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BOOK CLUB



May, 2019: Bobbi presents *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*

In May, Bobbi Wexler led the discussion of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, a debut novel by Gail Honeyman. Accidentally, the book was recommended to us by the publisher of April's selection, *Woman in the Window* by A.J. Finn. While Finn's book is a bona fide thriller, it shares some themes with *Oliphant*.

Oliphant's author was born in Central Scotland and studied French language and literature at Glasgow University. Ms. Honeyman is 47 years old and published the novel two years ago. While employed as an administrator at Glasgow University, she enrolled in a writing course submitting the first three chapters of her nascent novel. Last December, *Variety* reported Reese Witherspoon would produce and star in a movie version of the novel slated to be released Valentine's Day 2020.

Most agreed the book had many humorous moments. The title character obviously led a sheltered, if not troubled life and the extent of her cloistered existence is revealed slowly by the author. Eleanor is obviously intelligent--her observational skills are well-honed. However, her social and emotional skills are

woefully deficient. Perhaps her mother is responsible for her slow maturation? Will a budding rock star named Johnnie lift her out of her mother's clutches? Or will her co-worker, Raymond, pull her into the mainstream?

Whether Eleanor is completely fine is really up to the reader. Some suggested symptoms of adult autism, PTSD or some other mental illness. What is clear is the reader gets a profound description of loneliness. Or is it aloneness? Most felt she fit the role of a classic heroine without the classic Hollywood ending. (Sorry, no spoilers here!)