

Novel·Ties

# *Nory Ryan's Song*

PATRICIA REILLY GIFF



## A Study Guide

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**LEARNING LINKS**

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with a specific novel consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? When and where does it take place?
2. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide. Do some additional research to learn more about Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. Find out about its social classes, the economy, education, and diet. Start a K-W-L chart, such as the one below. Fill out column three after you finish the book.

### IRELAND—1845

What I Know -K-	What I Would Like To Learn -W-	What I Learned -L-

3. Hardship can bring out the best in people. Has your family or community ever been faced with a difficult situation? How did people respond to this challenge? In what ways did some people try to help others at this time?
4. **Social Studies Connection:** Do some research to learn about the ongoing relationship between England and Ireland over the past several centuries. Based on your findings, why do you suppose the English have governed Ireland for so long? What types of problems has this circumstance imposed on the Irish? What do you think should be done about these problems?
5. **Oral Language Activity:** The main character in this novel had to make some painful choices in order to help her family and neighbors. With a partner, discuss ways in which the decisions a person makes can change his or her destiny. Present an oral report about a choice you once made that affected your life in a significant way.
6. **Science Connection:** Famine is a serious problem in many countries in our world today. Choose a country that is currently faced with a food shortage, and do some research to find out what is being done to relieve the famine sufferers. Write a report on how government and private industries are attempting to deal with the famine in that place.
7. Notice the author's dedication at the beginning of the book. To whom does she dedicate this story? Why do you think she refers to those "who stayed" and "those who sailed"? Why might land have been important to those who sailed? What does this dedication suggest about the book you are about to read?
8. Read the short glossary with word pronunciations at the beginning of the book. Become familiar with the words and their sounds.

## Chapters 1 – 4 (cont.)

### Questions:

1. Why did Nory and Sean climb all the way up to Patrick's Well before they ate the dulse?
2. Why did Sean and Nory dream of living in Brooklyn?
3. What evidence shows that Nory and Sean could not read?
4. How did the area around Patrick's Well reflect the townspeople's difficult lives?
5. Why was Nory afraid of Anna Donnelly?
6. Why was Anna Donnelly's coin of no help to Cat and her mother?
7. How did Granda defend Nory's right to fish in the stream that now belonged to the landlord, Lord Cunningham?
8. Why did Nory worry that Maeve could spell trouble for Nory's family?
9. Why was Nory shocked when Maggie, her oldest sister, announced her plan to go to America with Francey?

### Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Sean and Nory did not know how to read?
2. Do you think Lord Cunningham was unduly cruel or simply acting in a businesslike manner?
3. What might Nory's desire to help Cat and her mother reveal about her character?
4. Why do you think Nory's family kept the dog, despite their poverty?
5. Do you think it was selfish of Maggie to leave for America without her family?

### Literary Devices:

- I. *Foreshadowing*—Foreshadowing refers to the clues that an author provides to suggest later events in the story. What might the coin that slipped out of Nory's hand into Patrick's Well foreshadow?  

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