



# Slipstream

*Michael Ondaatje*

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*Michael Offutt*

## **Slipstream** Michael Offutt

“Last night I died for the third time this week...” Those are the words spoken by Jordan Pendragon on the curb out front of his high school. He's talking about dreams he's been having. However, he soon discovers that they're not dreams but a premonition of things to come.

Jordan wants to be like every other seventeen-year-old boy. The only problem is that he's extraordinary in so many ways. For one, he's crazy good at fixing situations that have gone bad. It's a talent prized by his high school ice hockey team. However, when a car accident puts Jordan in the hospital, he wakes up with more than just an amazing slapshot in his toolbox. Jordan can manipulate space-time and in just a few weeks, he'll depend on it to save his life.

## **Slipstream Details**

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Author : Michael Offutt

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# From Reader Review Slipstream for online ebook

## Cherie says

Michael Offutt's SLIPSTREAM is a thrilling debut to this new series!

After Jordan Pendragon awakes from a car accident, he discovers he has unusual abilities to manipulate space-time. Those abilities quickly become his answer to life or death when he, another man, and his sister are sucked into a parallel universe. In Avalon, nothing is as it seems, and Jordan must find a way to use his powers once again to save both their worlds.

SLIPSTREAM is a complex book filled with strong elements of science fiction and hints of fantasy with its creatures and mythologies. The characters are well-thought out, and I enjoyed Jordan's character development the most as he becomes who he truly is. The plot is intricate and kept me guessing and reading. The novel uses scientific principles and mythology (particularly Mesoamerican with some Arthurian) to create this fascinating world of a science fiction Avalon. Offutt must've done some major research to craft his novel. The only downside to SLIPSTREAM is the over-description, which caused me to skim some sections and slowed down the pace, yet the adventure to the story kept me reading even during the slower parts.

SLIPSTREAM by Michael Offutt is unlike any book I've ever read. I love the elements of mythology combined with science to make a wonderful read. I look forward to reading the next book in the series.

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## Ciara Knight says

At first I struggled with how to write this review, because I didn't know where to begin. There are so many amazing elements to this story. I'm going to concentrate on what I loved about the story and forgo the synopsis because I don't want to give too much away.

My first surprise while reading Slipstream was how scientifically backed all the technology and fantastical elements of the story were. I've read many science fiction stories that don't follow the rules of their world, or pull things out of a hat. Slipstream is solid science and the author described the settings and gadgetry in such detail it made the world vivid, imaginative, and realistic.

This is not a quick read, but when you have so many great plot elements it takes time to insure the reader can follow. The complex plot kept me intrigued, but it isn't all science. This is a book of theology, complicated relationships, social issues, and so much more.

The two main characters are young adults, but this is not a book for the young or squeamish. Michael Oufft has a gift of writing horrific scenes that will stay with you. This is an edgy story with language, some sex, gore, and dark elements. Michael Oufft is beyond imaginative with his scary spiders and monsters, artificial intelligence, Liquid Life, slipstreams and killsuits, all wrapped up in a dark alternate world called Avalon.

I highly recommend this book to hard sci-fi fans or those who enjoy a complicated read with some gore.

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## **Donna Hole says**

Slipstream was a brilliantly written, YA sci-fi novel. Once I started reading, it was hard to put down. The main character Jordan Pendragon is a little difficult to appreciate at first; he is extremely intelligent and a superior athlete, with a self centered attitude and emotionless demeanor that can be a bit off-putting, despite the tragedy the story beginning. As the story progresses, however, so does Jordan's emotional growth. I attribute the early lack as the author allowing his character growth potential; and that is well done because there is distinct growth.

I have to admit I was more drawn to the alternate world of Avalon and the overall story plot than I was to the characters. The characters were excellently portrayed; but the world and its unique technologies and concepts carried the story. Surgically implanted electronic and mechanical devices replaced the mystical natures of the vampire and succubi and arguments the currency and addiction aspects of the story with the ingenious discovery of Life Green; and an artificial intelligence (AI) stands in place of an all knowing God.

