Elsewhere
by Gabrielle Zevin

Study Guide
How to use this study guide.

1. This study guide will have 3 types of questions:

   - Fact for Fact: these are questions that ask you to remember facts from the novel.

   - Thought for thought: these questions will ask you to infer some of the main ideas of the novel.

   - Your opinion: these questions ask you to make a judgment or evaluate a situation based upon your opinion.

2. Read the questions FIRST, and then read the chapters with the questions in mind, but do not read to find the answers. This will ruin your reading experience. Remember: summer reading is supposed to be entertaining and enjoyable. Reading just to fill out this study guide takes away that enjoyment.

3. Answer the questions in short complete sentences (this is good writing practice for you).

4. Be prepared for a test in your English I class on Elsewhere during your first week of school.
Short Summary of Elsewhere:

Liz has found herself on "Elsewhere" a type of afterlife, from a hit-and-run accident in which she was killed. Life on Elsewhere seems much like life on earth, except on Elsewhere people live backwards until they return to earth as babies born again. For Liz, this is tragic. She will never graduate, never go to college, never get a job, and never fall in love...or will she? Through her grandmother Betty and some friends she meets on Elsewhere, Liz learned the meaning of life...and life in death.

Cast of Main Characters:

Elizabeth (Liz) Hall – main character, is killed by a hit-and-run driver and ends up in Elsewhere
Thandiwe (Thandi) Washington – the first person Liz meets on the SS Nile, was killed by a single bullet to the head
Shelly – Thandi’s cousin on Elsewhere with whom Thandi lives
Lucy – Liz’s pet pug dog that opens the novel
Curtis Jest – a famous rock star from the group Machine, Liz’s favorite group, who finds himself on the SS Nile after dying from an accidental drug overdose
Betty – Liz’s grandmother, Olivia’s mom; the person that Liz lives with on Elsewhere
Dr. Frederick – Liz’s principal who gives a eulogy at her funeral about traffic safety
Zooey – Liz’s best friend back on earth
Edward – Liz’s last boyfriend before she was killed
Dr. Fujiyama – Liz’s biology teacher back on earth who did not come to her funeral
Olivia – Liz’s mom
Mr. Hall – Liz’s dad
Alvyn – Liz’s younger brother who can hear Liz from Elsewhere through running water
Captain – a young captain of the SS Nile who tells Liz she must get off the boat and go live in Elsewhere; ends up being Owen’s grandfather
Yetta Brown – the mean woman at the Office of Acclamation
Aldous Ghent – Liz’s counselor and advisor on Elsewhere; allergic to emotions
Ester – the attendant on the observation desk
Owen Welles – the detective who catches Liz at the well
Ellen Welles – Owen’s wife back on earth whom he still loves
Amadou Bonamy – the cab driver whose hit and run kills Liz
Sadie – Liz’s pet dog on Elsewhere
**Paco** – Thandi’s pet dog on Elsewhere  
**Jen** – Owen’s pet dog on Elsewhere

Places/things to know:

**SS Nile** - the ship that brings the dead to Elsewhere  
**Elsewhere** – the afterlife where people go when they die  
**Observation Deck (OD)** – a place on Elsewhere where residents can view life back on Earth  
**Enternims** – the official currency of Elsewhere  
**Avocation** – another name for a career that everyone on Elsewhere must choose  
**The Well** – a place where an Elsewhere resident can make contact with the living  
**The Sneaker Clause** – a loophole that allows teenagers to go back to Earth  
**Release** – a time when Elsewhere residents are reborn into Earth as newborns after living backwards from their age from when they died  
**The River** – where the Release takes place  
**DDA** – Department of Domestic Animals, where animals who die go to find new homes.
Prologue: In the End

Fact for Fact:
1. Who is Lucy?
2. Why is she sad?
3. What do the other dogs tell her to do? Why can’t Lucy do it?

Thought for Thought:
1. By noting the description in Liz’s room, what kind of person was she?
2. Why do you think the author opened with the prologue, and having a dog be the first “speaker” of the novel?

Your Opinion:

Do you think that dogs have these type of feelings for their owners? Why or why not?
Part I: The *Nile*

Chapter 1: At Sea

Fact for Fact
1. Where does Lizzy find herself when she wakes up?

