

March 16, 2010

Dear Peter Bognanni,

The House of Tomorrow is my favorite read this year. (Before you scoff, know that I read a lot. I consider my car not such much a mode of transport, but “the place to listen to audio books”, otherwise, being in the car is a waste of time.) I think **The House of Tomorrow** is one of the best written, best crafted novels I’ve ever read. I want to tell you why because I know for writers, while it’s wonderful to hear that one’s work is a host of fantastic adjectives, in the grand scheme of things, it’s nice to know WHY one’s work is deserving of those adjectives. So here goes, in complete random order. (Warning, nearly every sentence will likely begin with “I love...” The repetition may be tedious, but I’m sure you can bear it).

I love (see what I mean?) that you were able to create two seemingly inaccessible characters, Sebastian and Jared, and make them accessible. I think the average reader doesn’t have much experience with Buckminster Fuller philosophies and punk rock (myself included), but readers of **The House of Tomorrow** will be able to follow right along. The device you used to unite Sebastian and Jared WORKS (bravo!!). The talent contest at the church made me laugh out loud. (I cringe to use that phrase because it’s nearly cliché, but it really is true, I did laugh out loud.) I love the perfection of the audience’s reactions (babies crying, the elderly fleeing, the punk rockers jamming) and that you didn’t go for the mob mentality – it would’ve been so easy to write that everyone loved the performance or the opposite, and you didn’t do that, and I so appreciate it. The biggest hook for me as a reader is voice. You nailed it, not just with one or two characters, but with all of them. I love the undertone that no parenting technique is perfect – even if a parent (or guardian) has the opportunity to isolate a child in a dome and limit the child’s exposure to “wrong things”, things will still go wrong. On the flip side, if a parent is struggling to the bursting point with her own personal problems, her kids still have a chance to turn out ok. I love that the eccentricity of Nana is so believable. I love that the book was told from Sebastian’s point of view. I think this is both the most challenging and the most rewarding way to tell the story. I heard you speak at the Midwest Booksellers Association, and you mentioned that getting Sebastian’s speech down was a challenge. For this to be an adult novel with depth however, I think there really is no option but to tell the story from Sebastian’s POV and again, you nailed it. Lastly, I loved the patience of the character development. Jared, in particular, is not one to be rushed. It’s so tempting for writers to arrive at the endpoint prematurely. You didn’t do that; you took your time.

Thank you so much for **The House of Tomorrow**,

Jennifer

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