



# Away We Go

*Emil Ostrovski*

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## **Away We Go** Emil Ostrovski

Westing is not your typical school. For starters, you have to have one very important quality in order to be admitted—you have to be dying. Every student at Westing has been diagnosed with PPV, or the Peter Pan Virus. No one is expected to live to graduation.

What do you do when you go to a school where no one has a future? Noah Falls, his girlfriend Alice, and his best friend Marty spend their time drinking, making out, and playing video games on awaywego.com. But when an older boy named Zach (who Noah may or may not be in love with) invites Noah and Marty to join his secret Polo Club, the lives of both boys change as they struggle to find meaning in their shortened existence.

With an innovative format that includes interstitial documents, such as flyers, postcards, and handwritten notes, *Away We Go* is a funny, honest look at first love and tragic heartbreak.

## **Away We Go Details**

Date : Published April 5th 2016 by Greenwillow Books

ISBN : 9780062238559

Author : Emil Ostrovski

Format : Hardcover 270 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Lgbt, Contemporary

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# From Reader Review Away We Go for online ebook

## BookChic Club says

Really interesting, smart, emotional book. I also really liked the gay MC angle, which I didn't know about when I first started the book so it was a nice surprise.

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## Corey says

### Book Talk:

Not only has most of the nation's teenagers been struck by a deadly, contagious disease and relegated to hospices, there is a meteor on a collision course with Earth. Noah Falls must figure out what to do with the short time left to him (whether he dies by disease or comet).

### My Thoughts:

What a strange book. The premise intrigued me from the start (I am a glutton for dystopia), but it really failed to deliver. There was too much movement in perspective for me to follow along. I couldn't connect with any of the characters, as there was so little development. And the relationships (same sex or other) just seemed forced.

### My Rating:

2.5 stars

### Recommendations:

Gr. 10+ for language, adult situations

\*\*I received an ARC from Edelweiss\*\*

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## Vitor Martins says

Eu pensei bastante antes de escrever minha avaliação aqui porque esse livro me deixou realmente confuso. O plot dele é muito original, a escrita é bem diferente (de um jeito bom) mas isso não foi o bastante pra me fazer gostar de Away We Go.

A narrativa é confusa. O autor usa o recurso de viajar pela linha do tempo e contar a história de uma maneira não-linear, mas pra mim isso não funcionou de um jeito interessante. Não é aquela baguncinha que aos poucos vai fazendo sentido. Na maior parte da leitura eu me sentia desorientado e exausto.

Não consegui entender as motivações do protagonista. O romance menino gay + menino hétero não convenceu e no final eu já não estava me importando com quase nada. Só queria que essa história acabasse logo.

No geral, um livro com boas intenções porém muito cansativo.

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## Emily says

I didn't finish *Away We Go*. I just couldn't do it. I wanted to read it because it seemed similar to *Extraordinary Means* by Robyn Schneider. Unfortunately, *Away We Go* was not well-written or unique enough for me. I decided life was too short to finish this book when it had completely lost me. The characters weren't developed enough, and I really didn't care about the main character at all. I was so disappointed.

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## Alexa says

This was my face when I started this book. I don't know how I didn't realize this was going to focus on a group of kids segregated from the outside world because of a "new" virus called PPV, Peter Pan Virus. I'm not going to elaborate on the virus because the synopsis covers what PPV is, which is a mystery how I missed that this book would be about a fictional virus.

I thought this was going to be more of a contemporary but I was wrong. Not that this has anything to do with my rating. This is being compared to "Noggin", which I haven't read but I've read "The Alex Crow" by Andrew Smith and I'd compare it to "Away We Go".

I want to think about this a little more before making any comments.

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This book is being compared to *Noggin*, and *Grasshopper Jungle*, which I haven't read but I've read *The Alex Crow* by Andrew Smith and I'd can personally compare it to *Away We Go*. Readers who enjoy Andrew Smith's books will enjoy this book because it's strange and it'll keep you guessing the entire time.

This book is about a boy, Noah, who's been sent, by his parents, to Westing along with other kids who have PPV, better known as the Peter Pan Virus. The kids at Westing are segregated from the rest of the world to help the diagnosed stay stable and protect the outside healthy kids from contracting the virus. At Westing there's no contact to the rest of the world and there are only speculations to what happens when the symptoms of PPV get too severe to cope. The severely sick are taken away to a different ward where it's rumored they steal memories to give to people outside of Westing.

This book is very different and it surprised me many times. Noah struggles to come to terms with being trapped at Westing and inching closer to an inevitable death. He's gay or bisexual and I liked the fact that this book didn't focus on the main character struggling with his sexuality because he doesn't. Noah owns his sexuality and there's even a descriptive sex scene. The ending isn't what I expected and it's a bit unsatisfying.

