



## **Spirit Thorn (A Tale of Parallel Worlds)**

*Zacharias O'Bryan*

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## **Spirit Thorn (A Tale of Parallel Worlds) Zacharias O'Bryan**

Spirit Thorn, A Tale of Parallel Worlds, the important new novel by Zacharias O'Bryan, unifies spiritual ethics with both ecological mandates and the mind-bending cosmology of cutting edge physics. A science-fiction/fantasy adventure, Spirit Thorn is capturing the hearts, hopes and tears of all Seekers -- from the precocious ten-year-old to the questing adult.

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Do parallel worlds exist? Searching for proof, Professors Rodger & Cassie Swift vanish. Kestrelle, a spirit girl claiming to know their fate, tells their son Braden he must brave a whitewater, tooth-sprouting river into a land where wise vultures predict the future and blue minds inhabit lava caves, singing entire worlds into existence. What she doesn't tell him is that the role he will play is that of a thief and a traitor, or that she will be put on trial for her life. Only two powers can help: Kestrelle's Blood Thorn and Braden's vine-painted guitar. (For All Ages)

## **Spirit Thorn (A Tale of Parallel Worlds) Details**

Date : Published April 7th 2010

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Author : Zacharias O'Bryan

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Genre : Fantasy, Fiction



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## From Reader Review Spirit Thorn (A Tale of Parallel Worlds) for online ebook

### Jim says

This book was a bit difficult to get through. It seems almost to be a debut novella of someone that is just getting their feet wet. And, it's an early draft.

The ideas are interesting. Magic and metaphysics and alternate dimensions. But it was hard to get into. And hard to stick with. The annoying characters that I hated that seemed like would be in for only a scene or two ended up staying until the end. The story doesn't flow real well, and it's wrapped up at the end a bit too quickly and confusingly. It reads like a short story, but I compared the ebook to others I had that were the same length and it would probably come in at about 175 pages. I think if this had been an early draft, I would suggest the author develop the characters better and make the story tighter.

It was an experiment in finding free books on Kindle. But it might be a while before I do that again.

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### Samuel Addison says

Zacharias O'Bryan has taken some big themes - nature, humanity, multiverse cosmology, ethics, fate, family and more - and deftly weaved them into a charmingly engaging miniature oddessy.

There is always a danger that novels tackling such themes can end up boring the reader with humourless piety, but Spirit Thorn does not suffer this fate. Far from it - even at its most serious moments, the twinkle in O'Bryan's eye is never far from view. The mystical and ecological concepts are never forced or preached - the reader doesn't have to be a tree-hugging ecologist to feel for the plight of Molly Greenfingers (whatever she is!) and appreciate the numerous metaphors and allegories regarding humanity's place in nature and the wider cosmos.

The story follows a teenage boy - Braden - on the cusp of adulthood. His parents have been missing for a year. His attempts to find them, and comprehend the research they were conducting into the multiverse and other dimensions, leads him to encounter Kestrelle, a being who looks and sounds like a girl of his own age, but is clearly something else. An elf? Sure, why not - but your concept of elves probably stops far short of encompassing what she and her kin are.

Spirit Thorn pulls the reader down the rabbit hole and gives glimpses of what might lie behind the thin membrane of our reality that is the perceived uni-verse, but wisely does not attempt to provide too many explanations. Like all great works of science fiction and fantasy, there are enough broad strokes to allow the imaginative reader to paint in their own details and ponder their own questions.

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### Jeremy Stephens says

This is an extremely difficult book for me to review. On one hand, the story was kind of weak and the first couple chapters left me thinking this was a sequel since there are details (such as the Thorn) that are just

thrown out there with little explanation. Character development was also lacking. Because of that, I was tempted to only give it a two star rating.

On the other hand, this book did present a lot of interesting ideas concerning space, time, parallel dimensions, etc. Some parts of the story are comparable to classic works of fantasy and sci-fi. For example, the idea of the world being sung into existence reminds me of the beginning of Tolkein's The Silmarillion and the strange transcendental nature of space/time is reminiscent of Arthur C. Clark's 2001: A Space Odyssey. This timeless style of writing makes this book seem worthy of five stars.

So, why did I decide to give this book a four star rating? Well, I decided not to give it five stars because the beginning of the book was hard to get into and like I said before, some things could have been better explained. Two stars seemed unfair because this book did make me pause to consider some of the things being discussed (this is especially true of the many excerpts from a journal that appear throughout the book). Ultimately, I settled on four stars because after reading it, I concluded that this is the type of book where the reader is likely to come away with something new every time they read it. Also, I can see this book as something which possesses staying power- it seems like it will make as much sense and be just as interesting one hundred years from now as today.

