

## Book Club Discussion Guide



*Rage the Night by Donna Morrissey, Page 1 (July 2024)*

# Rage the Night

By Donna Morrissey

## About the author:

It was my good fortune to have been born and raised in an outport of 12 houses, and where we were only allowed to talk to six of those. It made for a real small growing up environment, but if you put a bell-jar over that place you'd come to understand every kind of conflict! Simply to say, people are complex, relationships even more so. The wealth of learning evoked in such a small culture (can we say that – a small culture??) will continue to feed me and my writing throughout this life and perhaps others.

“We are of our own making,” my mother always lectured. No doubt. Which is why we all have a unique story to tell. I’ve learned how we all live within myth, and one of the keys to meaningful living – and good writing – is to find that myth playing out within us, or within a character. And then bridge that myth to everyday life. Sometimes while thinking about my story, or that of a character’s, I falter. And should I continue to falter or get too lost within a feeling, I turn to the writings of the greats with the hopes of learning about whatever that feeling was that I got lost in.

Sometimes, I simply turn to my mum who I carry within me, and query such thoughts as, ‘Mom, when you buffs the down off the birds before cooking them – how is it you holds them so gently?’ And as she answers....’So’s not to break the skin, Donna, and sap the oil from the meat. The bird might be dead, but he’s still your supper...’

I write her words...Most times our greatest teachers are those who walk along the same shores as ourselves.

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May God bless the Beaches in White Bay, Newfoundland.

Source: <https://donnamorrissey.org/about/>

### About this book:

At once the intimate tale of one man's quest to discover the truth of his birth and a riveting account of a real-life Newfoundland tragedy from 1914, brilliantly and sensitively imagined by one of Canada's most beloved and bestselling authors.

When a deathbed confession uncovers secrets about his birth, twenty-year-old Roan—who has always believed himself an orphan, with no last name—sets off on a quest to discover the truth of his origins. His journey takes him across the snow-covered landscape of Newfoundland from the remote Northern Peninsula to St. John's and then onto the Newfoundland, one of the rickety and poorly equipped ships heading out to the sealing grounds for the spring hunt.

Between his farewell to Dr. Grenfell, the man who raised, educated, and cared for Roan since his toddlerhood, and the final discovery that will alter his life forever, Roan is tossed both emotionally and physically into harrowing situations that he could never have imagined. The people Roan meets along his journey are vivid and unforgettable, from young Ila, isolated and desperate as her mother coughs her life away in a frigid cabin, to the hulking, volcanic, unknowable Ashur Genge, whose own heartbreaking secret may hold the key to Roan's deepest desire.

As Roan's personal story entwines with the historical tale of the Newfoundland disaster, it is “the b'ys”—the simple men who risk their lives year after year on the ice—their brotherhood, their resilience, their heart, and their humour that carry him through tragedy and beyond.

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Rage the Night showcases Donna Morrissey's extraordinary empathy, her remarkable characters, and her unique literary voice; it is a masterwork from one of our finest storytellers.

Source: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/612626/rage-the-night-by-donna-morrissey/9780735239210>

### Discussion Questions:

(General fiction questions to get book club discussions off to a good start.)

1. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
2. Describe the main characters—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
  - Why do characters do what they do?
  - Are their actions justified?
  - Describe the dynamics between characters (in a marriage, family, or friendship).
  - How has the past shaped their lives?
  - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
  - Do they remind you of people you know?
3. Are the main characters dynamic—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
4. Discuss the plot:
  - Is it engaging—do you find the story interesting?
  - Is this a plot-driven book—a fast-paced page-turner?
  - Does the plot unfold slowly with a focus on character?
  - Were you surprised by complications, twists & turns?

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- Did you find the plot predictable, even formulaic?
5. Talk about the book's structure.
    - Is it a continuous story...or interlocking short stories?
    - Does the time-line move forward chronologically?
    - Does time shift back & forth from past to present?
    - Is there a single viewpoint or shifting viewpoints?
    - Why might the author have chosen to tell the story the way he or she did?
    - What difference does the structure make in the way you read or understand the book?
  6. What main ideas—themes—does the author explore? (Consider the title, often a clue to a theme.) Does the author use symbols to reinforce the main ideas? (See our free LitCourses on both Symbol and Theme.)
  7. What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?
  8. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?
  9. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? If so how does this book compare. If not, does this book inspire you to read others?
  10. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?

Source: LitLovers (<http://www.litlovers.com>)