2. Who is the girl in the room with Lizzy?

3. What does Lizzy notice about her appearance when she looks in the mirror?

4. What does Thandi have on her head?

Thought for Thought:
1. Why do you think Liz received the advice to “never open a door in a dream?” What could be lurking behind that door?

2. How does Lizzy “know,” or convince herself, she is dreaming?

Your Opinion:
What is the best dream you’ve ever had? What was the worst nightmare you ever had?
Chapter 2: Curtis Jest

Fact for Fact:
1. What is the name of the boat the girls are on?
2. How did Thandi get her injury?
3. Who does Liz recognize on the boat? Why does she like him?
4. What does Curtis show Liz on his arm?
5. Liz recalls how this dream of being on the ship began (pg 21). Describe the beginning of Liz's dream.

Thought for Thought:
1. Liz recalls the following line from an ancient Egyptian poem: “I met a traveler from an antique land.” How is this line applicable to what Liz is going through?
2. Why is Liz in such denial about her death?

Your Opinion:
1. Are there certain types of people you think would not be allowed on the SS Nile? Give evidence to support your opinion.
Chapter 3: In Memory of Elizabeth Marie Hall

1. Why is Thandi crying in this chapter?

2. Summarize Lizzy’s love life.

3. Describe how Thandi died.

4. What was in the envelope that Liz receives?

5. What does Liz see through B219?

6. Who was NOT at Liz’s funeral?

7. Liz finally admits that she is dead. How does she say she died (she tells Curtis this)?

Thought for Thought:
1. Why do you think some of the most important people in Liz’s life were not at her funeral?

2. Why would Curtis and Thandi be more accepting of their deaths than Liz?
Your Opinion:

1 Liz says, "If you have to be dead, it is better to be somewhere, anywhere, than nowhere at all." Comment on this statement (agree? disagree? makes/doesn't make sense?).
Part II: The Book of the Dead
Chapter 1: Welcome to Elsewhere

Fact for Fact:
1. Is Thandi sad about being dead? Why or why not?
2. Where does the ship land?
3. Who is at the Pier waiting for Liz?
4. Why does Liz try to hide on the Nile? What is her plan?
5. Describe the Captain of the Nile.
6. What does the Captain tell Liz about “going back?” Why is it dangerous? What happens to people who “go back?”
7. What does Betty tell Liz about aging on Elsewhere?

Thought for Thought:
1. Why does Liz say, “But it took me so long to get to fifteen!”?
2. Why would Betty enjoy Elsewhere over Liz?

Your Opinion:
1. Do you believe that people who did not accept their death become ghosts? Or, do you not believe in ghosts?
Chapter 2: A Long Drive Home

Fact for Fact:
1. Describe Elsewhere as Liz sees it on the drive home with Betty.

2. Explain what happens to people’s lives on Elsewhere.

3. How does Liz react to what will happen to her?

4. 

Thought for Thought:
1. Why does Liz get so upset when she learns she will live “backwards?”

2. How do you think Betty feels about Liz’s attitude?

Your Opinion:
Is this view of the “afterlife” similar or different to your own personal opinion about what happens after death?
Chapter 3: Waking

1. What is Liz doing as this chapter opens?

2. What appointment does Liz have to go to today?

3. Describe how Betty died.

4. What does Liz seem to like of Betty’s? Who also likes to garden?

5. Describe the ODs.

6. Describe the Registry Building.

Thought for Thought:
1. Why does Liz want to walk around in her pajamas all day?

2. Why would Liz want to go to the Registry Building alone?

Your Opinion:
Liz lives with her grandmother Betty in Elsewhere. If you were to be in Elsewhere, with whom would you want to live?
Chapter 4: A Circle and a Line

Fact for Fact:
1. What is the Office of Acclamation?

2. Where is Liz taken first?

3. Who is Polly?

4. Name a few things Liz learns from the cartoon portion of the video.

5. Describe how these are handled on Elsewhere: sickness and injury, Contact, and an avocation.

6. Where does Yetta take Liz after she watches the video?


8. What does Aldous tell Liz about her coma? What decision did Liz’s parents have to make?

9. Why does Aldous say it’s difficult for young people on Elsewhere to accept that they are dead?

10. What question makes Liz cry?
11. Was Liz happy on earth? What evidence does she give that she was or was not?

12. What is the Sneaker Clause?

13. Where does Aldous advise Liz to never go?

14. What does Aldous say about God?

15. Where is Liz’s next stop?

Thought for Thought:
1. How is life like a circle and a line according to the video?