I was very confused at times because the book jumps from scene to scene. I felt as if I missed something while reading but when I'd go back again I notice I hadn't missed anything. The ARC copy provided didn't have the finished designed of the letters, maps, postcards, flyers, etc. and I'd like to see how it all looks and flows when the book is finalized. In my copy the flow of these elements were a bit off and I wonder if that's only in this edition or if it'll translate better in the final edition.

Ultimately, this book is about friendship, first loves and loss and I'd recommend this to readers who enjoy

strange YA plots and/or enjoy titles similar to Andrew Smith's work.

\*A copy of this book was provided to me by HarperCollins Canada\*

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### **Charlie says**

I did not expect a dark contemporary, but that is what I got. The synopsis makes you think it's going to be a love story between two guys who are supposed to die. It's not. This was something else. Most of the book was exactly what I expected it to be, but it kind of wasn't. The way it was written made me think of Benjamin Alire Sáenz who is my favourite author ever. That poetic writing style that I love came back in this book by an entirely different author. That was not what I expected. I never expected to find another writer with that style of writing.

Towards the ending of the book, everything got crazy. I thought this book would not affect me in the slightest, but I literally bawled my eyes out. Noah was so likable which made it really hard to dislike him. But I can't say he was a saint. He cheated on his girlfriend so many times. He knew he was gay and he basically used the girl. It isn't all his fault, because Alice knew Noah was gay but that didn't give him the right to cheat on her. That made me mad. Alice was so selfless and did everything to make Noah happy but he led her on and made her hope for a happy relationship. He slept with guys while he also slept with Alice and of course he didn't tell her about it. She didn't deserve that. I had to say that, but it didn't take away from the overall story.

I have another point of critique which is that the timeline got so confusing for me. The book is counting down towards a meteor hitting the earth and wiping out all of humanity, but it's jumping around a lot. It's non-linear and I didn't even know what had already happened and what hadn't at some points in the book which I did not like. I don't think the rating is entirely objective though, because I got so excited about the writing.

A full review is up in a video on my channel: <https://youtu.be/vuZmDA2H-TU>

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### **Elsa Qazi says**

#### **5 STARS FOR BREAKING MY HEART**

i don't know what to say. my heart is done for. it is just done for. it is finished. so many feeellllllssssssssss. ughhhh. i am clearly not the right person to write a review that is sensible about this book so i'm just going to say this is the best and everyone should read it.

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## Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

*“I’ve often thought about what Peter Pan would look like if he were a Polo-playing Westing student brushing his teeth in one of our bathrooms, and I have to say, you’re exactly like I pictured him, right down to both your chest hairs.”*

This was a very strange story, and I had real problems trying to work out what was actually going on. The story jumped back and forth through time, with the only constant being some ‘cataclysmic, fiery, kind of clichéd end of all things (or not)’ – death? and I just had absolutely no clue what was happening at all.

I have to say that I also stupidly thought that this was a contemporary story, when it can’t possibly be because there is no such thing as ‘peter pan virus’, and nobody would stand for their kids being sent away to die in a place they weren’t even allowed to visit!

And romance wise, I really wasn’t expecting the boy on boy sex scene. Not something I think I’ve ever come across in a YA book, and a bit shocking to be honest. Not that I have any problem with gay sex, I just wasn’t expecting it in a YA book.

The ending to this was also surprising in that I was waiting for them all to die, and the book actually ended before that happened.

4 out of 10

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## Brandi Kosiner (Brandi Breathes Books) says

I have done this several times on my blog. Books that just don't work for me. I know my reading style pretty well, and I can tell whether I will like the book or not accurately about 80-90% of the time. If I finish a book, then there are aspects of that book that I enjoyed. I never talk about the author in a negative way, I only say what doesn't work for me. Normally if I finish a book, I give it at least 3 stars, meaning that I liked it.

Stopped at 11%

I wanted to read away we go because I like the sound of PPV the Peter Pan virus and the idea of the kids in the camp basically waiting to die it had a lot of promise for me and I thought it was going to go out a completely different directions.

Well both of the boys definitely had unique voices they were too strong for me. there was a lot of cursing and I guess I should have read description work that does describe it is funny but I guess I was excited more

of the emotional.

This is definitely a case of me expecting something different and not thoroughly researching before I chose to request

That isn't to say that the writing is poor or the characters are poorly constructed, it's personal on my end.

