



The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek

Seth Rudetsky

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Broadway, New York.

The shows, the neon lights . . . the cute chorus boys! It's where Justin has always wanted to be--and now, with a winter internship for a famous actor, he finally has his chance to shine. If only he could ditch his kind, virtuous, upright, and--dare he say it?—*uptight* boyfriend, Spencer. But once the internship begins, Justin has more to worry about than a cramped single-guy-in-the-city style. Instead of having his moment in the spotlight, he's a not-so-glorified errand boy. Plus, Spencer is hanging out with a celebra-hottie, Justin's best friend Becky isn't speaking to him, and his famous actor boss seems headed for flopdom. Justin's tap-dancing as fast as he can, but all his wit and sass might not be enough to switch his time in New York from nightmare-terrible to dream-come-true terrific.

Seth Rudetsky's second YA novel is endearingly human, laugh-out-loud funny, and for any kid who's ever aspired to Broadway but can only sneak in through the stage door.

The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek Details

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From Reader Review The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek for online ebook

Liviania says

I haven't read MY AWESOME/AWFUL POPULARITY PLAN, the first book about Justin by veteran Broadway pianist Seth Rudetsky. However, I was able to follow THE RISE AND FALL OF A THEATER GEEK just fine without it. Justin is a rather abrasive narrator. His mind is a little like a hamster running constantly around a wheel, and he thinks he knows best for everyone. I still liked him.

Justin makes several mistakes at the beginning of THE RISE AND FALL OF A THEATER GEEK. He pushes his boyfriend Spencer and best friend Becky too hard, and ends up alienating them. He also lies to the woman who lined up an internship for him to get out of it because he got a better internship working directly for a heartthrob making his Broadway debut. I found the second particularly naive of Justin, since most people understand you giving up one opportunity for another that fits your goals better. Lying, however, is less understandable.

THE RISE AND FALL OF A THEATER GEEK weaves together Justin's personal growth over his internship in New York with a mystery about why his employer is making such terrible acting decisions and what his agent is up to. The mystery is pretty obvious, so it's good that Justin's character growth is done with more nuance to balance it. Although Spencer and Becky aren't seen much in the novel due to the fight, I liked that they're shown to have gone on their own journeys. I like supporting characters with their own lives.

You might try reading a sample of THE RISE AND FALL OF A THEATER GEEK first, because Justin's voice might not work for you. If it does, this is a fairly cute bildungsroman with some nice details about how a Broadway show comes to be. It's pretty predictable, but I can see theater kids loving this one.

Leah says

This was such a cute read.

I would have loved it more if Justin wasn't so obsessed with Spencer; as the book opens, Justin is so excited about going to New York, but worries that if he stays with Spencer, he can't find a "proper New York boyfriend", which was fine, but when Spencer breaks up with Justin, all of a sudden, Justin just can't stop making everything about Spencer, and it honestly drove me insane. Considering Justin was going to break up with Spencer, it didn't make sense that he was so obsessed. When Devon entered the picture I was so excited, because he and Justin got on so well, but Justin only attempts to date Devon to make Spencer jealous, and it just seemed so selfish. You don't do that to a person.

I loved the theatre stuff in the book - and the mystery behind Hubert's reasons for making sure Justin stayed away from the theatre and Chase where he was meant to be interning for JobSkill. That whole plot line was addictive, and I devoured the second half of the book as it all kicked off for Justin, and he got his Veronica Mars on.

The book was such a fun, cute, quick read. I wasn't a massive fan of the way Justin acted towards any of the

boys in the novel (a case of having his cake and eating it) but I loved everything else about it (and was so curious why he wasn't the size of a freaking house, considering how much he eats, and eats, and eats, and eats). It was a really sweet read, and nice to see a book set around the whole Broadway scene, which isn't something I've ever read about before.

