Reason We Eat funny, makes no statements

By Kathy Harris

The Reason We Eat, Israel Horovitz's outrageous new play, has been appropriately described by its author as "funny, yet philosophically demanding." The jokes are fast and frequent, but the allegorical nature of the play seems so involved that by the end of the show, one is not sure of exactly what Horovitz's statement on society Horovitz intends to make. The audience is forced to think beyond the quick, sometimes slapstick humor of the play. Horovitz exposes the overconsumptionism of the world's most famous housewife and man's intrinsic greed and desire for possessions. His characters attain their goals by eating, in a metaphorical manner.

The plot and setting of The Reason We Eat are unusual and brilliantly satirical. The action occurs in a concentration camp for the wealthy obese. The tank muscular guard, Ted Something, is a tough, unsympathetic character taken directly from the Nazi gestapo. In keeping with the spirit of detention camps, the prison uses guard dogs — attack French poodles who are "direct descendants of Marcel Proust." The dogs are trained to sniff out any food on the prisoner's person, and they pounce while red lights flash and sirens wail.

The prisoners represent a society in which citizens are possessed with an unrelenting appetite. They don't only overeat food; they smoke cigarettes, drink endless glasses of milk, and see what develops. The characters in the concentration camp arrive there in a most unfortunate path. The plot of Israel Horovitz's comedy stems from the characters final desire to create a world where they can eat to their heart's desire without any restrictions. The world of their own — to create a world where they can eat to their heart's desire without any restrictions.

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