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### **Molly says**

2.5 stars? Maybe? I'm torn. This book was exactly like Extraordinary Means. And it was boring half the time. I liked some of the characters and the writing was pretty good. But for such a short book I found myself losing focus fast. I also don't really like this new BOLD USE OF NON-WRITING in books. It worked with Illuminae, I get it. It doesn't work with books like this. I didn't care at all about the fliers or the game states or whatever that were in this book (half the time they didn't even match whatever was going on... horrible placement).

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### **Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says**

First I have to start out by saying I liked this book but I didn't like some parts to it. I have read a lot of books this year but this one stands out in so many ways both good and bad. The setting is in a Boarding School for kids. What these kids are allowed to do and how they are allowed to act was a little strange for me when I was reading. The one thing that stood out for me was one of the main characters had some issues and he dealt with them as being simple.

In this story we meet best friends Noah, Alice, and Marty. They are attending this exclusive Boarding School for kids who have a virus. They live their lives day to day and have no ambitions to do anything. Their day consists of mundane things like video games and hanging with friends. Then things change one night for them when an older boy Zach invites them to be a part of his secret club.

Once they join this club things change and they have to decide what they are willing to do and willing to believe. What will they do? Stay in the group or leave it and try to move on with their lives?

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### **Stephanie (Reading is Better With Cupcakes) says**

This book...this book...

Oh this review...

It is going to be hard to write this one. I know it is. I finished reading this book at least a month ago. And ever since then, I have been thinking about how I need to write this review and knowing when this review needs to go up on my blog.

The problem though is, I don't really know how to explain this book and my thoughts about it. The reason being is that my feelings on this one are pretty mixed.

On one hand, there were parts of it that blew my mind, but there were equal amount of parts (or so it felt) that I was like..."what?"

Away We Go takes place in a world where a lot of the children get sick with what is known as the Peter Pan Virus (PPV). The problem with PPV is that usually before any given individual turns 18, the virus kills them.

The governments answer to this virus is to stick all the sick kids into schools/institutions, essentially a quarantine. Adults can't get sick, so they are around, but not really. The sick kids are very limited in their contact world. They have an internet place that they can go, but it is only this one site that they can go to. The information on the site, the books, the movies, the music, the games, all of it are put there by the government. They can't chat with others from the "outside" world. Even the news they are allowed access to is filtered.

So of course, this leads all of those kids in these institutions wondering if what they have been told is real causing them to come up with wild conspiracy theories and guesses.

Great premise for a book if you ask me. And at times, I really found myself pulled in and very intrigued with what was going on. There were things written inside Away We Go that totally blew my mind and made me take a moment to go "woah!" before moving on.

Then there were other times where I found myself willing to put the book down. And there were times where I found myself wondering "what did I just read..."

I also found myself having a hard time reading some of what the characters were saying. There were a couple of characters, thankfully side ones that didn't say very much, that had a tendency to use specific words over and over in their speech. For example, one of the very first characters you meet in this story has a tendency to say "son" after almost everything he says. IT DROVE ME NUTS. I know it was just a side character, and of that I am very thankful, but there were other ways besides doing that to create a personality in the character.

I would also like to note, for those who watch out for these kind of things in books for themselves, or for others, there is swearing and sex. This book is marketed young adult, but I would suggest it for the more mature portion of this group.

It was definitely an interesting reading experience. I am glad I read it though. The mind blowing moments within made it worth it.

This review is based on an eARC provided by the publisher through Irish Banana Blog Tours in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Find more of my reviews here:

<http://readingwithcupcakes.blogspot.com/>

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## Lauren R. says

**DNF page 135** | Nope. I can't focus on this for the life of me and just don't get it. I can't figure out if the time is bouncing around or not and frankly it's making me feel kind of stupid. I don't understand or like the characters, or really get the point of the book. Maybe I stopped just short of where the "action" starts. I don't know. But I'm not going to bother finishing this book if I don't care what happens.

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The premise behind this one had me interested right off the bat... But, sadly I couldn't get on board with it. The basic idea behind the book is that the Peter Pan Virus is spreading around the country and teenagers are dying early. They then go away to schools where they can essentially be quarantined until they die. They're cut off from the outside world (including their families) because of some random events that happened in Texas. That, among other things, was very unclear.

I don't usually DNF books; you can go see how small that shelf is on Goodreads! For some reason, I had absolutely nothing compelling me to finish this book. I couldn't focus on it. I didn't really even have any interest in finding out how it ended. No matter how hard I tried, this book was just not holding my attention. It could have been my lack of a connection to Noah, but it also felt like I just didn't understand what was going on.

