

BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

Bookclub-in-a-Box presents the discussion companion for Emma Donoghue's novel Room

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Quotations used in this guide have been taken from the text of the hardcover edition of *Room*. All information taken from other sources is acknowledged.

This discussion companion was written by Marilyn Herbert, B.Ed. She is the founder of Bookclub-in-a-Box and an international speaker with more than 30 years experience as a teacher and school librarian. Bookclub-in-a-Box is a unique guide to current fiction and classic literature intended for book club discussions, educational study seminars, and personal pleasure.

This guide was co-written by Allison Cannon. For more information about the Bookclub-in-a-Box team, visit our website.

Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion companion for Room

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BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Emma Donoghue's Room

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BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Readers and Leaders Guide

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is clearly and effectively organized to give you information and ideas for a lively discussion, as well as to present the major highlights of the novel. The format, with a Table of Contents, allows you to pick and choose the specific points you wish to talk about. It does not have to be used in any prescribed order. In fact, it is meant to support, not determine, your discussion.

You Choose What to Use.

You may find that some information is repeated in more than one section and may be cross-referenced so as to provide insight on the same idea from different angles.

The guide is formatted to give you extra space to make your own notes.

How to Begin

Relax and look forward to enjoying your book club.

With Bookclub-in-a-Box as your behind the scenes support, there is little for you to do in the way of preparation.

Some readers like to review the guide after reading the novel; some before. Either way, the guide is all you will need as a companion for your discussion. You may find that the guide's interpretation, information, and background have sparked other ideas not included.

Having read the novel and armed with Bookclub-in-a-Box, you will be well prepared to lead or guide or listen to the discussion at hand.

Lastly, if you need some more "hands on" support, feel free to contact us.

What to Look For

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is divided into easy-to-use sections, which include points on characters, themes, writing style and structure, literary or historical background, author information, and other pertinent features unique to the novel being discussed. These may vary slightly from guide to guide.

INTERPRETATION OF EACH NOVEL REFLECTS THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX TEAM.

Do We Need to Agree?

THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS NO.

If we have sparked a discussion or a debate on certain points, then we are happy. We invite you to share your group's alternative findings and experiences. You can contact us via our website (www.bookclubinabox.com), by email (info@bookclubinabox.com), or by phone (1-866-578-5571). We would love to hear from you.

Discussion Starters

There are as many ways to begin a book club discussion as there are members in your group. If you are an experienced group, you will already have your favorite ways to begin. If you are a newly formed group or a group looking for new ideas, here are some suggestions.

- Ask for people's impressions of the novel. (This will give you some idea about which parts of the unit to focus on.)
- Identify a favorite or major character.
- Identify a favorite or major idea.
- Begin with a powerful or pertinent quote. (Not necessarily from the novel.)
- Discuss the historical information of the novel. (Not applicable to all novels.)
- If this author is familiar to the group, discuss the range of his/her work and where this novel stands in that range.
- Use the discussion topics and questions in the Bookclub-in-a-Box guide.

If you have further suggestions for discussion starters, be sure to share them with us and we will share them with others.

Above All, Enjoy Yourself

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Key to the Novel

Author Information

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Emma Donoghue's award-winning novel *Room* is loosely based on true cases of abduction. It tells the story of resilient young Jack and his devoted mother (Ma), who have been held captive in an 11'x11' room since before Jack was born. Jack has never seen a real tree, or met another person other than Ma and "Old Nick," their captor. *Room's* story is told through five-year-old Jack's point of view and language, and his only experience of life has been from the inside of this small, isolated room. The novel's extraordinary accomplishment is letting the reader see the world from Jack's innocent, sheltered, uniquely fresh perspective.

One day, Jack and Ma devise a plan to escape to "Outside" where Ma tells him there are actual people and places like the ones he sees on TV. How and when they escape is a tense piece of storytelling, leading into the equally difficult issue of Ma and Jack's integration back into the world at large.

notes

Key to the Novel

- The concepts behind the novel are the devastating thoughts of kidnapping, long-term captivity, and the sexual abuse of a young woman. Donoghue has wrapped the dreadful story in the cloth of brave humanity. Rather than dwell on the terrible nature of these events, Donoghue presents a world of familiar issues such as motherhood, home, and day-to-day survival. The trick is that mother and son are locked in a confined environment; the perspective is Jack's and the reader's.
- Donoghue allows the reader to approach the difficult topics of parenting, identity, security, anger, and psychological balance from the basic and simple perspective of five-year-old Jack. His viewpoint creates a distance between the horror of our imagination and the real possibilities of the incident. Jack is innocent; he has been deliberately kept in the dark.
- But just as Jack learns about the complexity of life on the outside, the reader learns about life on the inside, slowly taking in the truth of the situation, a little bit at a time.

Author Information

- Emma Donoghue was born October 24, 1969, in Dublin, Ireland. She was the last of eight children and their father, Dennis Donoghue, is an academic literary critic. He is the chair of English and American Letters at New York University.
- Emma herself achieved a first-class honors BA in French and English from the University College of Dublin (without “learning to actually speak French”). In 1997, she earned a PhD in English from the



**Thanks for previewing this
Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion guide.**

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print or PDF format, just visit:**

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