Such a Fun Age

by Kiley Reid



About the Book

A striking and surprising debut novel from an exhilarating new voice, SUCH A FUN AGE is a page-turning and big-hearted story about race and privilege, set around a young Black babysitter, her well-intentioned employer, and a surprising connection that threatens to undo them both.

Alix Chamberlain is a woman who gets what she wants and has made a living showing other women how to do the same. A mother to two small girls, she started out as a blogger and has quickly built herself into a confidence-driven brand. So she is shocked when her babysitter, Emira Tucker, is confronted while watching the Chamberlains' toddler one night. Seeing a young Black woman out late with a white child, a security guard at their local high-end supermarket accuses Emira of kidnapping two-year-old Briar. A small crowd gathers, a bystander films everything, and Emira is furious and humiliated. Alix resolves to make it right.

But Emira herself is aimless, broke and wary of Alix's desire to help. At 25, she is about to lose her health insurance and has no idea what to do with her life. When the video of Emira unearths someone from Alix's past, both women find themselves on a crash course that will upend everything they think they know about themselves, and each other.

With empathy and piercing social commentary, SUCH A FUN AGE explores the stickiness of transactional relationships, what it means to make someone "family," the complicated reality of being a grown up, and the consequences of doing the right thing for the wrong reason.

Discussion Guide

1. SUCH A FUN AGE is told from the perspectives of two highly different women: Emira and Alix. How did the narration impact your reading experience? Did you relate more to one woman than the other? Did that change as you read the novel?

2. After Kelley takes the video of Emira in the grocery store, she asks him not to release it. Did you understand her request? What would you have done if you were in her position?

3. The question of parental vs. parental-figure relationships is pivotal in this story. How does Briar?s relationship with Emira differ from that with her mother? How do Emira and Alix each relate to Briar in turn?

4. While the ?age? in the title recalls childhood, the novel is very much about Emira?s pivotal age and her experience as a 25-year-old learning how to be a grown-up. Talk about some of Emira?s challenges, as well as her freedoms. How does her experience compare or differ to your own?

5. An unexpected person links Emira and Alix. What was your reaction when you realized the connection? How did it make you view Alix differently? Emira?

6. Kelley is the first to point out the racist accusations against Emira, but at times, he seems to forget they have very different experiences, whereas Emira is always aware of it. Talk about the moments where they don?t seem to communicate well about their specific perspectives.

7. Kelley and Alix have a fraught history. Do you think Alix is right to blame Kelley for many of her issues growing up? Do you think Kelley?s perception of Alix as spoiled and privileged is fair?

8. Alix devotes herself to befriending Emira, but Emira only sees Alix as her employer. At the end of the day, did you find their relationship to be anything more than transactional? In what ways do each of the women try to either maintain or disrupt that boundary?

9. Toward the end of the novel, Alix is confronted with the possibility that she had not acted in Emira?s best interests. Do you think Alix meant well by getting involved in Emira?s situation? Do her intentions ultimately matter?

10. The last chapter follows Emira in the years after the incident at the Chamberlains?. In what way did things change, if at all? Did anything you learned about Kelley, Alix or Briar surprise you?

11. There are many uncomfortable, but relatable, moments in SUCH A FUN AGE. In what ways did you see your own experiences reflected in this story? How did you feel seeing them explored through the characters?

Author Bio

Kiley Reid is the author of COME AND GET IT and SUCH A FUN AGE, which was a *New York Times* bestseller and longlisted for the Booker Prize. Her writing has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Playboy*, *The Guardian* and others. Reid is currently an assistant professor at the University of Michigan.

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