellen becomes the mistress of the house, a position she plans to retain by any means necessary. By the onset of WW II, her greedy scheming has landed her son a title and an estate, but at the cost of the lives of the people he loves most. To escape his mother's madness, Joe joins the war effort, hiding behind the uniform of a common corporal and trying to bury his pain. When he believes himself betrayed by the woman he has loved since childhood, he sinks even deeper into despair. It takes plain but wise Maggie LeMan and her outspoken, down-to-earth aunt to break through the barrier Joe has

constructed and teach him how to see the truth. Many of the story's emotional developments seem forced, especially Joe's agonizing and his eventual discovery of his feelings for Maggie. Cookson's contrived characterizations never fully engage her reader. Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club alternates. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. Book Description Ellen Jebeau married a man who did little but dream, and who then died with debt his only legacy. Whatever else her marriage had lacked, however, she had her son Joseph. She resolved he should have all in life she had missed and to achieve that end, she would stop at nothing. It was Sir Arthur Jebeau, her late husband's brother, who came to her aid, and soon Ellen and Joseph were living at the old family seat at Screehaugh. It was a convenient arrangement, one which Ellen was not slow to recognise could work to her advantage, for Sir Arthur was a widower and Screehaugh had no mistress... That was in 1926, but the working out of so many increasingly intertwined destinies would continue for twenty more years and only come to final resolution with Joseph Jebeau's escape from the traumatic heritage of his mother's ruthless ambition and his emergence as his own true self. MY BELOVED SON will rank among Catherine Cookson's most compelling and deeply moving novels and her portrayal of Joseph Jebeau is as sensitive and perceptive as any this well-loved author has achieved. --This text refers to the Paperback edition. See all Editorial Reviews

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