Eleanor Oliphant—despite her social isolation and the rules she sets to survive weekends—insists that she is just fine. But is she really? The gentle overtures of a coworker who accepts her as she is gets things rolling and gives her the emotional support she needs when a horrific (and embarrassing) event forces her to reevaluate her life. As it turns out, Eleanor Oliphant is absolutely not completely fine... but she will be.


About the Author: Gail Honeyman is a graduate of the universities of Glasgow and Oxford. Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine is a #1 New York Times bestseller, and has won awards around the globe, including the Costa First Novel Award, the British Book Awards Book of the Year, and the BAMB Reader's Choice Award. This is Honeyman's debut novel and she lives in Glasgow, Scotland.

Questions for Discussion

1. Knowing the truth about Eleanor’s family, look back through the book to revisit her exchanges with her mother. Did you see what was ahead? How did Honeyman lay the groundwork for the final plot twist?

2. What are the different ways that the novel’s title could be interpreted? What do you think happens to Eleanor after the book ends?

3. Eleanor says, “These days, loneliness is the new cancer – a shameful, embarrassing thing, brought upon yourself in some obscure way. A fearful, incurable thing, so horrifying that you dare not mention it; other people don’t want to hear the word spoken aloud for fear that they too might be afflicted” (p. 227.) Do you agree?

4. What does Raymond find appealing about Eleanor? And why does Eleanor feel comfortable opening up to Raymond?

5. Eleanor is one of the most unusual protagonists in recent fiction, and some of her opinions and actions are very funny. What were your favorite moments in the novel?

6. “Did men ever look in the mirror, I wondered, and find themselves wanting in deeply fundamental ways? When they opened a newspaper or watched a film, were they presented with nothing but exceptionally handsome young men, and did this make them feel intimidated, inferior, because they were not as young, not as handsome?” (p.74). Eleanor’s question is rhetorical and slightly tongue-in-cheek, but worth answering. What are your thoughts? If men don’t have this experience, why not? If they do, why is it not more openly discussed?

7. Eleanor is frightened that she may become like her mother. Is this a reasonable fear? What is the balance of nature and nurture?
8. Is it possible to emerge from a traumatic childhood unscathed?

9. Eleanor says, “If someone asks you how you are, you are meant to say FINE. You are not meant to say that you cried yourself to sleep last night because you hadn’t spoken to another person for two consecutive days. FINE is what you say” (p. 226-227). Why is this the case?

10. What is the difference between loneliness and being alone? Which of these applies to Eleanor and why?

(Questions provided by the publisher)