

## **The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce**

This story is Pilgrim's Progress for the twenty-first century. A heart warming tale of Harold who finds himself on an epic journey almost by accident and by dint of his unassuming nature inspires the nation as he treks across country in his boating shoes.

The story commences with Harold, now retired, receiving a letter from an old colleague with whom he has not kept in touch, who tells him that she is dying. Setting off to post his letter in response, Harold, step by step finds that replying by letter is just not going to be enough so he keeps walking determined to keep Queenie alive by the thought that he is on his way to see her. As she is now in Berwick and Harold in the West Country this is no small feat but undaunted by the experiences and people he meets along the way, Harold is determined to get to Queenie - convinced that her life depends upon it.

As Harold treks his way across country, his own story begins to unfold and we realise that things are not as they first appeared. Back home, Maureen his wife has to cope on her own and we see her journey through many emotions as she tries to understand why Harold has undertaken this quest and what this means for their marriage, which had run aground many years ago.

Can Harold and Maureen find a way back to each other? Can mistakes of the past be forgiven and can there be redemption?

Through his journey, Harold encounters humanity - the best and the worst, those with kindness and generosity and those who can't see past their own self interest. The motivated and the misguided. Harold is truly Everyman and we can't help but be caught up in his story. Will Harold hold true to his quest?

The Book Club loved this one. Possibly most enjoyed by those who have a few years under their belt but undoubtedly a must for all those who enjoy a tale with a moral!