

Top 10 parallel worlds in fiction

When you open the pages of a book you step into a parallel universe. You can discover new worlds, fantastic lands or even see reflections and alternative versions of the real world in the stories that you read. And what's more, for every story that is published, there exist parallel versions hidden away in the writer's notebook or in abandoned drafts, where characters' names are changed and events follow a different course.

But what's beautiful to me about the idea of parallel worlds is the fact that science suggests that they might actually exist. According to quantum physics, the universe that we live in might just be one of an infinite number of other universes. And every time our world is confronted by a choice, it splits into new parallel worlds where each possibility actually happens.

1. [Alice's Adventures in Wonderland](#) and [Through the Looking-Glass](#) by Lewis Carroll

The parallel world that Alice enters in these two books is a much stranger world than our own, populated by peculiar creatures with a fondness for wordplay and grinning cats – so not too different from Twitter really. But while Alice reaches Wonderland by falling down a rabbit hole or stepping through a mirror in order to meet the Cheshire Cat, Albie Bright takes inspiration from Schrödinger's Cat to travel to parallel worlds.

2. [The Chronicles of Narnia](#) by CS Lewis

Early on in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lucy tries to convince her siblings that Narnia is real, and when Peter and Susan consult Professor Kirke with their doubts about what Lucy has told them, the Professor replies "that nothing is more probable" than the existence of other worlds. In Narnia, CS Lewis created a parallel world of unparalleled imagination.

3. [Elidor](#) by Alan Garner

From one of the touchstone authors of my Mancunian childhood comes this haunting story of four Mancunian children who discover a portal to the fantasy world of Elidor inside a derelict church. There they have to find four treasures and bring these back to their own world to keep them safe. But the portals between parallel worlds can run both ways, and the evil forces that lurk in Elidor follow them back to Manchester...

4. [The Lives of Christopher Chant](#) by Diana Wynne Jones

In her *Chrestomanci* books, Diana Wynne Jones weaves magic and parallel universes to create a spellbinding series. The parallel worlds in Wynne Jones' fiction have taken different paths at key moments in history, such as a world where the Gunpowder Plot succeeded. *The Lives of Christopher Chant* tells how the hero of the title can travel to these parallel worlds in his dreams.

5. [His Dark Materials](#) by Philip Pullman

From a master storyteller comes this seminal trilogy of books that embraces the concept of the multiverse and in *The Subtle Knife* slices through the problem of how to move between parallel worlds with ease. Quantum physics suggests that life in parallel universes might have evolved in

completely different ways and Pullman realises this brilliantly in his creation of the world of the Mulefa in *The Amber Spyglass*.

6. [Coraline](#) by Neil Gaiman

In a parallel world, I never bunked off school at the age of fourteen to go to a Neil Gaiman signing in a comic book shop. In that universe I never had that moment of inspiration that made me realise that becoming a writer wasn't an impossible dream. Maybe in that world I've got buttons for eyes, just like the Other Mother in *Coraline*, who lurks behind a locked door in a sinister parallel world that's an eerie reflection of *Coraline's* own.

7. [The Flash: Flash of Two Worlds](#) by Gardner Fox and Carmine Infantino

The scientist Hugh Everett came up with his Many Worlds Interpretation of quantum physics proposing that parallel universes exist in 1957. Four years later his concept of the multiverse exploded in the pages of superhero comic books in this story from *The Flash*. This tale tells how the title hero vibrates at such an incredible speed that he crosses over into a parallel world where he meets his namesake, and the two Flashes team-up to defeat a trio of super-villains. From this cross-over comic, the DC multiverse was born, populated by parallel versions of Batman, Wonder Woman and a host of other heroes.

8. [Superman: Red Son](#) by Mark Millar, Dave Johnson and Kilian Plunkett

Everett's theory states that the world splits into new parallel universes every time a quantum event with more than one possible outcome takes place. Author Mark Millar chooses the quantum event of Superman's arrival on Earth to create this graphic novel which imagines a parallel world where the infant Superman's rocket landed in the Soviet Union instead of the United States. Familiar comic-book figures take on new guises in this bold Cold War retelling of the Superman myth.

9. [The Sentinels](#) by Malcolm Shaw and Mario Capaldi

From the pages of *Misty*, the groundbreaking girls' comic created by the Charles Dickens of the British comics scene, Pat Mills, comes this parallel world serial. Set in a run-down estate, Jan and her family take shelter in an abandoned tower block only to stumble into a parallel world where Germany won the second world war and Britain is now under Nazi rule. Filled with *Misty's* trademark darkness and thrills, hopefully new readers will soon get the chance to read *The Sentinels* in the planned reprints of classic *Misty* stories.

10. [They Do Things Differently There](#) by Jan Mark

Beneath the bland exterior of new town Compton Rosehay, Charlotte and Elaine discover the parallel world of Stalemate, a strange town filled with blackmailers, Martians and a mermaid factory. Equal parts *Grange Hill*, *Twin Peaks* and *Heavenly Creatures*, *They Do Things Differently There* is a very funny and original tale of teenage friendship from a much-missed children's author.