ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

Caught in a Flap!
Des Parunia
AuthorHouse UK
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Of the myriad ways to impress the "chicks," few are more novel than the one tendered in *Caught in a Flap!*, a naughty novel dealing mainly with the nether region of the female anatomy.

The author, Des Parunia, a doctor with a practice in London, England, writes: "I learnt quite early in my teenage years that girls were quite intrigued by the whole concept of gynaecology and were fascinated to hear what would make a bloke want to go into a specialty exclusively dealing with female reproductive organs!"

Parunia calls his narrator Mikey James, but there are similarities enough between details of Mikey's adventures and those of a nonfiction clinician that it is reasonable to suspect that the novel has strong autobiographical tendencies. Besides an eye for the ladies, both are infatuated with classic motorcycles and cars and like to party.

Mikey's adventures begin in Rhodesia as a teenager awakening to a preoccupation with the female form. One of the few downsides of Mikey's youthful tenure in Rhodesia is that, because he has very curly hair, he suffers under the nickname of Scrotum Scalp with best friends called Sparrowfart and Donkey Dick. Eventually, he matriculates through several schools, with plenty of Lion Lager and fast bikes along the way, and achieves his ambition by becoming a specialist in gynecology. Toward the end of the book, some readers may find that the text gets a bit too clinical. One would likely have to expect, though, that things like general genital distress, tricky cesarean procedures, vulva mapping, and "favorite colposcopy stories" come with the territory.

Though the book's ribald title and a cartoon on the cover showing a doctor with his head nestled between a curvaceous woman's thighs as he examines her is quite suggestive, there is little that is truly titillating here. In fact, Parunia never even comes close to crossing that line. The author strives to spruce up his very workmanlike prose with an irritating overuse of the exclamation point, as in an episode where the narrator is examining a woman who became pregnant after she and her lesbian partner hired out the job to a man of questionable hygiene:

“Unfortunately the gentleman in question had given the prospective mother rather a bad cluster of genital warts, not to mention an abnormal smear!” he writes. “But I did not know this vital piece of information at the time of my examination, so I carried on as best I could!”

And then there is the case of a transgender operation. Mikey is made queasy as another physician performs the procedure by amputating the penis and constructing a vagina from the scrotum skin. The physician “quietly chopped off the chap’s member and tossed it over his shoulder!” He then told an aide, “Here you are, give it to the cat!”

Mikey frequently laments the good old days of medical practice in England, when things were more informal and such perks as a hospital bar and doctors’ mess presented opportunities for professional camaraderie. The book seems to suggest that the profession isn’t fun anymore and that closing the office and finding another occupation might be in order.

The subject matter of the book is probably too clinical for most outside the medical profession or those who aspire to such, but the author says he was convinced that the “joys, trials and tribulations” of becoming a “consultant fanny mechanic must not be forgotten.” However, he includes this warning: “The author does not recommend you reading this book to your children at bedtime!”

Tom Bevier