



The Elephant of Surprise (The Russel Middlebrook Series Book 4)

By Brent Hartinger



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Book 4 in the Lambda Award-winning Russel Middlebrook Series!

People aren't always what they seem to be. Sometimes we even surprise ourselves.

So discovers seventeen-year-old Russel Middlebrook in *The Elephant of Surprise*, a stand-alone sequel to Brent Hartinger's landmark 2003 gay young adult novel *Geography Club* (which has now been adapted as a feature film co-starring Scott Bakula and Nikki Blonsky).

In this latest book, Russel and his friends Min and Gunnar are laughing about something they call the Elephant of Surprise – the tendency for life to never turn out as expected. Sure enough, Russel soon happens upon a hot but mysterious homeless activist named Wade, even as he's drawn back to an old flame named Kevin. Meanwhile, Min is learning surprising things about her girlfriend Leah, and Gunnar just wants to be left alone to pursue his latest technology obsession.

But the elephant is definitely on the move in all three of their lives. Just who is Wade and what are he and his friends planning? What is Leah hiding? And why is Gunnar taking naked pictures of Kevin in the shower?

The Elephant of Surprise includes Hartinger's trademark combination of humor and romance, angst and optimism. Before the story is over, Russel and his friends will learn that the Elephant of Surprise really does appear when you least expect him—and that when he stomps on you, it really, really hurts.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Along with the edifying main plotline, which will appeal to readers of any age, the well-conceived subplots won't disappoint young readers looking for the juicy gossip that runs through the series. With Russel, there's always drama--real and perceived--but definitely no lack of love. Fans of the series will revel in this smart, quirky YA novel that's ripe with substance beyond the surface." -*Kirkus Reviews*

"This is an unusual storyline, but, like Russel, readers may find themselves intrigued by Wade's [freegan anti-consumerist] lifestyle and beliefs. Secondary plot lines support the core drama, and teens will continue to enjoy Russel's ever-humorous narration. After eating barbecued raccoon with Wade, Russel says, "If it doesn't sound romantic, you'll just have to take my word for it, because it totally, TOTALLY was." -- *Publishers Weekly*

"Russel is a narrator it's a pleasure to spend time with. He's honest -- often touchingly self-deprecating and always hilariously self-conscious. ... This is the kind of teen book I absolutely adore. Funny, thought-provoking and entertaining. Read it!" -- *Chicklish*

"Like a warm chocolate cookie right out of the oven!" - *Buried in Books*

"A simple, wonderful story ... as accessible and reader-friendly as possible. ... [a] wonderful sense of youthful humor." -- *SABR*

"Alive and uplifting. ... I also continue to admire and celebrate the series for its matter-of-fact approach to diversity. It's the first time I can recall ever having read the candid thoughts of a gay white male regarding his attraction to a black male that wasn't loaded down with stereotyping and racial junk. ... Quietly, but thrillingly revolutionary." -- *The Backlot.com*

About the Author

Brent Hartinger is an author, playwright, and screenwriter. *Geography Club*, the first book in his Lambda Award-winning Russel Middlebrook Series, is now a feature film co-starring Scott Bakula and Nikki Blonsky.

In 1990, Brent helped found one of the world's first gay teen support groups, in his hometown of Tacoma, Washington. In 2005, he co-founded the entertainment website AfterElton.com, which was sold to MTV/Viacom in 2006. Read more by and about Brent, or contact him at www.brenthartinger.com.

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