

★ **Bombay Monsoon****James W. Ziskin**

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Reminiscent of the 1920s Gatsby era, with undercover alcohol and the hint of danger, James Ziskin's *Bombay Monsoon* is a captivating thriller set during a pivotal time in Indian history.

Danny Jacobs is a reporter fresh on the beat covering sprawling Bombay and its surrounding communities. It's June 17, 1975, just days prior to the start of "The Emergency," a time when politics upend people's lives and shatters the country's fragile peace. Jacobs has an inkling of the coming storm, as his first assignment is to interview a bomber who killed a policeman.

The story follows Jacobs as he tries to understand the country he is working in and the people who call it home. Jacobs is welcomed into the nation's ex-pat community, finding a new friend in his neighbor Willy Smets. Smets invites Jacobs to a party flush with illegal liquor, where he falls head over heels for his new friend's gorgeous partner, Sushmita, whose flirtatious ways hint that the infatuation might be returned.

In the book's three-movement drama, Jacobs is in over his head. The government begins to crack down on movement and his love life becomes a fraught affair. The complications pile up: Jacobs's servant is arrested for trying to sneak into Willy's apartment, putting him in the headlights of the country's corrupt police force. Floundering, Jacobs needs help, which comes from unexpected places. And when deeper truths become clear, Jacobs is forced to choose between helping his newfound country or somehow risking it all for love.

A hero rises to the occasion in *Bombay Monsoon*, a passionate thriller in which love and danger flourish in a society turned upside down by political decay.

JEREMIAH ROOD (November / December 2022)

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