

# UNDER THE BANYAN TREE BY R.K. NARAYAN

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# INTRODUCTION

**Under the Banyan Tree by R.K. Narayan is a short but deep meaning story, which prominently focuses on a creative man's nightmare.**

**Be it a writer, a painter, or a film maker, I think his worst fear is that one day he would lose his magical touch, he would no longer be able to compose stories, paint serene views or create superhit movies.**

# NAMBI THE PRIEST

Call it a writer's block, or simply the engine running out of steam, this fear is definitely lodged in every imaginative heart. And, Narayan, in his quintessential simple style, gave a new meaning to this fear.

As Tagore said, a poet can compose only as much as God allows him to do. So, does Narayan portray the story of Nambi, a temple priest who lived in Somal, a small village in mempi hills. He used to tell long stories under the banyan tree on moon lit nights. Every fortnight or so, when he is ready to tell a new story, he would light a lamp under the tree to give a signal to villagers to assemble and hear his story.

## **WORDLESS NAMBI**

**All his life, Nambi has been following this routine. In fact, story telling is his only occupation and passion. But one day, he could not remember the next phase of his story. Tried as he might, his memory failed him.**

**He could not utter a single word. As expected, Nambi was left flabbergasted. After this initial failure, he attempted to recreate his magic again and again. But, each time, he failed miserably.**

**Why did this happen? Did age finally catch up with him or the Goddess took away his ability? As Narayan leaves the question hanging in mid air, the story ends without a definite conclusion.**

**But, nevertheless, Under the Banyan Tree comes across as a reflection of Narayan's fear of his own air fizzling out. May be he also felt old like Nambi or at least was apprehensive of following suit.**

**Well, just not an expression of deepest fears, the story also abounds in creativity. As Nambi narrates fancy tales, I got the feeling of listening to a story within story. Another gem that lay scattered in Town of Malgudi!**

# SILENCE

Nambi is left wondering to himself why he can't tell his tales.

He then goes around the whole village and says that he is going to tell a grand story to and that everyone needs to be present. everyone arrives and he gives a speech saying "What is the lamp for when all the oil is gone?... These are my last words on the earth; and this is my greatest story".

He then was silent for the rest of his life.

## THE END OF CAREER

- . After the story teller saw that he was unable to tell his stories, he felt that his usefulness in life was done. Much like the lamp without any oil, he was (in his own mind) of no use anymore; and rather than have the people tell him that his stories were bad, or that he should stop because he made no sense, he took the matter into his own hands and took a vow of silence and lived it out for the rest of his life.