

Further Reading

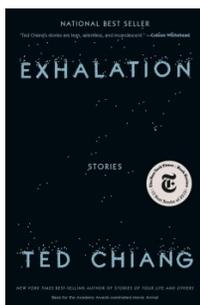
Noor (Nov 2021) by Nnedi Okorafor

When everything goes wrong on a trip to the local market, AO, a woman with a ton of major and necessary body augmentations, must race against time across the deserts of Northern Nigeria with a Fulani herdsman named DNA in a world where everything is streamed.



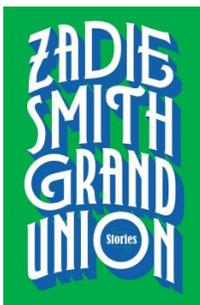
Exhalation: Stories (May 2019) by Ted Chiang

A collection of stories explores revelatory ideas and second chances in such tales as, "In the Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate," "Exhalation," and "The Lifecycle of Software Objects."

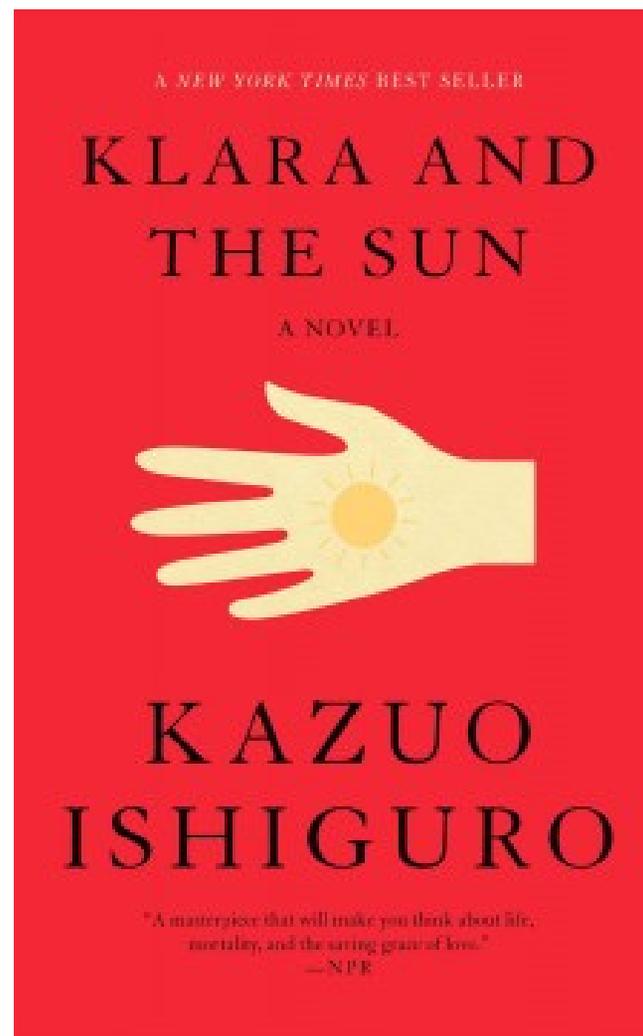


Grand Union: Stories (Oct 2019) by Zadie Smith

The award-winning author of White Teeth presents a first collection of 10 original short stories and selections from her most-lauded pieces as first published in The New Yorker and other prestigious literary magazines.



BOOK DISCUSSION



Discussion Questions

1. The setting of KLARA AND THE SUN is sometime in the future, when artificial intelligence (AI) has become more integrated into human society. Which elements of the novel felt familiar to you at the time of reading, which felt hard to imagine, and which were easy to imagine as a possibility for your lifetime?
2. Klara is prized for her observational qualities as an Artificial Friend. How do the tone and style of her first-person narration help to convey the degree of her attention to detail?
3. Does the term "Artificial Friend" resonate at all with you now, as a contemporary reader in the age of social media and the internet? What's the difference in the level of interaction between children and their "artificial" versus their real/human friends?
4. The details of Josie's illness are kept vague. Based on what we learn from the conversations among Helen, Chrissie, Paul and Rick about the choices parents make for their children in this world, how might that have affected Josie's condition?
5. Sal, Josie's late sister, is said to have died from a disease when the girls were younger. What shadow does that loss cast on the family and over the novel as a whole?
6. Before Klara goes home with Josie, Klara and the other AFs have a rapport with one another, especially with Rosa. What do these conversations, thoughts and feelings suggest about the sophistication of the AI technology in the novel, or about the unknown depths of the AFs' consciousness?
7. What does Klara's connection to the Sun suggest about the nature of her inner world? Is her understanding of its power based mostly on what seems to be the plain facts of her existence --- that she is powered by solar energy --- or something deeper?
8. Rick and Josie carry on a quiet but intimate relationship through their drawings. What is unusual about their friendship and their plan for their future, given the social hierarchy for children based on their class and economic privilege?
9. Discuss Klara and the Mother's trip to Morgan's Falls together. How does the natural setting help the Mother to reveal some of her vulnerabilities and fears? Why do you think the Mother makes the choices she does for her daughter?
10. Consider some of the ways that the characters in the book socialize: the "quick coffee" with the Mother and Josie, the kids' "interaction meetings," Josie and Rick's drawing meetings, and the sessions Josie has with Mr. Capaldi. How did you interpret the tone and atmosphere of these moments of connection between humans?
11. What was your opinion on the plan to turn Klara into an avatar of Josie? Who would have benefitted most from Josie being able to "live" on in another form? Would you have made the same choice for your child or a loved one in the same situation?
12. Would you describe the relationship between Klara and Josie as love? Where did you notice what seemed like genuine love to you in the novel?
13. What did you think of the place where Klara is sent after Josie is finished with her? What does this bring up about the moral and ethical considerations of integrating more AI into society? Did her fate bring to mind that of any people you know?
14. Who, in the end, seems more human to you --- the people in the novel, or the AFs?

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