



Plato's Cave

Russell Proctor

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Lighthearted novel suggests that the eternal quest to understand the nature of reality and the meaning of existence just might be doomed from the start.

Brisbane novelist Russell Proctor doesn't mind highlighting the problems science has with finding meaning in the world, nor does he shy away from poking a bit of good-natured fun at pseudo-science. In his latest novel, this committed skeptic and futurist puts his lifelong interest in science and astronomy to work to gently satirize humanity's enduring efforts to explain the nature of reality and the meaning of existence.

The humorous and philosophical *Plato's Cave* begins with Emily Branwell, an otherwise normal university student, who awakens one morning to find that her horoscope is shockingly accurate, that sausages keep appearing out of thin air all around her, that she can walk through walls, and that with the exception of a very peculiar plant named Mike, the interior of her house has vanished.

A bit flummoxed by these random and rather inconvenient incidents, Emily decides to get some help, but neither Joanna Clifford, the psychic who wrote the horoscope, nor Turhan Birgili, a Turkish wizard, have any idea what's going on. When an ominous black shadow appears in the sky, Emily consults astronomer Max Fisher and physicist David Nabarlambarl. They too come up empty-handed, and it becomes clear that these crazy occurrences might just be beyond anyone's understanding.

When the shadow appears in the sky for a third time, widespread panic ensues. In a world that is rapidly disintegrating before her, Emily must not only make sense of what's happening to herself but also to the universe. However, what she discovers might very well mean that everyone has been looking for answers in the wrong places. Or, as Emily herself puts it, "Reality is just the beginning."

Proctor comments, "I was first introduced to Plato's allegory of the cave in his book *Republic* at university and found the image, and its revelations, haunting." He adds, "My novel is a sort of cross between science fiction and philosophy in that it engages both genres in examining our quest for the meaning of existence. It does this in a light-hearted way that should appeal to most people. At the same time, it is also a cosmic mystery that invites readers to work out what is happening to the main character."

"[*Plato's Cave* is] a very well-researched and hilarious cosmic whodunit...By the time I was halfway through, I was literally reading this on the bus, walking down the street, every break at work! It's brilliant and I could see a television version being a cult classic. If you have a teenager who thinks science is dull, buy them this book. It's a really clever combination of science, new-age belief, humor, and knowledge. I admire a writer who can combine all that into an easy, enjoyable read!" - **Review by SundayGirl, 5 out of 5 stars**

Author: Born in Queensland, Australia, Russell Proctor has been everything from a lawyer to a professional actor and teacher. He has successfully scaled Mount Kilimanjaro and walked the Kokoda Track in his extensive travels around the world. The author of *Days of Iron*, a science-fiction novel about terrorism in the future, he is a committed skeptic and futurist.

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