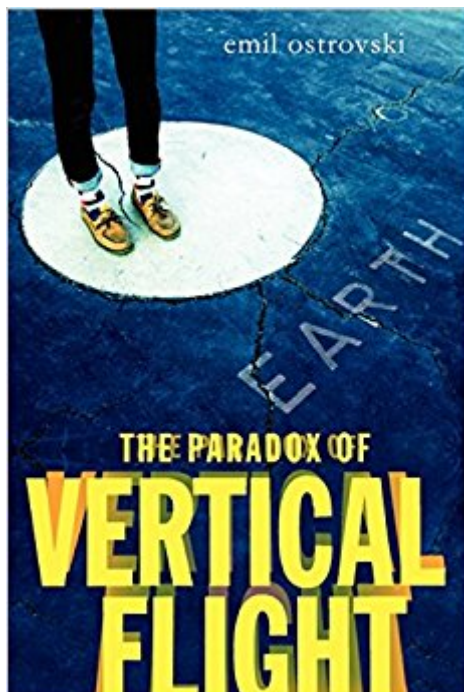


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The Paradox Of Vertical Flight



Synopsis

Hilarious, deeply moving, mind-bending, original, romantic, and surprising, this debut teen novel by Emil Ostrovski will appeal to fans of John Green, Chris Crutcher, and Andrew Smith. Gary Shteyngart, author of the New York Times bestseller *Super Sad True Love Story*, says: "Do yourself a favor and get inside a car with Emil Ostrovski immediately! *The Paradox of Vertical Flight* is an amazing road trip. You're in for one heck of a ride." An Indie Next Pick! On the morning of his eighteenth birthday, Jack Polovsky kidnaps his own baby, names him Socrates, stocks up on baby supplies at Walmart, and hits the road with his best friend, Tommy, and with the baby's mother, Jess. As they head to Grandma's house (eluding the police at every turn), Jack tells baby Socrates the Greek myths – "because all stories spring from those stories, really. Even this one. By turns funny, heart wrenching, and wholly original, this debut novel by Emil Ostrovski explores the nature of family, love, friendship, fatherhood, and myth." Shares a sense of humor and philosophical bent with such YA authors as John Green and Chris Crutcher. But the story and likable characters are Ostrovski's own, a delightful mix of quirky, intelligent, naive, well-intentioned, and just plain dumb teens. A delightful success." –ALA Booklist

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Emil Ostrovski and Lauren Myracle talk about Emil's debut novel, *The Paradox of Vertical Flight*. Emil Ostrovski emigrated to the US from Russia when he was two years old. He graduated from Vassar College in the spring of 2012 and is now attending Columbia University's MFA

program for creative writing. The Paradox of Vertical Flight is his first novel. Lauren Myracle is the author of many books for teens and young people, including the New York Times bestselling Internet Girls series; Shine; Rhymes With Witches; Bliss; The Infinite Moment of Us, which is a Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2013; and the Flower Power series. She lives with her family in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Lauren Myracle: Emil, you are one smart dude, and as an author, you have created in Jack another awfully smart dude. Jack's also a loner, and at one point in the novel he's an almost-pill-popper with the goal of almost killing himself. His self-inflicted isolation seems directly related to his crazy-smart brain relentlessly grinding its crazy-smart gears, because it's hard to be smart sometimes. There's a question my friends and I often asked each other in high school, and I'd love to hear your answer, in all seriousness: Would you, Emil, rather be smart or kind? And no, you can't say/suggest/or in any other clever way circle around to saying "both."

Emil Ostrovski: As a kid, I never really thought of myself as smart. Other things, like soccer-playing ability, were, I judged, far more important. School and grades and why I'd gotten a C in fourth grade art and the grammar lessons my father tried to subject me to (I remember being very much perplexed by the rather metaphysical definition of a verb as "a state of being") didn't inform much of my identity. But as I grew older and it became more and more apparent that I would not, in fact, become a professional soccer player, or Tae Kwon Do grandmaster, I invested ever more of myself in this idea of being smart, or, specifically, book-smart. To the point that the younger Emil almost seems like a different person (perhaps a better one). All this is to say, while I think it's much more important to be kind than to be smart, if God or The Flying Spaghetti Monster or A Hyper-Intelligent Shade of the Color Blue descended from heaven and asked me to choose between the two, I'm not sure I'd have the strength of character to choose kindness. But surely, I think, kindness would be the right choice. It would be the choice I hope I would make. Because I believe kindness is more valuable than academic intelligence, and when I say valuable, I don't mean it in a utilitarian way. I mean, simply, kindness is more meaningful, more beautiful. When I see a stranger help a mother lift her baby carriage up the subway steps, I think in that gesture, we get a glimpse of all human goodness—friendship, love, self-sacrifice. And I know you said not to try to be clever, but I want to point out that perhaps kindness and empathy form a part of a different kind of intelligence. A social intelligence. Without academic intelligence we might not have computers, or planes, or, well, nuclear and biological weapons. Without social intelligence, or kindness, or empathy, or whatever you want to call it, we wouldn't even be human. Finish the interview here. --This text refers

to the Hardcover edition.

