

Finlay Donovan is Killing It Discussion Questions

by Elle Cosimano

Author Bio: (from Fantastic Fiction & website)

Elle Cosimano grew up in the Washington, DC, suburbs, the daughter of a maximum-security prison warden and an elementary school teacher who rode a Harley. In addition to writing novels for teens and adults, her essays have appeared in The Huffington Post and Time. Cosimano lives with her husband and two sons in Virginia.



Characters:

- **Finlay Donovan** – (39) – Writer. Single mother. Zachary (2 years) & Delia (4 years). Nanny is Veronica (Vero). Divorced. Ex-husband, Steven, cheated with Theresa, his current fiancé. Finlay’s sister is George.
- **Aaron** – Volunteer at the Animal shelter with Patricia Mickler.
- **Detective Nicholas Anthony** – The detective on the Haggerty case. Fairfax County Police.
- **Julian Baker** – The bartender at The Lush, a bar. Law student.
- **Andre Borokov** – Russian mafia hit man.
- **Irina Borokov** – Andre’s wife.
- **Steven Donovan** – Finlay’s ex-husband. Owns a sod farm. Engaged to Theresa, a real estate agent.
- **Georgia “George”** – Finlay’s older sister. Police officer in Violent Crimes.
- **Mrs. Haggerty** – Finlay’s across the street neighbor. Neighborhood snoop.
- **Harris Mickler** – Vice president of customer relations at a Financial Services Firm. Wife is Patricia. Man Finlay is “hired” to kill.
- **Patricia Mickler** – Harris Mickler’s wife. Investment banker. Volunteers at an animal shelter.
- **Aimee Shapiro Reynolds** – Theresa’s college friend. Finlay’s kids call her Aunt Amy.
- **Veronica “Vero” Ruiz** – Finlay’s nanny and babysitter. A college accounting student. Her cousin, Ramon, owns a towing and mechanic shop.
- **Feliks Zhirov** – Russian mafia enforcer.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. This story is told solely from Finlay's point of view. Did it work? Why or why not?
3. ***Finlay Donovan is Killing It*** has a different take feel than most mystery novels. What did you like about it that was different? What did you not like? Did you appreciate this twist on the genre?
4. The characters in this book are over the top and the situations are in no way realistic. Did this help or hurt the novel? Why? Does it help your reading enjoyment if you know the novel is going to be unrealistic before you start or do you like the surprise?
5. Were you surprised that Finlay is so intrigued by Patricia's Panera note that she actually decides to scope out Harris Mickler? Why or why not?
6. The lines between fiction and life are slightly blurred in this novel: Finlay is a character, but she is also a writer herself, and later in the story she uses the crimes she's been involved in as inspiration for her new book. What does this book-within-a-book setup add to ***Finlay Donovan Is Killing It***?
7. Vero finds Finlay in the garage with Mickler. Why do you think Vero got involved? What does she get out of it?
8. Vero and Finlay's relationship is central to the story - how does it change throughout the novel?
9. How do you feel about Vero's willingness to be a hit woman verses Finlay's accidental hitman status? Why?
10. When did you put the pieces together that Finlay's accidental hit was connected to organized crime? How does the Russian Mafia's involvement affect the story?
11. How does Finlay's relationship to motherhood (and especially single-motherhood) play out throughout the novel? Is she a good mom? Why do you think that?
12. Finlay has some flirtations with both Nick, the detective, and Julian, the bartender/law student. Who was your favorite match for Finlay and do you like how the book handled these love interests?
13. During several scenes, Finlay wears a wig-scarf and sunglasses to hide her identity. She wears the same wig-scarf and glasses in her author photo, which appears in the books she's written. What do you think the wig-scarf represents to Finn, and how does her attitude toward it change throughout the book?
14. Finlay's view of her career is often self-deprecating, reflecting the various attitudes of her agent, her family, the market, and her ex toward her work. How do these attitudes change after Finn is awarded a lucrative book deal? How did Finlay's attitude change toward herself? What role do you think money plays in how society values women's contributions at home and in the workplace?

15. Did you know who killed Harris Mickler before it was revealed? What clues gave it away? What do you think of that reveal?
16. While not murderers, Finlay and Vero commit a bunch of different crimes in the course of this book. Did you appreciate that they got away with it or did it disturb you? Why?
17. Do you think Feliks Zhirov will be convicted for the deaths of the 6 bodies found at the farm? Should he be? Why or why not?
18. Were you surprised by the note Finlay received from Patricia Mickler at the end of the book? Does it make you want to read the next book (***Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead***)?
19. What was your favorite part of the book? What was your least favorite? Why?
20. Elle Cosimano has written other books. Will you read them?

References:

- Ashley Brooke – <https://ashleybrooke.com/discussion-finlay-donovan-is-killing-it/>
- Elle Cosimano website – <https://www.ellecosimano.com/>
- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/c/elle-cosimano/>
- Macmillan – <https://static.macmillan.com/static/smp/finlay-donovan-is-killing-it/bookclubguide.pdf>
- Novelist – <https://web-s-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.clevnet.org/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=b336f96f-cc85-446a-9291-ac1bbe1becda%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#UI=10944481&db=neh>

Elle Cosimano's Books

Series:

Nearly Gone (*Teen*)

1. Nearly Gone (2014)
2. Nearly Found (2015)

Seasons of the Storm (*Teen*)

1. Seasons of the Storm (2020)
2. Seasons of Chaos (2021)

Finlay Donovan (*Adult*)

1. Is Killing It (2021)
2. Knocks 'Em Dead (2022)
3. Finlay Donovan Jumps the Gun (2023)

Stand Alone Novels:

- Holding Smoke (2016) (*Teen*)
 - The Suffering Tree (2017) (*Teen*)
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If you liked Finlay Donovan is Killing It, try...

- Dial A for Aunties – Jesse Sutanto
- A Bad Day for Sunshine – Darynda Jones
- Arsenic and Adobo – Mia P. Manansala
- The Spellman Files – Lisa Lutz
- The Newcomer – Mary Kay Andrews