

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



GABRIELLE ZEVIN is an internationally best-selling and critically acclaimed author, whose books have been translated into thirty-nine languages. The *Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* spent several months on the New York Times Best Seller List, reached #1 on the National Indie Best Seller List, was a USA Today Best Seller, and has been a best seller all around the world. She has occasionally written criticism for the New York Times Book Review and NPR's *All Things Considered*, and she began her writing career at age fourteen as a music critic for the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel.

Zevin is a graduate of Harvard University. She lives in Los Angeles. Her tenth novel, *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* will be published by Knopf in 2022, and is being developed into a feature film by Temple Hill and Paramount Studios.

[gabriellezevin.com](http://gabriellezevin.com)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Were you aware that the title of the book comes from a *Macbeth* quote? Why do you think the author chose this title?

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
that struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
and then is heard no more. It is a tale  
told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
signifying nothing.”

2. *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* at its core is the story of an evolving friendship. Do you have any friends or family members that you haven fallen out with, but came back to later in life? Is there anyone you wish you had the chance to reconcile with?

3. Gabrielle Zevin is known for her word play in her stories. For example, part IV of the book is called *Both Sides* and alludes to the game that Sam and Sadie are creating, but each chapter is also separated into interpretations of events from both Sam and Sadie's side. What other playful elements did Zevin include in her book?
4. Several different social and cultural issues were discussed throughout the novel. Which one stuck out to you the most? Why was it important to the story? What if any solutions did the author offer through her narrative?
5. The book revolves around the creation of video games. Was that a barrier to reading and understanding the context of the story. Why or why not.
6. Much like *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* the reader is not given a feel-good ending that neatly ties up the story. Were you satisfied with the ending of the story?
7. What was the significance of the Hokusai "The Great Wave at Kanagawa" style used in the Ichigo video game? Why do you think it was used for the cover art of the book as well? 2. Which video game that Zevin described was your favorite and why?
8. How well did Zevin build the virtual worlds in this book?
9. If you were playing Oregon Trail, what would you want your epitaph to say?
10. If you could live in a virtual world where you could always start over, or have a 'perfect' world, would you? Why or why not?
11. Do you think it's possible to base an entire friendship around the love of video games? Why do you think Sadie and Sam's friendship could last for 30 years?

Rebekah Noggle & Katie Lentz.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### **Publisher's Weekly**

Zevin (Young Jane Young) returns with an exhilarating epic of friendship, grief, and computer game development. In 1986, Sadie Green, 11, visits a children's hospital where her sister is recovering from cancer. There, she befriends another patient, a 12-year-old Korean Jewish boy named Sam Masur, who has a badly injured foot, and the two bond over their love for video games. Their friendship ruptures, however, after Sam discovers Sadie's been tallying the visits to fulfill her bat mitzvah service. Years later, they reconnect while attending college in Boston. Sam is wowed by a game Sadie developed, called Solution. In it, a player who doesn't ask questions will unknowingly build a widget for the Third Reich, thus forcing the player to reflect on the impact of their moral choices. He proposes they design a game together, and relying on help from his charming, wealthy Japanese Korean roommate, Marx, and Sadie's instructor cum abusive lover, Dov, they score a massive hit with Ichigo, inspired by *The Tempest*. In

2004, their virtual world-builder Mapletown allows for same-sex marriages, drawing ire from conservatives, and a violent turn upends everything for Sam and Sadie. Zevin layers the narrative with her characters' wrenching emotional wounds as their relationships wax and wane, including Sadie's resentment about sexism in gaming, Sam's loss of his mother, and his foot amputation. Even more impressive are the visionary and transgressive games (another, a shooter, is based on the poems of Emily Dickinson). This is a one-of-a-kind achievement. Agent: Doug Stewart, Sterling Lord Literistic. (July) --Staff (Reviewed 04/18/2022) (Publishers Weekly, vol 269, issue 16, p)

