

Recommended Reading List:

If you enjoyed *Kissing the Witch*,
try these other books from HarperCollins:



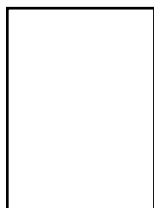
Dangerous Angels: The Weetzie Bat Books

By Francesca Lia Block



I Was a Teenage Fairy

By Francesca Lia Block



Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence

Edited by Marion Dane Bauer



Leaving Home

Stories selected by Hazel Rochman
and Darlene Z. McCampbell

Available at your local bookstore



Photo by Corm Henry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Donoghue has made a name for herself overseas as the host of a literary talk show on Irish television, and is an established playwright whose work has been performed in Dublin and Cambridge. She is the author of *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668–1801*, and the novels *Hood* and *Stir-Fry*. She lives in Cambridge, England.

Look for *Kissing the Witch* at your local bookstore or library. This reading group guide is available in bookstores everywhere, or call toll-free 1.800.242.7737 to order more (free of charge in packs of 10).

Joanna Cotler Books

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Reading Group Guide ISBN: 0-06-449358-X

Reading Group Guide



KISSING THE WITCH

By Emma Donoghue

Kissing the Witch, Emma Donoghue's refreshing collection of fairy tales, offers readers weaned on "happily ever after..." a startling new perspective on age-old tales. This reading group guide is designed to invite discussion, examine themes, and address issues raised in this luminous, fearless book.

In *Kissing the Witch*, women young and old wander a strange and delightful landscape in search of shelter, power, or their heart's desire. They work, struggle, marry for love or money, lose children or steal them, plot escape or revenge. Above all they tell each other their own stories. The forms are sometimes traditional, sometimes erotic, but always un-



Conjuring the intricate patterns and oral rhythms of traditional fairy tales, Emma Donoghue wraps age-old characters in a dazzling new skin.

“Kissing the Witch is written with luscious words you want to roll around on your tongue.”

“Innovative, almost musical.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Beautifully hewn prose.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Breathtakingly fresh...Once upon a time will never be the same.”

—*Bay Area Reporter*

“A masterful, gorgeous, and wickedly well-written book.”

—Francesca Lia Block

- 1 How do fairy tales inform our lives?
- 2 In what ways does Emma Donoghue undermine the conventions of the fairy tale?
- 3 By weaving all of the tales together, what might the author be trying to say about these women and their stories? About women in general?
- 4 In what ways are the women in these stories the same? In what ways different?
- 5 How important is homosexuality in these stories? Would you consider this book Gay Literature? Why?

- 6 At the end of *The Tale of the Rose*, the author writes, “And as the years flowed by, some villagers told travelers of a beast and a beauty who lived in the castle... and others told of two beauties, and others, of two beasts.” What factors could contribute to these various perceptions? Do you think the beauty and her beast are lovers? Does it matter to the story?
- 7 Which of these stories is your favorite? Why? Which best captures the situation of women today?
- 8 How are men portrayed throughout the stories? What are their views on women? Does this seem to differ from men’s perceptions of women in traditional fairy tales?
- 9 Why does the author entitle this book “Kissing the Witch”?
- 10 In traditional fairy tales, we know these stories by the names of the women who star in them (Cinderella, Snow White, Rapunzel, etc.). However, Emma Donoghue chooses to name her tales after the inanimate objects in the stories. What relationship do the women have to the objects? What does each object symbolize in these stories?