



The World of Nagaraj

R.K. Narayan

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Nagaraj's world is quiet and comfortable. Living in his family's spacious house with only his wife Sita for company, he fills his day writing letters, drinking coffee, doing some leisurely book keeping for his friend Coomar's Boeing Sari Company, and sitting on his veranda watching the world and planning the book he intends to write about the life of the great sage Narada. But everything is disturbed when Tim, the son of his ambitious landowning brother Gopu, decides to leave home and come to live with Nagaraj. Forced to take responsibility for the boy, puzzled by his secret late-night activities and by the strong smell of sprits which lingers behind him, Nagaraj finds his days, suddenly filled with unwelcome complication and turbulence, which threaten to alter for ever the contented tranquility of his world. The latest of R.K.Narayan's magnificent Malgudi books, The World of Nagaraj is beautifully written, funny and haunting , evoking in marvelously rich detail the atmosphere of a small town in southern India and creating a magical world into which the reader is instantly drawn.

The World of Nagaraj Details

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From Reader Review The World of Nagaraj for online ebook

Beatles24 says

Graham Greene hit the nail on the head when he said that he could not think of many authors who could weave a yarn so convincingly and with such imaginative verve than Narayan. Okay, I guess he did not say it but he might as well have. This is a great book that harks back to my childhood when the innocence of the tale marries the creativity of the story in so many parts that the product leaves you yearning for more. It is a perfect launch pad to understand small time dreams in rural India and to revel in a simplicity of life that seems so romantic and so out of reach. What a lovely book!!!!

Karthik says

Nagraj is ineffective, meandering, lazy and a doormat personality who dreams of writing a book about Narada, the gossip mongering and insidious saint among the Hindu gods. So while Nagaraj's outward communication makes him inconsequential, his daily actions and inward thoughts make for a hilarious read. There are also interesting personalities in his little town like Kavu pundit, and Bari the stationer about whom I will not reveal anything to avoid spoiling the book. The characters absolutely remind me of the varied personalities one comes across in India and the slow, small town feel makes me hanker for the stagnant but content india of yore.

Fiza Pathan says

Simplicity enables a person to understand the depths of human nature as well as the universe. R.K.Narayan's novel 'The World Of Nagaraj' just like his other books, takes the reader on a journey into the simplicity of a man's heart who is unable to comprehend the undertones of normal activities of people. At the same time, the description of an Indian town, Malgudi where all of Narayan's stories are based again soothes the intellectual critic within us & challenges our inner self especially , the Indian within us all to judge the book. The story is simple yet profound in its unique way. The character of Nagaraj is put forward to the reader as a person whose only aim in life is to pen down a novel on the life of the holy celestial Hindu sage, 'Narada'. Nagaraj is a domesticated personality who is simple minded (he cannot even mix his coffee properly) & who is unlike his elder brother Gopu, who is materialistic & very ambitious, ready to make a profit at whatever cost. Nagaraj is dominated & humiliated by his brother which as is seen clearly in the novel, he tries to ignore passing it off as a sort of 'brotherly joke'. The point is however that, no one takes poor Nagaraj seriously...neither his brother, nor his wife Sita, not the card playing pandit who he goes to learn about the life of the a fore mentioned celestial sage, nor his nephew Tim who is adored by Nagaraj....not anybody, except one person.....that person is Nagaraj's obsession NARADA. The reason I state that the sage from mythology is the only one who takes Nagaraj seriously is because, the meaning of Narada's existence itself is to cause misunderstandings between people (as we know from studying Hindu Mythology) & to pass on gossip from one party to another. This is what constantly happens in R.K. Narayan's novel ; the mother-in-law misunderstands Sita & questions her actions, Tim misunderstands his doting father & runs off to his uncle's home, Saroja (Tim's wife) misunderstands Nagaraj & leaves her abode along with her shady character of a husband...this continues to take place leaving pitiable Nagaraj gasping for a breath of freedom from everyone including his wife & Narada the sage himself. The novel also brings together a number of

unforgettable 'Malgudi' characters who not only entertain but who also play pivotal roles in the whole narrative.,example; my favorite the Talkative Man who leads Nagaraj to the card playing pundit. The novel keeps one engrossed till the very end & yet develops a person's understanding of how not being forthright in ones dealings can create a lot of unwanted issues.,example; Nagaraj was not forthright enough unlike his wife (who seems to act as hi Lady Macbeth) to question the mysterious drunken Tim about his whereabouts during college hours. The hypocrisy of the clergy is evident in the novel as well as the rather amusing side of a stationary shop owner who seems to know more about the Hindu sages & gods than the ordinary pundit. In all, the book was a breath of fresh air for me through the humorous characters & their never ending problems (just like mine....a good read if there was ever one. The 'Grand old man of Malgudi' strikes again !

