



Ivy vs. Dogg: With a Cast of Thousands!

Brian Leung

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Brian Leung's *Ivy vs. Dogg* delivers a stinging commentary of how unchecked voyeurism has impacted modern politics, making it a politician's business to get into everybody's business.

This *Election* for the internet age is a heady, wicked satire of suburban politics. A determined underdog challenges a golden boy for the ultimate prize, sparking twisted battles between the sexes and of young versus old.

High school tennis star Jimmy "Dogg" Doggins and plain-jane Ivy Simmons are childhood friends turned rivals, competing for the title of Mudlick's Junior Mr. Mayor. Ivy is pregnant, and the Committee, Mudlick's nosy governing body, hopes to exploit Ivy's condition to manipulate the election in Dogg's favor.

The Committee appeals to its conservative constituency and a lifelike topiary girl for moral guidance. Just when the desired outcome seems assured, havoc erupts and tears the Committee's well-laid plans asunder.

Leung's sharp, witty dialogue exploits his connection to and understanding of the underlying foundations of political and pop culture to maximum effect. He mocks the Committee's push to maintain the status quo while also showing how its own authority is undermined by its dogmatic adherence to strict social edicts and ignorance of changing culture. Committee sound bites ring hollow when compared to the issues presented by the town's marginalized outsiders.

Ivy and Dogg turn the stereotypes of established high school tropes—the popular kid and the kid from the wrong side of the tracks, the athlete and the nerd—inside out. Despite their allotted stations in life, they yearn for redemption and fresh starts. Ivy and Dogg teach the adults the value of decency in an atmosphere of fiery and destructive rhetoric, and in the process become the adults while their adult handlers act like spoiled children.

NANCY POWELL (May/June 2018)

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