

GDPL Book Club Discussion – Return to Solitude

1) Impression: what (if anything) in this book “struck” you - impressed you or annoyed you? Why? Read us a quote that stayed with you.

2) Characters: Eccentric characters in *Desolation Sound* are the “meat” of this book. Grant’s perspective on them changes over his lifetime, and since his previous book, *Adventures in Solitude: What Not to Wear to a Naked Potluck*. Which characters did he focus on, and why? Is finding someone interesting the same as admiring them? Does he admire men more, or are there just more men than women there? Could you empathize with or relate to some, all, or any of the characters? Which ones and why?

3) Setting: Why did Grant choose to write about this particular setting? Is *Desolation Sound* and its history “more unique” (!) than other “outback” places in BC waters? Are “outback memoirs” usually interesting? Why or why not?

4) Point of view: Grant has been a “summer person” in *Desolation Sound* for most of his life. How might it his viewpoint differ if he had grown up there, or lived there full-time? If you were a “local,” would you want your stories in his books? (Spoiler: Some don’t!)

5) Author and Audience: Who is Grant writing this memoir for? Who is he overlooking?

6) Writing style and quality: Amusing anecdotes about eccentric neighbours are a particularly Canadian style of humour, going back via Stuart Maclean to Stephen Leacock’s *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. Grant is also a CBC journalist. How amusing did you find his stories? How well-written? Did his journalism influence his writing?

7) Comparison and Adaptation: *Adventures in Solitude* was about Grant’s childhood summers in *Desolation Sound* in the 60’s and 70s. *Return* is about viewing the same place and people in the present, as an adult, with a wife and children in tow. Grant says he waited a decade before writing the sequel, for the *Desolation Sound* people to have more adventures – and for himself to grow up. How do the two books compare? Does this book remind you of any other “outback memoirs”? Would either or both of these books make a good film or TV series?

8) Personal relatability: Does this book remind you of anything, or relate to anything, in your own life? For example, your “outback” or off-grid adventures in BC or elsewhere?