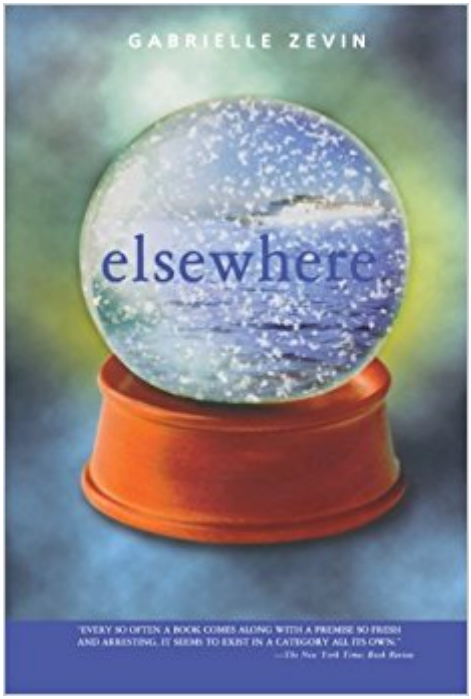
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Elsewhere: A Novel



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Synopsis

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 by Gabrielle Zevin is a 2006 Bank Street - Best Children’s Book of the Year.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 720L (What’s this?)

Paperback: 304 pages

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Best Sellers Rank: #35,251 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #43 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > New Experiences #83 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying #216 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 7-10Ã¢â ¬â œWhat 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.Ã¢â ¬â œSharon Grover, Arlington County Department of Libraries, VA
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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 MattsonCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Elsewhere was a wonderful read. The storyline revolved upon the subject of the afterlife. Elizabeth , the main character, has recently died and must learn to live in Elsewhere. Elsewhere is where all the dead people end up and where the people age backwards until they are seven days old and are shipped back to Earth to start a new life. Elizabeth must come to terms that she will never be able to do the things she has been waiting for, as she died at the young age of 15. Without having been able to even go to prom Elizabeth must learn to get used to Elsewhere with the help of her new friends.and relatives. This book has shown that death does not result in the end but a new beginning. This book showed that you have to learn to live with your current circumstances even if those circumstances are not that good. Elizabeth was thrust into this new life without even having been able to complete most of her life goals. She learned that she must make the best out of every situation and that is what she was able to do. Elizabeth was able to live on even if she was surrounded with new people and not knowing her surroundings. Elizabeth was able to find happiness there and she was finally able to be content after she was in a period of denial after learning that she died. This book taught me that even when all seems lost there will be a way to find happiness.

One of my favorite books ever. The author’s conception of the after-life is creative and touching. This is a rare book that I will probably read a second time.

I think that Gabrielle Zevin did a wonderful job with this Teen/Young Adult novel! The story is centered around fifteen-year-old, Liz Hall. She gets hit by a car, dies, and wakes up on the SS Nile, headed for Elsewhere, where she will begin her age, going backward, instead of forward, like on Earth. Liz has a difficult time accepting her death, at first, just like I’m sure we all would, at any age. Zevin did a great job with her imaginative view of her after-life, including the O.D.s (observation decks) and the Well, where she meets Owen, her first love. This is a wonderful read that depicts how life goes on, whether aging forward or backward, and the lessons learned with living (or dying); and even lessons of forgiveness. She develops all of her characters very well, and including dogs is also a nice touch; especially when Liz speaks to them in "Canine". I would highly recommend this, especially for teenage girls. A truly wonderful book!

I’ve reread this book over and over for 10 years, and I think I cry every time. I find something new to appreciate every time, especially since I was the age Liz was when she died when I first read this, and now I’m the age she would be been when she was released. This’ll never stop being my favorite book.

Ok, so imagine that you’re almost 16... and then you die.And then you wake up on an ocean liner, and you keep trying to figure out where you are, and how you can get back to your life. And when you realize that you’re dead, suddenly the life you’ve left behind doesn’t seem as bad as it did when you were almost 16 and still alive. The ocean liner is moving inevitably towards an unknown shore...Turns out, you end up in Elsewhere. A perfectly nice place to be, but still, you’re dead and separated from the people you love. At least, that’s how Lizzie sees it. She never got a chance to go to prom, or get her driver’s license, or fall in love, and now she’s separated from everything she knows and everyone she loves. She’s dead, and she’s stuck in Elsewhere.Slowly, Lizzie starts to let go of the obsessive need to revisit the life and people she left behind. She starts to embrace living, even though she’s dead. She makes new friends, she experiences love, and all of it means more than what she experienced in life, because now that she’s dead, she knows just how fleeting it all is. She learns to appreciate the life she has and the people (and dogs) she loves in Elsewhere. She does a lot of growing up, even though she’s also moving backwards. You’ll have to read the book to understand what that means.No matter what, it is comforting to imagine that we all pass through

Elsewhere eventually. And it is also comforting to imagine that none of the love, none of the laughter, none of the happiness is ever wasted just because it eventually comes to an end. In fact, sometimes Elsewhere is even better than Earth, because you know exactly how much time you have left, and you try to never waste a single moment.As Lizzie learns, it all depends on how you look at it, after all. And after reading this book, I'm taking a second, or even a third look at what it means to be born and to die, and what might be possible in between.Great premise. Very plainly written, but there was a lot of whimsy, too. (Talking dogs, anyone?) This was young adult fiction, but definitely the best type of young adult fiction that any adult would also enjoy.

This is a feel good book. The reader knows after getting into the book what will ultimately happen to the characters, but not saddened by that knowledge. Unusual concept, but well done. I believe preteens and young teenagers will especially enjoy the novel.

We had to read this for book club - and it was really mediocre. I don't think the YA needs to be simplistic and condescend to younger readers, but this felt exactly thus. Character development is non-existent; and the writing is full of cliches. I cannot recommend this at all.

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