

A Teenager in Love (With the Movies): Jeff Baron's Latest

The aspiring movie writer/mogul Sean Rosen is back in *Sean Rosen Is Not for Sale* and he is as irrepressible as ever. As in the first book in this series, *I Represent Sean Rosen*, once Sean has a creative idea, his trajectory is in motion and his determination to succeed in the entertainment business takes over.

Having discovered that a Hollywood studio is not going to trust a seventh grader with business deals, Sean has invented a manager, Dan Welch, from whom he sends e-mails to various bigwigs, and those bigwigs actually answer, believing they are dealing with a legitimate manager. It may seem farfetched, but Baron's engaging first-person narrator, Sean, makes this all seem possible.

Sean's invention of his alter ego Dan is a brilliant fantasy come true -- imagine an adult who is totally on your side, believes in you, protects you, advises you and negotiates for you. Sean is channeling his inner, perfect adult. Of course, our hearts belong to the slightly dorky thirteen-year-old Sean, who is in seventh grade, has not yet kissed a girl and is not sure he wants to just because his spoiled princess friend Brianna tauntingly invites him to.

Adolescents and near adolescents cannot help but identify with Sean in many ways, from his ability to fool the bully, to his protective and enduring friendship with his friend Ethan, who is seen as an outsider by the in crowd, to his endearing relationship with his parents, who don't quite know what to make of him. Sean is funny, quirky, and as contradictory as most human beings -- the fact that he would like to win the race without joining the track team says a lot about him.

As the novel ends, Sean is still trying to land a deal to make his movie, "A Week with Your Grandparents." Sean's idea and Dan Welch's deft way of handling their studio contacts has started a bidding war, but like most creative types, Sean doesn't want to simply sell the idea: He is determined to write the script. There is a surprise encounter late in the novel that brings Sean closer to his dream of being in the movie business, and clearly there is another book in the offing that might tell us how that turns out.

What we do know at the book's end is that while artistic integrity might not be a phrase that Sean would use, his character certainly lives it, and the reader enjoys every minute spent with this pint-sized creative genius. - Rita D. Jacobs