



Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow

Gabrielle Zevin

A decades-spanning novel about two collaborators building video games together, Zevin's book uses play as a lens on art, identity, grief, and the strange intimacy of creative partnership.

Reading level: Moderate **Pages:** 416

Best for: Clubs that like layered, character-driven literary fiction and arguing about what a book is really 'about'

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. The title is borrowed from Macbeth's soliloquy on meaningless time. What expectations did that framing set before you opened the book, and how did the novel push back on them?
2. Zevin opens in a specific time and place rather than with backstory. What does that structural choice signal about how she wants us to read Sam and Sadie's relationship?

DIGGING IN

1. The novel insists on calling what Sam and Sadie do 'work' rather than 'art' or 'play.' How does Zevin complicate the boundaries between those three categories, and is she arguing one is primary?
2. Games promise the player infinite second chances. How does Zevin use that promise as both metaphor and critique, and where does the metaphor strain or break?
3. Consider how the book handles Sam's disability and pain, Sadie's gender in the industry, and Marx's racial identity. Is Zevin making an argument about whose suffering gets aestheticized and whose gets erased?
4. Marx is repeatedly described in terms that flirt with idealization. Is he a fully realized character, a deliberate archetype, or a structural device, and what does your answer say about the novel's moral center?

GOING DEEP

1. Critics have split on whether the romantic-but-not-romance arc between Sam and Sadie is the novel's great insight or its great evasion. Which reading do you find more defensible, and what textual evidence supports it?
2. Zevin uses embedded games, alternate selves, and recursive references to other texts (Shakespeare, Hokusai, Oregon Trail) to layer the narrative. Is this intertextuality doing genuine thematic work, or is it largely decorative? What is she ultimately arguing about authorship and influence?

On the table

Cheese and bread board

Simple, shareable, and easy to graze on so conversation never has to stop

Bowl of clementines

A quiet nod to California and the book's recurring imagery of small, perfect things

Salted dark chocolate squares

Bitter-sweet, like the book; minimal effort, maximal mood

To sip

Black coffee or strong tea (no alcohol)

Late-night studio fuel for a serious talk about ambition and burnout

Dry red wine

Unfussy, contemplative; pour and let the discussion lead

Japanese whisky, neat

A subtle gesture to the book's Hokusai motif; one bottle, small pours

Run of show

7:00 **Arrival and graze**
Low music, board out, no agenda; let people settle

7:15 **Opening frame**
Host reads the Macbeth title source aloud and poses the two warmups

7:35 **Thematic round**
Work through the four theme questions, one at a time, with silence allowed

8:20 **Break and refill**
Five minutes to stretch, refill drinks, and let arguments cool

8:30 **Deep dive**
Tackle the two deep questions; encourage citing passages

9:15 **Scorecards and closing word**
Fill cards in silence, then each person offers one sentence

HOST TIPS

- Ask people to bring the book and at least one flagged passage; close reading raises the level fast
- Resist resolving disagreements. Let competing interpretations stand as the point of the night
- Keep food and music in the background. Dim overheads, use lamps, and reduce visual clutter

Playlist

Pensive, melodic, slightly melancholy; background only, kept low

01 Lovely Head - Goldfrapp

03 Holocene - Bon Iver

05 Aerodynamic (Daft Punk) - Daft Punk

07 Videotape - Radiohead

02 Teardrop - Massive Attack

04 Mad World - Gary Jules

06 Spiegel im Spiegel - Arvo Part

08 Avril 14th - Aphex Twin

Trivia

1. From which Shakespeare play does the novel borrow its title? (Macbeth)
2. In what year was the novel first published? (2022)
3. Who wrote the novel? (Gabrielle Zevin)
4. What Japanese artist's famous wave print is referenced in the book? (Katsushika Hokusai)
5. What industry do the central characters work in? (Video game design)
6. On which U.S. coast do significant portions of the story take place? (Both, but much of it on the East Coast (Cambridge/Boston) and later California)
7. What classic educational computer game is referenced as a formative childhood text? (The Oregon Trail)
8. Is this novel Zevin's debut? (No; she had published several earlier novels, including The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry)

Rate the book

Thematic ambition ☆☆☆☆☆

Structural craft ☆☆☆☆☆

Character complexity ☆☆☆☆☆

Moral ambiguity ☆☆☆☆☆

Lasting resonance ☆☆☆☆☆

The strongest argument this book makes is: _____

The interpretation I am least sure about: _____

One passage I want to reread: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

A Serious Night on Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow

Bring the book, a flagged passage, and an opinion you are willing to defend. We are reading slowly and talking deeply.



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