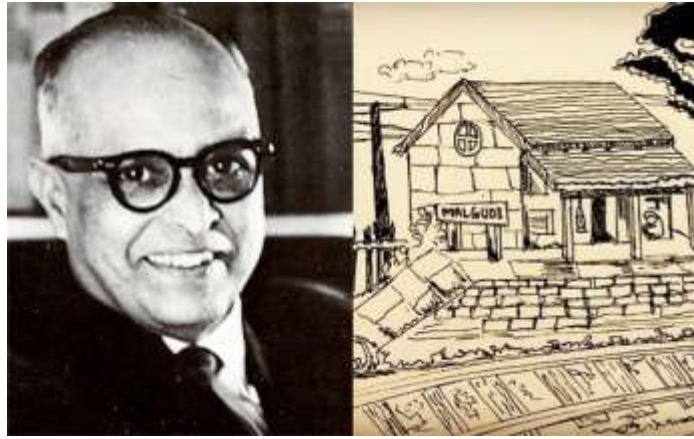


R.K.NARAYAN



R.K. Narayan (born October 10, 1906, Madras [Chennai], India—died May 13, 2001, Madras) was a master storyteller and one of the most celebrated Indian novelists to write in English. Raised mainly by his Grandmother, Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan had a brief stint at teaching before deciding to become a writer. He struggled to find a British publisher for his first novel in English, Swami and Friends (1935), but it came to the attention of Graham Greene who found a publisher and suggested he use the name R K Narayan. This happy chance led to a lifelong friendship between the two great authors, with frequent exchanges of letters and the occasional meeting in which they discussed their art. *Swami and Friends*, is an episodic narrative recounting the adventures of a group of schoolboys. That book and much of Narayan's later works are set in the fictitious South Indian town of Malgudi. Narayan typically portrays the peculiarities of human relationships and the ironies of Indian daily life, in which modern urban existence clashes with ancient tradition. His style is graceful, marked by genial humour, elegance, and simplicity.

His short story collection, Malgudi Days, published in 1943, marked a turning point in his career, establishing him as a notable writer. His first novel Swami and Friends was later made into a serial named Malgudi Days and this serial was telecast on DD National. The stories of Malgudi Days were so vivid that people felt connected to their own lives.

Besides novels, he wrote short stories, travelogues, condensed versions of Indian epics in English and memoirs. Among the best-received of Narayan's 34 novels are The English Teacher (1945), Waiting for the Mahatma (1955), The Guide (1958), The Man-Eater of Malgudi (1961), The Vendor of Sweets (1967) and A Tiger for Malgudi (1983). Narayan also wrote several short stories; collections include Lawley Road (1956), A Horse and Two Goats and Other Stories (1970), Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories (1985) and The Grandmother's Tale (1993). He also published shortened modern prose versions of two Indian epics, The Ramayana (1972) and The Mahabharata (1978).

In addition to a prodigious literary output, and as he was cut off from England owing to the war and needing an outlet for his works, in 1942 Narayan launched his publishing venture, 'Indian Thought'.

In 1958 Narayan's work The Guide won him the National Prize of the Indian Literary Academy, the country's highest literary honour. Narayan received many other awards including the Indian Sahitya Akademi Award, the Royal Society of Literature's Arthur Christopher Benson Award and, in 1964, one of his country's highest civil honours, the Padma Bhushan. In 1982 he was made an Honorary Member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1985, he was nominated to India's upper house, the Rajya Sabha, for contributing to the nation's culture. Narayan who lived till age of ninety-four, died in 2001. He wrote for more than fifty years, and published until he was eighty seven.