

Never Let Me Go – Day One

Sleep and have fun this weekend. It is part of the assignment: do one fun thing for yourself.

General Consensus: What is her job? What's going on with the society? Is it something sinister?

Perhaps this is a utopia with some horrible flaw, a dystopia.

Maya: page 3 – “I’ve developed a kind of instinct around donors.” She speaks about them like a subspecies. Is she including herself in this separation from normal people? Also, page 5 – “He knew he was close to completing.” Does this mean death?

Vivek: What makes Hailsham so special?

Maddy: I’m seeing it as a really progressive school. The way people value you is directly based on your creativity.

Maya: It’s interesting that they’ve been there since they were infants. How did these kids get lucky and go to Hailsham? Why the inequality among donors?

Colin: I find it interesting that there’s no mention of parents.

Zander: Does donating have something to do with reproduction?

Julia: The people at Hailsham seem isolated. It feels too controlled.

Hannah: Kathy H. doesn’t know anything about the outside. The children had no idea what’s going on outside.

Vivek: Why did they make such a big deal out of Tommy’s painting?

Daphne: The conformity instilled by this society freaks me out. Every process is instilled, all the values are set. There’s no individuality. There’s a pack-mentality about everything.

Maya: I feel like the huge mega-emphasis on forming cliques with your friends is due to their growing up without families. Their isolation from the outside world makes them stay together.

Colin: page 21 – Tommy’s being known for her temper from infancy. Why is that a big deal?

Jeff: “Infancy” is capitalized. It seems very institutionalized, very controlled.

Julia: Kathy’s acting like she’s thirteen years old, too mature for her encounter with Tommy.

Zander: When did they graduate? Why is Ruth a donor and Kathy a carer? What shifted and why? Why did Ruth lose her controlling personality?

Julie: What the hell are they doing? What does caring mean?

(good for Halloween. very creepy.)

Alejandro: I thought Ruth and Kathy were the same age. What makes people become donors or carers, if it's not dependent on age?

Julie: Ishiguro is trying to freak us out. He's thrown us into a completely different world... We're referred to as "you," quite intimately, but we're really more like eavesdroppers.

Vivek: There seems to be no other professions besides carers and donors.

Daphne: The sense of isolation from the world around you remains, from childhood to adulthood.

Maya: The abbreviated last names. It's like they don't have families.

Maddy: Page 13 – It seems like she's addressing us as though we're the donors.

Mia: There's a lot of emphasis on creativity, but not much on individuality.

Maya: What are they creating for?

Interjection: MAYBE THEY'RE OBJECTS OF AN EXPERIMENT! O ^ O

ie, how someone can hear you everywhere, so Tommy and Kathy have to speak quietly in the dining hall. They have to not draw attention to themselves. It's like that scene in the movie *The Golden Compass*, with all those children under observation.

Jeff: Lack of individuality...

Hannah: Society defines you.

Julie: page 20 – How Tommy first got singled out (“Tommy was in danger... covering up the best he could.”)

Daphne: It's not okay to stand out for being better than everyone because of praise. It's also not okay to be worse than everyone else.

Maya: Since the guardians are like parental figures, everyone became extremely jealous of Tommy because of his individual praise.

Hannah: The teachers are as bad as the kids, wanting them to be creative in *one specific way*.

Julie: page 24 – Tommy is told that it's okay to not be creative, and Kathy gets really upset about this.

Colin: That consolation invalidates everything she's strived for her entire life. By the way, on the cover, you can see the reflection of a surgery light in her left eye.

Maddy: Everything that Kathy's based her life on, her value in society, isn't a value.

Ben: Maybe Kathy knows something everyone else doesn't know.

Vivek/Colin/Julie: Tommy's comment makes Kathy's life unimportant and invalidates her efforts.

Proceeding to a close reading of the first passage ("My name is Kathy H... tell them to snap out of it.")  
Analyze Ishiguro's style. His language is deceptively plain. It's like watching a movie.

Alejandro: She started being a carer at 20 years old, so maybe that's when she graduated. What happened in seven years? (From knowing Tommy to her becoming a character.)

Part of Ishiguro's skill is not spelling things out. A part of the pleasure of reading is inferring what's going on. Kathy H. is controlled by everyone besides herself. She's passive, she doesn't make her own decisions unless someone lets her – a very contained kind of choice.