Nectar in a Sieve

Kamala Markandaya

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Kamala Markandaya 1924 - 2004





Kamala Markandaya

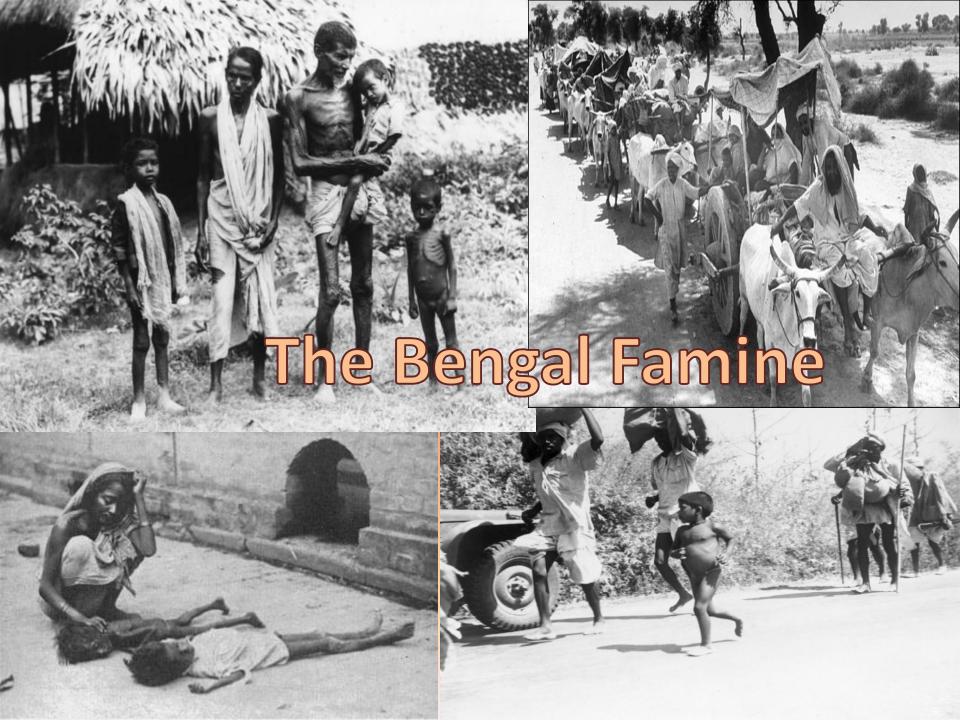
- 1924 2004
- was a pseudonym used by Kamala Purnaiya Taylor,
- an <u>Indian novelist</u> and <u>journalist</u>.
- A native of Mysore, India, a Brahmin
- a History graduate of <u>Madras University</u>, and afterwards published several short stories in Indian newspapers. A social activist too.
- Married an Englishman Taylor
- After independence in 1948, Markandaya moved to <u>Britain</u>, though she still labeled herself an Indian <u>expatriate</u> long afterwards.
- Only woman writer among the Trios Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan

Important works

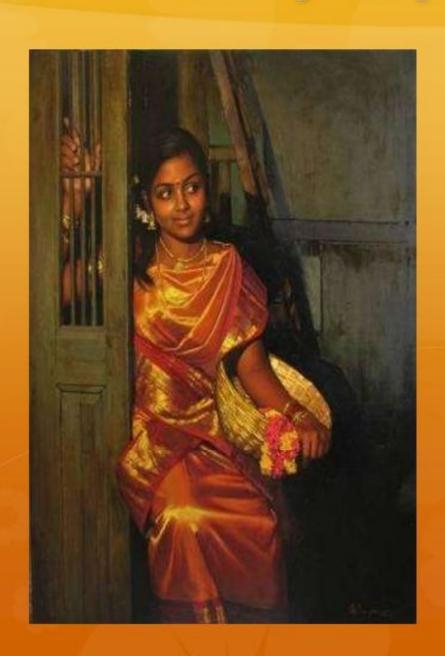
- 1. Nectar in a Sieve (1954)
- 2. Some Inner Fury (1955)
- 3. A Silence of Desire (1960)
- 4. Possession (1963)
- 5. A Handful of Rice (1966)
- 6. The Nowhere Man (1972)
- 7. Two Virgins (1973)
- 8. The Golden Honeycomb (1977)
- 9. Pleasure City (1982/1983)
- 10.Bombay Tiger (2008), Posthumous

Nectar in a Sieve (1954)

- ➤ Inspired by the great famine of 1943 in Bengal which claimed 3 million lives
- > The influence of industrial revolution in India
- > The sufferings of Indian Farmers
- > The status of women in India



Brief Synopsis of Nectar



- Tells the story of a peasant girl in India (Rukmani) who enters into an arranged marriage at age 12
- With her husband, Nathan, and later their children, she experiences poverty and societal upheaval
- The novel is told in the first person from her perspective as an elderly woman looking back on her life

Children

- Ira First and the only daughter named after river Irawaddy
- 2. Arjun
- 3. Thambi
- 4. Murugan
- 5. Raja
- 6. Selvam
- 7. Kuti

The Title of the Novel

Taken from the 1825 poem <u>"Work Without Hope"</u>, by <u>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</u>.

An excerpt from the poem is the epigraph of the novel:

"Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve, And hope without an object cannot live".

Life becomes meaningless when passed through the sieve of destruction: natural and manmade





Different Perspectives

❖ As a postcolonial novel – the influences and aftermaths of the British rule in a colony especially in India

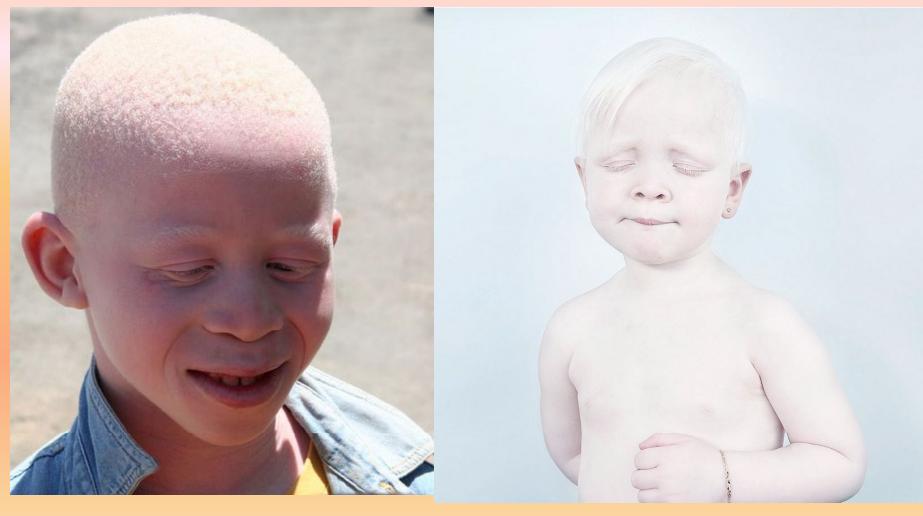
As a feministic /an eco-feministic novel – discusses the problems faced by women and nature and the dominance of patriarchy and capitalism over them

❖ As a diaspora novel - talks about the opportunities and challenges of immigration

The Focus

- Rukmani's relationship with Kenny, the British doctor
- Problems created by the Tannery (Leather Factory)
- Life of Ira who becomes a prostitute and begets an albino
- Lives of the sons
- The pathetic end of Rukmani and Nathan

Albinos



A person with pale skin, light hair, pinkish eyes, and visual abnormalities resulting from a hereditary inability to produce the pigment melanin

Nectar

"A novel to retain in your heart"

Milwakee Journal