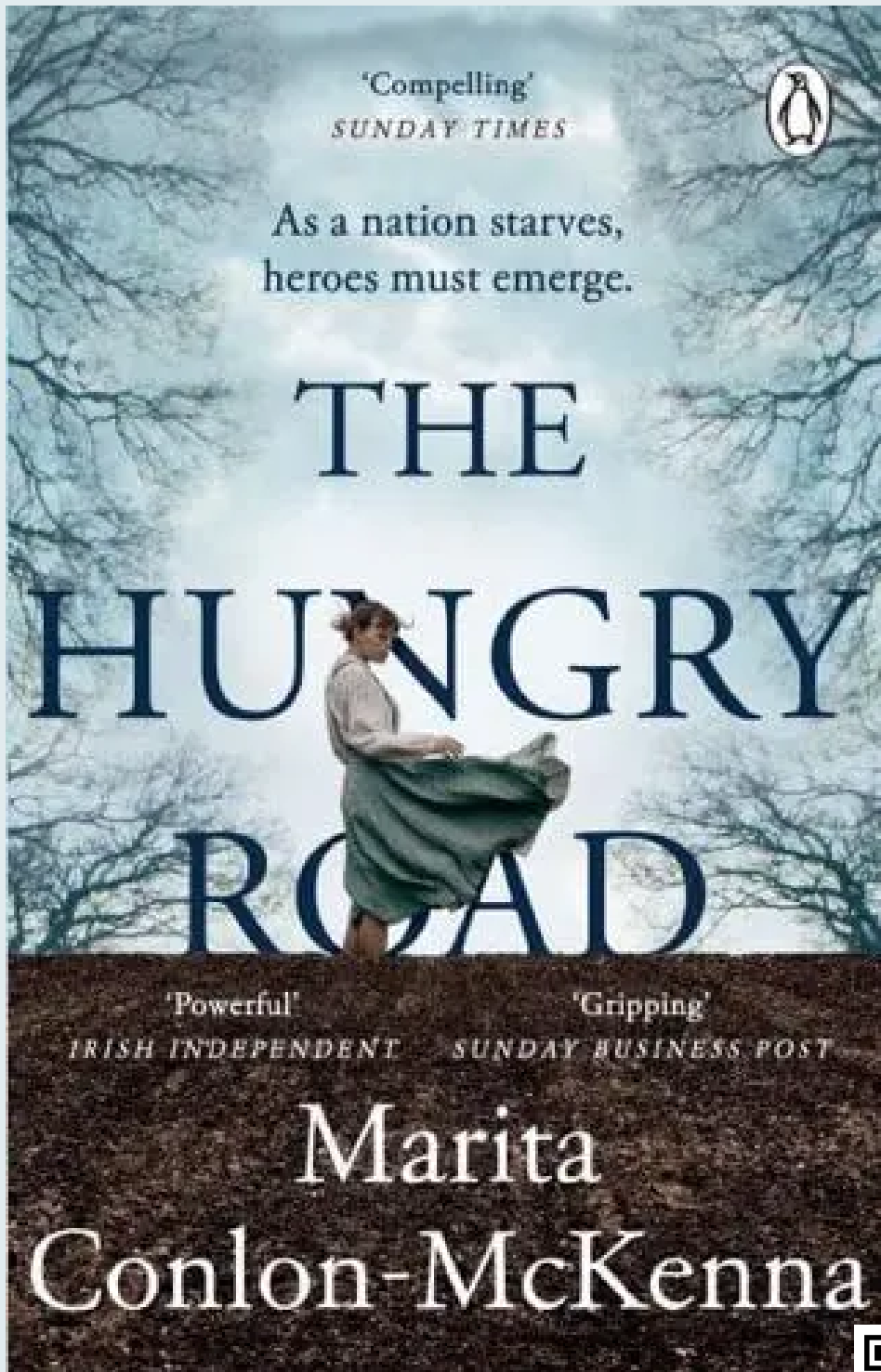




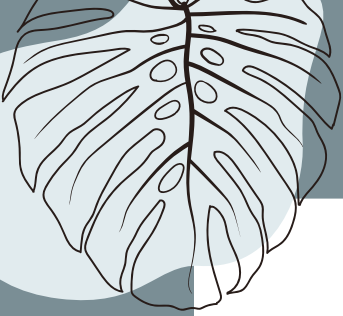
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Notes To Readers



