



"A funny and smart,
twisty and
surprising series."

—MEGAN
MIRANDA

ELLE COSIMANO

FINLAY *a mystery*

DONOVAN

KNOCKS

'EM DEAD

THE HIT-MOM BOOK CLUB KIT



MINOTAUR BOOKS




Welcome back to The Hit-Mom Book Club! In this kit,
you'll find everything you need for your book club's discussion of
FINLAY DONOVAN KNOCKS 'EM DEAD

by **ELLE COSIMANO:**




- **Knocks 'Em Dead: A Playlist**
- **Elle's Mom's Pot Roast Recipe**
- **The Multitasking-Mom's Essential Garage Tool Kit**
- **Discussion Questions**

Whether you're meeting in person, on Zoom, or via your somewhat-shady online women's forum—dust off those wig-scarves and sunglasses, grab a Panera pastry and a glass of wine . . . and start knocking 'em dead! We love to see your Finlay Donovan-inspired photos! Please tag us on social media and use #FinlayDonovanKnocksEmDead and #HitMomBookClub.

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Happy Reading!



MINOTAUR BOOKS

KNOCKS 'EM DEAD: A PLAYLIST

“This was my life. A three-thousand-dollar contract for months of work, no sleep, and ten minutes in the bathroom alone.”

—from Finlay Donovan Is Killing It

- 1. Killin It - Porsha, Baby C**
- 2. Is Everybody Going Crazy? - Nothing But Thieves**
- 3. Awful - Hole**
- 4. The Adults Are Talking - The Strokes**
- 5. Bad Decisions - The Strokes**
- 6. Ex's and Oh's - Elle King**
- 7. Lost on You - LP**
- 8. Criminal - Fiona Apple**
- 9. Shut Up and Let Me Go - The Ting Tings**
- 10. Seize the Power - YONAKA**
- 11. H B I C - Gin Wigmore**
- 12. Simmer - Hayley Williams**
- 13. Raise Hell - Dorothy**
- 14. Turpentine - Hole**
- 15. Love's Not Enough - The Mysterines**
- 16. She's Kerosene - The Interrupters**
- 17. The Rush - JJ Wilde**
- 18. Coming Up Short - BLOXX**
- 19. You and I - PVRIS**
- 20. Sorry Not Sorry - Demi Lovato**
- 21. Confident - Demi Lovato**
- 22. Into You - Ariana Grande**
- 23. Work from Home (feat. Ty Dolla \$ign) - Fifth Harmony, Ty Dolla \$ign**
- 24. Bad Guy - Billie Eilish**
- 25. Me Too - Meghan Trainor**
- 26. FRIENDS - Marshmello, Anne-Marie**
- 27. New Rules - Dua Lipa**
- 28. Don't Call Me Up - Mabel**
- 29. Look What You Made Me Do - Taylor Swift**
- 30. One Woman Army - Porcelain Black**
- 31. According To You - Orianthi**
- 32. WITHOUT YOU - The Kid LAROI**
- 33. Best Friend (feat. Doja Cat) - Saweetie, Doja Cat**
- 34. my ex's best friend (with blackbear) - Machine Gun Kelly, blackbear**
- 35. Therefore I Am - Billie Eilish**

**IF THIS SOUNDS REMOTELY CLOSE
TO YOUR LIFE, TAKE A BREAK,
AND LISTEN TO SOME KILLER MUSIC
CURATED JUST FOR YOU.**



**Scan the QR code
to listen now**

ELLE'S MOM'S POT ROAST RECIPE

Oil sizzled on the stove, the kitchen filling with the savory smells of garlic and onion powder as Mom seared the roast. She fell into a steady rhythm of peeling and chopping.

“Have a seat,” my mother said, cracking open a bottle of red wine. Only a third of a cup went into her recipe. The rest she poured into two glasses . . .

*—from **Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead***

There are few things in life as comforting to me as the savory, rich scents of my mother's kitchen when she's cooking. Her pot roast recipe is a family favorite, and I love the way the aroma lingers in the house throughout the day as it wafts from the oven or crockpot, over a low and slow flame. This recipe is simple, delicious, and can be adapted to work around the most hectic of mom-schedules.

