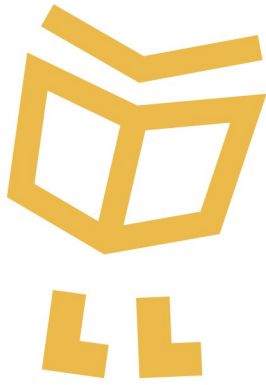


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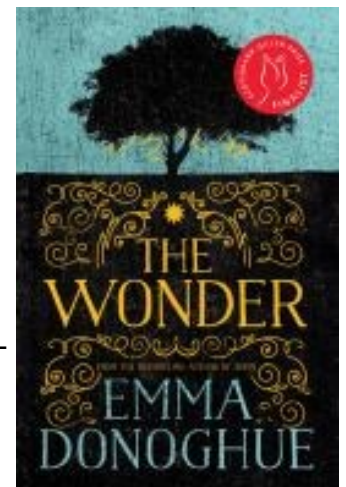


## The Wonder

Emma Donoghue

### Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe Lib Wright (consider the name, perhaps)—especially when we first meet her? How does she approach her move to Ireland, the people, superstitions, the food? When does it become evident that there is part of Lib's past she is not revealing to us? How reliable of a narrator is she?
2. Describe the Ireland that confronts Lib, the way in which Emma Donoghue presents the country in the 19th Century after the devastation of the infamous potato famine.
3. What about Anna O'Donnell? How does she differ from expectations, both yours and Lib's? When Lib first sees her, what is the state of Anna's health—does Lib find her as healthy as everyone claims she is?
4. Talk about the very complicated reasons for Anna's fasting. Is Anna too young to understand her decision? What responsibility do the family and the church have for Anna? What about the doctor's role?
5. As the days pass and Anna's condition deteriorates, Liz begins to feel she may be complicit in girl's demise. Is she?
6. How does Lib change from who she was when she first ventured into Ireland? How would you describe her as you progress through the novel?
7. The novel brings up basic philosophical and religious questions, one of which is what it means to give up the most vital necessity of life in the name of something greater than yourself. Is it admirable, mad, selfish, narcissistic?
8. What is the role of an outsider, like Lib? Does she have the right to intervene or an obligation to do so? What would you say or do to Anna?
9. The journalist asks Lib if she has "ever put to Ana, fair and square, that she must eat." Has Lib done so?
10. Discuss the book's title. What are the multiple meanings of "The Wonder"?
11. Do you see any parallels between this story and Donoghue's earlier book, *Room*? Think of small confined spaces, children, fragmented time, inner strength, and the power of love.



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## **About the Author**

Emma Donoghue was born in Dublin, Ireland, the youngest of eight children. She is the daughter of Frances (nee Rutledge) and academic and literary critic Denis Donoghue. Other than her tenth year, which she refers to as "eye-opening" while living in New York, Donoghue attended Catholic convent schools throughout her early years. She earned a first-class honours BA from the University College Dublin in English and French (though she admits to never having mastered spoken French). Donoghue went on receive her PhD in English from Girton College at Cambridge University. Her thesis was on the concept of friendship between men and women in 18th-century English fiction. At Cambridge, she met her future life partner Christine Roulston, a Canadian, who is now professor of French and Women's Studies at the University of Western Ontario. They moved permanently to Canada in 1998, and Donoghue became a Canadian citizen in 2004. She lives in London, Ontario, with Roulston and their two children, Finn and Una.

Source: <http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/10789-wonder-donoghue>

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