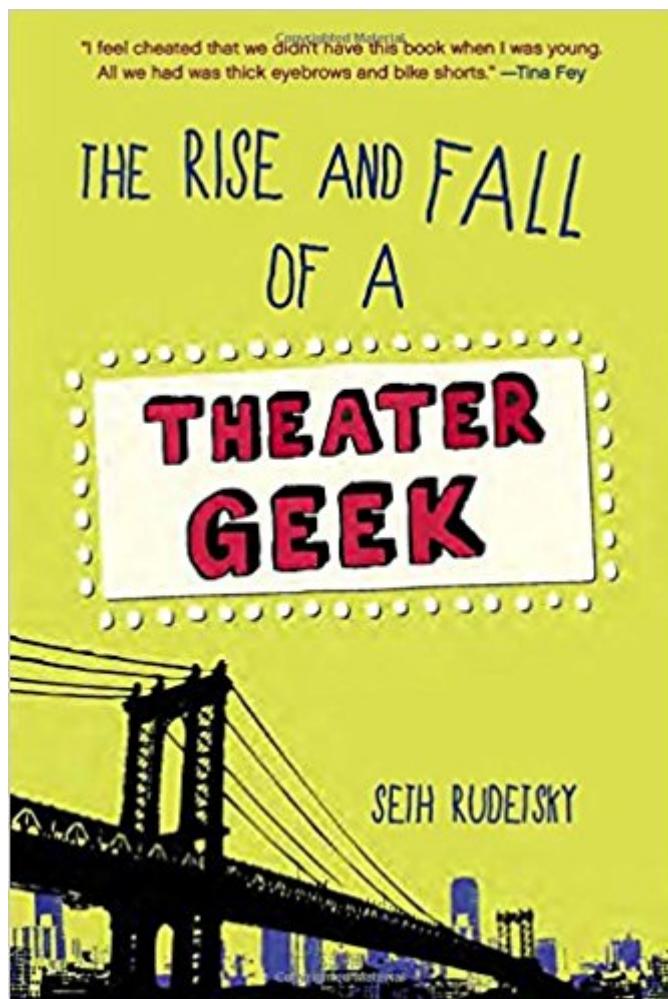


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# The Rise And Fall Of A Theater Geek



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

SETH RUDETSKY is the Broadway host, seven days a week, on Sirius Satellite Radio. As a pianist, Seth has played for more than a dozen Broadway shows including *Ragtime*, *Les Miz*, and *Phantom*. He was the artistic producer and music director for the first five annual Actors Fund Fall Concerts, including *Dreamgirls* with Audra McDonald and *Hair* with Jennifer Hudson. In 2007 he made his

Broadway acting debut in The Ritz and has also appeared on TV in Law & Order, Criminal Intent. As an author, he penned the books The Q Guide to Broadway, now in its third printing, and the recently published Broadway Nights, which was just released as an audio book on audible.com and featuring the voices of Andrea Martin, Jonathan Groff, and Kristin Chenoweth. He currently writes a weekly column on Playbill.com.

I will start out by saying that I am an adult theater Geek and an adult YA geek. I know the subject matter of this story well, and as an unpublished YA writer and voracious reader of this category, I know what makes a good YA novel. My reaction to this book before reading it was, "Here we go again, another celebrity has written a kids' book and it gets published without any trouble." The fact that its print edition is available only in paperback on flimsy quality paper was another warning sign that I was likely to be disappointed. But I love theater books and I'm a big fan of Seth's book and I listen to him every day, so I wasted no time in moving this one to the top of my stack. It took only a few pages to realize that my apprehensions were unfounded. This book is a delight, written with knowledge and care by an author who loves his material, knows how to create lovable characters, and is skillful at the craft of plotting. Well done. Fans of Seth will easily recognize the fast paced first person voice of the novel's main character, Justin Goldblatt. The voice is rambling, over-explaining, obsessive, and loud. It is the voice of Seth himself. In fact, I heard the whole novel in my head being read in Seth's voice, all his vocal inflections intact. At times, Justin feels a little "too adult" when some of the vocabulary and syntax choices feel out of range for a sixteen year old, such as when Justin is waxing poetic over the decor of an apartment in the Dakota, or musing on a certain character's vulnerability. But mostly the voice rings true for a very bright, self-absorbed sixteen-year old who has the run of New York City for two weeks. Justin takes some getting used to. He is incurably cocky, annoying, manipulative, and has a rocky relationship with the truth. He makes several wrong choices early in the story that set off the story's plot. He criticizes others for having faults that he doesn't always recognize exist in himself. Fortunately, the other characters in the novel are much easier to love. I'm particularly fond of Justin's Grandma Sally, a beautifully detailed Jewish woman who always manages to put Justin in his place. The plot of the story is

