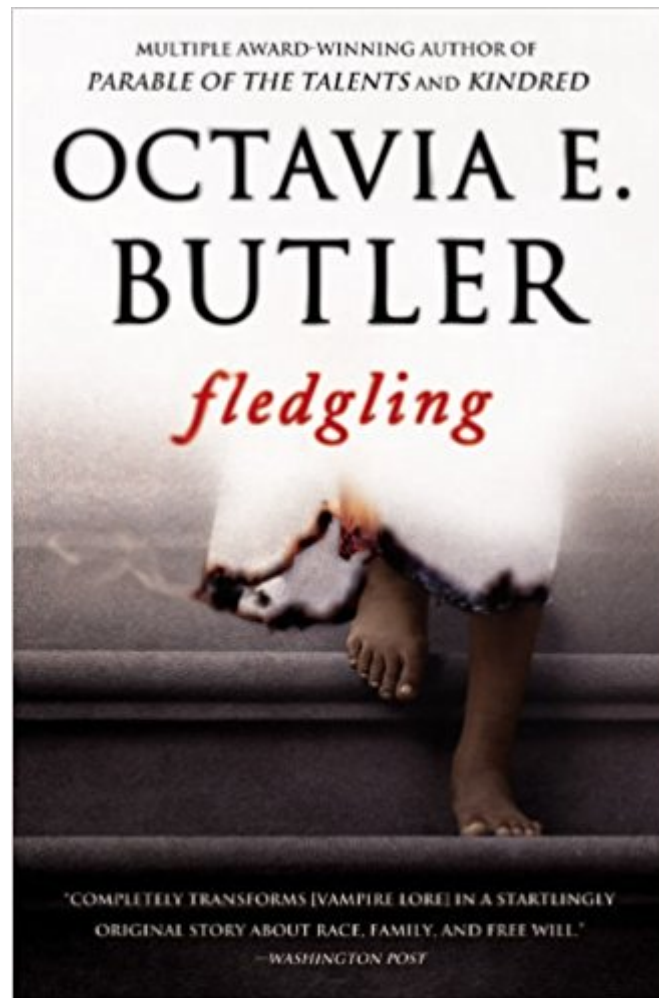


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Fledgling



Synopsis

Octavia E. Butler is one of the finest voices in fiction--period. . . . A master storyteller, Butler casts an unflinching eye on racism, sexism, poverty, and ignorance and lets the reader see the terror and beauty of human nature."-The Washington Post Book World "Readers familiar with . . . "Parable of the Sower and "Bloodchild will recall that [Butler] never asks easy questions or settles for easy answers."-Gerald Jonas in "The New York Times "Fledgling, Octavia Butler's first new novel in seven years, is the story of an apparently young, amnesiac girl whose alarmingly unhuman needs and abilities lead her to a startling conclusion: She is in fact a genetically modified, 53-year-old vampire. Forced to discover what she can about her stolen former life, she must at the same time learn who wanted-and still wants-to destroy her and those she cares for and how she can save herself. "Fledgling is a captivating novel that tests the limits of "otherness" and questions what it means to be truly human. Octavia E. Butler is the author of 11 novels, including "Kindred, "Dawn, and "Parable of the Sower. Recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, the Nebula Award, the Hugo Award, and numerous other literary awards, she has been acclaimed for her lean prose, strong protagonists, and social observations that range from the distant past to the far future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. The much-lauded Butler creates vampires in her 12th novel (her first in seven years) that have about as much to do with Bram Stoker's Dracula as HBO's Deadwood does with High Noon. They need human blood to survive, but they don't kill unless they have to, and (given several hundred years) they'll eventually die peacefully of old age. They are Ina, and they've