Gr 9 Up— On Jack's 17th birthday, two major events occur: he considers attempting suicide and he learns that his ex-girlfriend Jess has just given birth to his baby. What follows is a philosophical journey of self-discovery. During his visit to the hospital, Jack undergoes an existential crisis and kidnaps his own son in a moment of panic. Along the way, he involves his best friend, Tommy, and Jess and they all find themselves on the lam from the police as well as from reality. With his ailing grandma's house as the destination, Jack begins to contemplate what it means to be a father and introduce another human being into the world. He dubs his son Socrates and proceeds to hold a bevy of complex, one-sided conversations with him. They wax theoretical on topics ranging from the limitless universe to the possibilities of good and evil. Sometimes the story meanders too long in its philosophical ramblings, which may discourage more casual teen readers. Overall, though, this is a moving and quirky tale that raises many questions about humanity's existence and what it means to grow up. It's sure to find a fan base with teens who are introspective and contemplative. A whip-smart debut. —Kimberly Castle-Alberts, Hudson Library & Historical Society, OH — (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I loved so many things about this book it would be hard to narrow it down to just one. The philosophy references and discussions were great. The banter between the characters was incredible. I'm a huge sucker for witty back-and-forth dialogue, and Ostrovski delivers it in scene after scene. I also loved that this story tells the familiar tale of unexpected pregnancy aftermath from a largely unexplored voice: that of the baby's father. His connection with the baby (whom he names Socrates) and his emotional journey, realizing that it means so much to him to be a father, even for a few stolen hours, was so powerful. His relationships with his best friend and ex-girlfriend felt really genuine, too. And his grandmother! Aw, wow. His relationship with her and the fact that she has dementia really underscored the seize-the-day feeling throughout the book. The reason I started reading this book is because the author's next book *AWAY WE GO* will come out in a few months, and I was curious to see what his writing was like. After reading the post on his blog about why he wrote *THE PARADOX OF VERTICAL FLIGHT* and what it means to him, I couldn't help reading it. I was not disappointed, either. I definitely recommend this book to readers who like contemporary fiction with witty dialogue, strong emotional journey, and memorable characters. **LOVED IT.**

I can't begin to think of all the reasons I'm happy this book was referred to me, as I never would have picked it up on my own. The story is real, humorous, and at times very sad. It truly is the perfect story of a young man dealing with some of the largest and most difficult struggles of his life. This was a stellar debut and I will always pick up any book that Ostrovski writes.

One of the finest young adult novels I've read in years!

I found it to be well-written, kept your attention and at the same time, brought in many wonderful philosophical ideas. Looking forward to reading his next book!

The VERTICAL PARADOX OF FLIGHT is not for the casual reader. It is filled with references to philosophers that, though I've heard of, I am unfamiliar with their ways of thinking about life and the universe. About time and infinity. About the existence of us all. PARADOX (I will shorten it to that for review purposes) is not a light novel, nor is it one that I think you can put down and pick up again. It is short which makes that easier, but once you get going in the novel and you're in the right mindset, you don't want to lose it by leaving the story. Jack is contemplating suicide on his birthday. He is a student of philosophy. He is way too much in his head. I can identify with that. Over thinking is a huge flaw of mine so that I am usually frozen in place. Jack on the other hand, talks to his philosophers in his mind. He personifies them, first Socrates is his brother that never was, having been miscarried at 3 weeks and then he is the baby his ex-girlfriend has that he kidnaps from the hospital. Socrates, helps Jack in understanding the complexities of life, the questions he has, the meaningless existence he believes in, all in the form of a one day old baby. It's an impulsive act, kidnapping his own child and Jack knows it's wrong and yet, on some level, because he's been denied his rights, he feels justified in doing so. The novel is a journey of three "friends" Jack, his best friend Tommy, and the ex-girlfriend and mother of Socrates- Jess, as they travel to Bob's house (Jack's grandmother). On the way, they muse about life, the repetitive cycles of it, losing touch with each other, love, and the meaning of life. Socrates acts as the voice of wisdom along the journey, not in a "you should do this, you should do that" kind of wisdom but in a philosophical wisdom way. It's not a light read, with a heavy emphasis on philosophy, thoughts of suicide and unwanted pregnancy. But there are bright sides to it as well. Definitely this book will appeal to a more studious crowd and should be read by a more mature audience. It could be triggering for those with suicide issues in the past or present.

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