This kit was created for book clubs to use in their discussions of *The Hungry Road* and contains spoilers

Contents Warnings

Please be aware that *The Hungry Road* contains themes of despair, suffering and death





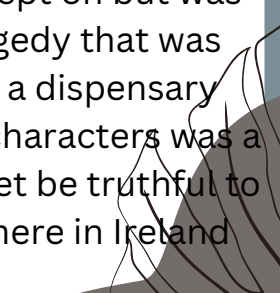
Interview with Marita Conlon-Mckenna

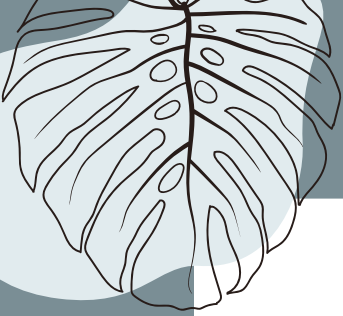
Anne-Marie O'Donnell: Where did your fascination with the Famine come from and how has it sustained your interest enough to write both children's and an adult book about it?

I am not sure where my fascination for the famine came from. History and the past fascinate me and have always made me want to discover and find out things. I do remember even when I was young realising how little information or books there were about The Great Irish Famine even though it was the most important and transformative event in our history. I couldn't understand why more hadn't been written about it. I had heard stories about the time of the Great Famine in West Cork from my mother and my aunt, but it was fate and hearing about the discovery of three small children's skeletons buried under a hawthorn tree, that riveted me.

I immediately took out my pen and began to write the story of this huge event through the eyes of three children. I wanted to write a book for my daughter and knew immediately this was the story to tell. The book would go on to be published and read and enjoyed by children all over the world. It certainly changed my life and since then I've found myself researching and discovering more about the Famine and have been involved in all kinds of events and projects around it.

I certainly had never intended to write a big Famine book again and had started work on a new book which had a small element about the Famine, when suddenly the research down in Skibbereen led me to a much bigger and bolder story. There I read about the town's doctor Dan Donovan and his heroism during those terrible years of The Great Hunger when starvation and sickness stalked the town and the huge efforts he and the good people of the town made to save lives and cope with the absolute tragedy that engulfed them. I was very nervous about it as I soon realised what an epic story I was writing; it was daunting, but I knew it was a story that deserved telling. I just kept on but was stunned by the sheer magnitude and scale of such human tragedy that was there to see in documents, reports, and Doctor Dan's diary of a dispensary doctor. Pulling it all together through the eyes of my four main characters was a task in itself, to make a book that would work on all levels and yet be truthful to the past. The reaction to *The Hungry Road* from readers both here in Ireland and overseas has amazed me.





Is writing a career you would want for your children?


Certainly, as I have loved every minute of being a writer and could not imagine a few days, weeks, or a time I wouldn't write! It is a part of who I am.

My children are all creative and write already. My daughter Amanda has had two books published very successfully already but is kept busy with a young family, another has developed big advertising campaigns, another works in film and writes scripts, and my son writes music and lyrics. They have all seen the satisfaction I get from my work and I think writing and creativity will always in some way be a part of their lives. However, the publishing world has changed since I started off and is more difficult. But the satisfaction of seeing your work in a book is enormous.

If you could live in any era of your choosing, which would it be and why?

I would probably go way back to the time of the Romans or even the Renaissance which has always held a fascination for me. There would be just so much to excite and discover and be a part of, once I was not a slave!





Reading Group Discussion Questions

What themes or messages did you notice while reading "The Hungry Road"?

How did the author develop the characters in the book?

Discuss the setting of the story and its significance to the plot.

What was the most impactful scene in the book for you and why?

How did the author create tension and suspense throughout the story?


Did any particular quotes or passages stand out to you? Share and discuss.