The main character, Noah, is... I don't know. The only thing I learned about him in the first 100+ pages was that he was cynical. He was also somewhat struggling with his sexuality? I didn't really understand the situation because he had a girlfriend that he clearly didn't like, but also had a mini relationship with a guy friend at the same time. The timeline issues (more on that later) didn't help me understand it any better.

It seemed like some chapters went back to the past but some were set in the present? I couldn't tell and it frankly made me feel stupid. I enjoy contemporary novels where I don't have to focus on world-building or similar confusing things. I hope to have a character connection and just enjoy the story. Of course, there are plenty of more complex contemporary books that I have read or will read, but I just didn't have the energy to figure this one out.

I essentially reached exactly halfway through the book and decided I couldn't go on. Usually I would count this as "read" for my Goodreads challenge, but I seriously feel like I gained nothing from the first half of the book. I didn't understand the school system, the character, or even what the point of the book was! I want to at least understand the central conflict in the story by the 50% mark. The plot summary suggests something, but even the promise of that didn't keep me engaged.

I can't imagine coming back to this one at any point, but you never know. Maybe the finished copy will have some neat finished graphics (this book has letters and posters and other things that weren't totally complete yet in the ARC) that will keep me going. For now though - why bother?

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## Online Eccentric Librarian says

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

Away We Go is a meditative piece exploring belonging, society, love, friendship, and the pursuit of a meaningful life. At the same time, there are some interesting statements (almost satirical) about the currently popular YA dystopian genre (of which, they may or may not be a part). Those looking for action, adventure, or a straightforward story will likely be left scratching their heads by the end. But this infinitely quotable novel is smartly written and populated with real, grounded, and very ambivalent characters.

Story: As the US reels under an epidemic that is killing off children, teen Noah finds himself sequestered in an elite school in the Vermont wilderness. For he, along with his schoolmates, have the contagious "Peter Pan" virus - and will die before they complete puberty. Left disaffected by the abandonment of his family, Noah drifts in and out of relationships. He cares for his girlfriend but knows he is in love with a classmate - who is in love with a different girl. At the same time, conspiracies abound - are the kids who 'go away' at the end truly dying or is there some nefarious plot underneath the transfers?

This story does not unfold organically. Rather, it bounces around between different times at the school. I had no problem following the story, however, since the writing is smooth, uncomplicated, and otherwise easy-to-follow. As well, the story is not rooted in action and is more a contemplative piece; observations are rather timeless and most of what happens in the first 3/4 does not need to unspool chronologically.

Most of the story is about Noah's conflicted feelings - about his parents, his affections for Zach, his relationship with Alice, and friendship with Marty. Within these three characters (romantic love, platonic love, and good friend) author Ostrovski mines a treasure of ambivalence; loving Zach while being with Alice, friending Marty knowing he loves Alice, Alice staying with Noah while knowing of Noah's love for Zach...it leads to a lot of very complicated feelings on all sides.

There is only one POV here - Noah's. Although there is the mystery of where the kids go when the virus begins to affect their motor skills, the story is pretty much bookended by Noah learning that a comet may hit the Earth and then ending on the day it is supposed to happen. Chapters count down the days until the 'apocalypse' with glee. But it's all curtain dressing to the pathos.

The tone is snarky, despairing, and insightful. The dialogue is especially brisk and very well written. The story moves quickly and this is easily a 3 hour read. Although not a book where things blow up or kids 'fight the dystopian power', it is a very poignant indictment on life. If I have one complaint, it's that the book tries to be more clever than it is and might be a bit overwritten in places. It's more of an antidote to the rash of poorly written YA books littering shelves currently. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

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## **Eriele the Mermaid ♥ says**

(Originally posted at [This Is Not Your Book Blog](#).)

I received an ARC from HarperCollins in exchange for an honest review (thank you!).

Okay. So here we go. I will try my best not to spoil anything at all. Some spoilers, realizations, and questions will be posted at awayweread (a blog I made for the book mehehehe).

How do I even start describing this wonderful book?

It's just the first book I've read since 2016 started (yeah, I made a pretty good choice about it), but I can already say **this is one of the best books of 2016.**

**THIS BOOK. FREAKING BEST BOOK SO FAR.** I don't even know how to categorize this book, if it's romance, heartbreak, contemporary, dystopia, or just a great book that will make you sad at the same time give you hope. It's even described it as "funny" in the summary above. ~~Whoever said that this book is funny is evil but heck yeah I laughed a lot too because of certain reasons.~~ But who cares? As long as people share the love pain with me, I'd be fine with all the categories.