2. What forms of foreshadowing is shown in this chapter (hint: pg. 78).

Your Opinion:
1. Do you agree or disagree with Aldous’ opinion from Question 9 about young people’s view of the world?
Chapter 5: Last Words

Thought for Thought:
1. What does Sarah tell Liz was her last word?

2. Why does Liz have to sign a piece of paper about her last word?

3. What were Thandi’s last words?

4. Who is Thandi living with? What is the connection between the way Shelly and Curtis died?

5. What avocation does Aldous offer Liz?

6. What does Liz have to learn in order to do her avocation?

7. Does Liz accept the position? Why or why not?

8. What does Liz tell Betty she wants to do at the end of this chapter.

Thought for Thought:
1. Aldous describes what “dead” means on pg. 86. Explain this.

2. Why would an avocation be important for those on Elsewhere?
Your Opinion:
If you were on Elsewhere, what would you choose as your avocation?
Chapter 6: Sightseeing

1. Why does Betty say the ODs are dangerous?

2. Describe the ODs.

3. Describe what Liz sees when she puts in her first enternim.

4. What funny things does Liz see Alvy do?

5. Describe Zooey as Liz sees her.

6. Why is Liz obsessed with her family and friends?

7. What does Liz "particularly like" to see when she watches Earth?

8. Who stills speaks about Liz?

9. What happened to Liz’s dad when Liz died?

10. Why doesn’t Betty want Liz to go to the ODs so much?

11. What does Liz pick up at the gift shop at the beach? What does she do with hit?

12. What does Liz put on that Betty gives her?

13. Who does Liz write postcards to?
14. How does Liz tell the dog that she feels? What’s the dog’s advice?

Thought for Thought:
1. Why is Alvy acting silly in front of his parents?

2. What does the last scene make Liz realize about her talent for an avocation on Elsewhere?

Your Opinion:
If you were on Elsewhere, what or who would you want to watch through the ODs?
Chapter 7: Lucky Cab

Fact for Fact:
1. Describe the cab that hit Liz.

2. Describe the cab driver, Amadou Bonamy.

3. Why is Liz so obsessed with making contact?

4. Who does Liz decide to ask to help her make Contact?

5. What does Curtis have as an avocation?

6. What are the two ways to make Contact with people on earth?

7. Describe the Well. Compare the difference between the ODs and the Well.

Thought for Thought:
1. What good can come of Liz contacting her family? What could go wrong?

2. Why might have Amadou Bonamy not have stopped when he hit Liz?

Your Opinion:
Predict what will happen to Liz when she makes contact.
Chapter 8: The Big Dive

Fact for Fact:
1. For what does Liz start to prepare?

2. Where is Liz spending less and less time?

3. Liz lies to Betty and tells her that she needs money for what?

4. What is Betty trying to do her best to do?

5. Who does Liz observe through Binoculars #14?

6. Why does Betty tell Liz that Amadou didn’t stop?

7. What does Liz realize about how she might have caused her own death?

8. What does Liz tell Betty about going to the ODs?

9. Discuss why Betty and Olivia, Liz’s mom, stopped talking while Betty was still alive.

10. What kind of dream does Liz have for the first time that night?

11. What does Liz decide to do at the end of this chapter?
Thought for Thought:
1. What positives can come out of Liz’s acceptance of her death?

2. Is Betty using her relationship with Liz to make up her torn relationship with her daughter, Olivia?

Your Opinion:
Do you think that Liz is responsible for her own death? Why or why not?
Chapter 9: Sadie

Fact for Fact:
1. In what department does Liz work? What is her avocation?

2. How does Liz feel about her first day on the job?

3. What does Liz see a dog doing? About what is the dog so shocked?

4. What is the dog’s name? What does she try to convince Liz to do?

5. Who does Liz say she has to ask before she can agree?

6. What does Liz realize about her conversation?

7. Who is the next dog that Liz meets? How did this dog die?

8. Does Liz take Sadie home?

Thought for Thought:
1. What is ironic about Liz’s job and the Prologue back at the beginning of the novel?