coexisted with humans for millennia, imparting robust health and narcotic bliss with every bite to their devoted human blood donors, aka "symbionts." Shori is a 53-year-old Ina (a juvenile) who wakes up in a cave, amnesiac and seriously wounded. As is later revealed, her family and their symbionts were murdered because they genetically engineered a generation of part-Ina, part-human children. Shori was their most successful experiment: she can stay conscious during daylight hours, and her black skin helps protect her from the sun. The lone survivor, Shori must rely on a few friendly (and tasty) people to help her warn other Ina families and rediscover herself. Butler, keeping tension high, reveals the mysteries of the Ina universe bit by tantalizing bit. Just as the Ina's collective honor and dignity starts to get a little dull, a gang of bigoted, black sheep Ina rolls into town for a species-wide confab-cum-smackdown. In the feisty Shori, Butler has created a new vampire paradigm — one that's more prone to sci-fi social commentary than gothic romance — and given a tired genre a much-needed shot in the arm. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Starred Review Renowned sf author Butler's first novel since *Parable of the Talents* (1998) delves deeply into the world of vampires. Shori, a 53-year-old vampire who appears to be a prepubescent girl, awakes alone in a forest, badly burned and scarred, with no memory of what has happened to her. She wanders to a road, from where she is picked up by young Wright Hamlin, whom she bites once she realizes she is a vampire. Wright shelters her, and the two begin a relationship, but Shori is drawn to the site of the fire that burned her. When she and Wright are attacked at the site, she learns of an older vampire, Iosif, who may have the answers she seeks. But when she meets Iosif, she learns that he is her father and that he, too, is in the dark as to who burned the enclave in which Shori and her mothers and sisters were living. When Iosif's enclave meets a similar fate, Shori and Wright flee, determined to track down the people responsible for destroying Shori's family. Butler has a reputation as a master for good reason, and her narrative flows quickly and seamlessly along as Shori seeks those who would destroy her. Gripping and memorable, Butler's latest is a welcome return performance. Kristine Huntley Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

A very different take on vampires, and one that makes so much sense evolutionarily. There's very little I can say without spoilers, but if you like vampire stories that go beyond the gothic, this is for you. This is not *Twilight*, nor the Anne Rice vampires, it is entirely new take on the vampire/human

encounter. You might also consider *The Gilda Stories* by Jewelle Gomez.

Loved it, I wish there was a second and third novel . The characters were all interesting I would have loved to find out what happened with Shori and the Gordans.

I was very much looking forward to this but with missing pages in the text my enthusiasm has cooled considerably. Hopefully this will be fixed soon. 5 pages missing so far and I'm only 60% through the book...But it's a very interesting take on the vampire genre.

I have only read one other of Butler's books. I am intrigued by her characters and have discovered a bit about her personally. *Fledgling* leaves you wanting to know a great deal more. Unfortunately, the ending seems abrupt and not natural. Clearly there should have been something about how the main characters moved forward. There is not and so the ending seems careless and not well thought out. Similar to how some authors short-change female characters in terms of building a whole person, Butler does the same with male characters. As much as the leading male character is in the story you really know nothing about him by the end of the book. He is sadly mono-dimensional. The same is not true of the leading female character or even a couple of the secondary characters who are female. Still it was an overall enjoyable read.

Within the past week, I have officially become an Octavia Butler fan. This is the first time for me reading sci-fi novels and this book had me intrigued and held me captive from the first page. I appreciated Butler's deviation from the "norm" regarding the lifestyle and weaknesses of vampires that are commonly used in television and movies. Shori was similar to a female version of Blade, a day walker, because of her mixed human-vampire DNA. It made sense that her black or dark skin is what made her so unique and special in comparison to the usual pale version of vampires. As with most readers, I was disturbed by the sexual relationship between Shori and her first symbiont because of her "human age" of 10-12 years old. I had to remember, we are talking about vampires here! This novel left so many unanswered questions. Will she ever regain her full memory? Will the Silks secretly seek revenge? Because of her human side, can she conceive with humans as well as Ina? It is such a shame and a tragedy that Ms. Butler left us. Shori's story could have very well been a series. I would love to see this novel come to life on the big screen. I think it will give the *Twilight* saga a run for its money.

I could not put this book down! I have read it before, and remembered enjoying it, so I picked it up again. It did not disappoint! Octavia Butler truly made a very refreshing version of a very popular theme. If vampires lived among us, I would hope they would be like the Ina. Shori, the protagonist, is extremely endearing, to me. I also think that it was very interesting to have Shori be a 53 year old in a 10 year old's body. Learning that detail alone was socially provoking. I guess we will never see this one develop into a movie!

Very different type of vampire story which is holding my interest.

I enjoyed reading this book. It was an interesting view of vampires. Octavia writes with great detail. You forget you are reading fiction. I recommend this book to everyone! I'm sorry she is no longer with us. I would have loved to see what else Shori would do with her life.

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