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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ GENERAL FICTION

We

Michael Landweber
Coffeetown Press (Sep 1, 2013)
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Scary as well as enlightening, this unique and mesmerizing novel is a page-turner.

A forty-year-old man transcends space and time after an accident propels him into the body of his younger self. On a mission to save his sister from a brutal attack, Ben enters his own seven-year-old mind to take charge of events that will lead to a cataclysmic outcome for his family if he does not intervene. Binky, as his mother affectionately called him during childhood, does not understand Ben's presence, causing confusion.

And Ben does not comprehend the full extent of their bond. "I knew next to nothing about this arrangement, this fusing of our selves, but I had assumed that my thoughts, my memories, remained only mine."

This extraordinary situation reveals the inner psyche struggling against the past, desperately seeking a favorable outcome long after traumatic actions have inflicted paralyzing damage. Scary and enlightening, Landweber's story illuminates the darkest human motivations along with the noblest effort to combat evil desires in unstable individuals. Reflective and introspective, yet highly charged with dramatic scenes in a race against time, this mesmerizing novel is a page-turner that will captivate even a jaded critic.

Reviewers cite Jungian psychology and *The Twilight Zone* television series as creative influences, but behind this supernatural plot is outstanding empathy backed by moral common sense. As Ben interacts with Binky in this touching and often humorous tale, the far-fetched aspect of this unusual occurrence is accepted. Drawn into the warring conversation between adult and child—parts of the same personality—one will learn what constitutes real maturity opposed to merely grown-up behavior when a sibling's life is threatened. Striking is the dual perspective within the same protagonist, an unusual angle that can be difficult to implement.

The hidden goal within this surreal scenario may be an attempt to resolve coming-of-age problems that remained sequestered in the deepest recesses of a tormented man's mind. "This situation was all too familiar. It explained why they kept me in therapy and gave me all the drugs that didn't work. To prevent me from doing what I knew was not in my best interests. To quell the urge to complete the task that could be my last. All that time and money, all those chemicals, were aimed at the sole purpose of helping me control that which I could not control."

Landweber is a prolific short story writer, with credits in numerous literary journals, and is an associate editor at the *Potomac Review*. *We*, his first novel, will make not only an impressive debut, but has already succeeded at an experimental undertaking few could achieve.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (November 14, 2013)

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