2. Why could this chapter be considered a turning point to the novel?

Your Opinion:
Do you think dogs understand humans like they do on Elsewhere?
Chapter 10: The Well

Fact for Fact:
1. How is Liz’s life different now on Elsewhere as this chapter opens?

2. Does Liz love her job?

3. Who adopts Paco?

4. Liz seems to be adjusting, but one thing still bothers her. What is that one thing?

5. Why does Liz decide to take the dive into the Well?

6. What does Liz say into the well?

7. What happens when Liz speaks into the Well?

8. Who hears Liz on Earth?

9. What happens to Liz just as she is about to answer Alvy’s question?

10. Who captures Liz? From what department is he?

11. What does Owen show Liz at the well? What went wrong with her plan?

12. Why does Owen say there’s no good in talking with the living?
13. Why is Owen shocked that Liz had to contact the living over a sweater?

14. Why does Owen have to stop people from coming to the Well?

Thought for Thought:

1. Why was Liz’s decision to speak at the Well much more important than giving her family her killer’s name?

2. What do you think about Owen’s view of the Well?

Your opinion:
Do you think Liz will try and make contact again? Why or why not? If you do think she will try, what do you think the reason will end up being?
Chapter 11: A Piece of String

Fact for Fact
1. To what does this title refer? Why is Liz so upset that the piece of string is gone?

2. What does Betty advise Liz to do to so she can stop her depression?

3. What are the 4 things on Liz’s list? What does she do with her list?


Thought for Thought:
1. What change does Liz go through during this chapter?

2. What kind of relationship did Liz have with her father?

Your Opinion:
Do you have something – a piece of jewelry, a toy, etc. – that someone in your family has given you that is important to you? Describe it and explain its significance.
Chapter 12: Owen Welles Takes a Dive

Fact for Fact
1. Summarize Owen Welles’ s life and marriage to Emily.

2. How did Owen die? How old was he when he died?

3. How old is Owen in Elsewhere years?

4. On Elsewhere, how does Owen feel about his marriage to Emily?

5. Why does Owen take a dive for Liz? What does he have to tell Alvy?

6. Why does he feel obligated to “fix” the mistake for Liz?

7. How does Alvy react to Owen?

8. How does Liz react to Owen’s gesture?

9. Where does Liz invite Owen?

Thought for Thought
1. What issues does Owen still have with being in Elsewhere?
2. What issues is Liz getting over while being in Elsewhere?
Your Opinion:
If you were to go to Elsewhere today, is there any "unfinished business" that you would need to speak to someone about at the Well? What is it?
Chapter 13: Thanksgiving

Fact for Fact:
1. Who has Liz invited to Thanksgiving?

2. Describe how Thanksgiving is on Elsewhere?

3. What is Betty’s toast that Shelly suggests?

4. What chore do Liz and Owen share together after dinner?

5. Where have Liz and Owen met before the Well?

6. What does Owen realize at his next visit at the ODs?

Thought for Thought:
1. What is happening between Liz and Owen?

2. Why would it be beneficial for Liz and Owen to move on with their lives in Elsewhere?

Your Opinion:
Would you be able to move on in Elsewhere if you were Liz? If you were Owen?
Chapter 14: A Mystery

Fact for Fact:
1. What is the big mystery?

2. Who does Owen adopt from the DDA?

3. Why does Owen have to take Jen? What did Jen do?

4. What is Jen saying on the ride home?

5. Why has Liz come to Owen’s house with Sadie?

6. Why couldn’t Owen have a dog on Earth?

7. How does Liz think that Owen says Emily’s name? What does it say about the way Owen feels about his wife Emily?

8. What does Liz ask Owen to help her learn with her driving skills?

9. Why does Thandi think Liz is having a hard time learning how to parallel park?

Thought for Thought:
1. Who seems more nervous about their growing relationship: Liz or Owen? Why?

2. Who else could Liz ask for advice? Who would Owen ask?
Your opinion:
Is Owen “cheating” on Emily by being interested in Liz? Why or why not?
Chapter 15: Liz in Love

Fact for Fact:
1. With whom does Liz confide about her feelings for Owen?

