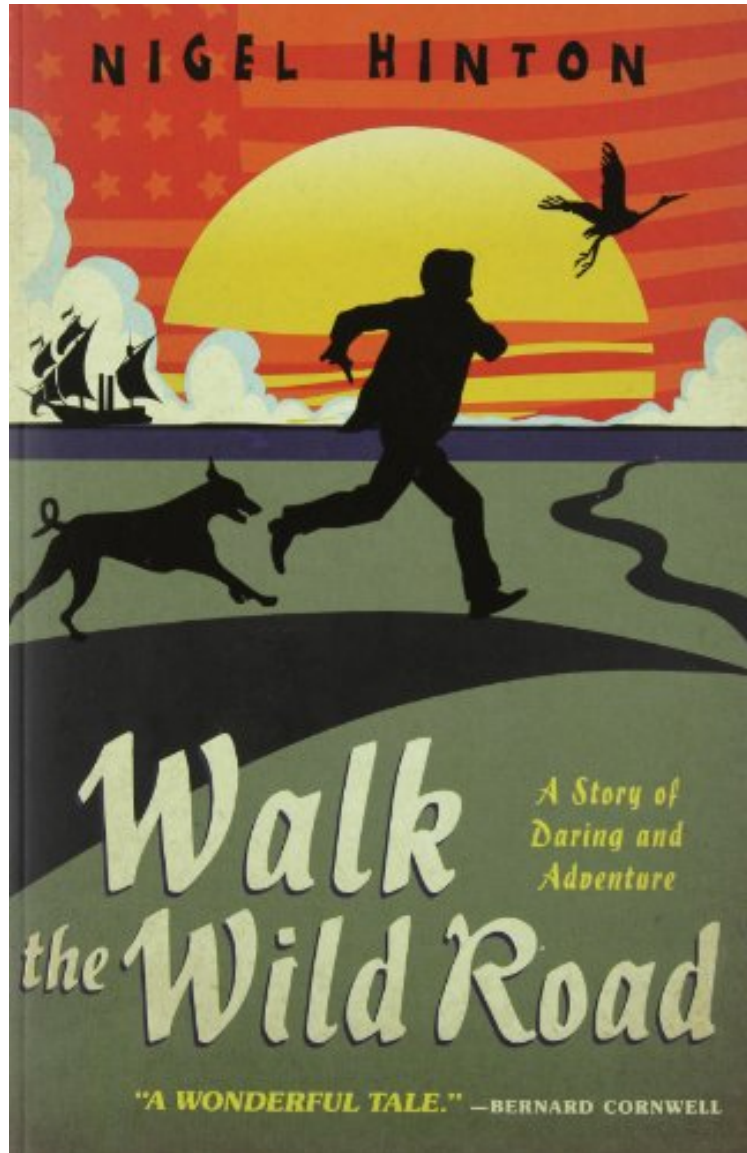


Walk the Wild Road

Nigel Hinton

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Nigel Hinton : Walk the Wild Road before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walk the Wild Road:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Epic ?By roger tonge Is the best Teen fiction that which equally grabs an adult? YES! -this book convinces me. From the start I was thrown into 11-year old Leo's frightful, awful predicament following his courageous but fool-hardy act of resistance to the cruel bullying of an all-powerful landlord. It will bring savage punishment on his impoverished family - eviction, maybe starvation. Only by Leo running

away might they be spared. So starts a journey of hope for a better life. I was with him all the way as he meets danger, wickedness, treachery, and misfortune. Often dashed hopes have Leo on the verge of giving up. But moments of unexpected kindness from a few good people, and above, all his meeting with Tomasz, also troubled and on the run, restore his resolve. Hinton's writing is here specially memorable and moving: -the meeting of two boys, the growing trust and intimacy, the sharing of fears, their moments of humour and fun, the twists and turns of an ever closer friendship. I never predicted what Tomasz finds out about himself - it's intensely moving. Pacey writing and short chapters keep the story moving, so important for teenagers. Direct and sharp description is never at the expense of moments of beauty and feeling. We're drawn deep into Leo's thoughts. Dialogue is lively and natural.

Remarkably, without holding up the forward drive of the story, the writing allows for moments where, say, something seen fleetingly triggers a heart-stabbing memory flash of the family Leo's left behind. The way Hinton subtly evokes an authentic sense of time and place in his story, set in a Prussian ruled area of Eastern Europe 140 years ago, enriches it wonderfully. Background is so well woven in that, without the writer in any way forcing it, we become aware of the growing anti-semitism, the drive to migration, the fight for freedom and justice by the oppressed Poles. A harrowingly vivid episode near the end has Leo witnessing the execution of a teenage freedom fighter. The turbulence of that time matches Leo's own inner conflicts, fears and hopes. It gives an epic quality to the story, so rare in modern teen fiction. I predict a modern classic. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Courtesy of Mother Daughter Book Club. com By Cynthia Hudson Author Nigel Hinton grew up hearing how his grandfather left his large, poor family from Poland at the age of 11 to seek his way in the world. His book, *Walk the Wild Road*, fictionalizes the family legend and imagines what could have set a boy off into the world on his own. Leo's family is desperately poor, and when his mom becomes pregnant with a new baby, all the older children must look for work. But times are hard, and there is not much work to be found. Leo's younger sister finds a place in a tavern, and Leo hears of a job at the manor. But when the landlord's cruel son accuses Leo of a crime that will send him to jail with hardened criminals, he takes to the road instead, hoping to better his life and send money home to his family. The country was preparing for war with France in 1870, and Leo meets with a suspicious population and hardship on the road. Then he meets Tomasz, who is making his way to America. The two boys journey together, buoying each other up through the hardships they encounter. *Walk the Wild Road* is an adventure story with a heart. Leo always wants to do the right thing, but hunger and exposure sometimes compel him to steal food and sneak lodging. He meets people who are kind beyond his expectations, and others who are cruel without reason. He learns that hardship is easier to face in the company of a friend, and he never gives up hope for a better future. Hinton does a nice job transferring this story from family lore to a tale that will resonate with teen boys and girls.

