



A Revolution of the Mind

M. V. Perry

Heeler Books (Mar 15, 2022)

eBook \$9.99 (482pp)

978-0-578-31404-4

A Revolution of the Mind is a complex novel in which a woman becomes angry about society's approach to mental health.

In M. V. Perry's novel *A Revolution of the Mind*, a woman in her twenties thinks about how her depression formed her.

Boo grew up in Chicago's affluent North Shore community. Her well-connected, boisterous family was steeped in local and national politics. Given her father's influence, she was expected to go to the University of Notre Dame. But anxious Boo, who has trouble making friends, dating, and even feeling comfortable in her own skin, wants to escape her privilege: she chooses a small California college instead.

Boo's past follows her west: after initial success at her physics major, she drinks to black out, experiments with drugs, and fails her classes. She's forced to move home, where she meets Jude, a depressed mental health activist. Through her, Boo develops a revolutionary stance toward society.

As Boo is pulled between people and perspectives, her story is told in precise, blow-by-blow terms. The book follows her daily life in college before shifting to cover her inner world. The contrasts between the two are jarring. Outwardly, Boo's life carries on; internally, her experiences play out on a different plane all together. She begins to notice that her conversations with family members and college friends do not represent real communication at all.

The book's descriptions are photographic, but they also suggest that Boo exists in a static world in which others seem inert. Boo's loneliness, alienation, and lack of intimacy dominate. Though she finds mentors in Jude and her grandfather, whose advice she follows, both fall into ill health, threaten to upend her again.

The novel is a character study more than anything else; its instances of action are subtle and sometimes trying. Its tone is claustrophobic, as its primary setting is in Boo's mind. A sense that insanity is the only sane way to be arises. The novel ably conveys Boo's vision of a tumultuous world whose collapse might be regarded as a blessing. It includes some spiritual language, though this is outweighed by its tragic journal entries, political diatribes, and disheartening scenes at school and in Boo's family home. Only when Boo begins to imagine her future does the story brighten and broaden.

A Revolution of the Mind is a complex novel in which a woman becomes angry about society's approach to mental health, but maintains desperate personal hope nonetheless.

MARI CARLSON (December 24, 2021)

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