2. According to Curtis, how does a person know when he or she is in love?

3. What does Owen do once he realizes that he does not have to help Liz learn how to parallel park?

4. How does Owen get to see Liz again? Who takes him there?

5. What is Liz doing when Owen and Jen get there?

6. How does the conversation go between the two?

7. What does Owen promise to do?

8. What do Liz and Owen give each other for Christmas?

9. What does Owen admit to Liz?

10. What does Liz challenge Owen to admit about them doing dishes and other things that they do together?

11. Explain the tattoo on Owen’s arm – how he got it, what it is, what is happening to it since he came to Elsewhere?
Thought for Thought:
1. How did Owen feel about the tattoo? How did Liz feel about it?

2. How does Liz know that she is in love?

Your Opinion:
Does age matter when two people are in love? Explain.
Chapter 16: Arrivals

Fact for Fact:
1. What is Thandi’s avocation?

2. Whose name does Thandi recognize on the list of new arrivals?

3. Who goes to tell Owen about Emily’s arrival? What does she ask Owen before she tells him?

4. How does Owen react to the news about Emily?

5. Later that night while she is at home, how does Liz feel about Owen’s decision?

6. Describe Emily’s arrival.

7. How did Emily die?

8. What does Emily do when she meets Jen? Why?

9. Does Emily understand Canine?

10. Who asks to leave – Emily or Jen? Where does Jen go?

11. Name the ways in which people that Liz knows have died (pg 197-198). What does Liz think about the way Emily dies?

12. What does Emily tell Owen about their baby?
13. What kind of living arrangements do Owen and Emily have?

14. Although Owen is happy to have Emily back, some things about her irritate him. What are these things?

15. Is there anything about Owen that bothers Emily?

16. Liz goes to Owen’s house to get what? How does the meeting go between Liz and Jen?

17. What does Betty suggest that Liz do to continue the friendship with Owen? How does it go?

18. What does Emily ask Owen on the drive home from dinner? How does he answer?

19. What makes Liz drive out to Owen’s house in the middle of the night?

20. How does the confrontation end? Who sees this from the house?

21. What does Owen tell Liz about his relationship with Emily?

Thought for Thought:
1. Why does Liz agree to continue to watch Jen?
2. What is Emily’s reaction to the two kissing? Does she have a right to be angry?

Your Opinion:
Do you think it is strange that Liz and Owen are in love? What should they do about it?
Chapter 17: The Sneaker Clause

Fact for Fact:
1. Who comes to visit Liz?
2. What does Liz tell him that she wants to do?
3. How does Liz enact the Sneaker Clause?
4. How does Aldous react to Liz’s decision?
5. Who does Liz decide to tell about her Sneaker Clause?
7. Does Curtis agree with Liz’s decision? How does Liz react to Curtis?
8. What does Liz write in the note for Betty?
9. Explain what happens between Owen and Emily the night before Liz leaves.
10. What happens to Owen’s tattoo?
11. What does Owen decide to do?
Thought for Thought:
1. How does Liz’s insight into the reasons for reading Shakespeare relate to her relationship with Owen?
2. Has Liz grown at all since she has been at Elsewhere?

Your Opinion:
Does true love last until death, or after death? Did Owen and Emily make the right decision?
Chapter 18: To Earth

Fact for Fact:
1. Who meets Liz at the River for her Sneaker?

2. How is Liz prepared for her Sneaker?

3. When Liz is asked by Dolly why she wants to go back, how does Liz respond? Does she respond at all?

4. Who goes to tell Betty about Liz’s decision? How does he initially react when he sees Betty?

5. Who else comes to Betty’s house that early morning?

6. What do the 3 decide to do?

7. While in the River, why does Liz decide to stop the trip (pg 220)?

8. Where does Liz end up when she breaks loose?

9. Who goes out to find Liz?

10. What seems to be happening to Curtis?
11. Who makes Liz cry at the bottom of the ocean?

Thought for Thought:

1. What is ironic about Liz deciding to activate the Sneaker clause and Owen’s marriage ending?

2. Is there any benefit to falling in love on Elsewhere? Why or why not?

Your Opinion:
Is Curtis too old for Betty? Why or why not?
Chapter 19: At the Bottom of the Ocean, in the Land Between Elsewhere and Earth

Fact for Fact:
1. How long has Liz been underwater when the chapter opens?
2. What does Liz see that makes her reach towards the surface?
3. What does the object end up being?
4. Who ends up saving Liz?
5. Who is Owen’s grandfather?