PRAISE FOR *Walk the Wild Road* "Nigel Hinton is an inspired storyteller. Leo's walk along the wild road will captivate you as it did me. This is a wonderful tale!" - Bernard Cornwell, International Bestselling author of Historical Fiction "This is an uplifting, touching, and at times heart-wrenching novel that addresses the issues of class and religious discrimination as well as poverty." - School Library Journal "Walk the Wild Road is more than a page-turner, it's a grip-you and hold-you yarn all the way from its opening paragraph." - Malcolm Macdonald, author "A gripping, epic tale of one brave boy's journey into his own future... Walk the Wild Road is a million stories distilled into an adventure you won't forget." - Wesley Stace, aka John Wesley Harding Leo took one step forward and then stopped. This was it - the road away from everything he knew. He could turn back. But then who would save his family from starvation? No, Leo was their last hope. He must go on... The journey is not easy - he'll have to sleep on the streets, steal food, and even fight off greedy soldiers. Along the way, Leo discovers the kindness of strangers and the loyalty of friends. But he also learns there are some people you just can't trust, especially when you're on the wild road to America.

"Walk the Wild Road is probably one of my favorite Middle Grade reads so far since starting my blog. It did the history well without sacrificing the storyline or the characters along the way." - Dreaming in Books "I think *Walk the Wild Road* would be a perfect fit for boys who enjoy reading middle grade adventure or historical fiction books. As well as for adults who like those same genres." - Stalking the Bookshelves "The great thing about this book is that while it is an adventure story it also delves deeper into really important issues like war, nationalism, religion, and poverty." - Book Labyrinth "Hinton's writing flawlessly flows across the page and enchants the reader. I felt like I was standing right beside Leo throughout his journey." - Reading Lark "Hinton does a nice job transferring this story from family lore to a tale that will resonate with teen boys and girls." - Mother Daughter Book Club "This four star book is one you'll want to read from cover to cover." - Pulaski County Public Library "The summary for *Walk the Wild Road* by Nigel Hinton does not come close to describing the impact felt in this historical fiction story about Leo's journey to reach America." - Eating YA Books About the Author Nigel Hinton was born in 1941 in Britain during an air raid. He is the author of 16 books in the UK; he is the winner of the Silver Pen Award (Holland), shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal, winner of the Children's Book Award in 1994, and recipient of the Lancashire Children's Book of the Year in 1999. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. From Chapter One Leo was the first to see the storks. He

was on the high bank overlooking his house when he heard the flapping of wings. He looked up through the bare branches of the birch trees and saw the big birds overhead. They were flying low, as if they were going to land. He held his breath and prayed, "Please stop. Please stay." At that moment, as though answering his prayer, one of the storks turned its head and glanced at the stork pole that stood invitingly at the edge of the village. But the birds flew on across the track and away over the fields toward the River Netze. He watched until they were just distant black dots. Then they made a slow turn to the left and Leo's heart began to beat faster as the dots grew larger. He realized that they were coming back. As the storks approached the village again he stood stock-still, fearing that a sudden movement might scare them away. He became aware of all the noises around him—a dog barking near the church, some young children shrieking and calling from the fields—noises that might frighten the storks. But no, they kept coming, heading toward the stork pole, a tall pine trunk with an old cartwheel on the top. His father had built it eleven years earlier to give thanks for Leo's birth and to attract good luck for his family and the whole village. Everyone knew that a stork nest could bring harmony and fertility—babies, good crops, and healthy animals. But for all of Leo's life, the stork pole had remained empty. And instead of plenty, there had been struggle and scarcity. For three years in a row, the potato crop had failed and famine had gripped the village, carrying off the weak, young and old, with sleeping sickness. Even in the better years, not a belly in the village was ever full. Only last year, Papa had stopped the whole family near the pole as they were walking home from the funeral of baby Karolina. He had looked up at the chattering magpies standing on the top of the pole and said, "I should take it down and burn it for all the good it has done us. Babies it brings us, only to watch them starve." But he had not carried out the threat, and now there were storks flying toward the pole. Leo closed his eyes, willing them to land, and his heart thudded in his chest. When he finally dared to look, the storks were perched on either side of the cart wheel. They stretched out their long necks and began to make a loud, dry, clacking noise with their beaks as if to announce their arrival and their intention to stay. And stay they did.