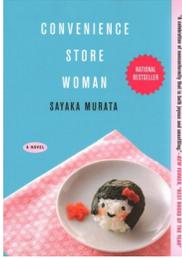


Books by the Stack



Convenience Store Woman by Sayaka Murata

A Japanese woman who has been working at a convenience store for 18 years, much to the disappointment of her family, finds friendship with an alienated, cynical and bitter young man who becomes her coworker.

Why you'll like it: *Offbeat. Quirky. Moving.*

About the Author: Sayaka Murata is the author of many books, including *Convenience Store Woman*, winner of Japan's most prestigious literary award, the Akutagawa Prize. She used to work part-time in a convenience store, which inspired this novel. Murata has been named a Freeman's "Future of New Writing" author, and her work has appeared in *Granta* and elsewhere. In 2016, *Vogue Japan* selected her as a Woman of the Year.

Questions for Discussion

1. Describe Keiko Furukura. Talk about the various aspects of her behavior that make her an oddball.
2. In what way does Keiko view Small Mart as an almost-utopia. How does her job there lend purpose to her life? Consider, for example, the manual that prescribes how she is to conduct herself with customers. How does she think of her fellow employees?
3. What does it suggest about Keiko's internal life (her soul, her personality) that she can "hear the store's voice telling what it wanted, how it wanted to be." She goes on to say, "I understood it perfectly." What does she mean that she understands the store "perfectly"?
4. What is Keiko's relationship with Shiraha? What do you think of him, especially his lectures on the Stone Age – about the men who hunt and those who don't?
5. When Shiraha complains about the convenience store job, Keiko tells him, "Shiraha, we're in the twenty-first century! Here in the convenience store we're not men and women. We're all store workers." What do you think of that statement? What do you think she means by it?
6. What is Japanese society *is Convenience Store Woman* taking aim at? Does the satire have relevance to our own culture? How would you describe the author's attitude toward Keiko? Is it one of condescension, disapproval, acceptance, admiration? Or does Murata view her heroine in a neutral fashion?

(Questions provided by litlovers.com)