INGREDIENTS:

3 lbs (ish) chuck roast
3-4 carrots, chunked
3-4 stalks celery, chunked
8 oz button mushrooms (fresh or canned)
1 lb baby potatoes
1 1/2 cups water
1/2 cup red wine
1 packet onion soup mix
3 oz liquid aminos or soy sauce
1/4 tsp dried thyme
1/2 tsp dried parsley
Garlic powder
Onion powder
Pepper
1 tbsp oil

STEP 1: SEARING AND SEASONING

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Season the chuck roast on both sides with pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder. Then sear on all sides until browned. (This is usually when your family members follow their noses into the kitchen and ask, “what's cookin'?”)

Remove the meat from the pan and set aside. Keep the heat on and pour the water and wine into the hot pan. (At this point, the wine bottle is open, and it's silly to let it go to waste. Help yourself to a generous portion before proceeding.)

Using a whisk or spoon, deglaze the golden-brown bits from the pan and stir them into the liquid as it boils. Add the onion soup mix, aminos, soy sauce, and thyme and stir until blended. Remove from heat.

STEP 2: SET IT AND FORGET IT

Put the seared roast into your slow cooker. Layer the chunked veggies, mushrooms, and potatoes on the meat. Then pour the gravy over top and close the lid.

Set your slow cooker on high for five hours. Find yourself a good book, put your feet up, and finish off that bottle of wine while you wait. You've earned it.

(Disclaimer: after three hours, your house will begin to smell intoxicatingly good. Your neighbors might wander into your yard, sniffing around. Strange men might ring your doorbell proposing marriage. Random children and stray dogs might start begging at your front door. I can't be held responsible for their actions.)

Enjoy with crusty French bread and butter and plenty more wine! For thicker gravy, stir in a slurry of 1 tbsp of flour mixed with equal parts water while the cooker is still boiling (just before serving). The gravy will thicken slightly upon cooling.



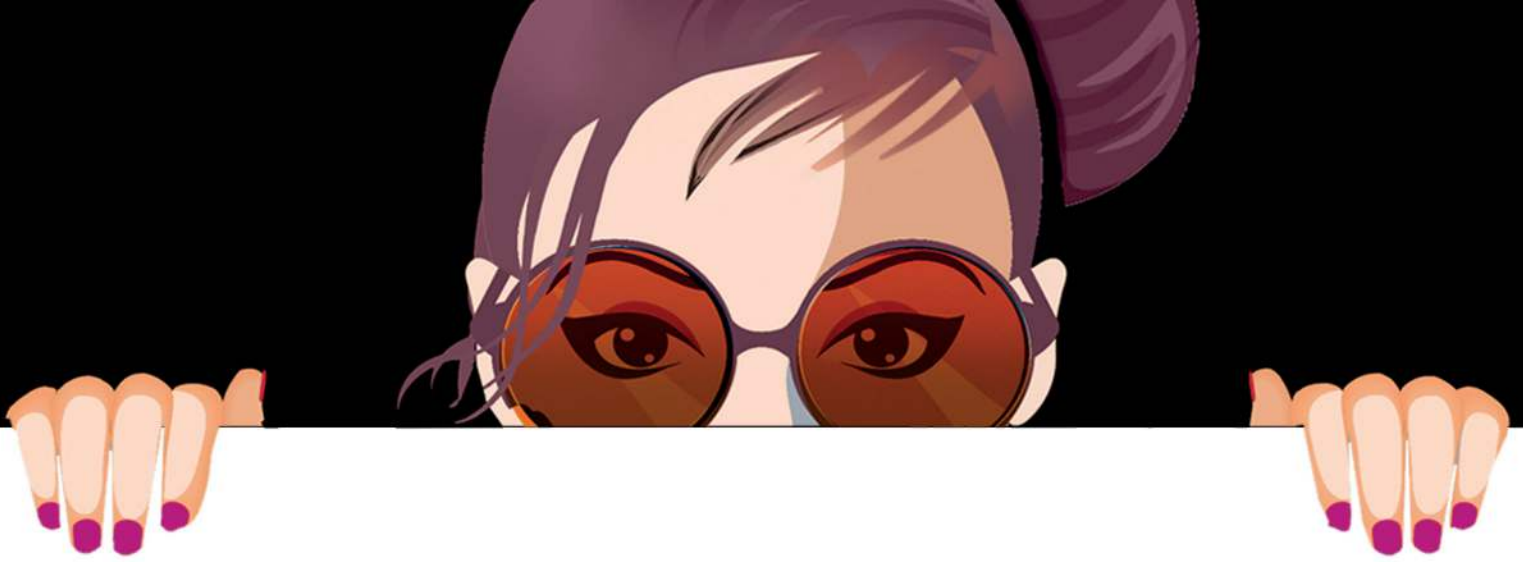
The Multitasking-Mom's *ESSENTIAL GARAGE TOOL KIT*

I thought about that stupid pink trowel in my garage—the only tool Steven had bothered to leave on the pegboard above the workbench when he'd moved out. I thought about all those empty pegs and dust-filled drawers. About the lengths Vero and I had gone to just to find a damn shovel to bury a body . . .

