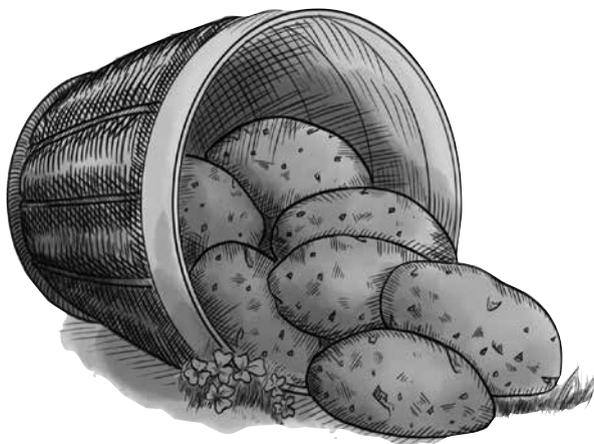


The Hopes and Dreams Series  
Irish-Americans

# Hungry No More

A story based on history



Second Edition

Tana Reiff

Illustrations by Tyler Stiene

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## The Hopes and Dreams Series

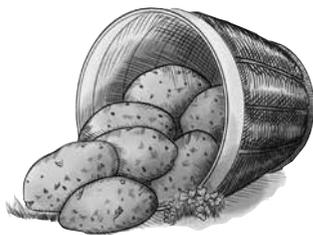
by Tana Reiff

The Magic Paper (Mexican-Americans)  
For Gold and Blood (Chinese-Americans)  
Nobody Knows (African-Americans)  
Little Italy (Italian-Americans)  
Hungry No More (Irish-Americans)  
Sent Away (Japanese-Americans)  
Two Hearts (Greek-Americans)

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# 1 The Old Days

Galway, Ireland, 1845

The story ended.  
Everyone laughed.

“Those were  
the good old days,”  
said Father Patrick.  
“I was young then  
and you were children.”

“You are still  
young at heart,”  
Johnny McGee  
said to the priest.

“Tell us more!”  
said Mary McGee.  
“I like to hear  
your stories  
when you visit.”  
She was holding  
her son Little John  
on her lap.

“Yes, yes,”  
said the old priest.  
“Those were better days  
in beautiful, green Ireland.  
Every family  
kept chickens  
and a pig.  
They sold eggs.  
And when the pig  
was fat enough,  
they ate its meat.  
They used every part  
of that pig.  
Life was not easy,  
but we were never hungry.”

“But now ...”  
Johnny looked down.  
“Now there is  
only the potato.”

“Only the potato,”  
Father Patrick repeated.  
“However,  
the potato is good!  
Boil a few potatoes  
in a big pot  
over the fire  
and that is dinner!”

Johnny knew  
all about potatoes.  
He and Mary  
paid rent for land  
to farm potatoes.  
They worked very hard  
and grew lots of potatoes.  
Year after year,  
the potatoes grew.

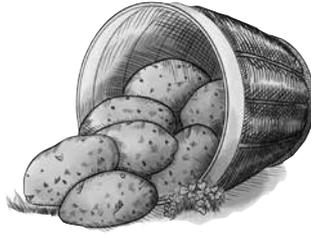
They were poor,  
but they had potatoes.  
The McGee family  
ate potatoes  
every day of the week.  
The potato  
was everything  
in Ireland.

“Thank God  
for potatoes!”  
said Mary McGee.  
“What would we do  
without potatoes?”

“Amen,”  
said Father Patrick.  
“And have you heard  
about old Mrs. Cleary?”

“Tell us!”  
Mary begged him.  
“You know  
what everyone is doing!”

And Father Patrick  
carried on.



## 2 Potato Problems

Each year,  
Johnny and Mary  
saved small potatoes.  
In spring  
they planted them  
in the ground.  
Before long,  
green potato sprouts  
popped up.

But one day  
Johnny saw trouble.  
The potato leaves  
had black spots  
all over them.

Johnny talked  
to the other farmers.  
They too were seeing  
black spots.

Father Patrick  
came to visit  
that night.  
“Everyone around here  
has black potato plants,”  
he said.  
“I hear  
it’s a blight.  
The plants  
are rotting!  
The potato crop  
could fail!  
People are afraid.”

“We can get by,”  
said Mary.  
“We have enough potatoes  
from last year.  
We can get through  
one bad year.”

And it was  
a bad year.  
The potato crop failed.  
The blight  
took everything.

The McGees got  
no potatoes at all.

The potatoes  
from last year  
were not enough  
to feed the family.  
And they had to save some  
to plant next year.  
Johnny and Mary  
were hungry,  
and Little John cried  
almost all the time.  
They gave him  
any real food  
they could get.  
They pretended  
to eat with him.  
When he wasn't looking,  
they ate weeds  
so their son  
could have enough.  
It was the only way  
for them  
to stay alive.

“Next year  
will be better,”  
Mary kept saying.

Johnny was glad  
when planting time  
came again.  
There was hope  
in the spring fields.  
He and Mary  
planted the little potatoes  
they had saved.  
Johnny watched  
as the new shoots  
came up in rows.  
“It is good  
to see green again,”  
he said to Mary.

Johnny checked  
the potatoes  
every day.  
One day  
the plants were green.

The next day  
they had a few spots.  
The day after that,  
they were black.

