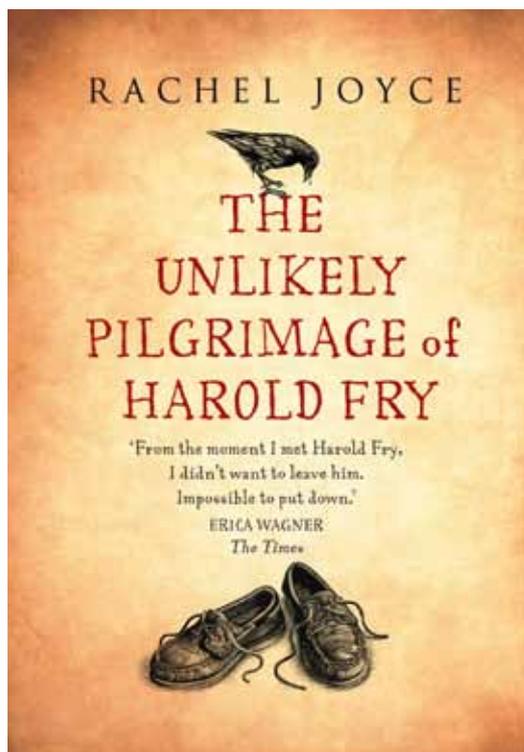




# Reader's Guide



*The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*  
is Rachel Joyce's first novel

## The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry Rachel Joyce

Doubleday  
Hardback £12.99  
Ebook £13.56  
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## About the author

Rachel Joyce lives in Gloucestershire with her husband and four children. She has written over 20 original afternoon plays for BBC Radio 4, and major adaptations for the *Classic Series* and *Woman's Hour*, as well as a TV period drama for BBC2. In 2007 she won the Tinniswood Award for Best Radio Play.

*The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* is her first novel. She is at work on her second.

## *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*

This is the story of recently-retired Harold Fry, who sets out one morning to post a letter to a dying friend. Quite unexpectedly, in a moment of impulse, Fry finds himself at the start of a journey which will lead him to walk hundreds of miles from home, en route making chance encounters and reflecting on tragic events from his past which transform his life and in turn alter the lives of the people he meets.

## Discussion points

At the start of the book both Harold and Maureen have allowed friends to fall by the wayside. What makes someone a true friend and how does Rachel Joyce represent friendship?

Harold is a man with many flaws. Despite, or perhaps because of this, do you see him as an archetypal Englishman? Or is he an everyman?

When we first meet Harold and Maureen, while they share breakfast, they seem in different worlds. To what extent did you see Maureen as the cause of Harold's departure?

Regret is an emotion that plays a key part in the novel. Do you think the author sees it as a positive or negative force?

Was the ending of the novel a shock or the inevitable conclusion?

## Themed reading

John Bunyan *The Pilgrim's Progress*  
Helen Simonson *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand*

## Useful links

### Author's website

[www.rachel-joyce.co.uk](http://www.rachel-joyce.co.uk)

### Publisher's website

<http://www.randomhouse.co.uk>

### *The Guardian* review

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/apr/06/unlikely-pilgrimage-harold-fry-review>

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