

The Gathering  
(2007)

By

Anne Enright

Irish Cultural Center  
Book Discussion

Saturday, February 22, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Norton Room

### Discussion Guide:

Anne Enright is one of the leading Irish writers. She was the first Laureate for Irish Fiction (2015-2018). In 2007, she won the Man Booker Prize (for the novel we are reading). She has also won the Andre Carnegie Medal for Fiction and The Novel of the Year (for 2015). She has published eight novels and many short stories.

→ This novel considers the opening years of Irish independence. What issues does the author allude to as the country struggled to gain credibility with the people and sought to make their place in the world?

→ She confesses that she cannot tell whether she is remembering events correctly. What is the importance of conflict between truth and reality, reality and memory?

→ Clearly family and personal identity (and memory) are important in this novel. Consider the following quotation, for example. "History is only biological—that's what I think. We pick and choose the facts about ourselves—where we came from and what it means" (162).

→ Please suggest other instances of this theme in the novel. From your own memory / personal experiences, have you discovered the observation above (and others) to be accurate?

→ Consider Anne Enright in light of our theme for the year: how well does she create her characters, especially the female who narrates the novel? What narrative strategies does Enright use to tell her family story? Would you recommend this novel to a friend? Why/why not?

Looking Ahead: The selection for March will be The Little Red Chairs, one of Edna O'Brien's later novels.