

Making Scenes

Hypertext author Adrienne Eisen discusses her first print novel

By Lizette Resendez
THE BATTALION

Author Adrienne Eisen has been making waves. Bulimics, hypertext students, athletic women and men craving fellatio have tried contacting Eisen after reading her novel *Making Scenes*.

Eisen said girls suffering from bulimia have told her she captured the true essence of the disorder.

Readers may feel Eisen's protagonist is easy to relate to partly because the main character and her many experiences stem from Eisen's life.

Eisen said she drew from herself and the people around her to create the main character.

Another way Eisen succeeded in creating a believable character was by not giving her a name.

"I write a lot from my own experiences," Eisen said. "If I gave the character a name, I would get bored."

Eisen said giving the character her name would make the novel similar to a memoir.

The main character is a 20-something who leaves college to move to Los Angeles and become a professional beach volleyball player. During her journey she stumbles across numerous sexual encounters — one with a faithful lover "who refused to use sharp objects" and another with a Jewish lesbian bulimic.

She also changes jobs as fast as she changes her sexual identity.

Her honest questions about life and her search for self-identity make it easy for readers to sympathize.

Eisen said her book has been especially popular among college students.

"I think 20-year-olds have a lot of ambition," Eisen said. "The world is at your feet. It's really hard to describe the sheer ambition and thrill of being able to do anything, but most people fail, even though the world looks like they can do anything."

Eisen said she tried to balance the excitement of going into the world with the disappointments that accompany the trip.

Making Scenes is Eisen's first printed novel, however, she has many writings in hypertext.

In 1993, Eisen began writing for CD-ROM. While in graduate school, the Internet grew and Eisen was forced to drop CD-ROMs in exchange for hypertext markup language, or HTML, to take her writing online.

"In 1994, I learned how to do HTML," Eisen said. "(It) was a total nightmare."

In fact, *Making Scenes* was initially published as hypertext and divided into four stories.

"I think that each piece stands on its own for the most part," Eisen said. "Literary magazines like them because they're short."

However, it took Eisen five years to complete her book.

Eisen, who said she did not know she was writing a novel at the time, said she began with page-long stories.

"I did that for like two years, I got the hang of it and saw that I could put a book together," Eisen said.

Eisen "lined up" her short stories, had friends edit her work and then filled in the holes.

She said the most thrilling part of the book is the self-discovery that comes with completing the novel.

"In order to make a book work, you have to know something about yourself, if you know everything about the book before you sit down, it's boring," Eisen said. "The process of discovery is a payoff. It's really thrilling at the end."

Eisen also had to consider the reader's feelings and ask what her readers will take from the novel.

"In order to structure my feelings in a way that makes sense to everyone else, I think I had to think a lot of what I had gone through," Eisen said. "What does that mean and why does that matter? In a diary you can just spew. In a novel, you owe it to your reader to be interesting."

Book Review

Making Scenes
Adrienne Eisen
Alt-X Press



"I look through the specks of vomit for sleeping pills ... I push the vomit on the floor into a pile and lay my face in it."

Making Scenes is filled with a young girl's experiences with bulimia, lesbianism and beach volleyball, among other things. Squirmish readers should avoid Adrienne Eisen's new book. However, those ready for a dose of reality should approach the book as though they are approaching an altar.

Making Scenes is a coming-of-age story about a young girl ready to conquer the world of professional beach volleyball in Los Angeles. She also has an insatiable desire for sex, food and literature. She devours each as if it was precious fuel.

Along the way she switches jobs as often as she makes herself throw up Doritos and whipped cream.

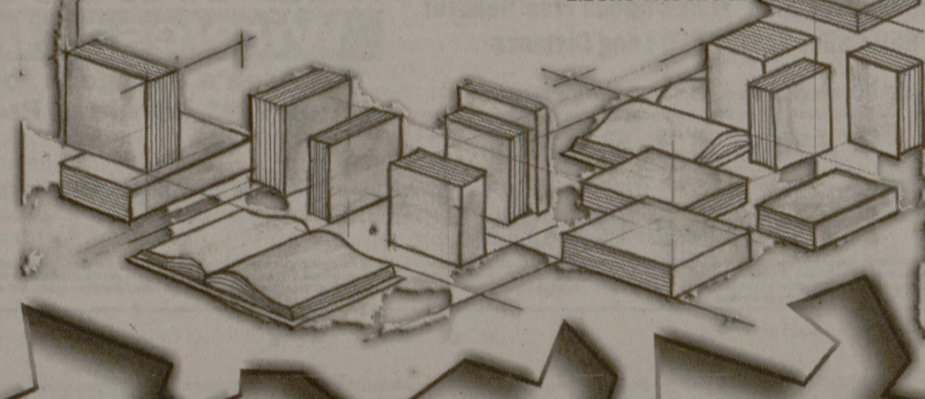
She holds jobs at a book store, a Crate & Barrel, works alongside commodities traders and signs autographs for a celebrity.

The down and dirty language is shocking and, at many times, hilarious.

While many readers may not be able to relate to the protagonist's problems, they will find themselves sympathizing with her and cheering her on as she confronts and conquers one problem after another.

Overall, Eisen has done an effective job of telling her story to her readers and teaching them the lessons she learned. (Grade: A)

—Lizette Resendez



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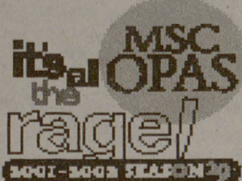


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