

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine

By Gail Honeyman

First published in 2017



Genre and Subject

Chick Lit

Friendship

Synopsis

Eleanor Oliphant has learned how to survive - but not how to live Eleanor Oliphant leads a simple life. She wears the same clothes to work every day, eats the same meal deal for lunch every day and buys the same two bottles of vodka to drink every weekend. Eleanor Oliphant is happy. Nothing is missing from her carefully timetabled life. Except, sometimes, everything. One simple act of kindness is about to shatter the walls Eleanor has built around herself. Now she must learn how to navigate the world that everyone else seems to take for granted - while searching for the courage to face the dark corners she's avoided all her life. Change can be good. Change can be bad. But surely any change is better than... fine?

Author Biography

Born and raised in Stirling in central Scotland to a mother who worked as a civil servant and a father in science, Honeyman was a voracious reader in her childhood, visiting the library "a ridiculous number of times a week.

She studied French language and literature at Glasgow University, before continuing her education at the University of Oxford for a postgraduate course in French poetry. However, she decided that an academic career was not for her and started a string of "backroom jobs", first as a civil servant in economic development and then as an administrator at Glasgow University.

While working as an administrator, Honeyman enrolled in a Faber Academy writing course, submitting the first three chapters of what would become *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* to a competition for unpublished fiction by female writers, run by Cambridge's Lucy Cavendish College. The book went on to earn numerous awards and wide critical acclaim and won the Costa First Novel Award in 2017.

Discussion Starters

- Why do you think Eleanor leads a lonely life? What factors contribute to her unconventional personality?
- What are some things that Eleanor has to learn that most of us take for granted? Why does she want to change her appearance?
- Why does Eleanor feel sorry for beautiful people? Do you think there's some truth in her reasoning? Why or why not?
- Describe Eleanor's relationship with her mother. Why do you think Eleanor keeps in regular contact with her?

- Little gestures of kindness mean a lot to Eleanor. Why? Do you think most people overlook the importance of thoughtfulness?
- Eleanor often speaks her mind. Does her forthrightness make you uncomfortable or make you cheer for her?
- How does Eleanor and Raymond's relationship evolve? Where do you see them in five years?
- Raymond tells Eleanor that she deserves nice things. Why do you think he feels that way? Do you agree with him?
- When does Eleanor start to feel hopeful about her life? What signs of positive change did you notice in her day-to-day routine?
- How did you feel about the ending of the book? Did it change your perspective about Eleanor?

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