

Circumstances of Wisdom



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Dreams give one the confidence of living life with a purpose. Isn't it? Acknowledgement of oneself about their personality and coming to terms with the acceptance of the flaws makes life easier than expected. Sometimes, life spins one in the web of love, confusion, responsibilities and loss, where the ability of a person to clear up the baggage that has held them back and disrupted their present situation poses a challenge in front of them. *Saraswati Park*, penned by Anjali Joseph dives deep into the complexities of relationships, where the struggle for the acceptance of one's sexuality and the trouble in one's marriage voices loud enough to bring the reader to come to terms with the realities of life.

Set in the present day Mumbai, the novel opens with a middle aged man named Mohan Karekar, who is visualized asking for the stationery items to serve the requirements of his letter writing profession. The visualized irritation on the face of the shopkeeper would make one reminisce their bargaining strategies which they ever indulged in. As the story proceeds further, the introduction of his wife, Lakshmi Karekar and her wavering mind, swinging between the days when she was newly married and the behavior meted on her by her in-laws, and coming back to the present, highlights one important fact to the readers: Present is always blissful. The picturization of events where the mind swings from past to the future and back to the present, highlights one important aspect: Mind behaves like a pendulum. Married and blessed with a daughter living her life abroad, the constant bickering between the couple, which is not showcased badly, and their moments of silence which traces them back to the past is one plus point as it makes the reader travel with the protagonist and experiences their state of mind.

Homosexuality. This word may look easy and understandable meaning wise, but it is perceived negatively world wise. The stigma attached to it in society may not just make one loathe their personality but may also make one stoop to the level of making one lost in their own world. Parallel lead in this story, Ashish Datye, who is the nephew of Mohan and is repeating his final year B.A. at Elphinstone College, to puts light on the plight of the people suffering from this complexity. The turning point of this novel is when his complex relationship with his rich classmate, Sunder is explained, where the secret fantasy of Ashish in leading a blissful life with the 'love' of his life, would make the reader's heart melt where the foundation of his dream is built on fantasy and not on love and respect.

What makes the novel inspiring, understanding and touchy, is when Mohan traces his footsteps backwards and reminisces the days when he enjoyed writing and aspired to be a novelist. Ashish opening up himself in his uncle's house is evident when he makes Mohan participate in a competition that eventually results in the victory of the latter. Living his dreams which he had never thought he would prove to be inspiring and heartwarming. Ashish, who has been left at his uncle's place by his parents for the completion of his year, is welcomed whole heartedly by his aunt, Lakshmi, who has a strange fondness for her husband's nephew.

Reciprocation of that love is evident when he compares the culinary skills with his mother, where he feels the ingredient of love lacked. This very gesture is one point which explains the emotional patterns of relationships which actually brings Ashish to a point where he begins to understand the ways of life, and his complex relationship with Sunder comes to an end where his end is joined with the beginning to his French tuition tutor, Narayan. What makes *Saraswati Park*, an enjoyable read is not just about relationships or the realities of life, but the emotions which have the capacity to build a castle as well as destroy a castle. Anjali Joseph hits the bull's eye where she has succeeded in entertaining the readers and giving them the required philosophy necessary to enjoy and appreciate. Overall, my thumbs are up!

