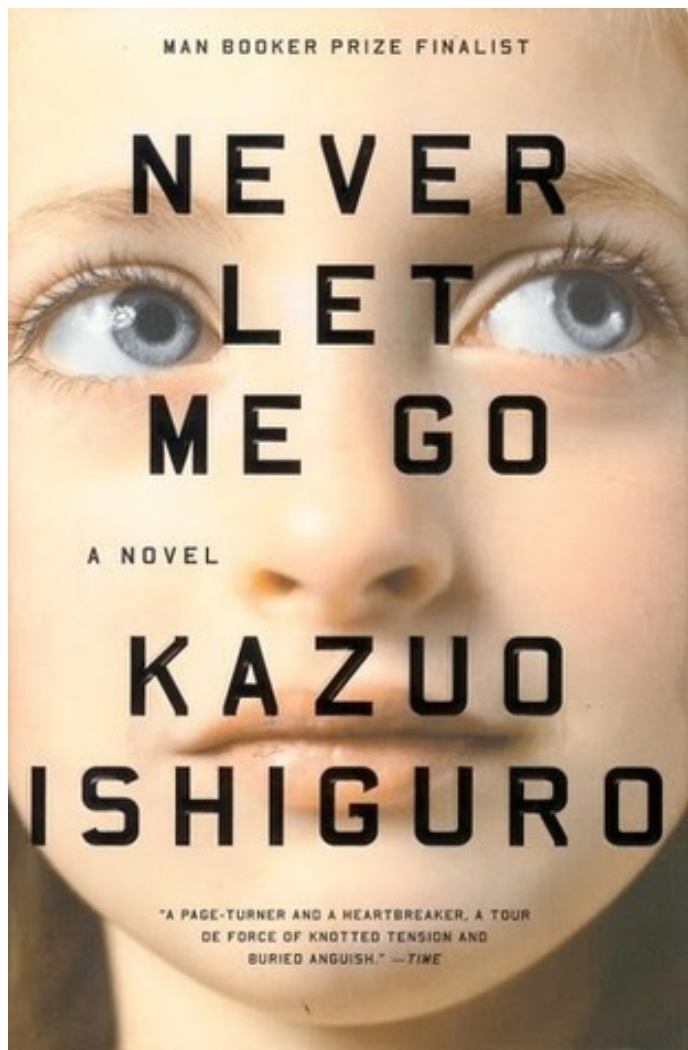

Kazuo Ishiguro

Never Let Me Go



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Author: Kazuo Ishiguro

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Description

As children, Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy were students at Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school secluded in the English countryside. It was a place of mercurial cliques and mysterious rules where teachers were constantly reminding their charges of how special they were. Now, years later, Kathy is a young woman. Ruth and Tommy have reentered her life, and for the first time she is beginning to look back at their shared past and understand just what it is that makes them special--and how that gift will shape the rest of their time together.

Insightful reviews

Michelle, the Bookshelf Stalker Queen of the Undead: This is no way I could put the words down how I feel about this book. In fact, I won't even try. The beauty of this book and how you feel about it, is not in the words on the pages, but the words that aren't on the pages. It is not what was said, but what wasn't said. It is tragic and though the setting might be based in fantasy or make believe, we would be fools to believe that what happens in this book (not literally what happens but on a greater scale- what happens)is not all around us. It is impossible to explain without spoiling it (even if I could spoil it for others I'd completely fail at explaining).

I thought I'd have to wait to write anything about this book but it hit me all at once which has evolved into this rambling review. I remember being in high school in my english lit class becoming an emotional mess over the mandatory reading not because I HAD to read the book but because the book moved me so emotionally. I feel that way now with *Never Let Me Go*. It has moved me as much as most of the classics did.

