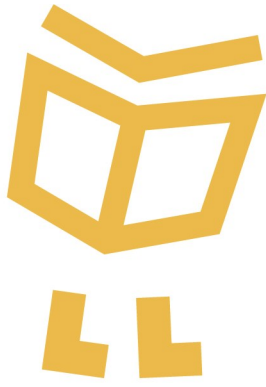


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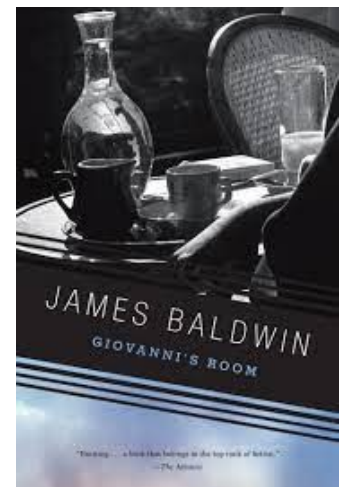


## Giovanni's Room

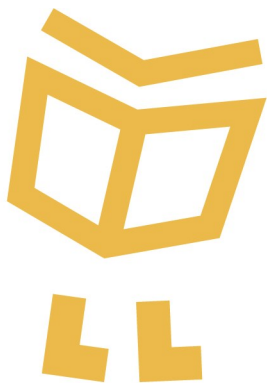
James Baldwin

### Discussion Questions

1. *Giovanni's Room* is the only one of Baldwin's novels without an African American character because he didn't want to write about race and homosexuality at the same time. Do you think this would still be an issue today?
2. What was David running from or searching for when he left his home in Brooklyn? In Chapter 1, what do we find out about his relationship with his father, aunt, and Joey?
3. What are some blatantly homophobic or transphobic passages, and how are they related to David's development in the novel? Do they serve a purpose?
4. What is the role of older gay men, especially Jacques and Guillaume, especially in relation to the young men? What gaps and hierarchies does that reveal within the gay male community, as it's being depicted here? What does all this have to do with the crime that happens later in the novel?
5. What's the role of Hella in the story? Does she stand for conventionality? Is Baldwin's depiction of her misogynistic?
6. On occasion, Baldwin describes characters as if they were animals or monsters or objects. Where do you find this in the novel? What does this convey?
7. What is the significance of Giovanni's room? What does it represent?
8. Were you sympathetic to Giovanni? What did you think about his history and how did that influence his current life?
9. Would a story like this be written today?
10. How did you feel about the end of the novel? What did you think the reader is supposed to take away from it?



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## About the Author

James Baldwin (1924–1987) was a novelist, essayist, playwright, poet, and social critic. His first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, appeared in 1953 to excellent reviews, and his essay collections *Notes of a Native Son* and *The Fire Next Time* were bestsellers that made him an influential figure in the growing civil rights movement. Baldwin spent much of his life in France, where he moved to escape the racism and homophobia of the United States. He died in France in 1987, a year after being made a Commander of the French Legion of Honor.

Via Penguin Random House Canada (<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/authors/1261/james-baldwin>)

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