### Library Journal

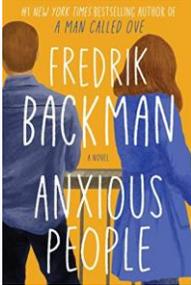
In her latest, best-selling novel Zevin (*The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*) creates a story about the wild ups and downs of friendship and love. It opens with Sadie keeping her sister company during cancer treatments at the hospital, where Sam is anticipating surgery on his badly mangled foot. When they meet in the hospital game room and play a computer game together, a nurse asks Sadie to come back for more gaming with Sam. More than 600 hospital visits later, they have a fight and don't speak again for six years. Finally reconnecting as college students in Boston, they begin designing games together, and Sam's roommate, Marx, helps them launch and run a business they call Unfair Games. Their first game is a big success, which unfortunately brings out the worst in each of them. As the business expands, so do the jealousies and disagreements, even when they become a couple. Eventually, their relationship is tested by tragedy. VERDICT Zevin creates beautifully flawed characters often caught between the real and gaming worlds, which are cleverly juxtaposed to highlight their similarities and differences. Both readers of love stories and gamers will enjoy. Highly recommended. --Joanna M. Burkhardt (Reviewed 07/01/2022) (Library Journal, vol 147, issue 7, p64)

### Kirkus Reviews

The adventures of a trio of genius kids united by their love of gaming and each other. When Sam Masur recognizes Sadie Green in a crowded Boston subway station, midway through their college careers at Harvard and MIT, he shouts, "SADIE MIRANDA GREEN. YOU HAVE DIED OF DYSENTERY!" This is a reference to the hundreds of hours—609 to be exact—the two spent playing "Oregon Trail" and other games when they met in the children's ward of a hospital where Sam was slowly and incompletely recovering from a traumatic injury and where Sadie was secretly racking up community service hours by spending time with him, a fact which caused the rift that has separated them until now. They determine that they both still game, and before long they're spending the summer writing a soon-to-be-famous game together in the apartment that belongs to Sam's roommate, the gorgeous, wealthy acting student Marx Watanabe. Marx becomes the third corner of their triangle, and decades of action ensue, much of it set in Los Angeles, some in the virtual realm, all of it riveting. A lifelong gamer herself, Zevin has written the book she was born to write, a love letter to every aspect of gaming. For example, here's the passage introducing the professor Sadie is sleeping with and his graphic engine, both of which play a continuing role in the story: "The seminar was led by twenty-eight-year-old Dov Mizrah....It was said of Dov that he was like the two Johns (Carmack, Romero), the American boy geniuses who'd programmed and designed Commander Keen and Doom, rolled into one. Dov was famous for his mane of dark, curly hair, wearing tight leather pants to gaming conventions, and yes, a game called Dead Sea, an underwater zombie adventure, originally for PC, for which he had invented a groundbreaking graphics engine, Ulysses, to render photorealistic light and shadow in water." Readers who recognize the references will enjoy them, and those who don't can look them up and/or simply absorb them. Zevin's delight in her characters, their qualities, and their projects sprinkles a layer of fairy dust over the whole enterprise. Sure to enchant even those who have never played a video game in their lives, with instant cult status for those who have. (Kirkus Reviews, May 1, 2022)

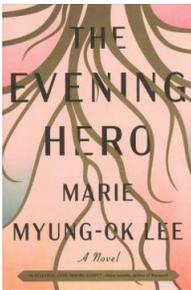
## READALIKES

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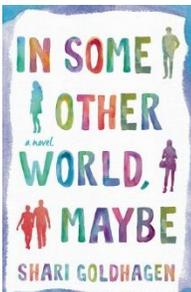
### ***Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman**

Taken hostage by a failed bank robber while attending an open house, eight anxiety-prone strangers—including a redemption-seeking bank director, two couples who would fix their marriages and a plucky octogenarian—discover their unexpected common traits.



### ***The Evening Hero* by Marie Myung-Ok Lee**

When the rural Minnesota hospital where he is a practicing obstetrician closes, a Korean immigrant confronts the life he built after the war and the assumptions he made about the so-called American Dream.



### ***In Some Other World, Maybe* by Shari Goldhagen**

Follows a group of teenagers throughout their lives after a shared 1992 experience at a theater showing the film version of the famed Eons & Empires comic books.