

Guided Reading: *Never Let Me Go*
Critical Thinking in Science Fiction

Name: _____

Instructions: These questions and reflections are designed to guide the reader through the novel by addressing the book's plot, style, and themes. Effective comprehension requires a thorough reading of the book, insightful annotating, and using our lecture notes as reference. Consider this your study guide for future assessments.

Part Two

1. In what ways are the Cottages different from Hailsham—both the land itself and the students? [chapter 10]

2. What role do you think the Cottages play in the overall development of the students? Give textual evidence for your opinion.

3. When Kathy finds a pile of "Steve's mags," she spends a considerable amount of time sifting through each magazine. However, as she says, she "moved through the pages quickly, not wanting to be distracted by any buzz of sex..." and that she "hardly saw the contorted bodies" because she was "focusing on the faces." What do you think she was looking for? [chapter 11]

4. Why do you think Ruth got rid of her "collection" after arriving at the Cottages? Can you connect her decision to the book's title, as well as one or more of its themes? [chapter 11]

5. What is a “possible” and what does it have to do with the theme of identity and social expectation? [chapter 12]

6. In regard to “possibles,” Kathy claims that she and Ruth fell into the camp that believed their “models were an irrelevance, a technical necessity for bringing us into the world, nothing more than that. It was up to each of us to make of our lives what we could.” Do you believe this is true? Why or why not? [chapter 12]

7. If science allows us to copy our biology, does this also include our humanity?

8. What is a “deferral” and why might this be important to the students? [chapter 13]

9. Once the group gets a good look at Ruth’s potential possible, they agree that, though the woman is much older, the resemblance just isn’t there. As Chrissie says, “Well, I think we’re agreed, aren’t we? That *isn’t* Ruth.” Rodney apologizes for dragging everyone out to Norfolk, and Ruth seems mildly disappointed. Why do you think they so badly wanted the woman to be Ruth’s possible? How might that make things better? How might that make things worse? [chapter 14]

10. Their trip to Norfolk is one of the very few times Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy have left the safety and seclusion of both Hailsham and the Cottages. Why does Ruth seek her “possible” so earnestly? Why does this trip turn out to be so important to Kathy? What “lost” things are each of them (Kathy, Ruth, Tommy, Chrissie, and Rodney) looking for?

11. Tommy speculates about a link between the Gallery and deferrals, and that some “special arrangement *has* been made for Hailsham students.” What does he mean by this? What does he believe their art reveals and why it matters? [chapter 15]

12. On their way back from Norfolk, “no one brought up Ruth’s possible or anything like that...” and Kathy “didn’t mention the Judy Bridgewater tape.” Why do you think such topics were avoided? Do you think it was purposeful? [chapter 15]

13. What are some of Ruth’s most striking character traits? How might her social behavior, at Hailsham and later at the Cottages, be explained?

14. What do you think Tommy’s animals represent and how does something so seemingly innocuous as a few drawings lead the fracturing of such deep and long-lasting friendships?
