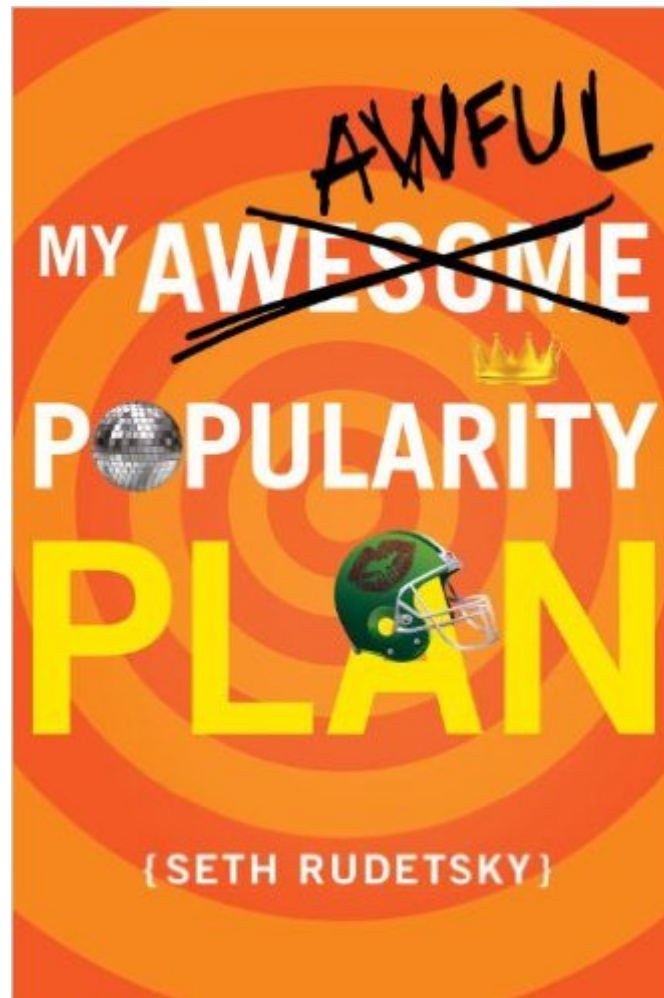


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My Awesome/Awful Popularity Plan



Synopsis

Justin has two goals for sophomore year: to date Chuck, the hottest boy in school, and to become the king of Cool U, the table in the cafeteria where the "in" crowd sits. Unfortunately, he has the wrong look (short, plump, Brillo-pad curls), he has the wrong interests (Broadway, chorus violin), and he has the wrong friends (Spencer, into Eastern religions, and Mary Ann, who doesn't shave her armpits). And Chuck? Well, he's not gay; he's dating Becky, a girl in chorus with whom Justin is friendly. But Justin is determined. In detention one day (because he saw Chuck get it first), Justin comes up with a perfect plan: to allow Becky to continue dating Chuck, whom Becky's dad hates. They will pretend that Becky is dating Justin, whom Becky's dad loves. And when Becky and Justin go out on a fake date, Chuck will meet up with them for a real date with Becky. Chuck's bound to find Justin irresistible, right? What could go wrong? Seth Rudetsky's first novel for young adults is endearingly human, and laugh-out-loud funny, and any kid who ever aspired to Cool U will find Justin a welcome ally in the fight for popularity.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (23 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #726,574 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Jewish #99 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > LGBT Issues #1039 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed Seth Rudetsky's humorous Young Adult novel. Awesome/Awful is fun, entertaining read; not a guide for surviving high school. Having spent nearly 15 years in the public school system, I've come to know these student 'types' pretty well. Not to say that all the characters are stereotypical, they each have their own unique qualities, strengths and weaknesses; that set them

apart as individuals and make them interesting. Teen angst comes in many forms and Rudetsky does a great job of exploring that here. Though *Awesome/Awful* has an overall positive LGBT message, it's not a preachy or agenda-driven book. Are there lessons that can be learned from it? Yes, of course- but I believe Rudetsky's goal here was to tell an entertaining story, not jump up on a soapbox and preach. It's hard to review it with complete objectivity- being familiar with Rudetsky and his public persona- both on stage and on the radio. The novel is written and reads the way he (Rudetsky) speaks in public. Someone unfamiliar, may find a totally different experience, finding the rhythm and patter of written word. I heard Rudetsky's voice in my head from the first to the last word on the page. Like Rudetsky, the character of Justin is an original. The way he thinks, what he says and does; always has a perspective that many might not think to see, on their own- or in the same light. Justin is on a journey of self discovery and trying to find his place; or, create his desired place in his school. His wacky perspective and attempts at love and popularity are both engaging and endearing, no matter how misguided they might be. In the end, the characters learn something about themselves, without letting go of their individuality.

