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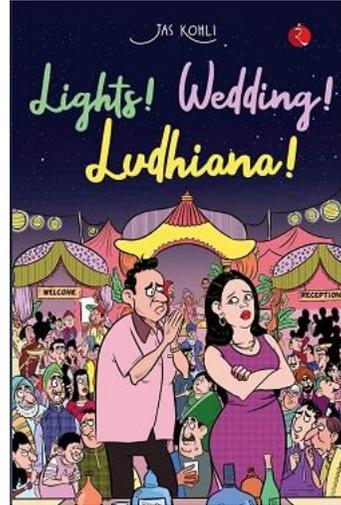
Book Review on Jas Kohli's 'Lights wedding Ludhiana'

Prof Dr. Shiv Sethi

An internationally acclaimed columnist, literary critic and book reviewer.

It is rare to find fiction books in India which mention 'humour' as their sole genre. Usually, we are offered a romantic comedy. So, just after glancing at the blurb of the fiction book 'Lights! Wedding! Romance!' published by Rupa Publications, I started reading it since I felt that my worked-up mind needed a comic interlude. However, there was a reservation- What would the book add to what has already been seen about the fat Punjabi Wedding in movies, television and web shows?

But after going through a few pages of the book, I realised that while the non-stop subtle and the not-so-subtle humour was making me smile frequently, the difficult to please literary side of me too had something to cheer about. Behind the comedic tale of a day in the life of the family of an industrialist in Ludhiana, the Rahejas, there are depictions of family dynamics, marital issues, the changing dynamics of romantic relationships, social costs of lavish marriages, the cold shoulder given to the environment and the unchallenged dominance of materialism.



The opposite ideological leanings of the chief protagonists, the husband and the wife builds up the premise. Kushal a reluctant industrialist and an ardent environmentalist, is obviously the odd man out amongst the well-heeled in Ludhiana who see subtlety as an undesirable trait in a person. On the other hand, Reeti, his pretty wife, loves to live life to the fullest- she likes parties, compliments and big cars. The others who bring alive the story include the ageing, drink loving patriarch Kimti Lal and Lakhshya, the naughty son of the couple. Rest of the characters have only minor contribution in the tale.

Employing the principle of 'show not tell', the author introduces the traits of the characters, mostly through the conversations and scenes. As in real life, none of the characters is completely good or totally bad- they have shades of grey. While Kushal is an idealist, he can't resist the temptation of a clandestine affair with his ex-girlfriend. Reeti is a social butterfly but makes sure that all the family members are taken care of. The essence of the city of Ludhiana is well captured as is the free-spending nature of Punjabis. There is a historical explanation too for this. Punjab was frequently invaded and therefore the populace developed an attitude- whatever

you have enjoyed is yours and the rest may be taken away by the looters.

Once the inciting incident happens, courtesy the naughty Lakshya, the story moves at a breakneck speed and the book is unputdownable. That the author manages to keep the writing light even in the scenes where there is a conflict is praiseworthy. Despite the impending upheaval in her married life, Reeti doesn't want to miss attending the wedding ceremony of a richie rich family because she has been preparing for this event for the last few months. While the grandeur pomp and show of the fat Punjabi Wedding has been well depicted, what keep up the interest of the reader are the incidents and interesting conversations which happen at the marriage venue.

The author has managed to take the reader right into marriage venue with vivid descriptions. Now it is the turn of Kimti Lal, Kushal's father, to create further complications. The twist at the last page of the novel leaves a pleasant after taste and makes one think- next, what will Jas Kohli come up with.

For me the biggest plus point of the book was the puckish humour. It would be no exaggeration to say that in this aspect, the author has reached the heights of the classic texts of humour and comedy. Some of the one-liners are epic but I don't want to give them away in the review.

I feel the author could have been injected more emotional depth in some scenes. But it seems Dr Jas Kohli didn't want to break the tempo by slackening the humour quotient at any point in the book.

The author, while revelling in the joy and bonhomie of marriage celebrations, does take a stand, questioning the burden of such events on the families which aren't well-off but falls short of questioning all marriage events. The author's assertion that the daughter could be made financially independent if money up used in ceremonies could instead be transferred in her account needs to be taken seriously. The environmental ideas of Kushal, the chief protagonist, are radical, but don't seem to get much traction in the

bastion of materialism. However, we need to start making changes in our lifestyle, however little they may be. Awareness is the first stage of creating a movement and many movements build up from a humble beginning.

'Lights! Wedding! Ludhiana!' is a bold and ambitious attempt by Dr Jas Kohli to bring out clean humour and such endeavours need to be encouraged.

Title: [Lights! Wedding! Ludhiana](#)

Author: [Jas Kohli](#)

Publisher: [Rupa Publications](#)

Available: [Amazon](#)

Dr Prof. Shiv Sethi

Dr Prof. Shiv Sethi is an internationally acclaimed columnist, literary critic and book reviewer. He has reviewed the works of the most famous authors all across the globe.

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