



Greener Grass

By Caroline Pignat

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"CLA Children's Book of the Year Award shortlist, 2009

Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People 2009 finalist

Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Awards shortlist, 2010

Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice, 2009AStarred Choice"

Kit Byrne's family is a strong one, but their strength and unity are being severely tested, as life becomes more and more desperate in 19th century rural Ireland. Lord Fraser is the wealthy landowner, from which the Byrne's and many other families rent their lands. When the potato blight hits, the farmers can no longer make their payments much less produce food for themselves, and the cruel system has no mercy as Lord Fraser wields an iron fist, driving families from their homes and burning their cottages.

Kit's dreams are now dashed as her family experiences a series of tragedies, and as she undergoes a daunting event that tears her away from her family. With her father dead, she must fight for survival and help her ailing mother and siblings escape Ireland for good.

This story is a glimpse into the tragic events of the Great Hunger, the famine that devastated Ireland, forcing thousands of impoverished families to seek better livelihoods outside of their homeland.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In 1847, 15-year-old Kit is jailed for digging up potatoes on confiscated land to feed her starving family, and during the three weeks that she is incarcerated, she reflects on the past year in Ireland: the blight, famine, evictions, and deaths. Lord Fraser, an Englishman, wants to repossess the land where Kit's family lives for grazing, and his estate manager, Lynch, sets fires to drive people from their homes. Much as Kit hates working as a kitchen maid in the estate's Big House, her family needs the money. Then she loses her job, and as she watches her mother sell family treasures, including the Bible and the bed, her sorrow ("I never cried once for fear of never being able to stop") and raging hatred make her plot dire revenge. Complicating everything further is Kit's love for Lynch's son, who loves her back. But can he stand up to his brutal dad? True to Kit's voice, the plain, rhythmic language ("My home was gone. My heart was broken") is lyrical but never ornate. The tension in the story and in the well-developed characters is always rooted in daily detail, and it builds to the final question, which suggests a possible sequel: Will Kit make it onto the ship to Canada? Grades 7-10. --Hazel Rochman

Review

"Pignat's writing is strong and detailed, bringing to life historical events in a personal and tangible way. . . . For its good writing, its keen perception of human emotions and its incredibly accurate portrayal of An Gorta Mor (the Great Hunger), this is definitely an addition to any 'must read' list of young adult novels.

Highly Recommended."

-- "CM Magazine"

"A remarkable work of historical fiction."

-- "Canadian Children's Book News"

About the Author

Caroline Pignat graduated from the University of Ottawa with a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts in English and Religious Studies. After working with children and youth for over fifteen years in roles such as teacher, seminar facilitator, mentor and coach, she began her writing career. Her fiction, non-fiction and poetry for children regularly appear in *Highlights for Children*, *Guideposts for Kids*, *Living Faith for Kids*, and *Clubhouse Magazine*. Caroline's humour columns for adults are published in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, *The Vancouver Sun*, and *The Ottawa Citizen*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Glenn Flinchum:

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