*—from **Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead***

THE DEFINITIVE SHOPPING LIST FOR ANY MULTITASKING MOM WHO FINDS HERSELF WITH AN EMPTY GARAGE WORKBENCH.

- A sturdy shovel:** you never know when you'll need to transplant a rhododendron. Or possibly a body.
- Duct tape:** there is nothing that can't be fixed with a simple roll of duct tape. Including big mouths. (Splurge for the double roll and thank me later.)
- Utility knife:** ideal for cutting duct tape. And slashing tires. But you didn't hear that from Vero or Finlay.
- A set of screwdrivers:** aside from the obvious, the right screwdriver also makes an outstanding defensive weapon.
- A pair of pliers:** great for tightening nuts. Or inflicting slow torture on the toenails of your enemies. Why limit yourself?
- A level:** chest freezers must be level in order to properly function. And we all know what happens to the contents of a freezer when it stops working. (See also: sturdy shovel)



- A tape measure:** how else will you know when you've reached a depth of six feet. Size matters.
- A flashlight:** ideal for locating lost items in the dark, narrow space behind the dryer. Or to avoid tripping on headstones in the dark.
- A hammer:** sometimes, you just need to break something. And when you need a blunt object to inflict maximum damage, there really is no substitute.
- Jumper cables:** Ladies, you do not need a man to start your dead battery for you. Unless he is a hot bartender who could double as an underwear model. In that case, definitely let him jump you.
- Gardening gloves:** will protect your fingers from calluses and keep your hands baby soft. And keep your prints off of surfaces. (See also: sturdy shovel.)
- Hacksaw:** you never know when you might need to trim a low branch from your Bradford Pear. Or trim something to fit in the chest freezer in your garage.
- Assorted batteries:** one can never be too prepared. (See also: flashlight and power drill.)
- A power drill:** Not just the ones you find in the garage. (See also: batteries.)
- Fire extinguisher:** for those nights when the meatloaf you forgot in the oven just won't extinguish itself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The book opens with the death of the Donovan family's pet fish. How does this first, seemingly small death represent—or juxtapose—the other deaths in *Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead*?
2. Unlike in the first novel of this series, the hit ordered on Steven by FedUp was posted to the Internet. With the reveal of who wanted Steven dead in mind, why do you think it's significant that this particular murder was requested online?
3. Vero and Finlay have a closer relationship than many moms and their nannies; were you surprised to learn, after all they've been through together, how much Vero is still keeping from Finlay? Why do you think she went to so much trouble to keep her secret?
4. In Chapter 6, Vero asks Finlay what she originally saw in Steven, and she replies, "He was good at making me feel like I needed him." What was your opinion of Steven in this book—and did it shift from the start to the end? Do you think Finlay's opinion had changed?
5. In what ways are the theme of disguises and mistaken identities used in the novel? How do you think they affect the reveals of the plot?
6. Female friendships and loyalty are a key theme in the book, with romantic relationships often taking second place. In what ways do you think the best-friend pairings of Finlay/Vero and Theresa/Aimee compare to, or differ from, each other?
7. Circumstances and anecdotes from Finlay's own life end up making their way into her novel. Was this story-within-a-story technique effective for you? In what ways are Finlay's predicaments represented in her own fictional story?
8. Mothers—in both life and this novel—frequently use distraction as a parenting device. We see several instances where Finn and Vero rely on distractions to evade trouble or accomplish a difficult task. Do you think they would have used this technique if they weren't used to dealing with small children? How else might their status as caretakers actually benefit them in the world of crime?
9. The themes of motherly love and protectiveness are ever present in this series: Finlay sums it up in Chapter 46: "A mother's love. The irrepressible instinct to protect her child." How are Finlay's protective instincts and her mother's different? In what ways do they align? How did the final reveal change your understanding of that phrase—or did it?
10. By the end, it seems that Finlay has chosen Nick over Julian. Do you agree with this choice?
11. There are several cliffhangers at the end—what do you think is next for Finlay and Vero?