

Discussion Guide for *The Rage in Placid Lake*

Director Tony McNamara cast musician Ben Lee, a first-time actor, in the lead role of Placid Lake. Lee, a popular musician, released his first album at age 16. Discuss Lee's performance and the challenges and benefits to casting first-time actors? How important is casting to a film? What did you think of the casting in the film?

In many ways *The Rage in Placid Lake* is a coming of age film. Compare it to other coming of age films you may have seen.

How does Placid's unconventional relationship with his parents influence his other relationships in the film? What is the dynamic between his parents Miranda Richardson (Sylvia Lake) and Garry McDonald (Doug Lake)? At the end of the film Placid asks his parents to show their love for him. What does love mean to Placid and how does this change through the film?

The film centers on the issue of normalcy (What is normal? How does one act normal?). How is this theme conveyed throughout the film? As soon as Placid reinvents himself he obtains an "ideal" job and home life. How does the way this life is portrayed contribute to the theme of the film?

Placid's recovery from his severe injuries on graduation night marks a turning point in the film. How does McNamara emphasize this?

Placid's Boss at Icharus Insurance calls the reinvented Placid "an original thinker." How is this ironic statement a comment on modern corporations? What other lessons does Placid's boss have for Placid? How does McNamara make Icharus Insurance seem like a surreal environment? What is the significance of the company name?

Jane and Gemma have very different views about sexuality. What do these views signify and how do they affect Placid? What role does Gemma play in Placid's various transformations? Is the film simply "boy meets girl" at its heart?

Not all the actors use Australian accents in the film. Does this affect your perception of the setting? Does this help create a feeling that the story transcends location or does it seem inconsistent to you?

What realization does Placid come to at the end of the film? What forces him to this realization?

Placid's character changes at surface level in the film, but ends up the same person he started out as. What does this say about the ability or necessity of changing one's true self?

How would you describe the film's cinematography? What cinematic and story elements give the film a cartoonish, fantastic quality?