Each new concept introduced was fully explained by the intervention of science; and yes, it all made perfect sense. The author's ability to describe his settings and gadgetry in minute detail made the word vivid, imaginative, and quite real.

The overall story plot progresses through a complex structure of introducing the characters, the importance of their roles in resolving the crisis the AI's split personality (a literal split in two), explaining ramifications to both world (Earth and Avalon) if the AI is not ultimately cured of its insanity, and the development of trust relationships between all the chosen hero's. I was impressed with the story's level of intrigue.

I would have liked the story to focus more on Jordan's use of the slipstream to resolve the overall story plot, but as this is the first book in a series, I understand the focus on world building. And of course there is romance; what hero would be complete without a love interest to make saving two worlds more than just a task to be completed. The middle of the story has a slow down where the relationship issues between Jordan and the sexy bad boy Kolin navigate their way through tumultuous issues of age, celebrity, and for Jordan, first love; but it picks up again once the romance plot is resolved. Jordan's twin, Kathy, also finds her heart captured by the combat veteran Dylan, and his puma familiar.

Overall, this was an exceptional integration of science, social issues, romance, theology, and yes, enough action to intrude any James Bond/Dr Who enthusiast. While I had grievances with some of the author's stylistic choices (pov and consistent use of pronouns) which are acceptable for most readers, I highly recommend this novel with a five star rating for creativity, and I look forward to the next installment, Oculus.

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## **Marc Leroux says**

Disclaimer: I received this book as part of the Goodreads giveaway program.

The premise of the book interested me. Science-fiction, time travel, multiple universes and hockey. What

more could I ask for?

Well, better writing and character development, perhaps. Perhaps using real hockey terms (it's "right wing" not "right forward") and not constantly referring to "ice hockey" ... we get the point after the 10th repetition). Jason Pendragon and his sister Kathy are normal teenagers, growing up without parents. Jason is a jock, a very good high school hockey player, who is also a top notch student in maths and science. After an accident he finds that he has a power, slipstream, that allows him to see the future, slip to another dimension, and can also control how fast things appear to him. The latter becomes important, since a high school student wouldn't have the strength or speed to play professional hockey, a situation that Jason finds himself in. The story arcs are many and some are quite weak. It was hard to follow which were the important ones. There is constant reference to drug usage, and perhaps not always in a way that was germane to the development of the storyline. The liquid life is an attempt to capitalize on the current vampire craze, but there are a lot of holes left in how this is being used.

This got 2 stars because I couldn't give it 1 1/2. The author deserves credit for writing it, and paradoxically, I enjoyed the beginning of the book much more than the middle and ending. This is the first book in a series, but life is short, and there are a lot of other books out there, so I won't bother reading the rest of this series.

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## **Helena Soister says**

Any book that begins with a teenager saying, "Last night, I died for the third time this week," gets my attention. But I was really hooked when this teenager ponders his physics class lesson by combining Schrodinger's Cat with speculations about God being forced to use angels to travel between dimensions because of the quantum laws he created, and the effects of "the one consciousness out there that we all happen to share."

"Slipstream" is an exciting science fiction adventure story that dares to expand the genre with inspirations from mythology, theology, horror, a touch of Arthurian legends, and a technological twist to Carl Jung's idea of the collective unconscious.

It begins with an orphaned teenager, Jordan Pendragon, who lives with his sister in Utah. He's a good student and a superb hockey player, but by the end of the first chapter his life is forever changed: a car accident puts him in a coma, and when he emerges from it he sees a mysterious Englishman invisible to everyone else. He also discovers that he can "slipstream" himself in space-time. When another "unreal" and much more threatening man trespasses into Jordan's life, the story takes off. Jordan and his sister Kathy are about to cross from Earth into the parallel world of Avalon.

