

*«Sometimes she thought that maybe this was all a dream and soon she would wake up and laugh at it, but the hunger pain in her tummy and the sadness in her heart were enough to know that it was real.»*

Follow the three heroes of Marita Conlon-McKenna's first novel during their journey through Ireland. Eily and her two younger siblings decide to find their great-aunts in Castletaggart. Their only chance to survive after they were left by their parents who are working far away from home. The children never met these relatives who used to be the protagonists of their mother's bedtime stories. With the help of old and new friends met on the road, the kids are full of optimism. But the travel is still perilous as the country is victim of the Great Irish Famine. This means that the kids will have to be strong and brave, they'll have to resist with little or no food . Will these qualities be enough to face up and avoid a sickness that killed hundreds of Irish during the XIX<sup>th</sup> century ? One thing is sure : Eily, Michael and Peggy will never be the same after this journey.

*«With *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, the author explores a historical event; the Great Irish Famine. This novel is also a lesson about life. The kids' journey goes not only through Ireland but it also touches deeply the children as they learn about courage and survival in front of a great danger. Life and History are combined together in a great blend.»*

Estelle Cormier – 1<sup>ère</sup> L

During the Great Famine in Ireland in 1840, Eily, Michael and Peggy lose what they had : their friends contaminated by the sickness and the food. After the death of their little sister Bridget, their mother decides to go to find their father but she doesn't come back. The food disappears and the kids have to survive in this horrible place. So, they decide to start a journey to find their aunts in Castletaggart.

During these days, they will have to resist to the sickness, to the fear, to the hunger and to many other terrible things for a child. They will have to manage alone in a world of adults.

**Will they succeed to go to Castletaggart without food ?**

**Will they find their aunts ?**

**Will their parents come back ?**

This realistic novel of Marita Conlon McKenna will give you these answers in a story of suspense and sadness.

*"A great survival saga"*

*"I loved this novel because I like the idea of children who have to do by themselves to survive. This story learned me something because there are many historical references and it was not easy to live during the famine. They lived many sad events but they didn't give up and I think it's realistic"*

Vireulle Magali

**« They prayed too that they would 'meet again in Paradise' »**

*Under the Hawthorn Tree* is a children's historical novel by the famous Irish children's writer, Marita Conlon-McKenna.

The heroes of this novel are three courageous children during the Great Famine in Ireland. This book is a part of the bestselling classic trilogy : *Children of the Famine*. This story narrates the courage of their voyage to Castletaggart to find their aunts, they are their only chance to survive. This story is a story of courage, dangers but especially a touching story of brotherhood. Will the children reach Castletaggart, alive?

This book is one of the best historical novels about the Great Famine in Ireland. By reading this story we learn more about the difficulty of this period and the courage of the Irish people. The most important in this book is the relation that links brothers and sisters. In this book they are willing to do anything for the purpose to save themselves.

**Mauguin Marantine**

## *Under the Hawthorn Tree*

« *Is there something to eat?* » an important question for the three children of Marita Conlon-McKenna's novel: *Under the Hawthorn Tree*. Marita Conlon-McKenna is a well-known Irish children's writer. In her novel she narrates the story of three brave children: Eily the older sister very attentive, Michael and Peggy the youngest. They lived during the great Irish famine with their mother and father who disappear. Without their parents and hungry they have to go the workhouse, a place of force work and sickness, but thinking about the aunts of their mom's story they decided to escape the workhouse and travel to Castletaggart where their aunts live. They have to overcome many obstacles to complete their goal.

An interesting book to introduce children to the story of Ireland. A very touching story with endearing characters. The best book for children about Ireland, perfect to study in class.

Bergès Marie