



Elsewhere

By Gabrielle Zevin

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Elsewhere By Gabrielle Zevin

Is it possible to grow up while getting younger?

Welcome to Elsewhere. It is warm, with a breeze, and the beaches are marvelous. It's quiet and peaceful. You can't get sick or any older. Curious to see new paintings by Picasso? Swing by one of Elsewhere's museums. Need to talk to someone about your problems? Stop by Marilyn Monroe's psychiatric practice.

Elsewhere is where fifteen-year-old Liz Hall ends up, after she has died. It is a place so like Earth, yet completely different. Here Liz will age backward from the day of her death until she becomes a baby again and returns to Earth. But Liz wants to turn sixteen, not fourteen again. She wants to get her driver's license. She wants to graduate from high school and go to college. And now that she's dead, Liz is being forced to live a life she doesn't want with a grandmother she has only just met. And it is not going well. How can Liz let go of the only life she has ever known and embrace a new one? Is it possible that a life lived in reverse is no different from a life lived forward? This moving, often funny book about grief, death, and loss will stay with the reader long after the last page is turned.

Elsewhere is a 2006 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

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Elsewhere By Gabrielle Zevin Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 7-10—What happens when you die? Where do you go? What do you do? Zevin provides answers to these questions in this intriguing novel, centering on the death of Liz Hall, almost 16 years old and looking forward to all that lies ahead: learning to drive, helping her best friend prepare for the prom, going to college, falling in love. Killed in a hit-and-run accident, Liz struggles to understand what has happened to her, grief-stricken at all she has lost, and incapable of seeing the benefits of the Elsewhere in which she finds herself. Refusing to participate in this new life, Liz spends her time looking longingly down at the family and friends back on Earth who go on without her. But the new environment pulls her into its own rhythms. Liz meets the grandmother she never knew, makes friends, takes a job, and falls in love as she and the other inhabitants of Elsewhere age backward one year for each year that they are there. Zevin's third-person narrative calmly, but surely guides readers through the bumpy landscape of strongly delineated characters dealing with the most difficult issue that faces all of us. A quiet book that provides much to think about and discuss.—*Sharon Grover, Arlington County Department of Libraries, VA*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Narration from beyond the grave has been cropping up with some frequency in YA novels this year, including Chris Crutcher's *The Sledding Hill* and Adele Griffin's *Where I Want to Be* (both 2005). But this example, Zevin's second novel and her first for the YA audience, is a work of powerful beauty that merits judgment independent of any larger trend.

The setting is an elaborately conceived afterlife called Elsewhere, a distinctly secular island realm of surprising physical solidity (no cottony clouds or pearly gates here), where the dead exist much as they once did--except that no one dies or is born, and aging occurs in reverse, culminating when the departed are returned to Earth as infants to start the life cycle again.

Having sailed into Elsewhere's port aboard a cruise ship populated by mostly elderly passengers, 15-year-old head-trauma victim Liz Hall does not go gently into Elsewhere's endless summer. She is despairing, intractable, sullen, and understandably furious: "You mean I'll never go to college or get married or get big boobs or live on my own or get my driver's license or fall in love?" She rejects her new existence, spending endless hours keeping tabs on surviving family and friends through magical coin-operated telescopes, and refusing to take the suggestions offered by a well-meaning Office of Acclimation. Eventually, though, she begins to listen. She takes a job counseling deceased pets, forges an unexpected romance with a young man struggling with heartbreaks, and finds simple joy in the awareness that "a life is a good story . . . even a crazy, backward life like hers." Periodic visits with an increasingly youthful Liz, concluding with her journey down the "River" to be reborn, bring the novel to a graceful, seamless close.

Although the book may prove too philosophical for some, Zevin offers readers more than a gimmick-driven novel of ideas: the world of Elsewhere is too tangible for that. "A human's life is a beautiful mess," reflects Liz, and the observation is reinforced with strikingly conceived examples: a newly dead thirtysomething falls in love with Liz's grandmother, who is biologically similar in age but experientially generations older; fresh arrivals reunite with spouses long since departed, creating incongruous May-December marriages and awkward love triangles (as Liz experiences when her boyfriend's wife suddenly appears). At one poignant moment, four-year-old Liz loses the ability to read. The passage she attempts to decipher, which comes from Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting*, is another meditation on the march of time and change.

Although Zevin's conception of the afterlife will inevitably ruffle many theological feathers, the comfort it offers readers grieving for lost loved ones, as well as the simple, thrilling satisfaction derived from its bold engagement with basic, provocative questions of human existence, will far outweigh any offense its metaphysical perspective might give. Far more than just a vehicle for a cosmology, this inventive novel slices right to the bone of human yearning, offering up an indelible vision of life and death as equally rich sides of the same coin. *Jennifer Mattson*

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Review

"*Elsewhere* is a funny, fast-paced, and fascinating novel. The concept is completely out there and yet the emotions are so weirdly realistic. I loved reading the story of Liz's life (death?)." -- Carolyn Mackler, author of *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* and *Vegan Virgin Valentine*

"A work of powerful beauty. This inventive novel slices right to the bone of human yearning, offering up an indelible vision of life and death as equally rich sides of the same coin." -- Starred, *Booklist*

"With an intriguing and well-developed premise, thoughtful characterization, and refreshing style, Zevin's poignant novel rewards readers with a view of death that celebrates the rich complexities of being alive." -- Starred, *The Horn Book*

"Intriguing. Surely guides readers through the bumpy landscape of strongly delineated characters dealing with the most difficult issue that faces all of us. Provides much to think about and discuss." -- Starred, *School Library Journal*

"An unusual premise and a thoughtful treatment make Zevin's first effort at writing for young adults a success. Will captivate teens ready for a thought-provoking read. Hopeful and engaging." -- *Kirkus Reviews*

"Funny and pensive, happy and heartbreaking. Readers from a broad range of beliefs will find this a quirky and touching exploration of the Great Beyond." -- *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

"Fascinating. Zevin, in her first novel for young people, bends the laws of physics and biology to create an intricately imagined world." -- *Publishers Weekly*

"A fun and thought-provoking page-turner. Readers ... will relish Zevin's lively imagination and her fast-moving plot. Buy this book for them." -- *VOYA*

"Zevin's touch is marvelously light even as she considers profundities, easily moving among humor, wisdom and lyricism. . . .No plot synopsis can convey what a rich, wise spell this book casts." -- *The New York Times Book Review*

"Great humor and speculation, on pets as well as people." --*Chicago Tribune*

"This book is amazing: centered around death without being morbid, it's about moving on with your life." -- A YALSA Teen YA Galley Reader

"It's a fun read that you will keep thinking about long after you've finished the last page." --A YALSA Teen YA Galley Reader

"It's an unexpectedly 'feel good' book, and makes the reader feel like those who have died aren't ever gone." -
-A YALSA Teen YA Galley Reader

"This books steps out of the trend and stands on its own. What an original concept." --A YALSA Teen YA
Galley Reader

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Davis:

The knowledge that you get from Elsewhere may be the more deep you rooting the information that hide within the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to know but Elsewhere giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in certain way that can be understood by means of anyone who read that because the author of this book is well-known enough. That book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We advise you for having this Elsewhere instantly.

Terry White:

Why? Because this Elsewhere is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such awesome way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have got such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking way. So , still want to delay having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Crystal Babin:

Reading can called mind hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book mainly book entitled Elsewhere your brain will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a book then become one application form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get prior to. The Elsewhere giving you yet another experience more than blown away your thoughts but also giving you useful data for your better life within this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

Joshua Hsu:

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