

# DURHAM COUNTY LIBRARY

## Book Club Kit Discussion Guide

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*Room*

by

Emma Donoghue

(New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2010)

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**Author:** Born in Dublin in 1969, Emma Donoghue is a writer of contemporary and historical fiction whose novels include the bestselling *Slammerkin*, *The Sealed Letter*, *Landing*, *Life Mask*, *Hood*, and *Stir Fry*. Her story collections are *The Woman Who Gave Birth to Rabbits*, *Kissing the Witch*, and *Touchy Subjects*. She also writes literary history, and plays for stage and radio. She lives in London, Ontario, with her partner and their two small children. [From [www.roomthebook.com](http://www.roomthebook.com)]

**Summary:** To five-year-old-Jack, Room is the world.... It's where he was born, it's where he and his Ma eat and sleep and play and learn. There are endless wonders that let loose Jack's imagination-the snake under Bed that he constructs out of eggshells, the imaginary world projected through the TV, the coziness of Wardrobe beneath Ma's clothes, where she tucks him in safely at night, in case Old Nick comes.

Room is home to Jack, but to Ma, it's the prison where she's been held since she was nineteen-for seven long years. Through her fierce love for her son, she has created a life for him in that eleven-by-eleven-foot space. But Jack's curiosity is building alongside her own desperation—and she knows that Room cannot contain either indefinitely.... Told in the inventive, funny, and poignant voice of Jack, Room is a celebration of resilience-and a powerful story of a mother and son whose love lets them survive the impossible. [From [www.roomthebook.com](http://www.roomthebook.com)]

### Questions:

1. Why do you think the entire book is told in Jack's voice? Do you think it is effective?
2. What are some of the ways in which Jack's development has been stunted by growing up in Room? How has he benefited?
3. If you were Ma, what would you miss most about the outside world?
4. What would you do differently if you were Jack's parent? Would you tell Jack about the outside world from the start?
5. If Ma had never given birth to Jack, what would her situation in Room be like?
6. What would you ask for, for Sundaytreat, if you were Jack? If you were Ma?
7. Describe the dynamic between Old Nick and Ma. Why does the author choose not to tell us Old Nick's story?
8. What does joining the outside world do to Jack? To Ma?

9. What role do you think the media play in the novel?
10. In a similar situation, how would you teach a child the difference between the real world and what they watch on television?
11. Why are we so fascinated by stories of long-term confinement?
12. What were you most affected by in the novel?

[From [www.roomthebook.com](http://www.roomthebook.com)]