Be sure to check out my review of this book on youtube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lvuzS...>

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### **Alison says**

I'm giving this book 4 stars because it was well written and has a really unique concept. The fact that I didn't quite understand it all because of my lack of scientific brain doesn't mean it should earn any less. I would say this book would best suit younger lads who understand and enjoy science (or girls for that matter, I'm not being sexist). It revolves around a young boy, whose parents have gone missing and he thinks it was into a parallel universe. So he puts together an experiment to try and recreate the conditions to see if he can find them. So there is a lot of physics involved and I'm afraid a lot of that part of it was over my head.

The descriptions of the parallel world are colorfully descriptive and really had me wondering how I would feel, if after walking over a ridge and finding an odd family, then trying to prove you were not trespassing by telling them you were from the local town, only to go back over the ridge to prove it to them and nothing of your world is there anymore. That particular part of the story sent goosebumps flashing up my arms. From there the young boy goes on an exciting journey. I think anyone with a basic knowledge of physics/science would enjoy the unique approach to this story.

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### **Leia says**

I wish I could give half-stars, because while Spirit Thorn doesn't quite merit three stars for me, I feel kind of bad giving it only two.

So, story synopsis: Braden's parents, who were world-renowned physicists working on incredibly complex and provocative research regarding the physics behind parallel universes, disappeared without a trace year

ago. Determined to find out what happened to them, Braden concocts an elaborate plan to recreate the exact conditions of the night his parents vanished, hoping to join them. Instead, he is pulled into a race to save not only his own world, but possibly all worlds.

I loved the premise of this story and kept hanging on, hoping that eventually things will start making sense, but it just didn't.

Maybe I'm just not the intellectual target of the book? This book assumes a basic knowledge of complex physics and physics theories, like String theory. Braden himself is intellectually superior to anyone else his age and his parents had tutored him in these matters since he was little, so there isn't really anyone to explain the foundations of these concepts to those of us who do not, in fact, understand basic physics.

While the plot and pacing are carefully executed and maintained throughout, it was difficult for me to follow along with the action. The writing, while beautifully evocative at some places, was quite abrupt at others and to me it felt a little heavy on the dialogue and a little light on the exposition.

It was easy to identify with Braden, though Kestrelle remained distant and alien to me (which may have been the author's intention). Braden's growth throughout the events is not really shown, though, and the unfolding of the plot was just too staccato and abstract for my personal tastes.

**Who would like this book?** Young adults and adults with a love and understanding of physics and sci-fi or fantasy.

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### **Brianne says**

To be honest, I didn't finish the book. I got about half way through and realized that I didn't remember or care about anything I'd read so far. Since I downloaded it for free I didn't bother forcing myself to finish it. The book is geared for a younger audience and just didn't hold my attention. If you are the sort of person that enjoys reading pre-teen fantasy stories involving parallel worlds and talking animals then you might enjoy this book.

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### **Diane M says**

Spirit Thorn is a unique book: delightful, engaging, thought-provoking, not easy to categorize. On the surface, it's a contemporary fantasy tale in the Hero's Quest genre. Braden, a precocious 14 year old, vows to find out what happened to his scientist parents, who mysteriously disappeared at the same moment their research findings were obliterated. An other-worldly girl urges him, and then joins and protects him, on a path into realms which at first have the appearance of earth's "reality" and then...

The story works powerfully on two levels. One, a coming of age story in which the human boy must acknowledge and conquer the demons within himself--not just the external threats--before he is worthy of the knowledge he seeks. More importantly (to me), it's a provocative allegory for the spiritual and ethical implications of today's scientific theories. Concepts of modern scientific inquiry--string theory, the bubble universe hypothesis and 'brane (short for membrane) universe--all come into play.

Zacharias O'Bryan calls Spirit Thorn "science in fiction," rather than "science fiction," which places it in the tradition of Madeleine L'Engle's Wrinkle in Time, but for an older audience.

Caveats: By today's standards, the story opens slowly. There isn't quite enough magic to satisfy the Sword-and-Sorcery buff. There isn't quite enough hard science to satisfy the techno-buff.

As Hermann Hesse said in Steppenwolf when introducing the Magic Theatre: "Not for Everyone." If I were rating the book for page-turner value, I'd give it 3 stars. For O'Bryan's use of the English language, I'd go 5 stars. For an engaging story, a 4. As an allegory, a 5.