"Avalon and Earth are similar worlds that occupy the same space in two different dimensions," Offut explains. The destruction of Avalon began with shock waves from the first atomic blast in 1945 Earth. The society that rises from the ashes is Earth-like and recognizable, but also dystopian, futuristic, and even more violent and ruthless. (My own favorite touch: the exorbitant cost of medical care and the cold-hearted means an Avalon hospital will use to collect on a debt.) In this Brave New World there are vampires, succubi, crystal spiders, ghost robots and grotesque monsters, all of them the results of engineering and biologic augmentation. There is the obsession with youth and the desperate, deadly pursuit of a life force that can be drained from the young and sold to the highest bidder - a fact that makes Jordan, with his precious "Green Life," a prime target. There is, most important of all, a human-invented god in the form of an A.I. that makes this society run.

Michael Offutt clearly has the scientific knowledge and vision to create a fascinating and complicated world that is spinning out of control and "phasing together" with Earth. When Jordan discovers that he is the chosen hero (or as I'd call him, the messiah) who must save Avalon, he infiltrates it by joining one of its professional hockey teams (yes, there's some humor in this, and it works). Because he can control the "slipstream" of time and space when he's out on the ice, he becomes a sports star, but in this dangerous world that's not always a good thing. In his corner is his sister, who proves to be strong and courageous and doesn't hesitate to put on a "killsuit" to go into battle. After all, they're orphans who have long since learned to be tough and self-reliant. Several intriguing Avalon characters plot and fight with them, including the mysterious Englishman who becomes a romantic figure to Jordan. But can Jordan trust him?

"Slipstream" is a wonderful first book in a trilogy, which is good news to me because Michael has created growing and changing characters I want to follow. He has also written a thrilling storyline that's too good to be confined to a single volume, and he isn't afraid to ask questions about the "gods" we create to fulfill our needs, and the dark side of these gods when we make them in our image. Avalon is a cautionary tale of what Earth will become like if we lose our souls and humanity. If you enjoy not only excellent science fiction but a rattling good yarn in any genre, you'll want to read "Slipstream."

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### **Kimiko Kotani says**

Jordan Pendragon is a star player for his high school hockey team in Salt Lake City. Neither he nor his twin sister Kathy seem to be anything other than normal representative faces of American high schoolers- that is until the car accident. This car accident changes their lives in more ways than one, as Jordan begins to have some very strange experiences. He even picks up a stalker- a very bold one at that who Jordan at first thinks is British. Kolin isn't the only one following however, and a friendly trip to the a carnival with friends turns into anything but a barrel of laughs. This is where things begin to reveal just how unaverage Jordan is, as he realises the things he is seeing that seem to be part of our world are not...they are parallels elsewhere and Jordan can ride the slipstream to get there. An elsewhere that Kolin and their other pursuer happen to have come from. Using this ability intuitively, he manages to rescue himself, Kathy and Kolin from their violent pursuer and finds himself plunged into a reality he could never have dreamed up.

A world that has seen violent devastation and where science has made many things possible. Cybernetically engineered vampiric succubi roam to catch the unwary, shape shifters mingle with humanity, and a crazed murderous cult are on the loose. Not to mention that the AI in charge of keeping society running has had some sort of psychotic breakdown and literally split itself into two personalities and bodies with violently schizophrenic results. Turns out all of the elements are very closely related to each other and young Jordan and Kathy have a crucial role to play restoring the balance of Avalon. A balance that is critical to reach, as earth is tied to it via the slipstream and so, the ultimate fate of one world depends on what happens to the other.

Available as an ebook for Kindle and Nook (and other epub accepting e-reader devices). Look for it on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

It's a heady mix of mythology, hard sci-fi, and yes, a bit of romance. If you despise techno-babble and find it hard to follow, you may find parts of this book not to your liking as Offutt goes into quite a bit of pseudo-science detail to explain the slipstream connection and the other marvels our heroes encounter. The romance

is secondary to the plot, being part of the social and mental development of Jordan and Kathy as two youths coming of age while adjusting to a new environment. Kathy's character really begins to find her feet when she falls for Dylan and his puma familiar and begins to join in on their combat missions. Jordan, on the other hand, finds himself in another role- as Kolin's lover. With all else that's going on, the road to love is not a smooth one to happily ever after, but it's nice to see such positive role models within YA fiction. Kathy is a strong minded, intelligent, capable young woman that female readers will likely identify positively with, while Jordan is a the boy next door type- good looking, sporty, book smart but rather unexpectedly naïve at times. He's the kid everybody knows and likes and hey, he just happens to be gay.