Lola says

I'm surprised I haven't shelved this one yet. I stopped reading it sometime during summer. At first, I really liked the atmosphere since it was light and humorous, but the main character slowly started getting on my nerves. He's like Tiny's twin. If you've read Will Grayson, Will Grayson, then you know exactly who I'm talking about. Hyperactive, full of himself, in love with every guy on the planet earth. And there was so much lying and inconsistency in the main character's feelings toward others that I just gave up being interested in his life.

Jacob says

"The rise and fall of a theater geek," just like its name, had various rises and falls. My appreciation for the book also went up and down, yet I continued to read it. I enjoyed the far out story of a fledging theater geek meeting a TV-turned-Broadway superstar. However, the style of writing wore me down. The plot near the end also became somewhat convoluted, but was tied together for a happy ending. I would have also liked the book more if it the story moved along faster by taking out some of the extra fluff in the book. Overall though, I enjoyed the book and would recommend it to fellow "theater geeks."

Jana says

I received a free copy from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This is a book about a guy who loves theater and really wants to get to Broadway one day. Then, when at a show with his boyfriend, he meets his favourite actor, who is just about to make his Broadway debut after a big role in a TV soap opera, and gets an opportunity to intern with him.

It was a light and quick read and definitely really fun. I found the characters to be pretty relatable and the story was pretty fun. It was all very uplifting and transported a good message, in my opinion.

Cassandra {semi-hiatus} says

"I also conveniently included a forty five minute professional-quality DVD that featured highlights of my performing experience going all the way back to first grade when I did my ??? Hanukkah musical and the stole the show as the sassy but ultimately wise sixth menorah candle."

Despite what most people think when they see two stars, I enjoyed this book. I looked forward to reading it, and spent most of it laughing. For those who don't know, Seth Rudetsky is the host of *Seth's Big Fat Broadway* on Sirius XM. I can't deny that commuting is my favorite part about working because I get to listen to his show in the car, and he is straight up hilarious. The quote at the top of this review is the sort of thing he says regularly.

So when I was packing my bags for the mission trip I went on last week, and saw this sitting on my shelf, I decided that it would be perfect to take since it would bring me back from the dark tone of *Half Bad* and help me cope with the lack of music and radio I was going to suffer. And it did.

If I were to ignore the predictability and fairy tale feeling of the plot, this book would have been closer to a four star. The characters were enjoyable if not a little inconsistent, and needless to say I loved the setting. The biggest problem this novel suffered was plot. Everything was predictable or convenient. Only plot element I truly enjoyed was Justin and how his relationships with Devon and Spencer turned out.

I want to keep this spoiler free, so I'm going to leave it at that. Would I recommend reading this? If you're a fan of Seth's or a theater geek yearning for some Broadway reference haven, yes. Otherwise, I'd try something more along the lines of *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* or *Know Not Why*.

Rebecca McNutt says

This book was really pretentious, relying on stereotypes and predictability instead of originality and creativity.

Max Baker says

Thank you Netgalley for providing me a free review copy in exchange for an honest review

The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek is one of those books that just seemed like fun. From the description it seemed like a genuinely funny story that just dripped with theater references and snark. However, after reading the book I wasn't disappointed exactly...more like disillusioned. Sure there were a few snappy one liners and a supporting character I liked, but in the end I didn't enjoy this book and I think that's largely due to Justin, the books main character.

There's an art to making a selfish character and I just don't think Rudetsky is quite there yet. Don't get me wrong, I love reading selfish characters, but only if they're done well. Justin wasn't. It became apparent around the half way mark that Justin was never going to own up to being selfish despite the overwhelming evidence against him. Justin never tried to be the bigger person and apologize for his mistakes. Instead he tries to be petty and make everyone apologize to him for even having the notion he could be anything less than perfect.

Now this could have been a very awesome character if Justin wasn't so one sided. Justin had no redeeming characteristics because in the end his only characteristic was being selfish. He never grows or changes as the novel progresses. At the end of the book the only real difference in Justin's character is that he helped one actor get his shit together, and even then it was *only* to one up the antagonist.