Thought for Thought:
1. Explain how it is ironic that Liz has met Owen’s grandfather.
2. What is the significance of Liz thinking the gondola was the pocket watch?

Your Opinion:
Do you think Liz continues to grow, even though she is getting younger? Why or why not?
Chapter 20: Restoration

Fact for Fact:
1. Who visits Liz while she recovers? Why does he cry?

2. When Curtis visits Liz, what does he ask her?

3. What is Liz's reaction to Curtis' questions?

4. Does Betty want to pursue a relationship with Curtis? Why not?

5. What does Curtis sing to Betty in the middle of the night?

6. What does Owen give Liz?

7. What does Jen say about forgiveness?

8. Does Liz eventually end up appreciating the watch? Does she end up forgiving Owen? What are her reasons for doing so?

Thought for Thought:

1. What kind of acceptance have you seen among the characters in Elsewhere?

2. What is the greatest lesson that Liz has learned so far?
Your Opinion:
What is the most unique thing that you have noticed about Elsewhere that is completely different from Earth?
Part III: Antique Lands
Chapter 1: Time Passes

Fact for Fact:
1. What kind of "other lives" will there be?

2. How many years pass for Liz in this chapter?

3. How old is Liz in Elsewhere at the end of this chapter?

Thought for Thought:
1. Explain what is meant by there will be other lives.

2. What does it mean when Liz decides to choose happiness?

Your Opinion:
Chapter 2: Two Weddings

1. What does Owen tell Liz at the opening of this chapter?

2. What is Liz’s new hobby?

3. What is a MIB?

4. Who is the MIB from? What does it say?

5. Does Liz want to go to Zooey’s wedding? Why or why not?

6. What does Zooey’s note say?

7. What does Liz want to do at Zooey’s wedding?

8. How does Owen tell Liz to make the best contact?

9. Why does Owen want to come with Liz?

10. How long do the two have to make contact?

11. If they had lived, how old would Liz be? How old would Owen did?
12. Name the places where Owen and Liz try to make contact at the wedding.

13. Where does contact finally work? Who hears them?


15. What does Liz tell Alvy about her life on Elsewhere?

16. What does Owen ask Liz in a roundabout way? How does Liz respond to his proposal?

17. Does he ever bring up the subject again?

18. What does Curtis ask Liz?

19. What happens between Betty and Curtis?

Thought for Thought:
1. What does Liz mean when she thinks, “This is my life for better or worse?”

2. Why doesn’t Owen bring up the idea of marriage again?

Your Opinion:
Do you think Liz and Owen are making a mistake by not getting married? Why or why not?
Chapter 3: The Change

Fact for Fact:
1. Describe the change of Sadie.

2. How does Liz feel about Sadie’s change? Why?

3. Why does Owen say that Sadie will be fine?

4. Who arrives a month after Sadie’s death?

5. What does Lucy ask Liz about where they are?

Thought for Thought:
1. Is it surprising that Liz feels the loss of Sadie in Elsewhere? What does this show about what changes and what doesn’t on Elsewhere?

2. Is Lucy happy to be on Elsewhere?

Your Opinion:
Do you think that Lucy will outlive Liz? Why or why not?
Chapter 4: Amadou

Fact for Fact:
1. Who stops by Liz’s office the day she retires?

2. What does Amadou tell Liz about his guilt?

3. Why didn’t Amadou stop that day when he hit Liz?

4. How does Liz describe being dead when Amadou asks her?

Thought for Thought:
1. Explain what Liz means when she says, “A life isn’t measured in hours and minutes. It’s the quality, not the length.”

2. Why hasn’t Liz tried to make contact with Amadou’s son?

Your Opinion:
Would you be able to forgive someone like Amadou if this happened to you? If it happened to someone you love?
Chapter 5: Childhood

Fact for Fact:
1. How old is Owen when this chapter opens? How old is Liz?

2. What does Liz realize when she tries to read *Tuck Everlasting*?

3. Liz asks Owen if he remembers the game. What was the game?

4. Why doesn’t Liz want to play that game anymore?

5. What happens when Owen reads to Liz?

Thought for Thought:
1. What mood is set in this chapter? What is being foreshadowed?