This is the author's début novel and while the overall story is great, it does have a few rough edges, but nothing that I found made this unreadable or unenjoyable, though I did find myself bogged down slightly at one point with what seemed to be a slightly too long scientific explanation of a phenomena. That was earlier on within the novel and as the pages flew by, I could see that the author was hitting his stride. The prose really began to flow as the characters grew and the our view of Avalon began to expand. Indeed, this is but part one of an ongoing series, so a large portion of this book is to acquaint ourselves with the twins, their new cohorts and the the issues within the parallel world of Avalon. I look forward to reading the next book in the series to see how they get on. A word to the wise, though- while this is marketed as a YA book, there is a graphic sex scene within the book (tastefully done and actually salient to the overall plot) so I'd keep it from under 16's. Given the scope of the story and the rather complex plot, I'd say anyone 16 and over that likes hard sci fi will likely find this a satisfying read.

I'd like to thank the author for providing me with my review copy.

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## **Wechselbalg says**

*I received 'SLIPSTREAM' by Michael Offutt as a Goodreads Giveaway.*

I liked the pace of the book.

The world of Avalon is well created. The monsters and modified people are especially fascinating.

What I didn't expect was the amount of drugs present in the story.

I originally expected the liquid life to be the symbolic/actual equivalent to drugs. So, drugs, like we know them, too, in Avalon caught me a little offhand, but I guess it's necessary for the story.

And I disliked it only due personal preference.

I've had a rather hard time getting into the characters, however I think they have good potential.

I missed a little more 'basic' flaws; small things, or just something to help create a more complex character. (It's easier to identify with a character the more there is to know about him/her)

But now I see, why Jordan is the way he is. (view spoiler)

Would love to see how all of the characters will develop in the next volume.

The romance didn't feel rushed or forced and it didn't dominate the story.

(view spoiler)

In a nutshell,

'SLIPSTREAM' is a promising start for a new series.

I would recommend it to everybody who is looking for a scifi story with a fantastic, dark world and some unexpected twists.

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## **Cindy Borgne says**

Slipstream is a wild ride into a parallel world blended with high-tech and dark urban fantasy.

At first, crazy things were just kind of happening to the main character, Jordan Pendragon. He found a strange bracelet and tampered with it. He got into fights and irritated emotionally cold teachers. A lot of questions were being raised about that bracelet, a mysterious British guy and some unusual things Jordan was seeing after the car accident.

I wanted answers to all the strange happenings. I was getting impatient for some direction, as in where is this story going with all of this? I wondered how long the author would keep the answers from me, but the explanations came once Jordan accidentally activated his ability to create a slipstream, which landed him in the parallel world known as Avalon. Then I found it all fascinating how everything fit together. Goals of surviving of getting back home came into focus. Since Avalon is painted as a dystopian world the reader knows it won't be easy.

So now you have this handsome, highly intelligent jock type (Jordan) trapped in a parallel world with his sister (Kathy) and a British "vamp" (Kolin) who is sort of like a vampire, only a SF version with technical explanations. He's an anti-hero who has a tainted past, but is trying to lead a better life. As the story progresses, Jordan gains more control over his slipstream ability. Also, a sub-plot of the story involves Jordan's confusion over his sexual preference. Toward the end, he makes a decision whether he prefers men or women.

I enjoyed the ride into this highly imaginative gritty world. The world building is incredible and there's never a dull moment. The only reason I held back a star is because the description tended to be on the heavy side for my personal taste. There was a lot of description of clothes, which usually came before introducing a character. Some of it was interesting because it was the more extreme stuff, like tattoos, nose piercings, blue hair, etc. Other times it was too much to remember. There were a lot of details about the setting and technology throughout the book. I found it hard absorb without re-reading, so this isn't what I would call a light read. While the description made the world building stand out, I felt it could've been cut back and had a bit more emphasis on the plot.

