



Rangbhumi: The Arena of Life

Munshi Premchand, Christopher King (Translator)

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Premchand is one of the most outstanding figures in twentieth-century Hindi literature. The inhumanity of caste hierarchies and the plight of women stirred his indignation and remained constant themes throughout his works. Of his many novels, Rangbhumi depicts most graphically the devastation of peasant society and agriculture under colonial rule.

Rangbhumi: The Arena of Life Details

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Nirmal says

In general, or so I believe, Premchand's stories are much more enjoyable and insightful than his novels. Rangbhoomi is a mixed bag. Its environment is during early 20th century in Banaras. Chief characters are Sevak family (an anglo-indian/indian christian family), A blind but devout and righteous beggar Surdas , group of families/people in Surdas's neighborhood and Raja of Chhatari and his family.

Certain passages are repetitious and full of idealistic/Utopian thoughts - possibly due to the colonial times when this book was written/published.

Dialogues are lively and language is generally colloquial and easy to understand. Overall message is positive. Though somewhat dated but I still recommend this book.

Sais Shishir says

A masterpiece by the brilliant. This novel contains striking life-philosophies, the human-nature, politics, vivid discussion of spiritual love and the physical love, complexity of family and relations, complexity of the Indian Indian society. Clash of two cultures, clash of the ruler and the subject. Complexity of rich and simplicity of the poor. A blind beggar is protagonist, so is a prince.

Not as vast as 'War and Peace', but essence is certainly equal. I would recommend this novel.

Puneeta says

Prateek Malhotra says

Curiously, even now, Rangbhoomi is the most Indian book I have read. Premchand's boldness in confronting delicate issues (when the country was itself in a very delicate state) is remarkable. He talks about the spread of Christianity, attitude towards capitalism, an inherent self-interest in even the best of civil servants at the time, and of course, the soul crushing crimes committed by Indians against each other to win the favour of the British.

In such a dark and despicable environment, the blind beggar Soordas underlines the sheer power of truth, a true sacrifice of desires, and Dharma. There's not much to say about this book--its one which you have to read for yourself.

After-all, they don't him 'Munshi' for no reason.

Rinku says

A true picture of our mind and our societies. Humans and societies have always remained the same, no matter in what time. The way Premchand writes about the psychology of humans and the societies in which they dwell, is remarkable and true even now.

Kyc says

Enjoyed this one.

Saurabh Sharma says

When I started this book, it looked lil boring but really different than Premchand's other books. He raised some serious question about God. And then their were many parallel stories. Initially I thought this may be one of the bad book or not so good book by Premchand but then book completely wronged me, It engaged me after some time and some of the things were quite edge of the seat. Human nature and its complexities and bountifulness has always been Premchand's strength and no body can write better than him on this topic. But IMO he took a lil different path here, he experimented and just don't limit himself to just his strengths. Its again a masterpiece by him, though its not perfect as Godan. One of the negatives I found is he sometime overdo the people's emotions and sometime describe them as near to god, but these characters are not very strong and they are plain human like us. They take decisions like us influenced by emotion and anger and mood. Apart from this, its a terrific book, just needs a lil patience initially as initial parts are lil philosophical. Also you don't feel much emotion for anyone, may be lil for soordas, that's it. Its not Godan but its excellent. And it contains more serious stuff about world than any of his other book I have read. Its a complex book and lil philosophical too and overall a terrific book. A movie on this will be too good.

Manish Kumar says

Death is not defeat. A good player stand up again and get ready to play another innings.

Raj Chargaway says

I have read many books by Munshi Premchand Ji and he is the reason I started exploring Hindi literature. I must say of all the Munshiji's books I have read, RANGBHOOMI is one of my favorite. Each character has a meaning and purpose, how their role and psyche changes over time is overwhelming, you would definitely analyse each character many times, after you finish the book.

Anie says

Every character has unique purpose and meaning. It is interesting to see how their role changes within different perspectives. This novel is related to different life philosophies, nature of Indian society, complex differences between rich and the poor, clash of various cultures. A real work of masterpiece. It seems boring in the beginning but as the story progresses you get well versed with the nature of characters and then begin enjoying part of each role.
