



# The Gathering

by Anne Enright

Published 2007  
272 pages  
2007 Booker Prize

## Plot Summary

First line: "I would like to write down what happened in my grandmother's house the summer I was eight or nine, but I am not sure if it really did happen."

## Characters

Veronica Hegarty, Liam Hegarty  
Mr. & Mrs. Hegarty + 12: Midge, Bea, Ernest, Stevie, Ita, Mossie, Liam, Veronica, Kitty, Alice, and the twins, Ivor and Jem  
Ada, Charlie, Lambert Nugent  
Tom, Emily, Rebecca

## Setting

Ireland, England

## Point of View

First person - Veronica

## Author Info

Anne Enright was born in Dublin where she currently lives and works. She is the author of several short stories and essays and three other novels: *The Wig My Father Wore*, *What Are You Like?*, and *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*. She has an undergraduate degree in English and philosophy from Trinity College Dublin and an M.A. in creative writing from the University of East Anglia. She is married and has two children.

Veronica Hegarty narrates the story of her Irish Catholic family of twelve children. The story centers on a disturbing event that occurred one summer when she and two of her siblings, Liam and Kitty, were sent to live with their grandmother. Liam never quite recovers from the events of that summer and some thirty years later has killed himself. As the family gathers for Liam's wake and funeral, Veronica, whose life is picture perfect on the outside, must confront some of her own demons.

## Discussion Questions

- Is Veronica a reliable narrator? Do you trust her narrative? Her memories?
- How far back do you think a mistake can be traced? Are Veronica's grandparents at fault for what happens to Liam?
- How significant is distance – both physical and emotional – to the story?
- Is this Liam's story or Veronica's? Who do you sympathize with most?

## Websites

### Anne Enright

<http://www.groveatlantic.com/grove/bin/wc.dll?groveproc-genauth-1603-0>

### The Gathering

<http://www.amazon.com/Gathering-Man-Booker-Prize/dp/0802170390>

### Anne Enright on Writing

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,2289230,00.html>

### Reading Group Guide

[www.randomhouse.co.uk/offthepage/guide.htm?command=Search&db=/catalog/main.txt&eqjsbndata=0224078739](http://www.randomhouse.co.uk/offthepage/guide.htm?command=Search&db=/catalog/main.txt&eqjsbndata=0224078739)