Juushika: As a child, Kathy H. attended Hailsham, an elite boarding school where children were raised to be both healthy and artistic and taught to believe that both their health and creativity were essential to themselves and to the world they would one day enter. Now an adult, Kathy reflects back on her life. She charts the very slow progression of her growth, her friendships with fellow students Tommy and Ruth, and her knowledge, as she herself gradually began to learn about her role in the outside world—and what this role dictates about her identity. A combination of heavy introspection and soft-scifi, *Never Let Me Go* has a thought-provoking premise and is brilliantly written, but fails to reach its potential, spending all its time in excruciatingly slow buildup and none of it in impact, theory, or debate. Enjoyable, but somewhat empty, and so moderately recommended.

This book's greatest strength is its writing style, but it is also one of the most irritating aspects. Kathy, the narrator, is intensely thoughtful and analytical, breaking down her personal history into eras, important moments, and developing themes. She walks the reader through the story of her life much in the way she lived it, slowly, very slowly, bringing to light her final realizations. In other words, there is a lot hidden in this book, and it takes the book's entire length—literally until the last fifteen pages—to reveal it all. In between are circuitous examples, where Kathy starts to talk about one event, goes back a bit to explain why the event was relevant, explains

the event itself, and then goes on without having drawn a major conclusion—instead, she's just mapped another point on her gradual arc or argument. The resulting pace is excruciating, both artful, brilliantly thought-out and executed, and simply painful as the reader is lead along, disappointed, and lead along again. The book's pace bring the characters to life (although both Ruth and Tommy lack some dimension) and, with it, the life that they lived, through Hailsham and beyond. As such, it is the highlight of the book, worked like an artform, but it is also intensely irritating and makes the book (which actually reads quite quickly) seem longer than it is.

There are a near-infinite number of issues, from the ethical to philosophical, that could be brought to question and debate in this book. The very premise almost begs them—both the science of the base culture and the purpose of Hailsham itself. Unfortunately, however, none of these topics are brought to issue in the text. Instead, the book is consumed by the very slow progression of the story, the creep towards the "twist" revelations of who the children are and what purpose they serve. When finally revealed, these revelations are not all that big—not because they lack the potential to be, but because they pale in comparison to the immense buildup that leads to them. The characters just barely exceed the gradual revelation of the book's premise and are largely just passive carriers of the story, and so the other various issues, the possible debates, never enter into the text. So when other reviewers talk about the questions this book raises, what they're really talking about is the potential for questions—and that is not the same thing. The burden of meaning for this book, everything that the reader could take away and continue to think about, rests entirely on the reader, who must pull out the themes and ask the questions himself, carry on the debates himself. The author shirks his responsibility, and the book suffers for it, failing to live up to its potential.

My final complaint with this book is that the underlying concept seems, blandly, unrealistic. ****SPOILERS**** follow, so be warned: The fact that in the book's contemporary culture the clones are considered non-human despite looking, acting, and living like humans seems entirely impossible. Consider: Humans never viewed the first cloned animals as different than their original counterparts; indeed, we were amazed and drew attention to the fact that they were identical, that they were *clones*. So why would cloned humans be any different (especially that these clones pass in human society as normal and indistinguishable)? Outside of the huge wastefulness of cloning entire humans just to harvest their organs, the fact that the cloned humans were not considered humans seems unreal to me, no matter who the gene donors were, no matter what brief attempts Ishiguro (though Ms. Emily) makes to justify it. ****END SPOILERS**** This is the underlying basis of the book's conflict and plot, and so problems with this concept create problems throughout the book. They weaken the foundations, making it difficult to accept the book and, as a result, even more difficult to take on the work of finding and analyzing themes, which the author fails too do. In the end, *Never Let Me Go* has a thoughtful premise with heavy potential for thought, theory, and debate, and it is skillfully, even artfully written, but the book fails to live up to its potential: the author does not tackle his own themes, and no matter how interesting the premise, it is an unreasonable one. I wanted to enjoy this book, and I did, but I felt cheated at the end: the final product was surprisingly empty, with the burden of meaning placed entirely and unfairly upon the reader alone.