wonderfully nuanced on several levels and you have to get all the way to the end before you piece together everything that has happened into a finished picture. I don't like reviews with spoilers that reveal plot twists, so I won't offer any, suffice to say that the plot is very complicated because of Justin trying to manipulate the lives of others and it takes him most of the novel to figure out what he's gotten himself into so he can solve the situation. I will say, though, that as it should be in good MG and YA teen lit, that the kids in the story manage to solve their own problems with little or no help from the adults in the story. This cast of teen characters prove themselves to be very adept problem solvers. Perhaps by the end they are a little too slick at this it's a bit of a stretch to think that in real life teens could sort out the mess the adults in the story have created, but in the big reveal at the end they have all the bases covered. There is an extended dénouement at the end in the form of a long epilogue in which every single last unresolved plot thread is neatly tied up with a happy bow, except for the story's villain, who is appropriately shamed at every turn in the ending. Perhaps the epilogue is too long and over-done, but it suits Seth's rambling style and what the story lacks in terms of a tight narration it makes up for in the humor of Justin's voice. One aspect of this novel I appreciate very much is that Seth opted not to be trendy. This is not a typical YA novel similar to the majority of new titles in this category. It's actually very old-fashioned in its feel. The story is gay themed, but other currently popular topics are absent from the story. This isn't a dark story of teen angst with an unhappy kid from a dysfunctional family agonizing on every page. The narration isn't laced with profanity in fact it's almost totally squeaky clean. The teen characters aren't off smoking, doing drugs, drinking alcohol, or having sex. The only beverage they ever abuse is coffee. There are only passing references to bullying. The characters are responsible, upbeat kids with goals, decent families, and compassion for others, a very refreshing change from so much of the YA market. One last thing: yes, the story is gay themed, and most of the teen male characters are gay. So if this offends you, this book isn't for you. And if you like gay themed stories and are looking for steamy sex scenes, well, this book isn't for you, either. Go pick up something by Brent Hartinger. But if you like stories about teen characters, gay or straight, who still have a measure of innocence, and you enjoy a nice light plot driven story with an element of mystery and easily likeable characters, grab this one up. You won't be disappointed. And Seth, I'm sure you have plenty more books inside you, but hey, don't give up your day job. You'd be missed.

What a wonderful book. Although written for young adults, it's also sophisticated and an amusingly great read for adults. The twists and turns of the story keep you guessing, the stories never giving away what was truly going to happen at the end. Just when you'd get a glimpse of something you thought was the answer to the mystery, a twist would happen and you would be off on a different direction! Terrific inside tidbits about life behind the Broadway curtain as well. It is great writing, full of amusing asides ( cleverly done with internal voices) it is definitely worth a read for adults and young adults as well.

This book is a sweet and funny romp through the machinations of a Broadway show as seen through the eyes of a 15 year old theater "geek" who is coping with a few machinations of his own, romantic and otherwise. It's not heavy or deep or likely to help you re-direct your life or lose that last ten pounds, but if you're looking for something light, quick, and entertaining I can't recommend it highly enough.

After reading the first book in the series, I immediately had to go on and order this because I want to see where the story would go. At first, I was skeptical, but then I could not put the book down. Twist, turns and mysterys kept me engaged in the story. I regularly listen to Seth Rudetsky on Sirius and can hear him in the voice of Justin. I sincerely hope there is another installment in the series.

I am a big fan of Seth via SiriusXM and really enjoyed this book. Being from California with minimal stage watching experience, but loving musicals on screen I don't know much. But listening to Seth has opened a new door for me- leading to enjoying touring shows in San Francisco. This book was a fun look sort of behind the scenes. Will be looking at his other publications past and future.

A quick fun read. It's not deep, it's not great literature, it's pretty full of clichÃ©, but if you were ever a 15 year old Theatre Geek you'll feel it.

This is a delightful book from the irrepressible Seth Rudetsky, about relationships, Broadway, intrigue, and a youthful clamoring to be a part of the Theatre World. Though aimed at younger readers, it's for the theatre geek in all of us. I'm over 70 and I loved it.

A fun read. A possessive teenage gay main character. So much inside Broadway information. A

clever mystery. And a happy ending. Perfect for the young reader, especially if they are interested in the theater world. M

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