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Ans to the Question no 2 :-

R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001) said that he found English the most rewarding medium to employ for his writing because it came to him very easily English is a very adaptable language. And it's so transparent it can take on the tint of any country. Critics frequently praise the unaffected standard English with which Narayan captures the Indian sensibility, particularly the South Indian ambiance. His unpretentious style, his deliberate avoidance of convoluted expressions and complicated grammatical constructions, his gentle and subtle humor all this gives his writing an elegant, unforced simplicity that is perfectly suited to the portrayal of ordinary life, of all classes and segments of Indian society household servants, herdsmen, saints,

crooks, merchants, beggars, thieves, hapless student. Narayan was essentially an old fashioned storyteller. With Addisonian wit Twainian humor, and Chekhovian irony, he depicted everyday occurrences, moments of insight while some of his stories are essentially sketches, quite undramatic, others feature the ironic reversals associated with O. Henry. Although Narayan's characters are imbued with distinctively Indian values, their dilemmas are universal. Among the nineteen stories in Narayan's first collection, *Malgudi Days*, there are two stories *Old Bones* and *Neighbours Help* that are laced with supernatural elements. This volume includes such memorable stories as *The Gold Belt* *The White Flower* *An End of Trouble* and *Under the Banyan Tree*. Some of the stories may be viewed as social criticism; Narayan looks with a satiric eye on various aspects of traditional South Indian society, particularly the dowry system and the powerful role of astrology and other forms of superstition. One of the finest stories in the collection *The Mute Companions* centers on the ubiquitous Indian monkey, a source of meager income for poor people and a source of delight for children. Adopting the omniscient point of view yet without moralizing or judging, Narayan portrays the life of Sami the dumb beggar, whose very existence depended on the behavior of the monkey. Having taught the monkey several tricks, Sami is able for a time to subsist on the earnings of the clever creature, who is his only companion. This brief story is an excellent specimen of Narayan's art, revealing his ability to portray a segment of society that typically goes unnoticed. The story emphasizes the passiveness characteristic of the poor Indian, his acceptance of his Karma, or fate. Narayan's gentle social criticism, too, emerges. Usually Sami avoided those big places where people were haughty, aloof, and inaccessible, and kept formidable dogs and

servants. As in many of his stories, Narayan in *The Mute Companions* blends humor and sadness. *Malgudi Days*, it should be noted, is also the title of a later collection, published in the United States in 1982. Eight of the thirty-two stories in this collection *Naga Selvi* *Second Opinion* *Cat Within The Edge* *God and the Cobbler* *Hungry Child* and “*Emden*” were previously uncollected the remaining stories were selected from Narayan’s two earlier volumes, *An Astrologer’s Day* and *Lawley Road*. In his second collection, *Dodu, and Other Stories*, Narayan focused on themes related to motherly love, South Indian marriages, the financial and economic frustrations of the middle class, and childhood. Among the outstanding pieces in this volume of seventeen stories are *Dodu* *Gandhi’s Appeal* *Ranga* *A Change* *Forty-five a Month* and *The One-Armed Giant*. (Originally published in *The Hindu*, as most of his stories have been, *The One-Armed Giant* was the first story that Narayan wrote.) The title story *Dodu* satirically focuses on adult attitudes toward children. *Dodu* was eight years old and wanted money badly. Since he was only eight, nobody took his financial worries seriously. *Dodu* had no illusions about the generosity of his elders. They were notoriously deaf to requests. One of the significant contributions of Narayan is his uncanny ability to portray children—their dreams, their mischief, their psychology. *Ranga* an early tale is a moving story of a motherless child developing into a disillusioned youth. *Forty-five a Month*” is a simple and tender story of the relationship of a father and his family his wife and their young daughter. The conflict between economic security and the little pleasures of life is evocatively and movingly delineated indeed, this depiction of a white-collar worker eking out his dreary existence reflects the experience of an entire generation in modern India. In *Lawley Road*, as in most of his fiction, Narayan is concerned

more with character than with plot. He notes that he discovers a story when a personality passes through a crisis of spirit or circumstances but some stories present flashes of significant moments in characters' lives without any dramatic circumstances; others simply show "a pattern of existence brought to view. Many of the pieces in this collection have a reportorial quality there are sketches and vignettes, character studies and anecdotes. Of the twenty-eight stories gathered here, fourteen are reprinted from previous collections. The title story is delightful. Named after a typical thoroughfare in the fictitious city of Malgudi, the story recounts how Kabir Lane is renamed as Lawley Road. The narrator is one of Narayan's most engaging recurring characters, whom the people of Malgudi have nicknamed the Talkative Man or TM for short, who lends distance and historicity to the story. In another strong story "The Martyr's Corner," the focus is on a humble seller of bondas, dosais (South Indian snacks), and chappatis (wheat-flour pancakes) rather than on the violent action. It is the character of the vendor—his dreary and drab life and his attitude toward existence—that holds the interest of the reader. *Horse and Two Goats, and Other Stories* comprises five stories with illustrations by Narayan's brother R. K. Laxman. The title story deals with Muni, a village peasant, and his meeting with a red man from the United States. The language barrier is responsible for confusion about a statue and a pair of goats, with hilarious results. The second story, *Uncle* is a masterpiece; it slowly unfolds the mystery that teases a growing boy about his benevolent but inexplicably sinister uncle. *Annamalai* and *A Breath of Lucifer* deal with two simple, hardworking, faithful servants. *Annamalai* is an eccentric gardener who attaches himself to a reluctant master. Sam in *A Breath of Lucifer* with an autobiographical preface, is a Christian male nurse. In the end, both