Krenzel: In "Never Let Me Go," a fictional story focusing on three classmates from a unique

boarding school, author Kazuo Ishiguro deals with questions of loss and mortality that each of us must eventually confront. As we get older, as we lose our friends and family, as the environment around us changes and things once familiar to us disappear or become unfamiliar, as we cling to our memories of how things used to be, how do we come to accept the fact that our lives are finite and attach some meaning to our limited existence? These are questions that the narrator of "Never Let Me Go," Kathy H. copes with as she recounts the disjointed memories that comprise her life. Sorting through these memories, she finds comfort in her friends and her career, eventually coming to terms with the meaning of her life and her ultimate fate.

Reflecting upon her life, Kathy devotes most of her time to thinking about her friends from Hailsham, a secluded boarding school where she grew up. Because contact with outsiders at Hailsham is limited, one of the school's big events is the quarterly Exchange, where students are given tokens they can use to buy other students' artwork. As this is the students' only way of accumulating material possessions, they grow dependent on each other for their "personal treasures" and learn to value others' work, forging unique bonds with one another. Kathy's two best friends are Ruth, an extroverted leader at the school, and Tommy, a shy introvert who gets bullied due to his lack of creativity and inability to produce substantial work. While they depend on each other throughout their time at Hailsham, like a lot of friends they drift apart after leaving the school. Looking back at the petty argument that led to the group's break, Kathy comments, "It never occurred to me that our lives, until then so closely interwoven, could unravel and separate over a thing like that." Kathy regrets the loss of her friends, but doesn't do anything about it until she hears that Hailsham is closing: "[I]t started to dawn on me, I suppose, that a lot of things I'd always assumed I'd plenty of time to get around to doing, I might now have to act on pretty soon or else let them go forever." Realizing that her time is limited, Kathy decides what is important to her – what she doesn't want to let go of – and reconnects with her old friends, Ruth and Tommy.

In addition to her friends, Kathy's career has a special meaning in her life. Kathy begins the book by identifying herself as a "carer." Although a lot of carers "are just going through the motions waiting for the day they're told to stop," Kathy enjoys her work, the long drives and the solitude, and she knows she is good at what she does. As a carer, she helps look after patients, assisting as they recover from "donations" and keeping them calm. She knows that she is a good carer, which is important to her: "[I]t means a lot to me, being able to do my work well." However, when she becomes Tommy's carer, he questions the meaning of her work, asking her if she really considers her job to be important since all of her patients are going to "complete," or die, anyway. Kathy responds, "Of course, it's important. A good carer makes a big difference." When reflecting upon her life, Kathy decides not only that her friends are important to her, but she also considers her job important, believing she makes a difference by helping others.

However, as the book begins, Kathy only has eight months left as a carer, and then she will begin the last phase of her life. Initially, Kathy does not accept this fate, hoping to get a "deferral." When the headmaster of Hailsham tells her a deferral is not possible – Kathy cannot escape her ultimate fate any more than the rest of us can – Kathy wonders what the purpose of her life has been: "Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all

those lessons? Why all those books and discussions?" In fact, one of the Hailsham teachers, Miss Lucy, had made this same argument when they were children, believing it was more important that they know their ultimate fate than worry about creating artwork and developing their sense of culture: "If you're to have decent lives, you have to know who you are and what lies ahead of you." But this is not true, the Hailsham headmaster counters, addressing Kathy and Tommy: "Look at you both now! I'm so proud to see you both. You built your lives on what we gave you. You wouldn't be who you are today if we'd not protected you." Ultimately, Kathy comes to agree with the Hailsham approach. When she meets a patient who did not go to Hailsham, but wants to hear all about her time there so that he can replace his own memories with Kathy's, Kathy realizes "just how lucky we'd been." Without being warned what lay ahead – as Miss Lucy had wanted – Kathy had been free to live her own life; even if it was messy, it was hers. As the novel concludes, Kathy drives to Norfolk, where she had shared her happiest memories with Tommy: "I imagined this was the spot where everything I'd ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was standing in front of it." Instead of hanging on to those things and people she has lost, Kathy realizes that this is as far as her fantasy can go: "I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, and drove off to wherever it was I was supposed to be." Like most of us, Kathy knows her life is limited, and the best we can do is go about our everyday lives, doing what we are supposed to do. She will never let go of her memories of what she has lost, but she has accepted her fate.