Readers who like technology, science fiction and escapism into a darker type world will enjoy Slipstream.

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## **Sally says**

This was such an odd book, such a weird clash of genres, that I'm still not entirely sure how I feel about. There are aspects of Slipstream that would definitely brand it as a YA novel, but then there are others that are simply too mature for such an audience. It is a very smart novel, and one with a fantastic premise, but the characters themselves, as well as some of the narrative phrasing, seems crafted to appeal to a younger



audience.

Like the book itself, the main character, Jordan, is something of an ill-fitting enigma. He is an orphan, a family boy, a risk taker, an ice hockey star, and a full-blown math and science geek. Don't get me wrong, it's nice to see a character who straddles the stereotypes, but he seems a bit too good to be true. Without going into too much detail, he ends up discovering a parallel Earth that was all-but destroyed by the atomic bomb testing of the 1940s. Once there, he's forced to join a sinister hockey league in order to gain information on how to defeat the evil soul-sucking (literally) corporation that holds sway over the world.

Maybe I'm showing my age a bit, but the narrative phrasing, with its emphasis on brands and brand-names, kept throwing me off, especially early on. I'm sure it rings true for a younger audience, and probably serves to draw them in, but it kept jarring me out of the story. The dialogue was a bit of an issue for me as well, coming across as a little too stilted and direct, at times, and a little too obviously hip at others, to sound entirely natural. That aspect did evolve as the story went on, as Offutt seemed to settle into his characters, but there were still occasions where the dialogue was used to info-dump on the reader.

On the other hand, the romance between Jordan and Kolin was exceptionally well-done, and provided a much-needed emotional core around which to build the story. It takes a while for them to come to grips with their feelings, much less to do anything about it, but I loved the slow burn of their intimacy. If you've ever questioned whether a gay teenager could pull off the role of romantic hero, Jordan does it. I wasn't sure, at first, what kind of role would be left for Jordan's sister to play, but Kathy is a strong character in her own right, and one who helps keep the reader engaged on a human level. She does slip a bit into the convenient damsel in distress mode from time to time, but she's definitely not alone in being put into jeopardy, and she is by no means a helpless young woman.

Like I hinted at earlier, the ideas and concepts here are incredibly clever, and the world-building is extremely detailed (even if a few elements did seem a bit derivative of other stories). I quite liked the contrast between the two worlds, and really appreciated the ways in which Offutt explored the different branches of society's technological evolution. The spiritual, good vs evil elements were a bit too simple for my tastes, but the genre does often lend itself to the black and white, so that can be excused.

Overall, I admired the book a great deal, and liked parts of it a lot, even if the package as a whole didn't completely work for me.

*As published on Bending the Bookshelf*

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## **Rusty says**

I've been quite ill of late and my heart's not in writing a review here, but I'm afraid I'll forget to follow up and do this later so I'll be brief.

This is about as tough a book to summarize, or review, as I've read in a while. I have to give the author an A+ for effort regardless, this novel is so jam packed with ideas that I'm not sure I can count them all. I mean, there is a ton of stuff going on here.

At first, the story begins in rather mundane fashion, a high school student struggling to find their place in the

world. But a near fatal car accident quickly leads us down path of increasing weirdness that only gets more and more intricate as the novel's main viewpoint character tries to unravel what's happening around him.

And what is happening around him? Well, it's tough to explain, and anything I say would probably count as a spoiler to someone, but I don't think it's giving away too much to say he ends up, more or less, meeting sentient AI's, synthetic organisms, surgically created vampires, and a lot of coked up hockey players. And that's barely touching the surface.

A lot to take in here, you'd better bring your full attention to this one. I would not recommend this for children or sensitive folks though. If you aren't in either of those two groups though, then you should read.