How did the historical context influence the events in the book?

What are your overall thoughts and feelings about the book and its ending?

How did the author's writing style contribute to your reading experience?

Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not?

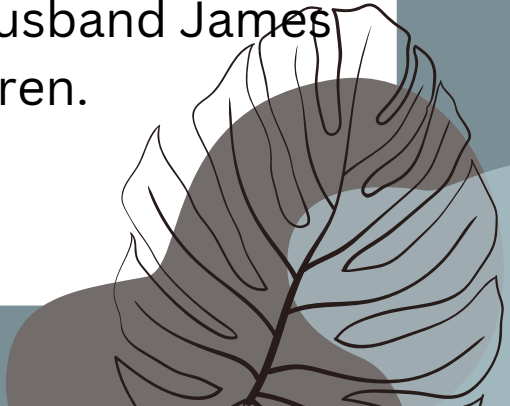




About Marita Conlon- McKenna



Marita Conlon-McKenna is an award winning Irish writer of both adult and children's fiction whose books are enjoyed by readers all across the world. Marita's work has been adapted for stage and T.V. Marita enjoys visiting schools, colleges, events, and festivals both in Ireland and overseas. She is a former Chair- Person of Irish Pen. She lives in Dublin with her husband James and has four adult children.





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Fields of Home
Marita Conlon-McKenna, Donald...



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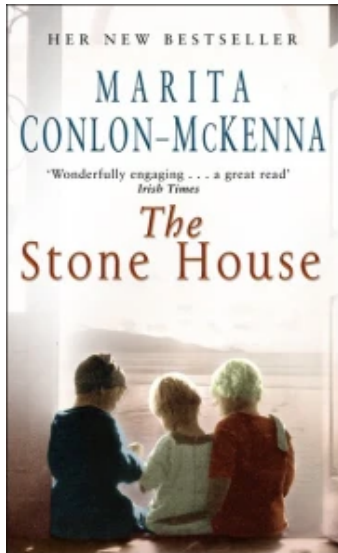
Children of the Famine - Book 1
Under the Hawthorn Tree
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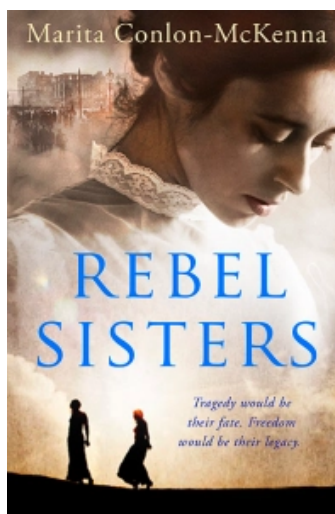




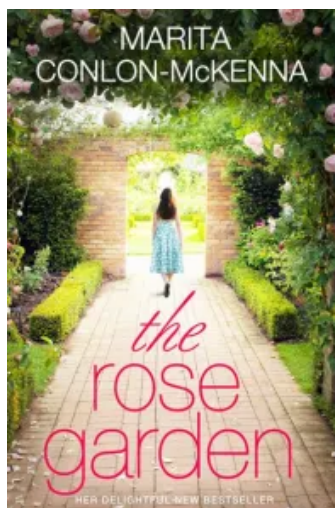
More from Marita Conlon-McKenna



Everything changes for Kate, Moya and Romy when they receive word that Maeve Dillon, their mother, is critically ill. It is time to return from Dublin, London and New York to Dunmore and the old stone house overlooking the Irish Sea where they grew up. But ancient jealousies surface as each sister confronts the past and the decisions they have made.



Rebel Sisters, Marita Conlon McKenna's powerful new novel, is set in Ireland during the 1916 Rising and is based on the real life Gifford sisters – Muriel, Grace, and Nellie – three young women at the very heart of the Rising. As the threat of the First World War looms, tension simmers under the surface of Ireland.



Molly's perfect life comes crashing down following the unexpected death of her husband David. She is left alone with a big old house to maintain, finances in disarray and her hopes for happiness in a heap. But Molly is a survivor.

