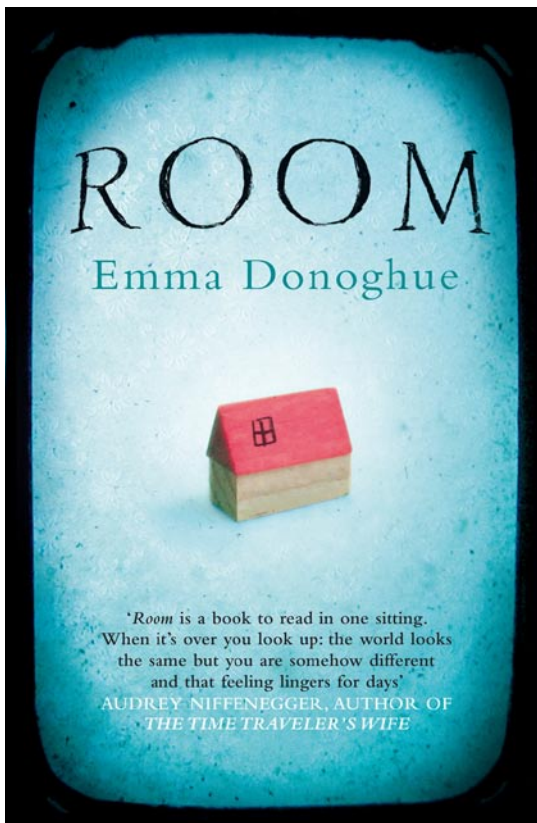




## Reader's Guide



### Other books by Emma Donoghue

*Stir-Fry* (1994)  
*Hood* (1995)  
*Slammerkin* (2000)  
*Landing* (2007)  
*The Sealed Letter* (2008)

# Room Emma Donoghue

Picador  
Price £12.99

[www.themanbookerprize.com](http://www.themanbookerprize.com)

**M**  
Man



## About the author

Born in 1969, Emma Donoghue is an Irish writer who lives in Canada. Her fiction includes the bestselling *Slammerkin*.

## Room

The novel opens as Jack turns five. Jack has never been outside of Room and although he and Ma have access to a TV, Jack believes that everything he sees on the screen is make-believe: as far as he's concerned, Room is the entire world. He's happy enough with his lot, however, because he doesn't know any different; Ma keeps him entertained, and he has her undivided attention. Their days have a structure, with time to sleep, a time to eat, to play, to watch TV - even a time for lessons. (And at night, which is when 'Old Nick' sometimes visits, Ma keeps Jack hidden away.)

But now Jack is five, and Ma tries to explain to him that - contrary to everything she's told him previously - there is a world beyond Room. Jack finds the concept impossible to grasp, but when Old Nick cuts the power supply to Room, Ma realizes their situation is even more precarious than she had previously thought. She decides they have to act, and comes up with an escape plan. For Jack, however, freedom is an alien concept, for Ma, too, life on the outside requires many adjustments; not least, the two have to learn how to live together in a world full of other people.

## Discussion points

Why do you think Emma Donoghue chose Jack, a five-year old child, to narrate the story? Is his voice convincing?

At the beginning, do you think Jack guesses at some level that there is a world beyond the Room?

Why do you think that the author chose not to tell us Old Nick's story?

What do you feel about the various media portrayals of Ma and Jack?

Do you think Ma made the right decision not telling Jack the truth about their situation, how would their lives have been different?

## Themed reading

John Boyne *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas*

Alice Sebold *The Lovely Bones*

Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night Time*

## Useful links

[www.themanbookerprize.com](http://www.themanbookerprize.com)

[www.emmadonoghue.com](http://www.emmadonoghue.com)

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

[www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/ireland/article6926743.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/ireland/article6926743.ece)