

Book Club Discussion Guide



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The Woman in Cabin 10

By Ruth Ware

About the author:

Ruth Ware grew up in Lewes, in Sussex and studied at Manchester University, before settling in North London. She has worked as a waitress, a bookseller, a teacher of English as a foreign language and a press officer.

Her debut thriller *In a Dark, Dark Wood* was an instant *New York Times* bestseller in the US, and a Richard and Judy pick and Sunday Times bestseller in the UK. It was optioned for film by New Line Cinema with Reese Witherspoon attached to produce.

The follow up, *The Woman in Cabin 10* was a number one *New York Times* bestseller. Since then her books have appeared on bestseller lists around the world, and all three have been optioned for either film or TV.

Sources: Author's website (ruthware.com)

About this book:

From *New York Times* bestselling author of the “twisty-mystery” (*Vulture*) novel *In a Dark, Dark Wood*, comes *The Woman in Cabin 10*, an equally suspenseful and haunting novel from Ruth Ware - this time, set at sea.

In this tightly wound, enthralling story reminiscent of Agatha Christie's works, Lo Blacklock, a journalist who writes for a travel magazine, has just been given the assignment of a lifetime: a week on a luxury cruise with only a handful of cabins. The sky is clear, the waters

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calm, and the venerated, select guests jovial as the exclusive cruise ship, the Aurora, begins her voyage in the picturesque North Sea.

At first, Lo's stay is nothing but pleasant, but as the week wears on, frigid winds whip the desk, gray skies fall, and Lo witnesses what she can only describe as a dark and terrifying nightmare: a woman being thrown overboard. The problem? All passengers remain accounted for - and so, the ship sails on as if nothing has happened, despite Lo's desperate attempts to convey that something (or someone) has gone terribly, terribly wrong...

With surprising twists, spine-tingling turns, and a setting that proves as uncomfortably claustrophobic as it is eerily beautiful, Ruth Ware offers up another taut and intense read in *The Woman in Cabin 10* - one that will leave even the most sure-footed reader restlessly uneasy long after the last page is turned.

Source: Publisher's website (simonandschuster.ca)

Discussion Questions:

1. What's the effect of having Lo's e-mails and various news reports interspersed throughout Lo's narration? In what ways do they help you better understand what's happening aboard the Aurora?
2. When Lo first enters the ship, she says, "I had a sudden disorienting image of the Aurora as a ship imprisoned in a bottle - tiny, perfect, isolated, and unreal" (p. 37). In what ways does this statement foreshadow the events that take place on the ship? Describe the Aurora. In what ways do you think life on the ship may seem unreal? Discuss the book's title. Why do you think Ware chose it? Did the title influence your reading of the novel? If so, how?

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3. Who is Carrie? Did you like her? Why or why not? Describe her relationship with Lo. In what ways, if any, are the two women alike? How do Lo's feelings about Carrie change as Lo gets to know her? Did your opinion of Carrie change as you read?
4. Lo questions Alexander about eating fugu during dinner aboard the Aurora, and he tells her that the fact it is poisonous is "what makes the experience" (p. 74). What does Alexander mean by his statement? Lo seems dubious about the appeal of it. Does Lo strike you as someone who takes risks? Were you surprised by any of her risky actions aboard the Aurora? Which ones, if any?
5. After Lo's flat is burglarized, she calls Velocity's assistant features editor, Jenn, and tells her about it. Lo says, "I told her what happened, making it sound funnier and more farcical than it really had been" (p. 13). Why do you think Lo underplays the break-in? How might this make her feel more in control? Have you ever underplayed an event of significance in your life?
6. When Lo panics on one of her first nights aboard the Aurora, she says, "I imagined burying my face in Judah's shoulder and for a second I nearly burst into tears, but I clenched my teeth and swallowed them back down. Judah was not the answer to all this" (p. 49). Why is Lo so resistant to accepting help from Judah? Do you think that she's right to be reticent? Describe their relationship. Do Lo and Judah support each other?
7. When Nilsson challenges Lo's claim that she's seen something happen in the cabin next to hers, she tells him, "Yes, someone broke into my flat. It has nothing to do with what I saw" (p. 141). Did you believe her? Did you think that the break-in made Lo more jumpy and distrustful? Give some examples to support your opinion.
8. When Lo first speaks to Richard Bullmer, she notices that he gives her "a little wink" (p. 79). What is the effect of this gesture? What were your initial impressions of Bullmer? Did you like him, or were you suspicious of him? After a prolonged conversation with

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- Bullmer, Lo says, "I could see why [he] had got to where he had in life" (p. 194). Describe his manner. What does Lo think accounts for his success?
9. Archer tells Lo that self-defense is "not about size, even a girl like you can overpower a man if you get the leverage right" (p. 73). Is Lo able to do so? What kind of leverage does she have? What different kinds of power and leverage do the people on the Aurora use when dealing with each other? How did you react?
 10. Judah tells Lo that "I still think, in spite of it all, we're responsible for our own actions" (p. 334). Do you agree? In what scenes did you think the deception and violence that occurred were justified? In what scenes did you think it not justified?
 11. When Lo sees the staff quarters on the Aurora, she says, "the rooms were no worse than plenty of cross-channel ferries I'd traveled on.... But it was the graphic illustration of the gap between the haves and have-nots that was upsetting" (p. 113). Contrast the guest quarters to those of the crew. Why does Lo find the discrepancy so unsettling? Much of the crew seemed unwilling to speak to Lo. Do you think this was caused by the "gap between the haves and have-nots"? Or some other reason?
 12. Lo tells Judah, "You don't know what goes on in other people's relationships" (p. 333). Describe the relationships in *The Woman in Cabin 10*. Did you find any particularly surprising? Which ones, and why?
 13. Bullmer tells Lo, "Why wait?... One thing I've learned in business—now almost always is the right time" (p. 190). Do you agree with his philosophy? In what ways has this attitude led to Bullmer's success? Does this attitude present any problems aboard the Aurora? Do you think Lo shares the same life philosophy as Bullmer? How would you describe Lo's philosophy on life?
 14. Describe Lo's relationship with Ben. She tells him "[e]verything I hadn't told Jude. What it had been like....that I was vulnerable in a way I'd never thought I was before that night" (p. 82). Why does Lo share all this information with Ben rather than Jude? Did you

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think that Ben had Lo's best interests at heart? Why or why not? Were you surprised to learn of their history?

Source: *LitLovers*

litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/10720-woman-in-cabin-10-ware?start=3

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