

## **Book Review Roar by Cecelia Ahern**

**Ms. Asha Mohan**

### **Abstract**

*"I am a woman, hear me roar; in numbers too big to ignore"*

– Helen. Reddy and Ray Burton

*Cecelia Ahern brings 30 fables highlighting different dilemmas women face. The keenly observed stories resonate a truth that hides deep within us. The review discovers metaphorically narrated stories reflecting each one of us as it pivots women in various aspects of life. The recent change shows the diminishing patriarchy in the society. More facilities to girls' education and equality in career opportunities for women are slowly being practiced in the present world. Women of the present are considered more privileged than in the past but still when the frustration builds in or when met at a crossroad is it only the misogyny that causes women from making a selfless decision? The reviewer has unveiled the secrets of women empowerment through critically analysing each story and their life-affirming outcome. An assurance that each story will relate to you or someone you know.*

*In a humorous, caring and yet astounding way the stories captures when we all want to or once wanted to Roar. A rare and thought-provoking book, that speaks to women of all ages.*

**Keywords: Womanhood, Gender study, Feminism**

### **Review**

Ahern, C (2018). Roar: Thirty Women. Thirsty Stories, Harper Collins Publishers UK.

The book to be reviewed is Roar from the best-selling Irish author Cecelia. Ahern. Cecelia Ahern completed her degree in Journalism and Media Communications. Her first novel P.S. I Love You was published in the year 2004. Till date she has written 17

novels including Roar. She has sold 25 million copies internationally which was published in 40 countries in 30 languages.

The novel is entirely a work of fiction published by Harper Collins Publishers UK on 1st November, 2018. Including the paperback it is a total of 352 pages. There are 30 stories narrated as allegories. Each story involves different dilemmas that

women face. The book is reviewed by Ms. Asha Noella Mohan.

The reviewer has understood the literary meaning of the book and has interpreted based on her opinion. Three questions given on the back cover of Roar increased the curiosity of the reviewer to read more. Have you ever imagined a different life? Have you ever stood at the crossroads, undecided? Have you ever had a moment when you wanted to roar? The content of the book fascinated the reviewer, as each title of the story starts with, 'The woman who' indicating past tense and a ray of hope for some positive outcome. In none of the 30 stories the main characters are given names because the author wants us to relate with the women in the stories. Every story exhibits women overcoming different challenges on a regular basis. The story portrays a reflection of the demons women fight against; these demons are not the patriarchy or the misogyny of the society we live in but the lack of belief in self-empowerment.

The glimpse of all the thirty stories is given below:

The woman who slowly disappeared 'I'm Here, I'm here' shows the need of how every time we thrive to prove ourselves. We wait for acknowledgement from people we love, if not given we tend to think we are not efficient and forget to

appreciate ourselves.

The woman who was kept on the shelf is how we might believe our family and friends define our identity. Career can be sacrificed for taking care of our loved ones till one day everyone has moved on and we have been wasting our skills and talents to rust, never too late to crash our shelf and declare to start working on a dream job or just our dreams.

The woman who grew wings talks about how even a strong woman who has faced so many challenges gracefully yet finds it intimidating when women around her get judgemental. Sometimes you do not need wings to fly but just liberty from your own negative assumptions.

The woman who was fed by a duck reflects on how easily as a woman we happen to blame our frustrations on others. Anger when hidden can be more dangerous to us than others around us.

The woman who found bite marks on her skin exposes the biggest enemy 'Guilt'. The inability to be everything to everyone at all times can be overwhelming. Celebrate everything, even if it is a cup of coffee or to take a moment for you. Do not let the guilt of 'me-time' bite you.

The woman who thought her mirror was broken is about our perception of beauty being related to physical

appearance. The older face, fuller cheeks, the flabby tummy and the wrinkles are also perfect.

The woman who was swallowed up by the floor and who met lots of other women down there too is when an unintended mistake leads to embarrassment and makes you want to be buried in a cringe hole and never see the light again; your worst nightmare has come true in front of others. Today one might have gone blank while giving an important presentation, tomorrow something worse could happen, reconcile with that moment and move on, you cannot stay in the dark forever.

The woman who ordered special sea bass special is how you can be an inspiration by showing another woman how you overcame your weakness or even better, how you accepted it and learn to strengthen yourself.

The woman who ate photographs is for all those who live in the past. 'How I wish to go back to my younger days?' or 'How I wish I never did that?' we lived those moments, they are already a part of us we're made of them but we still have new moments to make.

The woman who forgot her name shows, though we become a mother nothing can replace the love of our own mother. You may be the most successful person, best mother, but it

is only your mother who will always remind you without hesitation who you are and where you came from.

The woman who had a ticking clock reminds the beauty of time, not everyone's time needs to synchronize. One can get married at 21 or even 40 or maybe never, each have their own time, this is not a choir to have a rhythmic ticking, let your miracle happen when it is supposed to.. Have patience.

