

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Kiley Reid is a recent graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop where she was the recipient of the Truman Capote Fellowship. She lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Such a Fun Age* is her first novel.

- [Author's website](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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?

- <https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/such-a-fun-age/guide>

BOOK REVIEWS

Publisher's Weekly

In her debut, Reid crafts a nuanced portrait of a young black woman struggling to define herself apart from the white people in her life who are all too ready to speak and act on her behalf. Emira Tucker knows that the one thing she's unequivocally good at is taking care of children, specifically the two young daughters, Briar and Catherine, of her part-time employer, Alix Chamberlain. However, about to turn 26 and lose her parents' health insurance, and while watching her friends snatch up serious boyfriends and enviable promotions, Temple grad Emira starts to feel ashamed about "still" babysitting. This humiliation is stoked after she's harassed by security personnel at an upscale Philadelphia grocery store where she'd taken three-year-old Briar. Emira later develops a romantic relationship with Kelley, the young white man who captured cellphone video of the altercation, only to discover that Kelley and Alix have a shared and uncomfortable past, one that traps Emira in the middle despite assertions that everyone has her best interests at heart. Reid excels at depicting subtle variations and manifestations of self-doubt, and astutely illustrates how, when coupled with unrecognized white privilege, this emotional and professional insecurity can result in unintended—as well as willfully unseen—consequences. This is an impressive, memorable first outing. Agent: Claudia Ballard, WME Entertainment. (Jan.) --Staff (Reviewed 09/02/2019) (Publishers Weekly, vol 266, issue 35, p)

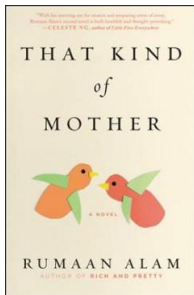
Library Journal

/ Starred Review */* DEBUT Say you're a white, professional woman in the midst of a late-evening crisis. Would you call your African American babysitter, catching her at a friend's birthday party, and ask her to come tend to your toddler? Say you're that African American babysitter. After taking your charge to the local market, wouldn't you be annoyed, then humiliated, then downright scared and angry when a security guard accuses you of kidnapping? Say you're that white woman, wanting to right this wrong, and giving the sitter a raise or an edible arrangement isn't quite the right path. Would you go crusading with self-righteous, even self-serving zeal, not really checking in with what your babysitter wants or needs? If you were that babysitter, what would be your next move? Especially if you loved that toddler and thought you were good at your job? Aren't you curious to find out how put-upon Emira deals with her clueless brand-marketer boss? VERDICT In her debut novel, Reid illuminates difficult truths about race, society, and power with a fresh, light hand. We're all familiar with the phrases white privilege and race relations, but rarely has a book vivified these terms in such a lucid, absorbing, graceful, forceful, but unforced way. [See Prepub Alert, 7/1/19.] --Barbara Hoffert (Reviewed 10/01/2019) (Library Journal, vol 144, issue 9, p90)

Kirkus Reviews

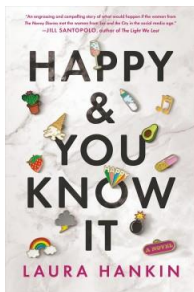
/ Starred Review */* The relationship between a privileged white mom and her black babysitter is strained by race-related complications. Blogger/role model/inspirational speaker Alix Chamberlain is none too happy about moving from Manhattan to Philadelphia for her husband Peter's job as a TV newscaster. With no friends or in-laws around to help out with her almost-3-year-old, Briar, and infant, Catherine, she'll never get anywhere on the book she's writing unless she hires a sitter. She strikes gold when she finds Emira Tucker. Twenty-five-year-old Emira's family and friends expect her to get going on a career, but outside the fact that she's about to get kicked off her parents' health insurance, she's happy with her part-time gigs—and Briar is her "favorite little human." Then one day a double-header of racist events topples the apple cart—Emira is stopped by a security guard who thinks she's kidnapped Briar, and when Peter's program shows a segment on the unusual ways teenagers ask their dates to the prom, he blurts out "Let's hope that last one asked her father first" about a black boy hoping to go with a white girl. Alix's combination of awkwardness and obsession with regard to Emira spins out of control and then is complicated by the reappearance of someone from her past (coincidence alert), where lies yet another racist event. Reid's debut sparkles with sharp observations and perfect details—food, décor, clothes, social media, etc.—and she's a dialogue genius, effortlessly incorporating toddler-ese, witty boyfriend-speak, and African American Vernacular English. For about two-thirds of the book, her evenhandedness with her varied cast of characters is impressive, but there's a point at which any possible empathy for Alix disappears. Not only is she shallow, entitled, unknowingly racist, and a bad mother, but she has not progressed one millimeter since high school, and even then she was worse than we thought. Maybe this was intentional, but it does make things—ha ha—very black and white. Charming, challenging, and so interesting you can hardly put it down. (Kirkus Reviews, November 1, 2019)

READALIKES



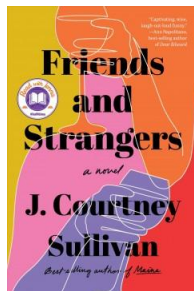
***That Kind of Mother* by Rumaan Alam**

Overwhelmed by new motherhood in spite of her love for her infant son, Rebecca, a white woman, asks a kind black woman, Priscilla, to become her family's nanny, only to have her perspectives changed about her own life of privilege, a situation that compels her to take on unanticipated challenges in the aftermath of a tragedy.



***Happy & You Know It* by Laura Hankin**

Accepting a job as a playgroup musician for Park Avenue infants after her band rises to stardom without her, Claire is drawn into the glamorous world of wealthy clients who hide secrets and betrayals beneath competitive social-media stardom.



***Friends and Strangers* by J. Courtney Sullivan**

Struggling to adjust to small-town life after having a baby, an accomplished New York City journalist immerses herself in social media before bonding with a babysitter from a very different walk of life.