



Heartland Reviews

scientifically-based book reviews from the heart

Title: AFOOT: A Tale of the Great Dakota Turkey Drive

Author: George Brandsberg

Illustrator:

Publisher and/or Distributor: The Cedartip Company

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Reader: Bob Spear

Rating: 5 hearts

A scoundrel uncle robs 13-year-old Joshua Green and his older sister of their bakery after the death of their parents. She is farmed out as a domestic and Joshua becomes a slave on his uncle's farm. Both escape separately and head for the gold fields. Part way there, Joshua is robbed and must join an animal drive for a job. The animals turn out to be a huge flock of turkeys, which must reach the gold fields 200 miles away before Thanksgiving to earn top dollar. Joshua has to walk the entire distance since he cannot afford a horse.

Rufus, the trail boss, is a nasty man who treats everyone like dirt, but has his own crosses to bear. Along the way, Joshua learns the importance of never giving up and the fact that friends sometimes come from unusual backgrounds. He overcomes obstacle after obstacle and earns the respect of the drover and most of his fellow herders.

This mid-grade adventure story will pull young readers through it strongly. There is action, comedy, and interesting historical culture laced throughout it. We rated it five hearts.

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