

The Saratchandra Omnibus: Volume 1 (v. 1)

Saratchandra Chattopadhyay



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Saratchandra Chattopadhyay is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest Indian novelists of the twentieth century. His novels, serialized in periodicals and subsequently published in book form, earned Saratchandra immense fame in the early decades of the century, and established him as Bengal's master storyteller. Even today, seven decades after his death, Saratchandra remains one of the most popular novelists in Bengal, and is widely read in translation across India as well. This collector's edition of Saratchandra's works in English translation brings together the writer's most renowned and best-loved novels in two omnibus volumes. The first volume features five novels: Srikanta, Devdas, Parineeta, Palli Samaj and Nishkriti. Srikanta is the story of a wanderer who observes the people around him; through them especially the women he loves and respects, from the sacrificing Annada Didi and the rebellious Abhaya to the housewife Rajlakshmi and the courtesan Pyari Bai he tries to arrive at an understanding of life. Devdas, on the other hand, is the tragic tale of a man who drives himself to drink and debilitation when he is unable to marry his childhood sweetheart Paro. In Parineeta (Espoused), the orphaned Lalita is secretly in love with her guardian Shekhar, but circumstances conspire to drive the two apart. Palli Samaj (The Village Life) has Ramesh, an engineer, returning to the village of his birth to try and rid it of the backwardness that plagues it, even as he tries to revive his childhood ties with Rama, now a widow. In Nishkriti (Deliverance), the strong-willed Shailaja, the youngest daughter-in-law in a joint family, is made an outcast as a result of a misunderstanding; much later, her elders realize their mistake, just in time to save the family from disintegration. Each of the novels showcases the qualities Saratchandra is famous for: everyday stories told in a simple yet gripping style, strong characters, meticulous plotting, true-to-life dialogue, and unforgettable depictions of life in turn-ofthe-century Bengal. Translated especially for Penguin, these classic novels will delight those new to Saratchandra's works as well as those who want to return to them again.

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