If I had to compare it to anything, it would probably be the movie *The Little Mermaid*. Ariel wants something, obstacles happen, she gets what she wants. She never learns anything and *The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek* has the same problem. Justin wants something, something happens to cause conflict, and then he gets what he wants without ever having to compromise or change.

That brings me to my next point, the relationship between Justin and Spencer. It's explicitly stated very early on in the book that Justin wants to break up with Spencer so he could explore other options, and that's fine; I totally understand wanting to try something new, but again (Do you see a theme here?) as the novel dragged on I found myself getting absolutely pissed.

Relationships are about compromise. You can't just expect your partner to adore every single attribute about yourself throughout your relationship, it just doesn't happen. Justin starts out saying that he wants to try something different because Spencer is uptight and doesn't hang on every word he says. On the other hand, Spencer ends up breaking it off with Justin because he realizes Justin is always trying to make him into something Spencer's not rather than try to compromise himself.

During Justin's time in New York he meets and I guess semi-dates a boy named Devon, who's almost exactly like Justin in every way, solely to make Spencer jealous. This brings up the whole I-realize-how-annoying-I-was-after-dating-myself trope you see sometimes and while I can't complain about how that turned out, because it did its job, I can complain about the aftermath.

There's a scene outside a theater where Spencer ends up taking Justin back and they reconcile. It's during this scene that Spencer does literally the worst thing imaginable: He tells Justin not to change, because he wouldn't be himself if he did.

WHAT.THE.FUCK. I spent roughly 250 pages in this kid's head and let me tell you, he should change. He's selfish and egotistical and irrational and jealous. There's a huge difference between changing your personality in order to get a boyfriend and changing in order to improve yourself, and I don't think this book understands that. If you break up with a person because he's constantly trying to change you, don't tell him it's okay because he managed to save a actor's career.

I guess that's my main problem with the book, and actually a lot of other books as well. Changing doesn't mean having to abandon who you are, it just means working on characteristics and being able to grow and change. They need to understand what's wrong with themselves and work on it. If they don't, they're no different from the person they were on page one.

Chris Vigilante says

DNF at 54%. Justin is an unbearable character. The only way I would like this book is that if in the end he is alone and miserable because he doesn't deserve to be forgiven by his friends. Unfortunately I couldn't make it that far before having to put this down. Justin needs to grow as a person. A complete 180 for him isn't even enough, and it wouldn't be believable considering how self-centered and illogical he is .

Heather F says

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher via NetGalley. As a theatre geek, I loved this book! Joshua is not a likeable protagonist, but he is flawed in a way that normally YA female characters are. This book was clever. I really liked how LGBTQIA friendly it was-I would have loved for this book to be around when I was a teen theatre geek!

Katie says

I really wanted to like this book. It seemed like something I would really be into because of how much I love Broadway, but I just struggled with this. My main issue was that the main character was completely unlikeable with pretty much no redeeming qualities. He was selfish and pushy and only cared about himself. For most of the book, he cared more about making other people jealous about his life than actually caring about other people. He is petty and manipulative and I just couldn't stand him. By the end, (view spoiler). I also didn't really care much for any of the secondary characters. Justin's friends were fairly flat and Chase was not a believable character.

On top of not liking the characters, the premise was also very farfetched to me. The whole idea behind this story is that at Justin's school, juniors get to do 2 week internships for credit with a program called JobSkill. This is meant to prepare them for what they might want to be doing once they have real jobs. Justin, who wants to be a theatre actor, wants to spend his internship doing something related to Broadway. I had no problem with this. What really threw me off was how Justin met an actor he admires in the audience at a Broadway show who happens to be in rehearsal for his Broadway debut. And when Justin told him about JobSkill and how he was working for a publicity company for off Broadway shows, Chase (the actor) offered for Justin to work for him instead, just a week or so before the internship is supposed to start. I can suspend belief for a lot of things when I read, but this was not one of them. The plot only got more unbelievable the further I read ((view spoiler)).

