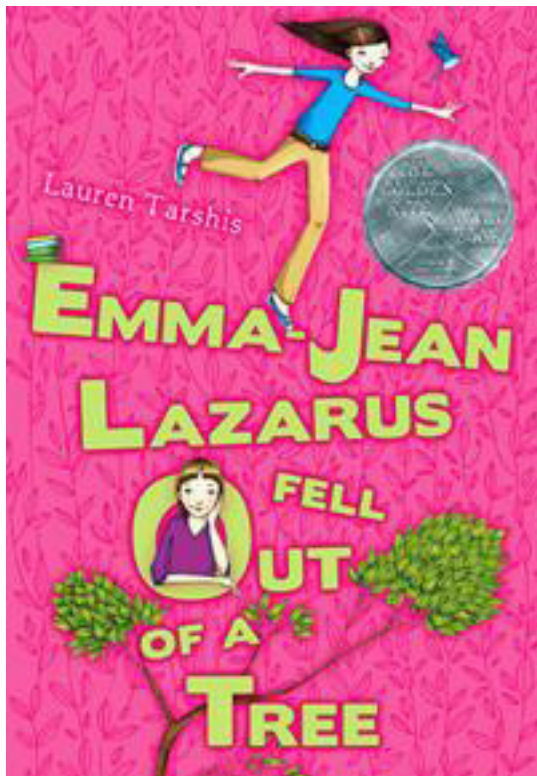


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# KIRKUS

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## Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree

By Lauren Tarshis  
Age Range: 8-12

### KIRKUS REVIEW

At the beginning of this incisively voiced story, Emma-Jean Lazarus, a self-possessed but socially isolated seventh-grade girl, has no friends her own age. In fact, Tarshis's winning heroine views her classmates as an anthropologist might, observing them with great interest, but not really getting their strangely irrational behavior. And they, in turn, view her as simply strange. This begins to change when Emma-Jean comes across classmate Colleen Pomerantz sobbing her heart out in the bathroom. Colleen needs help in dealing with a girl bully, or

as Emma-Jean sees it, the alpha chimp of Colleen's social set. Emma-Jean decides that she'll help Colleen and, later, others by utilizing the reasoning of her deceased father's hero, the illustrious mathematician Jules Henri Poincaré. However, emotions have a way of defying logical analysis, and after a while, Emma-Jean discovers that she's become entangled—not only with peers, but with friends. The comic juice in the story comes from Emma-Jean's hyper-rational yet totally skewed take on reality, and her evolution from analyst to actor makes for a captivating, highly satisfying read. (*Fiction. 8-12*)

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Pub Date: March 1st, 2007

Page count: 144pp

Review Posted Online: May 20th, 2010

ISBN: 0-8037-3164-7

Publisher: Dial

Kirkus Reviews Issue: Jan. 15th, 2007

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