

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine – Reading Group Questions

- How do you think you would have treated Eleanor if she had been your work colleague? What do you think the world is like for those who are often seen as ‘different’ or ‘difficult’?
- “Today, it was ‘Top of the World’ by The Carpenters. That beautiful voice... she sounds so blissful, so full of love. Lovely, lucky Karen Carpenter.” Why do you think Eleanor described Karen Carpenter as ‘lucky’?
- “All the studies show that people tend to take a partner who is roughly as attractive as they are; like attracts like, that is the norm.” Do you agree?
- How does the novel deal with the idea of grief? Who does Eleanor grieve for?
- “I feel sorry for beautiful people. Beauty, from the moment you possess it, is already slipping away, ephemeral. That must be difficult.” Do you think there is any truth in this? How do you feel about beautiful people?
- “If I knew one thing about romance, it was that the perfect moment for us to meet and fall in love would arrive when I least expected it, and in the most charming set of circumstances.” Has this ever happen to you? Where do you think Eleanor has culled this idea from and is this sort of romantic ideal harmful or harmless?
- “That’s the thing: it’s *best* just to take care of yourself.” Is there truth in this?
- “I suppose one of the reasons we’re able to continue to exist for our allotted span in this green and blue vale of tears is that there is always, however remote it might seem, the possibility of change.” Is this the main theme of the novel?
- “Grief is the price we pay for love, so they say. The price is far too high.” Discuss.
- Why do you think Eleanor is the way she is? Do you think this is a result of nature or nurture?
- “These days, loneliness is the new cancer – a shameful, embarrassing thing, brought upon yourself in some obscure way.” Do you agree with Eleanor? If you do, why is it the case? How is loneliness viewed by society?
- What is the difference between loneliness and being alone? Which of these applies to Eleanor and why?
- “Is knowing always better than not knowing?” Discuss.
- What do you think the future holds for Eleanor and Raymond? How is their relationship portrayed – is it love? And if so, is it romantic love or platonic love?



THE
READING
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