

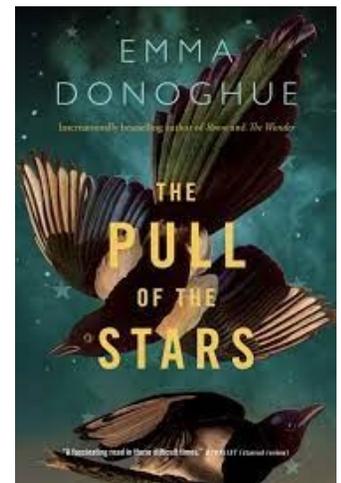


# The Pull Of The Stars

## Emma Donoghue

### Discussion Questions

1. What similarities do you see between the pandemic in the novel and the COVID-19 pandemic? What details are different? Do you think that people will be more or less likely to read this novel now in light of what is going on?
2. Do you think that your own opinion of the novel is influenced by your response to the day-to-day realities of living amidst COVID-19?
3. Although the influenza is the most immediate concern, *The Pull of the Stars* deals with other historical events as well: World War I is reaching its end and Julia's home country, Ireland, is in the midst of political turmoil regarding Home Rule. How does this total lack of normalcy affect Julia and the other characters?
4. How do the crises allow Julia to operate differently than she might have in a more normal era? Would the novel have unfolded in the same way if the influenza had been an isolated incident, and Julia and the others did not have to deal with the war or the heightened Irish politics?
5. "Here's the thing—[people] die anyway, from poverty rather than bullets. The way this godforsaken island's misgoverned, it's mass murder by degrees. If we continue to stand by, none of us will have clean hands" (p.209). What do you make of this argument, and of Lynn's continuation that "everything's politics" Do you agree that it is a political act to keep one's head down and reinforce an unjust status quo? Is complacency complicity?
6. What do you make of Julia's relationship with Bridie? How do the two of them even each other out?
7. Discuss the way that sexism affects Julia professionally.
8. How much sympathy are we meant to feel for Groyne? Are we meant to feel as Julia does, that he is an unlikeable chauvinist? Or should we, like Bridie, look deeper to see the tragedies that lie beneath the surface?





### About the Author

Born in Dublin in 1969, **Emma Donoghue** is a novelist, screenwriter and playwright. Her novel ***Room*** sold more than two million copies and won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Canada and the Caribbean). It was also shortlisted for the Man Booker and Orange Prizes as well as the Scotiabank Giller Prize. It sold more than two million copies. Donoghue scripted the Canadian-Irish film ***Room***, which was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Her fiction ranges from the contemporary (***Stir-Fry, Hood, Landing, Touchy Subjects, Akin***) to the historical (***Slammerkin, The Sealed Letter, Astray, Frog Music, The Wonder, The Pull of the Stars***). She has also written two books for young readers, ***The Lottery Plus One*** and ***The Lottery More or Less***.

This book is available for download as an eBook. For more information, please visit [lpl.overdrive.com](http://lpl.overdrive.com) or call 519-661-4600.

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