



Waiting for Jonathan Koshy

Murzban F. Shroff

Astrophil Press (Oct 2, 2022)

Softcover \$16.95 (134pp)

978-0-9980199-8-7

In Murzban F. Shroff's novel *Waiting for Jonathan Koshy*, a friend's misfortune leads to reminiscing.

Jonathan Koshy is on his way back to Mumbai for the first time in three years. Four friends gather to await his arrival. They pass the time by recalling the highs and lows of their decades-long friendship. Koshy is the most unconventional of them all, stirring feelings of protectiveness and affection that color their stories about him. Though circumstances have changed since the men's last meeting, the central four know that, when Koshy arrives, he will be the same; the good times will return with him. They find this certainty reassuring and wonderful.

Koshy is revealed to be not often nice, though: he treats his girlfriends like dirt, never pays his debts, and rarely takes responsibility for his actions. Yet his friends, charmed by his energy and youthful perseverance, remain loyal to him. Koshy, in turn, goes to great lengths to help them out of frustrating and dangerous situations.

Lush descriptions capture the physical beauty of the friends' favorite hangout, 104 Pali Hill, with its bright colors and beautiful furniture, as well as the warm memories associated with the old house and its residents. The men's recollections reveal that the world has grown a little harder and a little less friendly since their youth. Modern developments transformed all of their favorite places, replacing bungalows and serene neighborhoods with concrete high rises and amenities for the wealthy. The poverty and abuses that plague India also trouble the five men, influencing the ways that they manage (and sometimes risk) their careers.

Building in anticipation toward a friend's arrival, the novel *Waiting for Jonathan Koshy* shows how people and relationships evolve over time.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (November / December 2022)

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