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India Smythe Stands Up

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This is a laugh-out-loud story with a thoughtful subtext. India is very used to being at the bottom of the social league at school and no-one could ever accuse her loyal friends Anna and Meena of being well-informed fashion icons. That was left to Lisa and April, the It girls of Year 11- brittle, shallow, image-obsessed and unremittingly cruel to those they considered to be their inferiors. Their boyfriends were cast in the same mould - so it came as a huge shock to India when she was asked out by Ennis, one of these minor gods. Eager to be a part of the highest social echelon, she accepts.

Govett has a real talent for creating excruciatingly funny set-pieces - in school, at home, at parties - and peopling them with instantly recognisable stereotypes. She peppers this with the sort of preoccupations with which most teenage girls are all too familiar and weaves in a slapstick humour. What is most impressive is her ear for dialogue: there is an unerring realism about everything from her grasp of surreally funny family conversations to the awkwardnesses of first date verbal stumblings.

I raised a cheer when India finally rejected the social lure of Ennis' revered but tedious company and opted for the boy she'd liked all along - unaffected and endearing Rich, with the too-high forehead and a passion for the highly unfashionable school orchestra.

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