Smitha Murthy says

It had been a while since I read an RK Narayan book. I had been in search of some Indian-English books and I rifled through my sister's bookshelf to get this gem. I loved the character of Nagaraj. I loved the way he thinks. I loved everything about him, including his aversion to the harmonium. He made me laugh and considering my grim-facedness in life, that's something to say!

Deepika Ramesh says

Delightful!

My blog on the book: <https://worncorners.com/2016/05/12/rk...>

Rangarajan says

I think this is the last of RK Narayan's fiction novels that I have read. It is not the first of his books that I will recommend to a friend.

It is a charming portrait of an unassuming man named Nagaraj of Kabir Lane, Malgudi. Most of the book is about the ruminations of Nagaraj who lives in his own world, and his fondness and obsession for his nephew. There isn't much of a dramatic element in this novel to keep one interested in Nagaraj, but an enthusiastic reader will enjoy the details of an era gone by.

J. Watson (aka umberto) says

3.75 stars

I found reading this novel quite readable but a bit disappointing, I wondered why and kept telling myself everyone for some reason would live in his world like Nagaraj. One of the reasons is that possibly I've long considered his "Swami and Friends" in mind as one of his best so the more I read it, the less I felt convinced as another. However, there are a few points I would like to share and tell why it is still interesting.

First, Narayan has typically written his novels based on rural India in which there are many things in common geographically and agriculturally so reading this excerpt depicting the area where the two brothers met and how Nagaraj idly reacted and Gopu sarcastically replied reminds me of rural Thailand:

... He remained silent and thoughtful. They were now in a banana grove with bunches still ripening on their stalks. The green glare from the broad leaves waving seemed to him soothing, and he declared, 'How green is this shade!'
'Banana is always green, what is there to wonder about like a baby?'
... (p. 54)

Second, For those who first read him, they might think his novels generally look readable due to their words, style and grammar. In fact, the more we read, the more he subtly presents unfamiliar words to his readers like something new to taste. For instance, we would come across 'incongruous' (p. 88), 'sacrilegious' (p. 130), 'cadaverous' (p. 137), etc. Therefore, reading his works is also something challenging in disguise to those who think they know all as well.

Third, we would of course appreciate Narayan's sense of humor in every chapter so gradually we learnt to like and admire Nagaraj's amiable ways of looking at things, that is, he tended to be easy-going, religiously-minded regarding whatever came or whoever said anything. He simply kept reflective like a sage and talked when necessary, so his character was quite different from his brother's. Gopu tended to be more authoritative and didn't care whether his words embarrassed his brother or not. It is amusing to read how he rebuked in advance twice before Nagaraj feeling ill at ease would try to evade his demanding queries, as we can see from the excerpts:

... Nagaraj was saying, 'Mother, why don't you go in and rest? Visitors are gone – I'll also turn in for a couple of hours' rest in my room – ' Gopu overheard Nag's words and said at once, 'Nagu, don't try to get away. I've business with you. Come to my room.'

... (p. 33)

And on another occasion:

... He got up abruptly to go out of the room under the pretext of finding if dinner was ready. His brother, now settled on the easy chair in the room, said, 'Don't get up and try to escape. You have not lost the habit yet! Listen to me. You should have turned him back on the very first day. Instead of that you petted and pampered him, without even asking whether he took my permission before leaving home.'

'Yes, I asked him whether he had your ---'

'What did he say?'

'I don't remember,' Nagaraj said.

... (p. 42)

To conclude, we may not expect to enjoy reading this as a hilarious novel due to its Narayan-style plot in its Indian context but we would definitely enjoy its rich, funny and worldly dialogs as observed and taken part by Nagaraj and his key characters in the world they would live vividly in our imaginings.

Rishi Prakash says

RKN had got his first novel (Swami and Friends) published in 1935 after lot of struggle but there was no

looking back once the mystic town of Malgudi was born. "The World of Nagaraj" was his penultimate novel which got published in 1990 and hence clearly one of his later works. Maybe, it was an idea that did not go the way RKN wanted it to, maybe he just grew tired of the idea, but from the beginning 'The World of Nagaraj' never takes off. Unfortunately this particular book, though set in Malgudi's familiar landscape, fails to capture the magic of this delightful village. I found it difficult to read, laboured through it, though I knew it was going nowhere, and finally ended it just because I had started it which was a first for me after reading so many of his books which were all good in their own ways.

