

The 1st Runner Up of English Section

Senior Division

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(Secondary Section)

**Book Title : Tomorrow, and Tomorrow,
and Tomorrow**

Author : Gabrielle Zevin

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Press Start to Begin:

**Unlocking the Hidden Depths of Tomorrow, and
Tomorrow, and Tomorrow**

“What is a game?” Marx said. "It's tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. It's the possibility of infinite rebirth, infinite redemption. The idea that if you keep playing, you could win. No loss is permanent, because

nothing is permanent, ever.”

In the virtual world, death is not the end of the game of life. There are endless resets, endless possibilities, endless chances, endless “plays”. In Gabrielle Zevin’s 2022 novel *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*, the author takes readers on a captivating journey spanning three decades, exploring the evolution of the relationship between two friends, Sam Masur and Sadie Green. Set in the backdrop of the American gaming industry, the novel explores the power of video games and how they serve as a form of self-expression, a means of escape, and a source of nostalgia. Through the characters’ highs and lows, the falling in and out of love, and the successes and failures, Zevin invites readers to reflect on the transformative potential of embracing imagination and blurring the boundaries between reality and fantasy.

The title of the book *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and*

Tomorrow references Shakespeare's popular soliloquy from *Macbeth*, investigating the topic of life's brevity and the conceivable outcomes of birth and renewal. In this soliloquy, Macbeth reflects on the fleeting nature of life and its inherent meaninglessness, describing it as a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Zevin's novel reimagines this soliloquy to represent unending possibilities of rebirth and renewal, suggesting that life is not just a meaningless repetition but a source of new beginnings. By incorporating this reference, Zevin sets the stage for exploring the power of video games and the potential for personal growth within their virtual realms.

Video games serve as a central theme in *Tomorrow*, *and Tomorrow*, and *Tomorrow*. From their initial bond over *Super Mario Bros* as children to their collaboration on the creation of the blockbuster game *Ichigo*, Sam and Sadie's friendship is intertwined with their shared passion

for gaming. As they navigate the challenges and triumphs of the gaming industry, video games become a powerful tool for self-expression, allowing the characters to explore limitless possibilities of storytelling and imagination. Along with their friend and business partner Marx

Watanabe, the trio journey across the tumultuous landscape of the game development industry during the turn of the century, exploring both triumphs and setbacks.

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow also delves into the struggles faced by Sam and Sadie as minorities in their field. Sam, a Korean-American, endures physical challenges resulting from a car crash that claimed his mother's life and left him with a disability. Sadie, a Jewish female, grapples with the under representation and marginalisation she experiences in the predominantly male industry. Through their experiences and those of other minority characters such as Marx, a Japanese-

American, and Ant and Simon, a gay couple who work at Unfair Games, the novel sheds light on the pursuit of the American dream, and the search for self-identity. Video games become a means for these characters to express their unique perspectives and challenge societal expectations.

Zevin often explores the theme of escapism throughout the novel, particularly in relation to video games. For Sam, gaming becomes an outlet to transcend his physical limitations and be himself free from judgement. Sadie, suffering from postpartum depression following the death of her partner Marx, retreats from her responsibilities and finds solace in gaming. However, it is through this escape that she eventually reconnects with Sam, finding comfort and strength within her own virtual realm. At some point in the book, we even get transported into the world of the Pioneers, a video game Sam develops for Sadie to support her. This theme of escapism reflects the human desire to

break free from the mundane and find solace in different experiences and possibilities. As the line between reality and the virtual world blurs, the strength of their relationship becomes clearer and stronger than ever, proving that virtual experiences can be just as meaningful as real-life experiences.

What makes video games so captivating is their ability to evoke a sense of nostalgia. Players are often drawn to games that remind them of simpler times, transporting them back to their childhood or significant moments of life. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, games like *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*, *Stardew Valley*, and *Minecraft* have boomed in popularity because of their simple gameplay mechanics and open-ended nature, allowing players to feel freedom and comfort. Similarly, the novel explores the power of nostalgic video games in providing comfort after tragedy. After traumatising events like the death of Marx or the 9/11 attack, Sam and Sadie

create games like *Mapleworld* or *the Pioneers*, which reference their childhood favourites, such as *the Oregon Trail*. This provides comfort and a sense of familiarity in times of distress, to Sam and Sadie and the gaming community as a whole.

In conclusion, Gabrielle Zevin's *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* is a thought-provoking exploration of the power of video games. Zevin challenges traditional notions of reality by blurring the boundaries between the real and the virtual, showcasing meaningful connections and experiences that can be formed within virtual realms. Ultimately, the novel invites readers to reflect on the significance of video games in shaping personal identity and human connections in an ever-changing world. As the blurb of the book says, "yes, it is a love story, but it is not one you have read before."