2. Why are Owen and Liz sad in this chapter?

Your Opinion:
What is your reaction to Liz and Owen getting “younger?”
Chapter 6: Birth

Fact for Fact:
1. Who delivers Liz to her Release? Who receives Liz?

2. Who is there at Liz’s release?

3. What is outside of Curtis and Betty’s house?

4. Summarize Betty’s toast to Liz.

Thought for Thought:
1. What does Betty mean by “we fool ourselves into thinking we know what will be...”

2. Is this a happy or a sad time in the novel, or a little of both?

Your Opinion:
What will happen to Liz?
Chapter 7: What Liz Thinks

Fact for Fact:
1. List some of the things that Liz thinks as she floats in the river.

2. What does Liz dream when she is floating in the river?

Thought for Thought:
1. Compare Liz’s maturity level from the beginning of the novel until now. What is ironic about her maturity?

Your Opinion:
Is the concept of an Elsewhere appealing to you? Do you think of “Heaven” as something else? Discuss.
Epilogue: At the Beginning

Fact for Fact:
1. When is the baby girl born?

2. What does the baby girl’s mother ask her?

3. Who is the baby girl? What does she do?

Thought for Thought:
1. Will Liz have any memories of her previous life?

2. How do you think Liz’s new life will be different from her former life?

Your Opinion:
1. Why does Liz laugh at the end?
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:


Water is a powerful image and symbol that runs throughout the book. Liz's story opens on the ocean: the Well is in the water; the Observation Decks face the water; Liz can communicate through a water source with her brother, Alvy. What other aspects of the importance of water are evident in the novel? Why does the author elect to use water as such an essential symbol? Comment on some of the other symbols, such as Liz's stitches, the watch her father gave her, and the snow globe.

This novel is divided into three separate parts and also employs a prologue and an epilogue. Understanding the structure of the novel is important to understanding the story itself. Why is the scene with Liz's dog, Lucy, the first glimpse the author provides of the story? How does this scene foreshadow what will come later in the novel? How does the epilogue bring the novel not to a close but to a resolution? What purpose do the three parts serve? What important events occur in each of the three parts?

There are many characters who are part of the story of Elsewhere, all of them critical to it. The author, Gabrielle Zevin, introduces the characters early in the story. Liz meets Thandi and Curtis on the ship, Grandma Betty upon her arrival, Aldous Ghent at the acclimation session, and Owen at the Well. No characters, not even the canine ones, are minor to the story. Explore how the characters move the novel forward. For instance, what important role does Esther, the supervisor at the Observation Deck, play? Why is Thandi critical to the story? Could the novel be complete without Sadie or Lucy or Alvy? How does each of them help Liz adjust to life on Elsewhere and come to understand that life on Elsewhere is something to be cherished?

Notice the allusions made to classic and contemporary literature throughout the novel. Liz recalls a line about antique lands. Aldous Ghent prompts Liz to read Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Liz reads E. B. White's Charlotte's Web as she grows younger. Finally, Owen reads Natalie Babbitt's Tuck Everlasting to Liz when she is no longer able to read on her own. Every one of these titles deals with some aspect of life as it relates to Elsewhere as well as Earth. How does each address some facet of Liz's life and experiences?

How does the author use humor in the novel? What examples of wordplay are evident? For instance, Liz is aboard a ship called the Nile and Thandi tells her she is in denial (de-nile). Another example of this gentle humor is when Liz meets Sadie and informs the dog that she is drinking from a toilet. Locate other instances of humor and discuss how it is used in the novel. Is the humor intended to defuse the emotion of a serious situation or scene? Is it more of a way to show how Liz is becoming acclimated to life on Elsewhere?

Be sure to visit the Web site for the book at: www.fsgkidsbooks.com/elsewhere/index.htm. How does the structure of the site reflect the structure and content of the novel?

Liz and all the other arrivals in Elsewhere are encouraged to find an avocation to pursue during their time there. Ghent explains to Liz that an avocation is something that makes one's soul complete (page 74). Some of the residents of Elsewhere work in avocations similar to the jobs they did on Earth; others have new ones. Marilyn Monroe becomes a psychiatrist. Curtis Jest decides to be a fisherman and comments that John Lennon is a gardener. How do the avocations of Monroe, Lennon, Owen, Betty, Curtis, and other characters reflect what they really want out of their new lives?