I liked that the book had to do with Broadway, but I just couldn't get behind the plot and the characters and so this book was not enjoyable for me. The only bright side was that it was short and a quick read.

Bonnie says

I read the first book and enjoyed it. This had all the jokes Written out and explained. And I did not enjoy that. I thought the plot was thin and although the character development did happen, it was not intriguing enough to keep my attention. My final statement would be that I do not believe that this book is reflective of this author's abilities.

Ella Zegarra says

Original de: El Extraño Gato del Cuento

¿Has visto Will & Grace? Si la respuesta es no, deberías, te estás perdiendo de una gran serie. Si la respuesta fue sí, entonces entenderás cuando te digo que leer The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek fue como leer a un mini Jack McFarlane, muy divertido pero a veces un poquito irritante.

Se me hace sumamente genial el poder encontrar cada vez más libros LGBT, y a diferencia de When Everything Feels Like the Movies, con este libro vuelvo a lo más ligero y divertido.

Luego de terminarlo no tengo mucho sobre que hablar, me gustó pero como dije al inicio, también pudo ser bastante irritante el leerlo, si Justin hubiera hablado desde el principio no tendrías los grandes enredos que se desarrollan en el libro. Aunque obviamente se supone que de eso trate el libro, así que no hay mucho de quejarse, la verdad.

The Rise and Fall of a Theater Geek es ligero hasta decir basta, demasiado inocente en algunas ocasiones, quiero decir básicamente el trabajo que consigue Justin sale literalmente de la nada. Se me hizo por momentos más un libro Middle Grade que Young Adult. Tiene mucha vibra a lo Get Happy, a diferencia que este libro si tiene un mensaje más resaltante.

Libro ligero para una tarde que quieres relajar la mente y reírte/renegar un rato con Justin y sus embrollos.

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Mary says

I enjoyed this more than the first (though Justin still drives me crazy!) Justin actually progresses as a character in this book (as in he starts to see his flaws and accept that he needs people to ground and balance him). It was also fun to have this book set in NYC.

Ryan says

This book was absolutely the worst I've read in 2016 so far. With that statement out in the open, my review might get a little rant-y.

What makes this book terrible you ask? Well, for starters it has a cringe worthy writing style, an insufferable main character, and a scattered plot. Yes, this book failed every aspect of a novel to me: plot, characters, writing, premise, development, etc.

The main issue with this novel is our main character, Justin Goldblatt. Here are some adjectives I wrote down while reading that reminded me of Justin.

1. Self-centered/Conceited/Narcissistic
2. Immature (He dated a guy just to make his ex jealous)
3. Selfish
4. Rude
5. Bratty
6. Dumb

I want to read about well-developed, flawed, yet likable characters of the LGBTQIA community. Not characters that are one dimensional like Justin. He's a walking stereotype (much like Tiny Cooper from Will Grayson, Will Grayson). He never goes beyond the surface, just very superficial.

Not only that, but Justin created all of his own problems! Problems that could have easily been fixed if he just spoke up and told the truth. I'm so tired of novels that can be resolved in twenty pages, but don't, because the main character is like, "Oh, I can't tell him right now. It's not the right time. Best wait till the last page." It's infuriating to read about.

I also think the author failed at getting into the mindset of a teenage boy. Justin sounded stiff, like a middle aged man trying to talk like a teenager. It took me a few seconds to realize that when Justin said "the reverse camera image" on his phone, he actually meant the selfie camera.

Which also leads me to the writing style. It was just really, really bland. Bad. Simple. There was no style. In fact, it seemed very elementary to me.

The plot was all over the place. Was this book supposed to be a mystery? If it did, it sorely failed in that aspect. Another frustrating thing about this book is the unrealistic, easy solution that pops out of the blue right at the very end!

I would almost classify this book as Middle Grade. Or maybe I'm just too old to enjoy this Disney Channel type of YA novels. Either way, I regret spending money on this book.