It's been three months since the cataclysmic, fiery, kind of cliched end of all things (or not) happened to me. Been three months since this book has been haunting me. Been weeks since this is all I could talk about, like when someone asks what I've read or what I would recommend or just simply mention *Away We Go* as much as I can in between conversations. I told people to put this in their TBR list and that I would remind them when the book is released locally, and people have been waiting for a post of my thoughts and feelings about the book... I wanted to keep this review to myself for as long as I could because I'm still in denial with *Away We Go* (even if I reread some scenes at least once a day and it was also difficult for me to lend the book to my friend) until I could finally embrace the fact that I finished it, and what's done is done (including how I told the author that I have mixed feelings for this and all that stuff), but I also want to drag people to hell with me MUAHAHAHAHAHA.

^ This was literally me for my book and a pack of Skittles that @bibliophilesoprano gave me.

*Away We Go* \*coughs\* ("aray" means ouch in Filipino) I mean, *Away We Go* starts with a boy named Noah Falls, who was diagnosed with a contagious and deadly disease called the PPV or the Peter Pan Virus (PPV is an airborne disease that could affect children to young adults and if they get it, they would only have a few years to live). Noah gets accepted in this school called Westing Academy where smart kids like him study and try to live a normal life while also trying to "recover" from their PPV. The line in the summary that says "No one is expected to live to graduation" means that nobody gets old enough to graduate. Cue Alice and Marty, Noah's best friends and flatmates. Alice is this girl who wants to save him, and Marty's the boy who would write the story of their lives through a play.

And then there's the student council vice president Zach.

**Zach.**

**ZACH.**

**Z A C H.**

Well, I kinda imagined Zach looking like that in bed—sexy and hot. One of the accurate summaries of this book could be: "Zach fucked the lives of his constituents." ~~Also my life too, yup.~~

I'm not actually sure if this was contemporary, because just a little of rule breaking and student-teacher/administration action could turn this into a dystopian book. I'm really glad it wasn't dystopian since I was getting tired of all the plotheoles it could lead to and the several crackpot theories and how many pages it

would take to explain a concept. But what Ostrovski captured perfectly in this book is what happens to people when they're diagnosed of a disease and they know they are dying slowly. You could see their defense mechanisms at work on rejections and risks and how they cope up when they know that their days are limited. It's technically just your typical high school, except that all of them are smart and are YOLO-ing more.

WARNING: Read this book on a fine day, because it could break you. Prepare a pack of Skittles as well. You'll need it, I swear.

I would love to quote a lot of lines in the book that broke me, but I'm still not sure if those lines will be in the final book.

And now for the bullet part because my hands and words can't just keep up with my random thoughts and feelings:

- \* I love Emil Ostrovski's words. They're not big and mouthful as I would have expected because Noah is a smart kid, but his writing is impactful. Impactful because of the truth pressed between words of reality. Kind of reminds me of David Levithan.

- \* I love the cover!! And the font text used in the book. ~~If I were in charge of the book cover, the cover would be Noah eating Skittles and looking for a golden person.~~

- \* I'm excited to see the final artworks and posters in the book. I feel like there's really no need to include the posters and flyers of students, but it's okay. Would have been better if each of the characters' handwriting was there.

- \* Pain.

- \* PAIN.

- \* PAIN PAIN PAIN PAIN.

- \* "I'm not crying," one of the characters must have said in the book at some point, and that's what I'm saying right now as I write this review while rereading scenes to relive the pain.

- \* PAIN.

- \* The thing about Noah, why I like him, is that I understood him. We're both cynical. I'm not mad at his mistakes, if he would call them mistakes. He's the boy who's almost hell-bent on needing someone that he actually needs.

- \* I feel like I'm Noah whenever he loses his shit.

- \* I need Skittles right now.

- \* I advise everyone to **read it twice**. Read it as it is, then read it by sequence or by the time. Every jump in the time has a warning of "Seven weeks before the cataclysmic, fiery, kind of cliched end of all things (or not)". You'll get some reference and notice small details that didn't look important on the first try.

**How I had mixed feelings about this, even if that was actually the whole point of this post: it can either save or break you.** That`s still how I feel right now. Finishing this book gave me hope, but then I would remember everything that happened in Away We Go and then I would cry again.

Conclusions: everYBODY GO READ IT AND CRY WITH ME. I`ll be waiting in awayweread (but there could be mild or vague spoilers in there so if you`re fine with it, then go visit the lonely blog). And then there we can just blog about all the things and headcanons and just about everything.

This review is not enough to express everything that I`m feeling right now, so if you want more proof of why you should read Away We Go, talk to me personally. And I`ll cry for you. And then I`d laugh at you if you cry after finishing the book.

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