I got this book for my 11 year old who listens to Seth Rudetsky on the radio all the time and is a big fan. She loves his books and is looking forward to more. She tells me that reading the books she can hear his voice talking which, if you've ever listened to his shows you will know what she means. He is hilarious!

I think it is best if you read this book with the voice and cadence of Seth Rudetsky in your head. You can listen to him on SiriusXM Radio or on youtube. Meet Justin Goldblatt, Broadway musical-theatre obsessed high school sophomore, son of a doctor - a real brain in biology - slightly neurotic, butt of bullies and mean jokes. He has a 35 waist and a jew-fro, a best friend, and a crush on the high school football star, Chuck. Chuck is a douche, but he has blue eyes, blonde hair, and doesn't even know that Justin exists, even though they have had classes together and Justin appears in the youtube video of Chuck and Becky making out in the boys' locker room (when Justin walks into the scene in just his towel after taking a rare shower at school) Justin thinks that the day the Tony Award nominations come out should be a school holiday. (Coincidentally, this book was released on Tuesday morning, January 24, the day the Oscar nominations were made) Justin is out and gay in high school, so, of course, just as on the television series, *GLEE*, he is prey for bullies, who call him Fag or Fag-nesium (in Science class). He just accepts it and the label, until best friend Spencer tells him it is as bad as being called Kike. Any-who... Justin's goals this year are to be popular and snag

Chuck as a bf. He can be popular if he can make 8.3 new friends a day, or at least be nice to even the nerdy kids in the lunch room. Maybe he will strive for 8.6 a day. And then, after detention one day (he got it when he heard that Chuck got it and would be there), and after eaves dropping on Chuck and Becky (they say that they are broken up, but their text messages tell a different story), Justin launches a plan (and a stage kiss that he and Becky learned in Drama class) that can have him date Becky as a front for Chuck, get him closer to Chuck, and maybe achieve his goals... right? RIGHT?

I am always on a lookout for a funny, gay fiction. I came across Seth's books and I was intrigued by the often high ratings his books received. So, I grabbed this and Broadway. It was an amazing read - joyful, funny, ridiculous-but-acceptable ride. It was amazing how plots turned and flowed well. The ending felt like a Disney movie, where everything was turned out well and to an extent, explained. It was done nicely that I did not mind much. Just that I kept thinking of Trevor, the plumb kid in the Academy Award winning short film - 'Trevor'. Just that Trevor was an innocent gay kid, but Justin was wicked. Wickedly funny.

A few weeks back I heard just the ending of Seth's interview on NPR's "Fresh Air." I was hooked. I watch Seth all the time on YouTube and wanted to see his humor and insights turned into fiction. He did it. I laughed out LOUD (guffawed) several times while reading and could not put it down. Read it in one sitting, although in different chairs if you must know, but really enjoyed the characters. It reads as fast as Seth talks, so it's a fast and furious albeit delightful ride back to those terrible yet wonderful high school years. It was a little like reading "Forever" (and remember how thrilling that was back in the day) with a refreshing gay twist. About time. Thank you Seth. Write On!

Seth Rudetsky has written a book that is as funny as he is. It will make you laugh out loud at situations we all can relate to. Although I am not a Young Adult, or in high school, I still thoroughly enjoyed this book. The book will make you feel good about being yourself and lets you know that being yourself is what will make you the happiest!

I downloaded the book after seeing it mentioned in Entertainment Weekly and I was not disappointed. I looked forward to picking this book up and tuning out from my reality every evening after work. Fun to read and enjoyable throughout.

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