Your notes

GCSE English Literature: revision notes

# Klara and the Sun

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## Plot

- In a near-future America, Klara is an AF (**Artificial Friend**), a solar-powered robot sold as a companion for children. She is unusually observant. From the shop window she studies people and the Sun, which she believes gives life.
- She is bought for Josie, a teenage girl who is often ill. Josie has been "**lifted**" (genetically edited to be more intelligent), and the lifting has made her sick; her older sister died of the same illness. Her neighbour Rick, who is not **lifted**, is her closest friend.
- Klara learns that Josie's Mother has been having a "portrait" of Josie made: an AF body, so that Klara could learn to become Josie if she dies.
- Believing the Sun can heal, Klara makes a bargain with it in a barn: she will destroy a polluting machine she has seen. She gives up some of the fluid inside her head to damage it. When Josie seems close to death, the Sun's light pours into her room and she recovers. Josie grows up and goes to college, and Klara, no longer needed, slowly fades in a yard, content with her memories.

## Characters

- Klara: loving, loyal and logical. She understands much, but not everything, about humans, and her care for Josie never wavers.
- Josie: bright, kind and brave, but changed by illness and by the pressures of being **lifted**.
- The Mother: loving but desperate, ready to "continue" Josie through Klara rather than lose her.
- Rick: loyal and clever, but shut out of the best chances because he isn't **lifted**.

## Themes and context

- What makes a person unique and human; love, loneliness and care; faith and hope; technology and inequality (the **lifted** and the unlifted); **sacrifice**.

- Kazuo Ishiguro, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017, published the novel in 2021. Like Never Let Me Go, it asks what it means to love and to be human.

## Form and narration

- Klara narrates in the first person, in calm, precise language. Her view is limited: the reader often understands more than she does, which makes the novel moving and unsettling.
- Her unusual way of seeing, breaking scenes into boxes, shows the world through a machine's eyes.

## Key terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **Artificial Friend** | In the novel, a robot companion bought for a child. |
| **Lifted** | In the novel, genetically edited to be more intelligent. |
| **First-person narrator** | A character who tells the story as "I". |
| **Limited narrator** | A narrator who doesn't understand everything they describe. |
| **Sacrifice** | Giving up something valuable for someone else. |

## Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is Klara?
2. What does Klara believe about the Sun?
3. Why is Josie ill?
4. Who is Rick?
5. What is the "portrait" really for?
6. What does Klara destroy as her side of the bargain?
7. What does Klara give up to damage the machine?
8. What happens to Josie in the end?

### Answers

1. An Artificial Friend, a robot companion
2. It gives life and can heal
3. She has been "lifted", which made her sick
4. Josie's neighbour and closest friend, who isn't lifted
5. An AF body so Klara could become Josie if she dies
6. A polluting machine
7. Some of the fluid inside her head
8. She recovers, grows up and goes to college

Your notes

## What to do next

**Practise 10 questions on this topic**

**Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes**

**Read the lesson, one step at a time**

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