



The Parallel Lives of Elizabeth Ann

J. Nichols Mowery

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An intricate plot entwines with complex subplots on the scientific possibility of unseen realities.

Imagine three parallel versions of the same woman forced to interact in a mystical realm before embarking on a disturbing expedition into the unknown. If this does not frighten, then proceed on J. Nichols Mowery's journey in *The Parallel Lives of Elizabeth Ann*, the first installment in a trilogy.

At a glance, this creepy novel may appear to be an in-depth study of schizophrenia; instead, the story is actually an examination of alternate planes of existence. Mowery creates a world where different lives coexist under the same roof. Liz, Eliza, and Beth—a widow mourning the loss of her husband in an air crash, a murderess, and a sensitive soul grief-stricken over the death of her lesbian lover—must eventually learn to accept one another's presence. Their individual destinies remain unclear. A powerful stone beneath their multi-dimensional home is a catalyst for cosmic events.

In conjunction with the summer solstice, these unusual personalities will meet, seeking an explanation for the bizarre occurrences that have transpired. This intriguing premise could go in countless directions, yet the somewhat convoluted plot teeters on a complicated and confused idea that generates too many tangents. Each of these women's stories has the potential to be a novel in itself, and the attempt to fast-pace them into a grand opener may have resulted in the loss of essential details along the way. Without question, the foundation for this story holds infinite options for development. The pages are crammed with an incredible mixture of material, truly enough for several books and definitely sufficient for a series, but the first delivers too much all at once.

Immersed in the supernatural, the overriding mood of this tale is ominous, with intermittent moments of lyrical beauty:

Though time seems to stand still, hours pass as the two move in tandem to music only they hear. The storm whips around the cabin without interrupting their last connection, Beth is too entranced to notice anything but the joy in Maxine's face and the love in her own heart. As the women dance through the night, the fury of the storm slowly dies away with the dawn.

Mowery's familiarity with the Pacific Northwest has contributed a vibrant authenticity to her novel's setting along the Washington coastline.

An action-propelled psychological thriller, *The Parallel Lives of Elizabeth Ann* will delight the curious looking for a fantastical depiction of a fragmented woman. Mysterious and mesmerizing, this is experimental fiction intended for the open-minded.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (April 17, 2015)

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