The woman who sowed seeds of doubt encourage the fear of doubts, if you are always self-assured how would you change your ways? Own your uncertainties to cultivate something new.

The woman who returned and exchanged her husband, what is the best relationship? Clumsy and imperfect which is real and honest or perfect but with the side note of unhappiness? No one is perfect for each other; it is the will of wanting to work together for the relationship and never giving up.

The woman who lost her common sense shows, when something is not done the traditional way it is OKAY! The path is yours and it is unique but while making that change do not endanger your life or the lives of others.

The woman who walked in her husband's shoes portrays a different

mode of societal compliances that we can never imagine. Women can be unfairly exclusive but a man has to protect and defend the family. Just like how you cannot explain what it's like to be a woman, you cannot explain what it's like to be a man.

The woman who was a featherbrain is a warning that sometimes you need to put yourself first. Take care of others but you need to relax your mind, take a step back, do something you love, read a book, hear music or just take a nap.

The woman who had her heart on her sleeve assures that the keeper of your heart should be you. Surround yourself with people who give you tools to protect yourself and not take over.

The woman who wore pink will help you live as an individual regardless of society's punishment. Live as a human being, not as a male or female.

The woman who blew away talks about the kind that can only see flaws. When your mind is filled only with yourself and no room for anything with substance or meaning, it will reflect in your actions. Love yourself but not by being worried only about the superficial existence.

The woman who had a strong suit refers on nurturing a personal strength through a talent, skill or forte. Don't stop, keep going and keep learning.

The woman who spoke woman highlights all women speak man, they were raised bilingual. However with the right voice, men will learn to understand them over time, just as women have learned to understand the language of men.

The woman who found the world in her oyster is about acceptance. The edible oysters don't produce pearls and the pearl oysters are not edible, same goes with life. You cannot have it all, don't sulk about it and seize the opportunities that life has to offer.

The woman who guarded gonads teaches that abortion should not be treated as a collective decision. It is her body and it has nothing to do with you, let that woman not be judged.

The woman who was pigeonholed is how easily we tag someone. Control freak, mother, sly, liar, survivor, wife, bossy, flirt – STOP with the labelling because a woman can be described more than one word.

The woman who jumped on the bandwagon is a journey of two women to the same destination. One exhausts her way to the highest point because she enjoys what she does and the other woman uses vindictive actions to reach her aim. Which one are you? In any journey only diligence can prevail.

The woman who smiled is a pleasant reminder that you need to smile

because you want to smile and not to hide your misery.

The woman who thought the grass greener on the other side is how most of the times we feel miserable and unappreciative of what we have. Count your blessings for jealousy will only make your heart rot.

The woman who unravelled is to putting each other back together again. Ask for help when needed, be the healing when asked for.

The woman who cherry-picked encourages to analyse, inspect, scrutinize and evaluate your experience for broadening the perspective of life. Nothing in life comes easy. Slowly you will learn to make good decisions. The woman who roared: A woman of any background, characteristics and profession deserves a better, happy and safe life. Don't scream your frustration, ROAR.

The book makes the reader reflect whether one actually understands feminism and true empowerment. The overall outcome is to be or in some cases TRY to be an optimist. The author does not blame anyone instead she focuses on how we all are in this together. By the end of the book you will relate to some stories. It talks about the women who befriend us, encourage us and make us brave. The author repeatedly emphasizes that

whatever the society has to offer it is solely the responsibility of an individual to make a change. Courage plays a vital role but it starts with willingness to accept yourself for who you are. The author gives an assurance when asked for help your best people will assist you or an unexpected stranger might succour but most of the times you need to help yourself. A woman might play different roles but in the journey of life the author reminds us not to forget our own identity; If this has to be achieved by daring to live for your own choices and nurture for your own amelioration, then so be it.

The ideas of some stories can get repetitive. Since all the stories are narrated with metaphorical reference which for some readers the true meaning of what the author tries to deliver might be lost. The writing style of Cecelia Ahern for this particular book is distinctive compared to her other novels which could lead to misinterpretation from the reader's end. The author has innovatively encouraged the idea of loving yourself and discovering your own strengths with the acceptance of your weakness. While in most of her novels she narrates remarkable love stories, Roar is no exception for the idiosyncratic narration. However, some stories might come across as outlandish, as you may not relate to every story. The

reviewer's main concern is that the book mainly talks about self-empowerment which ideally every human requires. Since the book is promoted as women-centric, the men audience might not show interest in the book.

Cecelia Ahern encourages living as a human and not as a gender. You will feel content when each woman in the story discovers her strength; Celebrate even with flaws as she holds a power to make a change. It is okay to make a mistake. Alas! We are just human.

Roar is an innovative and unique take on feminism.

### **Reference**

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