Annamalai and Sam, governed by their own impulses, unceremoniously leave their masters. Seventh House perhaps a continuation of *The White Flower in Lawley Road*, dealing in astrology and superstitions, touchingly explores a husband's tender devotion to his sick wife. Each of the five stories is a character study; all the stories are embellished with picturesque native customs. The dominant tone throughout the collection is casual, understated. *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* is a superb retrospective collection of twenty-eight tales, published specifically for American readers; almost all the stories are drawn from earlier volumes. When the collection appeared on the American scene, several glowing reviews were published in the leading weeklies and periodicals. This collection further confirms Malgudi's place as a great imaginary landscape. The title story, fittingly taken from Narayan's first collection, reaffirms storytelling as a central human activity. The villagers of Somal lived in a kind of perpetual enchantment. The enchanter was Nambi the storyteller. Yet having regaled his audience for several years with his tales, Nambi spends the rest of his life in great consummate silence. *The Grandmother's Tale and Selected Stories* (titled *The Grandmother's Tale, and Other Stories* in the paperback edition) was the first collection of Narayan's fiction that attempted to give a comprehensive overview of his more than fifty years of productivity. Many of the stories, including *A Horse and Two Goats* and *Lawley Road*, have been widely anthologized for many years. Others, including *Salt and Sawdust* and the title story, make their first North American appearance in this collection. Many of the stories are based on humble but complex characters engaged in daily life in India. As a collection, they demonstrate the richness of Indian life, which blends ancient tradition with Western technological modernity, but

Narayan's stories do not call attention to the setting. Rather, they focus on the characters, showing with gentle humor the wonderful absurdity that makes one human and the ironic twists that shape one's life. In *Salt and Sawdust*, for example, Narayan presents a childless housewife who cannot cook—her sense of taste is so bad that she cannot tell the difference between salt and sawdust. Her poor husband is forced to take over the cooking, while his wife occupies herself with writing a novel. However, when the novel is finally completed, the publisher advises the wife to turn it into a cookbook. Narayan was a master of the small details that make domestic scenes seem true and important. Although the wife is made fun of in *Salt and Sawdust*, she is a fully rounded character. The humor is good-natured, and Narayan's respect for humans with all their flaws never wavers. *The Grandmother's Tale* is adapted from a tale Narayan's mother told him about his own great grandmother. The story is narrated in a winding fashion by a young boy who is sent to live with his strict grandmother. Although he resents his new situation at first, he gradually comes under the spell of the story she tells him, in bits and pieces, about her own grandmother's life. The grandmother's story is set firmly in India. The heroine is married in a traditional ceremony at the age of seven, but her husband abandons her to take a new wife. The landscape she crosses to reclaim her husband is clearly the Indian subcontinent. Ironically, regaining her husband costs her her independence. *The Grandmother's Tale* is unlike many of Narayan's stories in having a strong and admirable central female character. The framing device of the boy narrator reinforces the timelessness and universality of the grandmother's story, which is equally powerful to a young Indian boy in a small village and to adult readers around the world. As an old-fashioned storyteller, Narayan

sought to convey the vitality of his native India, a land that is full of humanity, oddity, poverty, tradition, inherited culture picturesqueness. Narayan realized that the short story is the best medium for utilizing the wealth of subjects available. A novel is a different proposition altogether centralized as it is on a major theme leaving out necessarily a great deal of the available material on the periphery. Short stories, on the other hand can cover a wider field by presenting concentrated miniatures of human experience in all its opulence. Narayan's concern was the heroic in the ordinary Indian. John Updike affirms that all people are complex surprising, and deserving of a break this seems to me Narayan's moral, and one hard to improve upon. His social range and his successful attempt to convey in sum an entire population shame most American authors, who also it might be charged ignore too much of what could be seen. With dignified simplicity, honesty and sincerity Narayan infused his as with charm and spontaneous humor his narrative voice guides the reader through his a comic and ironic world with an unobtrusive wit. The first of R.K. Narayan's three volumes of short story an Astrologer's day and stories (1947) contains thirty pieces all of which had previously appeared in the Madras Hindu. Thus they had been written for and presumably read and enjoyed by the readership of one of India's greatest English language newspaper. Though this readership would include most of the British Anglo Indian and Americans living in souyh India it would be made up overwhelmingly of ture Indiand. It is an important point. Narayan is an Indian writing for Indians who happen to read English. He is not interpreting India for westerners. In europr and Americ of course Narayan's repute tion rest upon his novel. The publication in London of an Astrologer's Day following Narayan was an Indian journalist love by

his fellow countrymen. Paradoxically however though Narayan's short pieces have been welcomed in the Hindu for over thirty years his novels have never been popular in India indeed I myself have found that they are obtainable there only with the greatest difficulty. Another book hunter reports that in the leading bookshop of Bangladesh in Narayan's own Mysore state not a single book by Narayan was available on being queried a clerk replied that there was no demand for Narayan works. Narayan himself has stated that in the city of Mysore where he has lived most of his life perhaps only 200 of the population of 275,000 have ever read any of his books and yet Mysore justly has the reputation of being an important center of education and culture. The fact is that Narayan's books have first been published in England and more recently in the United States and have only later appeared in India in unattractively printed paperback editions.