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## **Dorin says**

*I have recently received Michael Offutt's Slipstream as a GoodReads Giveaway*

I've never been good at introductions, so I'll just cut to the chase...

Michael's debut novel looks like a very good promise for future writings.

There are quite some features that he combined successfully in turning a nice story, like, and not stopping at, good overall pacing of the action, building the tension, building like-able characters, creating a deep dystopic world, and so on.

There are also a couple of ideas that didn't quite catch on me, and a few things that I really didn't like. Nevertheless, overall it was a pleasant read.

To get into detail, let's see now...

### **Setting**

Personally, I would have liked a bit of more world building. The worlds described have been quite thoroughly imagined, but the writer gives only the minimum needed to keep up with the action. Imagine a tree, and imagine you are going along the trunk, up to the top. That's nice and effective, but the tree may have a lot of branches on the sides, and some of them might seem interesting.

### **Characters**

On this bit I would say I didn't find the characters to have been built as complex as I had hoped. Especially regarding the abilities they're endowed with. The "explanation" that comes near the end of the novel does come in handy and clarifies parts of the unknown, but I love books that make me feel the characters and relate to them. That I didn't feel. In spite of interesting romances presented in quite a clear and "romantic" way (they're romances, right? :D), the characters seemed cold and at times, impersonal...

### **Action**

The action is great. I did have a hard time connecting ice-hockey and world-saving in one piece, but it seems to work. What bothered me about pacing is that it is quite uneven. There are pages where the actions are "loud and clear", with great kinematic descriptions, but there are also pages where things happen in three words. I am thinking now of the scene where some of the characters go to the Undercity and have a nice

discovery. I'd say a couple more pages about getting there would have been perfect.

#### Subject

As I said before, I had a bit of a problem putting together ice-hockey and world-saving. Partly because of the amount of drugs implied (and it's a lot), partly because sports? and Schroedinger's cat? Together?? (as some other reviewer mentioned). More, the "science" behind the slipstream is a bit too conceptual, too simplistic, although, again, quite effective. Some more information on this would have made me give the book four stars, actually...

#### Things I really didn't like

I hate name-dropping. I don't care Jordan's listening to Eminem's last album. Or whatever. And that doesn't count in character complexity either. And I really don't give a damn if he's eating out at Chuck E Cheese or whatever that's called or not. Probably the author wanted to give the "real" Earth an earthly tone. Whatever (third time I'm using the word. By number five I would've dropped the book). And the endless description of the laces on "insert character name"'s shoes in the morning..... C'mon, there's a full page describing a regular, day-to-day outfit, and on the next three lines the character's moved out, crossed the entire city by car, gone underground and made a discovery that's about to turn around the whole action?

Then, there are ideas that seem sooooo familiar.... I mean, the actions that take place in some of the buildings have Matrix written all over them. Half of the action I had Matrix going on in my head. It was nice (great even), but... Sometimes the resolvings come toooooo close to *deus-ex-machina*.

Now, to end with a positive attitude, because, let's face it, I've been going on and on about improvements needed, there's one thing that stuck with me and I really enjoy it. In a way, it also explains a bit all the things I didn't like and turns them into something promising.

The whole novel, for me, has manga/anime written all over it. If I were a writer and I wanted to write a novel after a comic book, Slipstream would be the most probable outcome. You wouldn't have a constant pace throughout the action; you wouldn't have the entire world described; you'd have to come reeeeeeal close to *deus-ex-machina*-esque resolvings and you'd probably have a drawing of a character's day-to-day's outfit's shoe-lace...

That's what Slipstream feels to me: a comic book turned into a novel.

With sports, AI's and angels, drugs and world-saving.

Yes, I liked it and I want to read the sequel.

Michael, mission accomplished.

