



83 In the Shade

Christopher F. Reidy

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83 In the Shade is the story of Michael McNamara, 17 year old native of Stoningham, a suburb of Boston. Michael is gay and half in and half out of the closet. The story follows Michael through the summer of 1983; his experiences and adventures. First the bad news: Michael's best friend Sean "Scooter" O'Hanlon is missing in action; exiled for the summer to his father's house in Salem. Then, Michael's mother forces him to get a job at a local discount clothing retailer. And Michael, despite sex lurking in every corner of his life, never seems to be getting any for himself. This would drive any teen to distraction. Luckily, Michael makes some new friends who make his life a little less boring. First, there's Kiva Fleischmann; a nice Jewish boy who goes to the local high school. Through Kiva, Michael meets the mysterious and erotic "Mr. Z.", a randy and improper drama instructor. Michael is smitten. But that will have to wait; since Michael has two new lesbian friends: Cheryl, from work and Lisa. Lisa has a rock group and Michael finds himself part of the band when he exaggerates his musical abilities. Then there's Mr. Blanchard, Michael's boss, a big bear of a guy who Michael can't stop flirting with. All of these disparate strands come together and proceed to explode like fireworks at Lisa's momentous 4th of July party when her band makes their debut. After Michael makes the mistake of introducing Scooter to Mr. Z. the strength of his bond with his best friend is tested to its limit. We meet Lisa's family, The Rinaldi's: a tight-knit clan bursting at the seams with hot Italian men. And a charming Mama to keep them all in line. We also meet the rest of Michael's family, his macho, good-natured father. His stoner brother Tiger; and Van, Tiger's eccentric friend who Michael might truly be in love with. And Michael's mother Jane who Michael just can't seem to please. Michael, who narrates the story first hand, is a Pop-Culture lover and cinephile who often goes on tangents about his favorite movies; from Woody Allen's heady "Interiors" to the sheer camp of "Staying Alive." As well as skewering some of the sillier obsessions of 1983. In the classic tradition of coming of age stories, 83 In the Shade is sure to delight anyone who's ever been a teen-ager; no matter what their orientation is. cfreidy@gmail.com

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