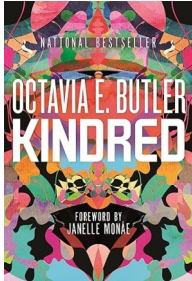




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Kindred
By Octavia Butler
Discussed May 2013

Characters

- Dana Franklin
- Kevin Franklin – Dana’s husband
- Rufus Weylin – only child of Tom & Margaret Weylin; Dana’s great-grandfather
- Alice Greenwood – freeborn woman of color, later a slave on the Weylin plantation; Dana’s great-grandmother
- Isaac Jackson – Alice’s husband; Holman plantation
- Aunt Sarah – cook; Weylin plantation
- Carrie – Sarah’s mute daughter and only remaining child
- Nigel – Carrie’s husband; Weylin plantation
- Liza – sewing woman; Weylin plantation; betrayed Dana to get back at Alice
- Tom Weylin – owner of the Weylin plantation; father of Rufus Weylin
- Margaret Weylin – second wife of Tom Weylin; mother of Rufus Weylin
- Jake Edwards – overseer on the Weylin plantation; cousin of Margaret Weylin; “mean low white trash”
- Evan Fowler – 2nd overseer on the Weylin plantation; sends Dana to work in the cornfields
- Joseph – son of Tom Weylin and Alice
- Hagar – daughter of Tom Weylin and Alice; Dana’s grandmother

Discussion Questions

1. How does *Kindred* compare with other Butler novels you’ve read, such as *Fledgling* or her earlier works?
2. Who are the “kindred” from the title?
3. The novel includes depictions of several families, in both the 19th and the 20th Centuries. How does Dana’s different relationships with these families compare with the LGBTQ experience with various types of families?

4. Do you think Butler's depiction of slavery on the Weylin plantation is accurate, balanced, or fair? How do Tom Weylin and Rufus Weylin differ from – or confirm – your opinions? How were Dana's opinions affected by her experiences on the Weylin plantation?
5. At various points, the injuries Dana sustained in the 19th Century were examined by 20th Century practitioners. How did their opinions provide additional insights into the nature of slavery?
6. There's an old saying: "Lie down with dogs and you'll wake up with fleas." How might this old saying reflect some of Butler's views about slavery?
7. How does Rufus's relationship with Dana change over the course of the novel?
8. Kevin actually spends more time in the 19th Century than Dana does. Why would Butler do this?
9. The act of time travel only resulted in injury to Dana during her last trip back to the 20th Century. Why do you think the results of this trip were different?
10. Both Dana and Kevin were surprised that they found themselves thinking of the Weylin Plantation (and the 19th Century) as "home." Why do you think this happened?
11. A typical theme in time travel stories is usually one of the following: either "if you tamper with the past, you could disrupt the future" or "history can't be changed." How does Butler explore these issues?