Johnny's heart  
was heavy  
when he told Mary  
the bad news.

“What shall we do?”  
Mary asked.  
“We have  
no old potatoes  
to fall back on!”

“We are not  
the only ones,”  
said Johnny sadly.  
“All of Ireland  
is in trouble.”

For a short time,  
England sent wheat  
to Ireland.  
“I'm glad

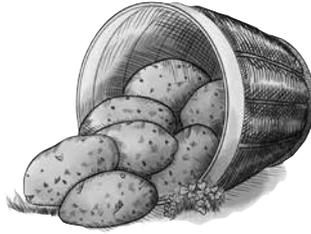
to have this wheat,”  
said Mary.  
“But we get  
so little of it.  
It doesn’t last long.”

And then  
wheat from England  
stopped coming.  
Everyone was hungry.  
People starved to death.  
Some people  
left for England,  
Canada, and America.  
People lay dead  
by the side of the road.  
Old Mrs. Cleary  
stayed in her cottage.  
All she could do  
was wait to die.

“We are so hungry,”  
Mary told Father Patrick.  
“We worry  
about our son.  
We might die  
just like the others.

Then what would become  
of Little John?  
What shall we do?"

“Keep the faith,  
my children.  
Please don't leave Ireland,”  
begged the priest.  
“Things will get better.  
We must keep praying  
that the potatoes  
will come back.”



### 3 Leaving Ireland

“I’m sorry, Father,”  
said Johnny  
to the priest.  
“Things are very bad —  
gone too far.  
Our mother country England  
is not helping us.  
If we stay in Ireland,  
we will surely die.  
We must think about  
our little son.  
There is nothing left  
for us to eat.  
We cannot wait  
another year.  
We are young.  
We must get away.  
We will go  
to America.”

“I understand,”  
said Father Patrick.

“But did you know  
it costs less  
to go to Canada?  
Some people walk  
from Canada to America.”

“What a long walk  
that would be!”  
said Johnny.  
“We are not as strong  
as we once were.  
It would be better  
to go to America.  
The American ships  
are better, too.  
And an American ship  
will take us  
straight to Boston.”

So Johnny and Mary  
did not pay their rent.  
They used the money  
to pay for their trip.  
Money could not buy food.  
But it could buy escape.

Father Patrick  
saw them off.

“You have my blessing,”  
he said.  
He hugged each one  
and patted them  
on the head.  
“God be with you.”

The McGee family  
went to Liverpool, England,  
across the Irish Sea.  
Some Irish people  
stayed in Liverpool.  
But the McGees  
boarded a ship.  
It carried animals  
as well as people.  
Animal noises  
followed them down  
under the ship’s deck.  
Cows.  
Pigs.  
Goats.  
Even geese.  
The animal smells  
and the salt air  
stayed in their noses  
all the way to Boston.

The McGees were three  
of 125 people  
on that ship.  
They made friends  
with a young man  
named Kennedy.  
His family's farm  
in Ireland  
was not big enough.  
One son  
had to leave.  
Kennedy lost  
a coin toss.  
He was the one  
to go to America.  
Everyone on the ship  
had a story.  
But Kennedy  
told funny stories  
that helped people  
pass the time.

In 40 days  
and 40 nights  
the McGees  
set foot in America.

## Glossary

Definitions and examples of certain words and terms used in the story

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### Chapter 1 — The Old Days page 1

**lap** — When a person sits, it is the space formed on top of the legs. Children and pets can sit there.

*She was holding her son Little John on her lap.*

**boil** — To cook something by heating it in very hot water.

*Boil a few potatoes in a big pot over the fire, and that is dinner!*

**carried on (to carry on)** — To continue talking, especially while telling a story.

*And Father Patrick carried on.*

---

### Chapter 2 — Potato Problems page 5

**sprouts** — A plant as it first appears on the surface of the ground.

*Before long, green potato sprouts popped up.*

**blight** — A plant disease.

**rotting (to rot)** — To change from being a healthy plant to becoming an unusable dying plant.

*I hear it's a blight. The plants are rotting!*

**crop** — An entire planting of an agricultural product.

*The potato crop could fail!*

**get by** — To survive with some difficulty.

*"We can get by," said Mary.*

**get through** — To survive with difficulty over a period of time.

*We can get through one bad year.*

**pretended (to pretend)** — To look like something is true, when it is not.

*They pretended to eat with him.*

**weeds** — Plants that are usually not useful.

*They ate weeds.*

**fall back on** — To have and use an extra supply of something in reserve.

*We have no old potatoes to fall back on!*

**starved (to starve)** — To die from not having food.

*People starved to death.*

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**Chapter 3 – Leaving Ireland** page 12

**saw them off (to see someone off)** —  
To go with someone to their departure.  
*Father Patrick saw them off.*

**blessing** — A kind of prayer given as an approval.  
*“You have my blessing”*

**hugged (to hug)** — to hold someone close to the body for a moment.  
*He hugged each one.*

**coin toss** — A coin is thrown up in the air, and a decision is made on the basis of how it lands – “heads or tails.”  
*Kennedy lost a coin toss.*

**set foot** — to arrive.  
*The McGees set foot in America.*

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**Chapter 4 – Greenhorns in America** page 16

**greenhorn** — A name for people who are inexperienced at something. Often they can be tricked.  
*“I’m here to help you greenhorns.”*