

# Colliers Row



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Scolland, 1840: a country of contrast and change, where the cities are filled with whisky shops and brothels, and the countryside is tilled by men who are encouraged to have unmarried "followers" to provide cheap labor. A country, too, with great respect for education, as it struggles with the problems of coal miners hours and safety

This is the world of young Kate Kilgour, housekeeper to James Galbraith, a minister of the Free Kirk in Greenock. Then local gossip about Kate's illegitimate son forces Galbraith to give her notice, even though his heart cries out that she should stay.

And so the story of lovely, strong-minded Kate begins. She will discover her link with the wealthy pit-owning Balfour family. She will marry an evangelical miner in the Lanarkshire coal pits. She will teach her children independence and pride and watch as they go out into a world of turmoil and transition: one son to America to become a railroad pioneer; a daughter to New Zealand on a "bride ship" after a disastrous affair; her handsome bastard to seafaring danger on Clyde-built clipper ships.

Another son will stand for Parliament as one of the first Labor MPs, and Kate herself, in time of deep crisis, will return to James Galbraith's side.

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目录:

[Colliers Row\\_下载链接1](#)

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