

*Parnucklian for Chocolate*  
A novel by B. H. James  
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B. H. James



**For more information contact:**

Alisa Trager  
Marketing Associate  
marketing@redhen.org

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(800) 621-2736  
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*Parnucklian for Chocolate* is a dark comedy about what it is to grow up an alien in your own family and your own life.

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As a small child, Josiah believed that his father's absence could be explained by the simple fact that he was a high ranking alien official on the planet Parnuckle. It explained so much else, too, like why Josiah should eat nothing but chocolate (Parnucklians eat nothing but chocolate), and why he should be proud of and idolize his father, the Keymaster of Gozer, even though they'd never met.

But as time goes on and the gaps in this mythology widen, Josiah is faced with two possibilities: either it's all very real or it's all very pretend. This betrayal comes into sharper focus when, three weeks before his sixteenth birthday, Josiah is released back into his mother's care after two years in a group home. His mother is about to marry Johnson Davis, and when Josiah, his mother, Johnson Davis, and his daughter Bree Davis—a prematurely mature girl with her own history of parental betrayal—attempt to live together as an all-American nuclear family, the myths underpinning all of their lives come chaotically and absurdly unspooled. In *Parnucklian for Chocolate*, B.H. James has taken the alien heart of family life and made it recognizable and relatable to all—extraterrestrial or otherwise.

## **Praise for *Parnucklian for Chocolate***

"This silly story has a charm all its own and infers that we are all, maybe, a little bit crazy. It will appeal to readers of the absurd and to those who appreciate comic coming-of-age stories."

—*Library Journal*

"A classic naïf, Josiah is reminiscent of Chauncey Gardner in Jerzy Kosinski's satirical novella, *Being There*. First novelist James seems to have similar satirical intent in his treatment of family and the condition, in Josiah's case, of being an outsider."

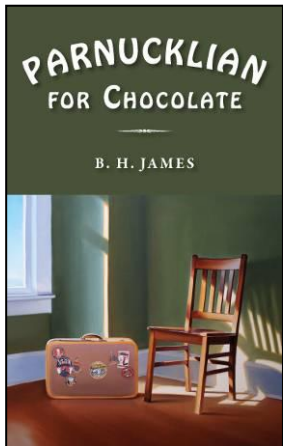
—*Booklist*

"The gradual awakening of a teenager whose mom protects him with a fanciful story reveals an unnecessarily cruel world. Josiah grows up believing, as his mother tells him, that he is the product of an alien abduction from the planet Parnuckle, whose inhabitants eat chocolate, never sleep, and don't need to bathe."

—*Publishers Weekly*

## **Biographical Note**

**B.H. James** was born and raised in Galt, California. He went to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where he majored in Sociology, and holds a Master's of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Nebraska. It was there that *Parnucklian for Chocolate*, his first novel, began to take shape. He currently lives in Lodi, California.



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**More Praise for *Parnucklian for Chocolate***

“*Parnucklian for Chocolate* is a hilarious, ingeniously absurd coming-of-age tale. James’s sentences are delightfully self-conscious and playful, clever but not too clever, and entirely original. His characters are often foolish, even pathetic, but they nevertheless manage to deliver a powerful message: that the power of the imagination is the only thing capable of saving lives.”

—Amy Hassinger, author of *The Priest’s Madonna*  
and *Nina: Adolescence*

“Like Chauncey Gardiner in Jerzy Kosinski’s *Being There*, Josiah—the teenage protagonist in B.H. James’ fantastically quirky debut novel, *Parnucklian for Chocolate*—is a bit of a blank slate. Raised and home-schooled by a pathological mother who tells him his father’s an alien from the planet Parnuckle, Josiah bewilderedly bumbles through psych wards, group homes, and the sexual minefields of contemporary teenagerhood with a jejune artlessness that is simultaneously disturbing and heart-rending. In hypnotically rolling prose skewered throughout with sharp wit and details, James slyly unveils Josiah’s alien and alienated perspective as a wide-eyed mirror to the minor horrors underlying suburban surfaces, a social anthropologist to the kitschy absurdities of contemporary pop culture, and an arbiter for the delusional, science-fiction nature of ‘home’ and ‘family.’”

—Lee Ann Roripaugh, author of *On the Cusp of a Dangerous Year*

**From *Parnucklian for Chocolate***

**Chapter One**

Growing up, Josiah ate nothing but chocolate. He ate chocolate for breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks, and, of course, he ate chocolate for dinner. Chocolate ice cream, chocolate brownies, chocolate donuts, chocolate candy bars and cake and mousse and pudding and his very favorite: chocolate cream pie.

Josiah’s beverages consisted of chocolate milk, chocolate milkshakes, hot chocolate, and chocolate flavored drinks such as Yoo-Hoo. The only beverage, and for that matter, the only nourishment whatsoever, that Josiah ever ingested that had not been made with chocolate or covered with chocolate, had been the occasional glass of ice water.

Josiah, however, was in perfectly good health. He had a relatively fast metabolism, and, more importantly, was not fully-human, thereby making him insusceptible to many of the nutritional laws that typically affect the human race.