

The Wizard and the White House

Mike Maggio

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One fateful day, the president of the United States wakes up to discover he has no mouth, a janitor across town wakes up to discover he has two, and a Pakistani immigrant in Arlington hears the voice of God in a waterspout. With no voice to communicate, President Thorne quickly learns how much of a mouthpiece he's been. With an extra mouth espousing Thorne's fervent prayers, Larry White's wife takes it as a sign her hard-drinking husband has finally been moved by the spirit and whisks him off to church. And Fuzzaluddin Choudry finds, despite his best efforts to turn the wheel and slam on the breaks, that his car is driving him to the White House itself. Behind the scenes, a wizard secluded in a cave is pulling the strings, seeking revenge for wrongs committed long ago. Like really long ago. But it was important, okay?

This thinly veiled satire of the Bush administration is a lighthearted romp through the political landscape of the early 2000s. Maggio pairs sharp barbs ("Though not an especially successful physician, [the surgeon general] was considered a wise, circumspect man, well respected among political circles") with more slapstick humor (Easter service on the National Mall is held inside "a huge, fully-inflated plastic cathedral, towering high before them like a giant Moon Bounce") to create a highly entertaining read.

ALLYCE AMIDON (Spring 2015)

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