

To Squeeze a Prairie Dog: An American Novel

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J. D. Wiswall is the newest clerk in a pool of state government workers. He learns of competition among peers for a \$10,000 prize for developing a cost-saving program to improve the government's budget and their own lives. Their developing team is on track to win, but when J.D.'s bumbling alcoholic supervisor accidentally stumbles on a multimillion-dollar cost-savings suggestion, problems begin.

Governor Bennett is a politician who will stop at nothing to stoke his ego; even if it means throwing the personal lives and quirks of his clerks into the public eye. When a snoopy reporter threatens the clerks' ability to claim a prize that will change their lives, sparks erupt in this quirky, fun spoof about ambition, success, dirty little secrets, and social and political oddballs.

The book's title, *To Squeeze a Prairie Dog*, already indicates that the tale will be extraordinary, and readers will quickly realize that the multifaceted account isn't just a romp through political ambition and smarmy individuals. It's about a group of oddballs with ambitions to move beyond their set financial, social, and career courses to achieve greater goals, and it pairs a healthy dose of wry humor and insights with a realistic story of interactions between very different colleagues who are thrown together to evolve to something greater than their clerical roles.

Satire and comedic observation are juxtaposed with acts of connection in a story that excels in portraying not just great ambitions, but small acts of kindness: "I wish there was something more I could do to bring joy to all of us besides cookin'," she said. Seeing smiles on her coworkers' faces did bring her immense joy."

From creative brainstorming over the grand prize to the things everyone feels compelled to do to get ahead, *To Squeeze a Prairie Dog* isn't just about sacrifice and ambition, but about the costs of success and the challenges of remaining creatively quirky in a world replete with economic, social and political challenges and goal-seekers.

Fun, ironic acronyms and jokes illustrate real efforts to bond, support one another, and survive against secrets and revelations about how the world really operates. *To Squeeze a Prairie Dog* paints a rollicking story that careens through the office structure to delve into the motivations, lives, and connections between ordinary individuals.

Readers seeking an uplifting, fun story of fortune, friendship, and fame will find *To Squeeze a Prairie Dog* juxtaposes a range of viewpoints and ironic situations designed to leave readers both

entertained and thoughtful. This tale comes full-circle to provide a satisfying spoof on political ambitions while commenting on personal achievement and ideals of success.

—D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer, *Midwest Book Review*