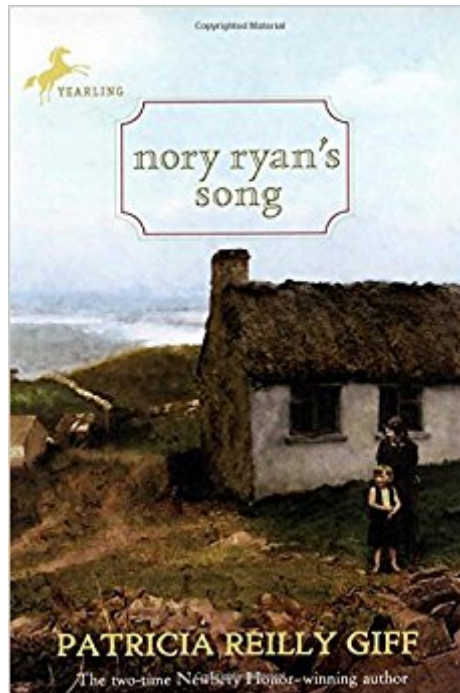




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# Nory Ryan's Song



## Synopsis

Nory Ryan's family has lived on Maidin Bay on the west coast of Ireland for generations, raising a pig and a few chickens, planting potatoes, getting by. Every year Nory's father goes away on a fishing boat and returns with the rent money for the English lord who owns their cottage and fields, the English lord bent upon forcing the Irish from their land so he can tumble the cottages and clear the fields for grazing. Times are never easy on Maidin Bay, but this year, a terrible blight attacks the potatoes. No crop means starvation. Twelve-year-old Nory must summon the courage and ingenuity to find food, to find hope, to find a way to help her family survive. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Life is hard for poor Irish potato farmers, but 12-year-old Nory Ryan and her family have always scraped by... until one morning, Nory wakes to the foul, rotting smell of diseased potatoes dying in the fields. And just like that, all their hopes for the harvest--for this year and next--are dashed. Hunger sets in quickly. The beaches are stripped of edible seaweed, the shore is emptied of fish, desperate souls even chew on grass for the nourishment. As her community falls apart, Nory scrambles to find food for her family. Meanwhile, the specter of America lurks, where, the word is, no one is ever hungry, and horses carry milk in huge cans down cobblestone streets. As Patricia

Reilly Giff writes in her note to the reader, the Great Hunger of 1845 to 1852 was a tragic time for the Irish. Enough food to feed double the population was sent out across the sea, while an indifferent government ignored the starving masses. More than one million of the eight million people in Ireland died. Nory Ryan's Song, a fictionalized account based on this terrible era in history, describes the heroic struggles of one girl who refuses to give in to hunger, exhaustion, and hopeless circumstances. Young readers may have heard of the Irish Potato Famine, but they won't truly understand it until they meet Nory. Giff is the author of many beloved books for children, including the Newbery Honor Book Lily's Crossing and the Polk Street School series. (Ages 9 to 12)

--Emilie Coulter --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Giff meticulously re-creates the Great Hunger as she traces a 19th-century Irish girl's struggle to survive," PW wrote. Ages 8-12. (Sept.) Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The Great Hunger of 1845-1852 was a devastating time for the Irish. The devastation caused by the famine was terrible - families torn apart, untold suffering, and many making their way to America. It is this famine that forms the backdrop of Nory Ryan's Song. Nory and her family have lived by Maidin Bay in Ireland for many generations. Their home is leased from the local English lord Cunningham, a cruel man with little regard for his tenants. His sole aim is to drive the tenants out so that he can have sheep grazing on the land. In this Cunningham is aided by his henchman Devlin who is merciless and ruthless in collecting rent owed on the homes. Nory's father has gone off fishing to earn enough money to pay the rent, and leaves behind Nory, her older sisters Maggie and Celia, younger brother Patch, and Granda. Life is incredibly hard, but Nory's gift of song and her family and friends keep her spirits high. Things take a turn for the worse when the potato crop goes bad. The disease causes all of the crops to fail, and leaves the people of Ireland wasting away from hunger. Nory's sister Maggie leaves for America with her new husband, and Nory dreams of joining them someday, a dream shared by other members of the family. The story focuses on Nory as the protagonist, of her feelings and struggles as she copes with the problem of surviving day-to-day and figuring out ways to find food or making whatever they find edible. Nory is a strong and selfless individual - she gives and gives, and gives some more. It is this great spark of humanity within Nory that attracts the attention of the village healer, Anna. At first Nory is troubled by this woman's attentions, thinking her gift of healing possessed of some dark force, but as time goes by and times get more desperate, Nory realizes how much of a kindred spirit the older woman is, and comes to appreciate the old woman's generosity, kindness, and gift for healing. This is a story that haunted me

even after I finished it. The author writes with such heartfelt sincerity that I could picture the desperation within Nory and her family and friends as they struggled to contain their hunger and survive. The prose is descriptive and vivid, and the reader is able to visually picture the great suffering of the people of Ireland as portrayed by Nory and company. This is truly one of the best pieces of YA historical fiction I have read!

Nory Ryan live in Ireland during the patatoe famine, life is already hard enough with their landlord kicking their neighbors out of their houses left and right. Nory becomes apprenticed to Anna a healer, even though most of the people in Nory's village ridicule Anna, Anna just wants Nory to learn her cures so she may help others as she has. Maggie (Nory sister) leaves for Brooklyn, America where Nory believes the streets are paved with gold. Everyone starts to leave Ireland because without potatoes they will starve. Soon Celia and Granda leave for America, leaving Patch and Nory behind. When Patch, Sean and Sean's Ma leave Norty is the only one of her family remaining in Ireland. Will Nory ever see her family again? "Nory Ryan's Song" tells about how hard life must have for people during this time and how strong and brave they must have been. I recommend it for it all ages. It is thrilling but still teaches you something! For me it is a must-read!!!!

Beautifully written. Very sad in parts but there was always something that made me want to keep reading. I felt every emotion of love, despair And hope along with the characters. This book reminds me of an Irish ballad.

I really like it but It is only my opinion so I can't tell others still don't judge a book by its cover

A persistent female character leads the reader through the hardships faced by a family during the potato famine. Nory is self confident and stubborn and is the perfect main character for this story. Patricia Reilly Giff has written an accurate and touching story that is just right for middle readers.

for my kids

This book was my literature pick to along with our history studies. It gives you a feel for the difficulties faced by the Irish during the potato famine without being inappropriate for children. My kids, ages 11 and 13, enjoyed it enough to read the other two books in the trilogy on their own.

I read this with my children as part of our study of this time period. It really brought to life the things we were studying and helped us get a realistic picture of the desperation of that time.

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