Though her life hasn't been perfect, Kathy, reflecting upon her memories, finds that her life has been meaningful – having had close friends, an important job, and an idyllic childhood, she considers herself "lucky." But has she, in fact, led a decent life? Has her life been purposeful and meaningful? These are universal questions we may all ask of ourselves – how to accept our own mortality and assign purpose to the limited life we have been given. However, these big questions of how to deal with loss and mortality also become a source of frustration and disappointment for readers because, while "Never Let Me Go" builds these questions up, it never seems to fully resolve or answer them. Fortunately, though, it does provide some clues. One of the recurring items of the book relates to a song Kathy plays as a child called "Never Let Me Go." What makes the song special for Kathy is that she assigns her own meaning to the lyrics; instead of listening to the actual words, she imagines her own version of the song: "Even at the time, I realized this couldn't be right, that this interpretation didn't fit with the rest of the lyrics. But that wasn't an issue with me. The song was about what I said." At one point, when Kathy is dancing to the song in her mind, Madame, a Hailsham leader, catches her and starts sobbing. Later Madame confesses that, when she saw Kathy that day, she imagined Kathy was holding onto the old world, a "kind world," which was being replaced by a "harsh, cruel world," but now Madame realizes her interpretation was wrong: "It wasn't really you, what you were doing." Soon after Madame catches her playing the tape, the tape is lost, her friend Ruth tries to replace it, and later, with Tommy's help, Kathy finds another copy of the tape. The symbolic implications are clear: just as she assigns her own meaning to the song, Kathy assigns her own meaning to life. Sometimes she may be lost, sometimes others like Tommy may help her, and sometimes others like Madame may assign a different meaning to her life than she does, but Kathy is the final author of her life. While others may deem her life meaningless, she herself is content, if not happy. "Never Let Me Go" may not provide a universal answer for some of the big questions it poses about loss and mortality, but the ultimate message seems to be one of hope: as the authors of our own lives, it is up to each of us to take what we are given and make the

most of it.

Shayantani Das: 4.25 stars There will be spoilers! How might you're feeling if an individual got here as much as you and extremely frivolously begun reminiscing concerning the time when, he/she had her hands chopped off by way of this different person? there's no distress or fury or maybe remorse during this person's voice. He/she may well besides be telling you approximately how a person spilled coke. i feel that's what could make this person's phrases extra scary. Kathy is precisely that sort of a narrator; she is excruciatingly calm and maddeningly passive. possibly that's why, specially after turning the final page, i believe the necessity to return and skim this novel everywhere again. that may be why i think so surprised and sad. by no means permit Me move starts off with Kathy remembering approximately her time at Hailsham, specially the connection that develops among her, Ruth and Tommy. Ruth is the extrovert, dominating girl, whereas Tommy is the delicate one with a nasty mood or even from her childhood, Kathy is the resigned one, the observer. There are center breaks, betrayals, friendship, loyalty, and amidst all of it the omnipresent dread one of the characters that, on the finish of the day none of that may matter. The language is easy and the general tone lucid. Still, Ishiguro manages to express such not easy hitting emotion and paints this sort of bright picture of Hailsham, its fields, the sales, the guardians. time and again his language made me overlook that organ harvesting was once fictional and that i bought all labored up approximately it. I felt like how pass over Lucy should have felt: helpless and furious. The novel's climax, specially Kathy's recognition of her destiny is especially very depressing. How can such sophisticated language and a narrator like Kathy circulation someone so much? Frankly i've got no idea. i'm nonetheless in shock. might be i'll learn the final 2 chapters again. Anyway, hugely recommended!

