

Parnucklian for Chocolate

B. H. James

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“Three weeks before his sixteenth birthday, Josiah was allowed to move back in with his mother, who had been impregnated with him during an alien abduction her freshman year of college.”

So begins *Parnucklian for Chocolate*, a pitch-black story about growing up in an alienating world as, well, an alien. Young Josiah’s mother is deeply disturbed, having taught him that his father lives on planet “Parnuckle.” Josiah has (no surprise) spent years with Child Protective Services. When he is released, the pitfalls of teenagerdom and the conniving, nymphette daughter of his mother’s fiancé await. We follow Josiah and his new family into a comical pit of madness that is increasingly terrifying as the stakes rise.

Josiah’s yearnings for love, home and father are even more poignant when set against his polluted notion of reality (he even believes his true mother is “the Goddess Cher”) and disrupted family life. One day he will have a family, he uses, and “live with them, all together ... and none of them would ever have to leave that home.” Young adult and adult readers will enjoy this crazy, sad ride into alien adolescence.

Parnucklian for Chocolate is B. H. James’s first novel. James holds an MFA from the University of Nebraska and teaches high school in Northern California.

LEIA MENLOVE (Summer 2013)

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