



Faith Greater Than Pain

L. "Doc" Cleland, Susan Imhoff Bird

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Some may say Doc was just an old man on a long walk, but it was a walk that forever changed his life. He lived experiences you may not believe, and had conversations you may not be ready for. Only you can open that door, when you're ready. If you find something in this book that changes your life, you are not alone. Doc Cleland is a man who lost his childhood to an abusive, alcoholic stepfather; his wife to Lou Gehrig's disease; his job, home, and savings to the economic downturn; and 4 of his 5 children to paths that stray from his Mormon roots and lifestyle. Seemingly a man who has also lost his path in life, Doc decides to honor his great-grandmother's memory by re-creating her pioneering handcart journey of 1856. He begins walking in Iowa City, pulling a wooden handcart, heading west on his 1400-mile journey, uncertain of exactly what he'll encounter along the way. Sarah Goode Marshall was the first Mormon handcart pioneer to reach the Salt Lake Valley, a 34-year-old widow with 6 young children and a powerful commitment to her newly found faith. A woman who left in England her family, her home, and everything she knew, Sarah's story has lived only in family journals and lore for the past 5 generations until Doc brings her to life by connecting with her indomitable spirit during his trek. Join Sarah as she discovers the faith that is true for her, withstands the abuse her husband piles upon her, and finally leaves her home in England to answer the call to Zion. Her husband, who dies after mishandling an attempt to poison Sarah, lies buried in English soil while her siblings chastise her for daring to consider leaving their homeland; neither is enough to stop Sarah from following her heart. She and her children travel by ship, train, and finally by foot and handcart in their journey to reach the Great Salt Lake Basin. Though their company is plagued by exhaustion, inadequate nutrition, terrifying storms, savages and death, an indomitable spirit travels with them and seems to leave traces behind, just waiting to be discovered by the next travelers. While Doc experiences physical ailments that land him in a hospital and near-constant mental struggles due to his exhaustion, he engages the reader with his gritty determination to understand his ancestor's journey, his jaunty commitment to his task, and his humble acceptance of what eventually transpires: a spiritual gratification unlike any he's ever known. Although Doc walks alone, his encounters along the way expand his experience to an understanding of humanity in its many and varied forms, from the Schwan's delivery man who drives ice cream out to him, to the Civil War Re-enactment buff who gives up a day to drive behind and protect him, to the women who spend their days rescuing birds from sludge ponds and share their stories with him. In *Faith Greater Than Pain*, Sarah Goode Marshall's story anchors Doc's modern-day journey, as each—separated by a century and a half—walks toward Zion, all the while discovering a second Zion within.

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