Cecily: Very disappointing, regardless of a promising opening. it's a ridiculous tale that's more and more badly told. when you don't desire to grasp the main plot point, watch out for studying the again hide of a few editions. :(GENRE Although usually classed as sci-fi, i feel that is extra simply because dystopian fiction is frequently labeled that way, instead of whatever inherently sci-fi within the ebook itself. In fact, it does not even consider dystopian for a while. in lots of ways, it really is extra of coming-of-age novel: dealing with lack of innocence and accepting responsibilities. STYLE The narration is especially conversational (which is fine). SETTING AND PLOT It is firstly set in a co-educational English boarding school, in a rustic house. There are the standard friendships and fallings out, and it has teenagers as younger as five (maybe younger), yet in lots of methods it sort of feels relatively idyllic. However, there's an understated risk from the outset, and the college is oddly passionate about creativity. The pupils' vagueness approximately their eventual destiny probably shadows that of the reader. point out is made early on approximately (view spoiler)[carers and donors and they're informed of "people who shudder on the very considered you - of the way you have been introduced into the realm and why" (hide spoiler)], yet it is just in the direction of the top that the main points are made explicit. i feel i would have loved the publication somewhat extra if i would needed to paintings it out for myself (rather than learn it at the cover). the center part is decided in "the cottages" the place the leavers visit stay for a number of years or so, and the tale narrows to be extra in particular approximately Kathy (the narrator), Ruth and Tommy. This exaggerates the distinction of the 1st part: they could indulge their spare time activities (reading and sex, mostly), residing very easily

simply couldn't undergo to look. the tale made me uncomfortable, and that i hated myself for returning to it after having placed it aside. i used to be irked through the characters, my inner-Kirk screaming, "SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!" The torpid creepiness made me detect that no, not just was once not anyone going to do anything, yet that neither I, nor you, nor any of us, are all that diversified from the folk who harvest those negative souls for his or her organs. After all, i am a fats and chuffed first-worlder who much less and no more has a care or inspiration for all those people who are exploited to make my lifestyles possible. We homo sapiens adapt to anything, and grasp our hats at the such a lot contorted and worn rationalizations. I could grind my the teeth and ask, "Where is their Marx? Their Malcolm X?" Fuck, i might have settled for Stalin or Benedict Arnold. yet possibly the progressive gene were remoted and bred out in their clone our bodies -- a unique possibility, because of the imperfect wisdom of the first-person narrator. what is worse is that while technological know-how could have manipulated them to be docile, we, all of us, were likewise manipulated by means of the inertia of history. As i've got written, I grew drained with what I observed as tedious prose, the catalog of information about daily life pointed out via the narrator. yet then it dawned on me that this cataloging is strictly this type of factor a death individual may do. lifestyles may tackle extra urgency. What you and that i might take with no consideration is pregnant with ask yourself to the condemned. In fact, chuffed serendipity, this view is supported by means of a learn stated within the November 2009 factor of the character and Social Psychology Bulletin -- researchers have come across that those that profess to be in love are extra analytical. and what's somebody condemned to die except an individual in love with life? I winced at Ishiguro's condemnation of liberal half-measures within the face of social norms. The narrator and her team of acquaintances are raised in a nearly "humane" demeanour -- educated, inspired to domesticate own friendships with one another, inspired to pursue art. And whereas they symbolize the exception, an scan to illustrate that clones have souls, they're condemned nonetheless. all of the petty jealousies and transcendent friendships that framed their short, attractive lives, are ate up via better society. And whereas there's by no means a point out of God, the nearest they arrive is calling up a former teacher who's in simple terms mildly repulsed via them and who bids them to devour from the Tree of whole Knowledge. Repeat after me: i'm pathetic. i'm powerless. Kirk, succumbing to the Borg after all.

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