The book is listed as being suitable for All Ages, but if you're thinking of downloading it for a child, the child should be fairly precocious.

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### **Marichee says**

Easy easy read. Too easy in fact. I finished it, never fear, but it was almost like reading a Dr. Seuss book.

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### **Wesley says**

This books stands out on my mind as one with the worst dialogue/monologue, I couldn't even get past the first couple of chapters...

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### **Bryan Frink says**

As the author of the book, I'll recuse myself from the task of judging "Spirit Thorn, A Tale of Parallel Worlds," by Zacharias O'Bryan. There are many others willing both to praise and criticize the work. To those who have praised it: Thank you! Everyone can use a little reassurance. To those who have criticized it: Sorry it didn't meet expectations. No one knows better than I the shortcomings of the book.

What I can say in an author review, is that, for me, the book succeeds partially. As we move into an era of human knowledge and belief systems derived from science, I have been intrigued with issues of spirituality. Tribal desert gods of certain Mideastern tribes of several thousand years ago do not speak to me. So the book is one piece of a growing, universal question; my own entry into the dialogue out of which new spiritual answers will someday emerge: What kind of cosmology will blend the growing knowledge base of science with our need for story, myth and spirituality?

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### **Stephen Jones says**

A lot of fun. A young man is taken to a parallel world in search of his missing parents. Everything is the same, but different. The action is as much psychological as well as physical.

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**kent says**

it is basically a 10-12 y/o children's book. It was decent, i finished it

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**Heather says**

This book combined elements of nature and science to bring together a epic fantasy that drew me in from the first page. It sent my mind reeling about possibilities of other worlds. It made me think about our own reality. All these realities each moving in time with one another. Any book that can draw me in from the first page and make me keep reading is a 5 star book to me. His world weave is very descriptive and I can almost feel his world in my fingertips. Bravo..looking forward to more reads.

If you like a book that makes you think, this is the one for you:)

Sometimes you come across a book that is an absolute gem. This is one of them. It moved me and made me think about our reality and other worlds just beyond your fingertips. If I could give it 10 stars I would.

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**Kirsten says**

Spirit Thorn is a story that begins from the point of view of Braden a young human boy and then flipping back and forth between him and Kestrelle, a spirit "elf" girl. Each chapter is then interspersed with fragments of Braden's father's scientific journals giving a reference to phenomenons and other scientific theories that may explain some of what is happening in the story.

Although the Thorn is said to be important for nearly the beginning it's importance and origin of only hinted at throughout the book and is never fully explained. The same also goes with Braden's guitar which is said to be monumental in their quest yet is hardly stops anything when it is destroyed halfway through.

Setting: In a parallel universe in Oregon (oddly not mentioned until about half way through) where gasoline, and other usual modern amenities are a thing of the past.

Characters: As for character development this book is also highly lacking and left me with even more questions by the end instead of revealing withheld information or explanations by the end as many other books do. How Braden was portrayed his year long struggle/search to find out what happened to his parents seems to be glossed over so it evokes little sympathy. His later selfishness and lack of premeditated actions made him seem more like a secondary character than a main one and made me think how much the book could have kept most (if not all) its literary integrity and storyline if Braden was simply removed all together. As for Molly, another non-human character, I would have appreciated more explanation of who she was (or more specifically what her job was in the eyes of the other creatures). She is identified as "The Singer" and you are left puzzled as to why it is important until at which time she seems to be paralleled with religious figures such as Jesus or Buddha.

Age Recommendation: Although this books is said to be for all ages I would adjust that to being best for pre-teens, particularly for those interested in books involving creatures of other races (mythical or otherwise).

Overall it is a fairly fast read and if you have nothing better to do go and give it a read after all it is free to buy but I wouldn't spend money for it which is disappointing for me as I had moderately high hopes for this one...

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### **George Schlubier says**

This book is a journey about a young man who goes looking for his missing parents. Braden follows the journals from his parents, Rodger and Cassie Swift, to find himself caught in a parallel world with a Spirit Thorn, a spirit girl- Kestrelle and Molly Greenfingers (a monster) who charms you with her amazing music. In fact the theme of music with the river were the better parts of this novel. I would strongly recommend it for young adult readers who are biased towards fantasy fiction. I personally enjoyed the tale because I am a big fan of parallel worlds like Roger Zelazny Chaos series.

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