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### Don Bradshaw says

Reviewed on Hearts On Fire... <http://heartsonfirereviews.com/>

Wow this was an amazing piece of fantasy from an author totally new to me. The second book in this series, Oculus, can not come out soon enough. Jordan Pendragon is a wiz kid at math, a high school hockey star and one gorgeous hunk. He and his twin sister Kathy are orphans living on their own on Salt Lake City. Jordan is in a terrible car wreck which left him in a coma for a week. When he awoke, he saw a strange young man coming out of a patient's room with a vial full of liquid in his hand and a strange glowing band on his wrist. Jordan returns to school only to find that he has some weird abilities which cause his nose to hemorrhage. He

later sees the man with the wrist band in town and tackles him causing the man, Kolin, to drop the band which Jordan picks up. Jordan, Katy and their dates go to the state fair where Jordan runs into Kolin who wants his wrist band back but they are attacked and Jordan, Kathy and Kolin are pulled into an parallel universe. This version of Earth called Avalon is vastly different from our Earth. Much of it is in ruins due to the effects that the first atomic bomb exploded on Earth. An entity known as the Shadow runs a corrupt government of corporations where the life energy of individuals is sucked out of people and sold to the rich. The Shadow gets the lion's share of the life force. Kolin is part of a group that is working to defeat the Shadow and meld it back with the Light to form one God being again. Unfortunately, the Shadow has the Light imprisoned. Jordan has to join a corrupt hockey league to gain access to information which will help free the Light. The rest of the group has their own things that they must accomplish along with Jordan. The story ends on a cliff hanger with no book two in sight which is very disappointing. The world building in this book was excellently done and most of the characters are very well developed. Jordan is only a seventeen year old boy but I quickly saw him as an adult the way Mr. Offutt wrote his character. The story is very technology and mathematically oriented to explain what the slipstream is and does. The author is very caught up in full descriptions of what everyone is wearing which I found pulled me away from the many plot twists and turns. There were also several information dumps to fill in holes in the story that could have been done in a less intrusive and disruptive way. For these reasons I cannot give the book a full five star rating. I recommend this exciting fantasy to all fantasy lovers although I would advise them to wait until Oculus is available so that the story flow is not interrupted.

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### **The TBR Pile \*Book review site\* says**

Full Review: <http://thetbrpile.weebly.com/1/post/2...>

This was a bit of a strange book that never really fully came together for me. Jordan himself is a bit of a contradiction - a sporty guy who loves Ice Hockey but who is also a bit of a science geek who spends his down-time considering Schrodinger's cat in some detail. His sister as well remains something of an enigma for much of this novel and neither character ever really develops much beyond the first page. The plot felt highly derivative and a bit of a mish-mash of ideas better utilised by other authors who have come before. This seemed to borrow heavily from such fare as Stephen King's Dark Tower series with its themes of destruction able to cross between worlds. There are even two towers, one Black, one White, that co-exist (one in our world, one in Avalon, the parallel reality) and which seem to hold all reality together! Even though this book may have held a little shred of promise in its opening chapters, ultimately it never really delivered and the end result was something of a disappointment!

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### **Alex Akira says**

This highly ambitious novel blends quantum theory, mythology and spirituality into an action-adventure, mystery-ridden, technically detailed, love story that reads like a script for a movie or a new video game. I'm rating it 3.5 stars.

While I was compelled to turn its pages, fascinated by the incredible amount of detail the author created for his world and eager to find answers to the mystery it's pages held, I also found myself searching for

something I could grab ahold of to satisfy my emotional self.

I love science fiction, and will admit to liking sci-fi fantasy more than speculative sci-fi stories of which I feel this novel is. I also love physics and quantum theory and the author knows his stuff. It was a delight to read quantum physics correctly described and applied in the early chapters of the novel, I only wish the author knew his hockey terminology as well.

I was dropped into the life of seventeen-year-old, hockey player, Jordan Pendragon as he recalls the accident that landed him in the hospital. He awakes alone in the night, pieces together fragments of memory and stumbles through the hospital corridors where he sees a man leaving a patient's room. The stranger carries what Jordan perceives as a bag of blood and wears a glowing watch the like of which he has never seen. Shortly thereafter the man flees and the emergency signal in the patient's room begins to sound; the patient is dying and Jordan concludes that the stranger is responsible.

