

# Indian Culture, Spirituality and Family in the Select Works of RK Narayan

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**Abstract:** RK Narayan is a famous Indian author who has published successful novels. His works are usually set in a fictional town of South India, named Malgudi. He was one of the most influential authors in Indian Writing in English. Some of his works were semi-autobiographical. This paper studies the author's critically acclaimed works.

**Keywords:** RK Narayan, The Dark Room, Bachelor of Arts, The English Teacher, The Financial Expert.

## I. INTRODUCTION

RK Narayan is a famous Indian author who has published successful novels. His works are usually set in a fictional town of South India, named Malgudi. He was one of the most influential authors in Indian Writing in English. Some of his works were semi-autobiographical. He was also a former member of the Rajya Sabha.

## II. THE DARK ROOM

The Dark Room was published in 1938 in India, and the setting is Malgudi, a fictitious town created by RK Narayan. The story revolves around the plight of Savitri, who tolerates her husband's abuse. She is also a mother to three children, namely Sumati, Kamala and Babu. She tries to drown herself but is saved. Thus the plight of an Indian woman in a conservative Indian society is observed here.

## III. BACHELOR OF ARTS

Bachelor of Arts was published in 1937 in India. This novel is also set in Malgudi, a fictitious town. The story revolves around the life of Chandran, and is a coming-of-age story. He decides to marry Malathi, as he is in love with her. However, due to astrological incompatibility, the marriage doesn't take place. He soon embarks on a nomadic life and falls in love with Sushila. Thus, the growth and evolution of an individual is charted here.

## IV. THE ENGLISH TEACHER

The English Teacher is a novel published in 1945, and is also set in Malgudi. It is notable fact that this novel is dedicated to Rajam, RK Narayan's wife. The protagonist experiences trauma after the death of his wife. The author beautifully conveys the depth of emotions and experiences by humans. Indian culture is depicted in the novel. The development of the self and the constant strive for peace are focused on.

## V. THE FINANCIAL EXPERT

The Financial Expert is a novel published in 1952, and is also set in Malgudi. The financial expert is named Margayya, who is a moneylender. His business takes place under a banyan tree. Calamity strikes when his son throws his account book into the gutter. The presence of astrology in Indian culture is frequently referenced in the novel. The greed for money is a focal point.

## VI. THE GRANDMOTHER'S TALE

The Grandmother's Tale is a novella by RK Narayan, published 1994. The story revolves around the life of the author's great grandmother. RK Narayan talks about how she had travelled long distances in search of her husband. Bala, his great-grandmother, was a child bride of Viswa. She was seven years of age and he was eight years old at the time of their marriage. At the time, the British Raj was still ruling India, and his grandmother had searched in different places of South India for her husband. Indian culture is depicted here.

## VII. WAITING FOR THE MAHATMA

Waiting For The Mahatma is a novel published 1955, and written by RK Narayan. The protagonist, Sriram, is a high school graduate. He becomes an activist and harbours affections for Bharati, a girl he likes. Bharati takes part in Gandhi's Quit India Movement. Sriram later gets involved with anti-British extremists. The 1947 Partition of India is described in the novel. Indian History is depicted poignantly in the novel.

## VIII. THE GUIDE

The Guide was a novel by RK Narayan, published 1958. The events are set in Malgudi. It starts the evolution of the life of Raju, the protagonist. Raju begins the novel as a tour guide, and transforms into a great holy man, as the plot slowly moves. Due to his forgery case, he is sentenced to prison for two years, after which he is mistaken for a sadhu in a small village. Spirituality and its presence in India is portrayed in the novel.

### **IX. THE MAN-EATER OF MALGUDI**

The Man-Eater of Malgudi was published in 1961. The story centres around Nataraj, who works as a printer. This novel is also set in Malgudi. Bhamasura is mentioned in the novel. The term refers to a demon. A taxidermist named Vastu starts bullying the protagonist and intrudes into his life. He is likened to a demon in the novel. Thus the story has historical references.

### **X. MR SAMPATH- THE PRINTER OF MALGUDI**

Mr Sampath-The Printer of Malgudi is a novel published in 1949 and set in Malgudi. The novel is set during the time of the British Raj in 1938, and comprises of two parts. The first part deals with the life of Sampath and the publication of a newspaper. The second part revolves around the life of Mr Srinivas. Wealth, peace and fame are the main themes, as Sampath wrestles with the changes in the Indian economy.

### **XI. SWAMI AND FRIENDS**

Swami And Friends was a novel published in 1935, and written by RK Narayan. It was the first book written by RK Narayan, and the protagonist is Swaminathan. He is a school boy and is ten years of age. He tries to win the favour of a rich school boy named Rajam. Mahatma Gandhi's Non Cooperation Movement is depicted in the novel. The contrasting natures of tradition and modernity are also depicted.

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