



ELSEWHERE BY GABRIELLE ZEVIN

Young adult fiction/fantasy
Ages 12 to older
Intriguing, heavy, weird

Elsewhere is a book that introduces the always-interesting question, "what happens when someone dies?". Well, in this book, when people die, they are taken to a land called Elsewhere, where they age backward until they're young enough to be sent back to Earth to be reborn.

Elsewhere's main character is Liz, a girl who is killed when a car hits her when she's on a bicycle. Liz wakes up on the SS Nile, and initially thinks everything is a dream; after all, she's met her favorite rockstar (who is also dead). But quickly she realizes she's dead, and goes into denial, initially regularly visiting the Observation Decks where one can watch their alive friends and relatives. However, Liz realizes that her visits aren't helping and meets Owen (after he arrests her, actually), gets closer to her dead grandmother, Betty, and gets a job.

The premise the book is centered around is really interesting, and brings up another idea for what happens after death. I'd have loved to read more scenarios set in this world.

Onto the characters: I despised Liz at first. She is snotty and self-centered, and uses up much of her grandmother's money to spy on her living family and friends. However, she gets better by the end of the book (hmmm but she still likes dogs, inexcusable). I think I liked Betty, Liz's grandmother, the most. She is motherly and caring, and genuinely seems interested in her granddaughter, even though they'd never met because Betty had died before Liz was born.

Once again, there's a love triangle between Liz, Owen, and Owen's wife from when he was living, Emily. I honestly believe that this was one of the worst love triangles I've read. It wasn't needed; Liz and Owen just could've been friends, right? Many of the other characters were all slid into place so that they each had a partner by the end of the book, which I felt was unnecessary.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who likes to think. *Elsewhere* is also a smaller book than some others, so it's good for a quick read (just be prepared to think about it, of course. You won't be able to resist the thinking). 7/10

