

BOOK CLUB IN A BOX

Bookclub-in-a-Box presents the discussion companion for Kazuo Ishiguro's novel Never Let Me Go

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Quotations used in this guide have been taken from the text of the paperback edition of *Never Let Me Go*. All information taken from other sources is acknowledged.

This discussion companion for *Never Let Me Go* has been prepared and written by Marilyn Herbert, originator of Bookclub-in-a-Box. Marilyn Herbert, B.Ed., is a teacher, librarian, speaker and writer. Bookclub-in-a-Box is a unique guide to current fiction and classic literature intended for book club discussions, educational study seminars, and personal pleasure. For more information about the Bookclub-in-a-Box team, visit our website.

Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion companion for Never Let Me Go

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CONTACT INFORMATION: SEE BACK COVER.

BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

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BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX

Readers and Leaders Guide

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is clearly and effectively organized to give you information and ideas for a lively discussion, as well as to present the major highlights of the novel. The format, with a Table of Contents, allows you to pick and choose the specific points you wish to talk about. It does not have to be used in any prescribed order. In fact, it is meant to support, not determine, your discussion.

You Choose What to Use.

You may find that some information is repeated in more than one section and may be cross-referenced so as to provide insight on the same idea from different angles.

The guide is formatted to give you extra space to make your own notes.

How to Begin

Relax and look forward to enjoying your bookclub.

With Bookclub-in-a-Box as your behind the scenes support, there is little for you to do in the way of preparation.

Some readers like to review the guide after reading the novel; some before. Either way, the guide is all you will need as a companion for your discussion. You may find that the guide's interpretation, information, and background have sparked other ideas not included.

Having read the novel and armed with Bookclub-in-a-Box, you will be well prepared to lead or guide or listen to the discussion at hand.

Lastly, if you need some more 'hands-on' support, feel free to contact us. (See Contact Information)

What to Look For

Each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide is divided into easy-to-use sections, which include points on characters, themes, writing style and structure, literary or historical background, author information, and other pertinent features unique to the novel being discussed. These may vary slightly from guide to guide.

INTERPRETATION OF EACH NOVEL REFLECTS THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BOOKCLUB-IN-A-BOX TEAM.

Do We Need to Agree?

THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS NO.

If we have sparked a discussion or a debate on certain points, then we are happy. We invite you to share your group's alternative findings and experiences with us. You can respond on-line at our website or contact us through our Contact Information. We would love to hear from you.

Discussion Starters

There are as many ways to begin a bookclub discussion as there are members in your group. If you are an experienced group, you will already have your favorite ways to begin. If you are a newly formed group or a group looking for new ideas, here are some suggestions.

Ask for people's impressions of the novel. (This will give you some idea about which parts of the unit to focus on.)

- Identify a favorite or major character.
- Identify a favorite or major idea.
- Begin with a powerful or pertinent quote. (not necessarily from the novel)
- Discuss the historical information of the novel. (not applicable to all novels)
- If this author is familiar to the group, discuss the range of his/her work and where this novel stands in that range.
- Use the discussion topics and questions in the Bookclub-in-a-Box guide.

If you have further suggestions for discussion starters, be sure to share them with us and we will share them with others.

Above All, Enjoy Yourselves

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Keys to the Novel

Author Information

INTRODUCTION

Novel Quickline

Kathy H., the thirty-one year old narrator of the story, reminisces about growing up at Hailsham, an isolated boarding school in the English countryside. At first, the setting seems normal, even idyllic, and we assume that the children have come from a privileged background. But slowly, it dawns on us that they have no surnames or parents. They also have no real contact with the world outside.

We gradually understand, as Kathy does, that they are clones, raised to 'donate' their organs to heal others. They will leave the school at age sixteen to become 'carers' and then 'donors'. After their fourth donation (if they make it that far) they will be 'completed'.

As we get to know their stories, we become aware that the children both know and don't know their fate. Everything they learn and are told is shrouded in euphemism. This lack of certainty, this fogginess, is at the heart of the novel.

While this seems to set the stage for a novel with a futuristic backdrop, Ishiguro actually sets his masterful story in the present, in a real country, and he writes about a process that may already be in place, somewhere, in some form.

The novel considers a comprehensive approach to biotechnology and ethics. Cloning is a controversial subject, but **Never Let Me Go** is not intended as a warning about the ethics of cloning. Instead, it explores the human condition as we believe we know it. But like the children at Hailsham, we operate in a world we don't fully understand or control, even if we do our best to act as free agents from within. Ishiguro forces us to consider our tendencies to place moral blinders on our eyes to avoid the things that we know threaten the freedom we work so hard to maintain.

Keys to the Novel

Never Let Me Go - The Genre

- One of the keys to appreciating this novel is to figure out what the novel is and what it is not. **Never Let Me Go** was shortlisted for the 2006 Arthur C. Clarke award for science fiction, and many reviewers label the story as sci-fi (science fiction). However, the book does not fit into a science fiction pattern in the same way as does an H.G. Wells story or Margaret Atwood's futuristic **Oryx and Crake** or **A Handmaid's Tale**. Ishiguro's novel is not an imagined view of what



**Thanks for previewing this
Bookclub-in-a-Box discussion guide.**

**If you'd like to purchase the full guide in
print or PDF format, just visit:**

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