

*The House in the Cerulean Sea* by T.J. Klune

Linus Baker is middle-aged, content with his position as a caseworker with DICOMY (Department in Charge of Magical Youth), and has no real ambition to make any changes to his routine. That is until Extremely Upper Management sends him to the Marsyas Island Orphanage to check on the well-being of the magical residents and assess the man in charge, Arthur Parnassus. Spending time with the “dangerous” children and their caretaker, Linus is forced to take a good hard look at the rules and regulations of DICOMY and Extremely Upper Management, and his own role in the department. In the end, Linus has some difficult decisions to make, which could have some major repercussions, and not just for him.

This is the first book of T.J. Klune’s that I’ve ever read. One of my favorite authors had repeatedly sung the book’s praises, so I knew I needed to read it. And I’m so glad that I did. It reminds me a little bit of Ransom Riggs’ *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children*, but more lighthearted and whimsical. The residents of the orphanage may be considered “monsters” to some, but they are really just children, who may look a little different, searching for somewhere to belong. And where they belong is on Marsyas Island with Arthur. The kids are subject to a lot of prejudice by some of the humans on the mainland, which is heartbreaking. Thankfully, there are a few kind souls that step up to help Arthur give the children a sense of normalcy, including Linus.

This hands-down my favorite book of the year so far, and I would go so far as to say it is quite sincerely the most beautiful book I have ever read. It is a warm hug in book form, enveloping you in and effortlessly making you part of this weird and wonderful family. Yes, one of the children in the orphanage is the Antichrist, but this is still 100% a feel-good read. I actually cried when I finished reading the last page, because it was such an enchanting journey and I didn’t want it to be over. I just want to keep reading about these lovely, magical characters forever.

GK