

Review Username: Anonymous

Grade: Junior (11th grade)

School: El Dorado High School

Author: Alexa Donne

Book Title: The Ivies

Rating 1-5 (1- lowest, 5- highest): 4/5

Alexa Donne's *The Ivies* follows a group of five senior girls at boarding school Claflin Academy and their journey with college applications. Known as the Ivies, these girls have made it their mission to get into Ivy League colleges—and they would do anything to ensure that happens. After early acceptances come out, one of the girls turns up dead, and the remainder of the group are all suspects. One of them—Olivia Winters—makes it her mission to figure out who murdered her friend. Along the way, she uncovers countless ruthless deeds committed by her friends, which poses the question: could the murderer be someone closer to her than she thought?

Donne did an excellent job composing this murder mystery; plenty of plot twists kept the reader on the edge of their seat, yet the ending didn't feel rushed or out of place. For this reason, I really enjoyed the book. I found myself quite invested in the story, feeling the emotions of the characters and criticizing some of the decisions they made. All of the characters were flawed in some way, which helped make the story feel more realistic. So many books present only the idealized version of characters, but this one didn't do that which I appreciated. The story focuses on a wide variety of characters, giving a wide audience a part of the story to relate to. For me, this was one of those books that is hard to put down! The mix of emotions of being a teenager and the anxiety of preparing for college was accurately portrayed, driving the story just as much as the murder itself, which can sometimes be hard to accomplish.

I would absolutely recommend this book! It offers a clear picture of the pressures of high school and a new perspective on the lives of privileged teenagers. From the beginning, I felt drawn into the story and remained that way until the very end. It reminded me a lot of Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, and I noticed many similarities between her main character, Pip, and Donne's Olivia. If you enjoy murder mysteries—and especially if you enjoyed Holly Jackson's murder trilogy—definitely try this book, you won't regret it!