This book mainly concentrates on how Nagaraj looks at the incidents and events in his life. The language is simple and has vivid descriptions which definitely catch attention but after a while it just becomes repetitive and stale and hence the interest just goes. But definitely not anywhere close to all books that I have read so far which were quite a few. It gets boring at a few places with too much detail. It was a slow read for me. The language is impeccable, the usage, the turn of phrase, everything is perfect as one would expect from a master like RKN but it lacks soul which is the biggest problem here. All his past books had a character or a collection of characters which used to bring that magic every time which somehow did not happen here. As an inhabitant of Malgudi, Nagaraj is perfect but he does too little and anything of consequence or interest to the reader, has only enough material on him to probably last two pages in any of RKN's other books, but we go through his monologues for almost 180 pages which is kind of sad considering the masters abilities. All in all, this goes to the bottom of RKN's pile so far.

Kiran Poet says

A story about a man who finds himself in solitude of day and night.

Abhishek says

Kind of boring when compared with other books from the master story teller

Abhaga says

Enjoyed here and there but was bored overall. Not a single character whom I cared for. Nagaraj starts out as an eccentric nice fellow but is highly irritating by the end.

Sandhya says

The book is about a simple-minded, pleasant man, living with his wife, Sita and mother in a rather grand ancestral house called Kabir Street. He loves day-dreaming and talks a great deal to himself. His life's ambition is to be a thesis on sage Narada. Humble and affable, Nagaraj has no worries until his nephew Krishnaji, referred to as 'Tim' comes to stay with him. Narayan - through a series of flashbacks gives a vivid picture of the family characters. Gopi, the elder brother is aggressive and dominating. Until their father is alive and they all stayed together, Gopi took the best room, where he and his wife would stay locked in. The

wife would cook savouries in limited portions and take them directly to their room. When the will is read out, Gopi asks for the farm house and lands in the village. This suits Nagaraj who prefers having the house in Malgudi.

Sharp-tongued and abrasive, Gopi looks at his younger brother as a bit of a fool, and openly insults him for his dull replies. Nagaraj being supremely unassertive, takes many of his brother's put-downs as a joke, trying to maintain a semblance of cheerful normalcy.

The entire book brings out the predicament of a man who cannot stand up for himself and confront situations. There is a scene in the novel where Tim and his wife have come to permanently stay in Nagaraj's house. This is the time when the latter has finally decided to get serious about his theses on Narada but Tim's wife is in the habit of playing the harmonium in the mornings and this is a source of intense irritation to Nagaraj. His impulse once prompts him to bang against her door and ask her to shut up. But he weakly smiles and walks away when she actually opens the door.

more...<http://sandyi.blogspot.in/2011/10/r-k...>

Sushma Karra says

Packed with humour

Sudhir Pai says

RK Narayan wrote The World of Nagaraj nearly 50 years after he'd published the first of his Malgudi novels - *Swami and Friends* - in 1935. While the sheer longevity of Narayan's fictitious world is astonishing, it must be said that the fatigue of writing over five decades was somewhat visible in this particular book.

While the book about Nagaraj - a quintessential Malgudi resident who seems blissful in his state of routine contentment - starts off promisingly, the plot loses its way when Narayan tries to balance two sub-plots within the same story. One is the protagonist's responsibility of raising his nephew Tim, and the other being the character's obsession over writing the definitive biography of the great saint Narada. Somehow, neither sub-plots stand out on its own, and the sum of its parts somehow fails to add up.

The book certainly has its moments. RK Narayan continues to be a master craftsman, and nobody can even describe a quaint South Indian town as vividly as the author. The World of Nagaraj is just further evidence of his writing prowess. But like me, if you have read and loved "Swami and Friends" and "The Guide", it would be best lower your expectations before you pick up The World of Nagaraj.

Nagaraj Tanguturu says

Its funny to read this book because story character name is same as myself. Also, his thoughts are similar to mine. :-) He wants to write a book about Sage Narada, I want to learn Sanskrit. :-) I read RK Narayan book in my school days. I picked up this one again and enjoyed the book. Very good writer and also improve our vocabulary by using excellent words.