And so begins an extremely clinical, speculative fiction story filled with detailed descriptions of two worlds, one being that of contemporary Earth, the other a sister world, Avalon, which is much older. This second world, which Jordan accesses via use of the "slipstream," a talent he appears to have acquired since his accident, is technically advanced and yet it is a devastated world where Light and Dark struggle for rule. Jordan and his sister are transported to this world in the company of Kolin, the stranger Jordan saw the night he woke in the hospital, and are pressed into service of Light to help save the planet.

The amount of detail given to the people, tech modified creatures and technology that this sister world holds is amazing and for this I give Michael Offutt mad props. Unfortunately the author chose to detail everything in the vast novel, from objects that appear only fleetingly to those of true importance to the story, leaving me as a reader to sort through the accumulated facts and try to recognize which were valid and which were not. I also felt the author missed a multitude of opportunities to allow me to "feel" for his characters.

Physical appearance of the characters are told in a clinical "list" form that did nothing to support or lend warmth to their personalities. Also, the character's emotional responses to the variety of exciting adventures they go on are expressed in an indifferent, almost robotic manner.

I was never allowed to feel what Jordan felt, nor was I able to "inhabit" him or any of the characters in the story. I was left outside to look in at the story and while the amount of detail kept my mentality hopping to keep track of every marvelous new entity, I could not create images from the details nor hear the "music" or emotional nuance that generally accompanies a well-balanced story and therefore I could not really "care" for the characters.

That said, I am glad I stayed with this debut effort story, the author shows an amazing amount of promise. At its end my thought was that the book had the ambition of William S. Burroughs Naked Lunch crossed with that of Stephen King's The Stand.

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## **Brooke R. Busse says**

Michael is a good blogging friend of mine (in fact, he sent me my copy of this book) so I intend to put as much thought into this review as I possibly can. However, I refuse to sugar coat anything. If something was good, I'll say it's good. If something needed a little work, I intend to be fully honest about that, too.

First, I can not fathom the amount of imagination it took to come up with this world. Every detail, from how many Megacities were in North America to the floating heads in Hilent's office amazed me. And that's just

the setting and worldbuilding. The plot line and backstory were also incredibly imaginative.

All of that imagination was explained by science. And it wasn't that hard to understand. I had to read over the super physics-y parts again just to make sure I got it, but that only occurred about four times in a 339 page book.

Now, for my biggest peeve in this book. I could handle the typos, of which there were a few. I could glaze over the couple times when I was slightly confused because of the description of a room. I could ignore the occasional instances of repetition. No, the thing that tripped me up again and again was the dialogue. It was unnaturally straightforward most of the time. Now, I can understand this around the science-centered parts in order to avoid confusing the reader, but it was often used when characters were expressing their feelings. I could believe it if one person was that open, and I believe this to be the case with Jordan, but literally *everyone* seemed to be. And that itched at me. People are not like that. Half the time, they don't even know their own emotions that exact.

To end on a happy note, let's take a look at the romance. (MAY CONTAIN SMALL SPOILERS) Because I'm a girl and, oh my gosh, two guys in love. -happy sigh- I loved its development, not only with Jordan and Kolin as a couple, but with them as individuals. It progressed slowly. In the beginning, neither of them even admitted they were gay. But by the end, there was love and acceptance and, ahem, that sex scene. YA writers (yes, I'm looking at you) take a cue from this. It's so much better than insta love (though Michael and I may have a talk about Rachael).

EDIT: I forgot to mention one other thing that really struck me. (Hey, I wrote this late at night.) Again, I warn you of SPOILERS. It wasn't until Kathy got her arm sliced off by the nightmare squid monster that I realized how much I cared for the characters. My heart sank and I almost thought that it couldn't be true. I admired this not only for the good characterization, but for the author's ability to hurt his characters. /END EDIT

So, in conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

P.S. Michael, you wouldn't happen to have the blueprints to Ian's office library, would you? Just send them to the same address you sent the book. 'K, thanks.

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