

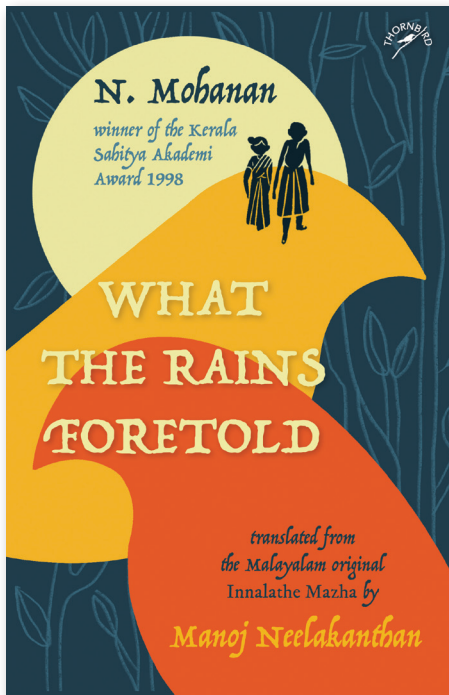
What the Rains Foretold

Winner of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, 1998

N. Mohanan

Translated from the Malayalam original *Innalathe Mazha*
by Manoj Neelakanthan

The tale of an ancient prophecy
and an origin myth of Kerala and
its communities.



What the Rains Foretold relates an origin myth of Kerala and its people. N. Mohanan's work is an introspection into the mind of the protagonist, Vararuchi, and the tragic arc of his life. Young Vararuchi was an accomplished scholar, who sought to challenge destiny and overturn its writ. He was offered the coveted seat of the Royal Pundit at the King's court, but demurs and declares he wishes to pursue the truth.

On hearing a prophecy that he is destined to marry the child of a Pariah couple, Vararuchi seeks to subvert fate. Later he marries Panchami, the beautiful and accomplished young daughter of a Brahmin, but learns she is the same child. They have twelve children, who are forsaken at his bidding as he pursues his quest for knowledge. The children grow into fine young people from different walks of life—religion, warfare, the arts and crafts—to become the progenitors of Kerala, a land that thrives with prosperity and contentment. The conclusion that blends repentance and forgiveness provides a cathartic resolution.

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N. Mohanan (27 April 1933–3 October 1999) was the son of well-known Malayalam writer Lalithambika Antharjanam and Narayanan Namboodiri. He graduated with a degree in the Sciences and thereafter obtained an MA in Malayalam literature from University College, Thiruvananthapuram. Starting as a college professor, he worked in the public relations department of Kerala government, and was the Director of Cultural Affairs, and Managing Director of Kerala State Film Development Corporation. He retired in 1988. His noted works include *Ninte Katha Enteyum*, *Dukhathinte Rathrikal*, *Poojakkedukkaatha Pookkal*, *Seshapathram* and *Innalathe Mazha*.



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Extract from the book:

*'For sure, for sure,
It is ordained.
The writ of destiny
Awaits its unfolding.
The writ of destiny
Brooks no undoing.'*

Vararuchi sprang up and looked angrily upwards, from where the voices came. 'Never, never! The writ of destiny will never happen. It is I, Vararuchi, who says this. This will never happen,' he yelled.

Agitated, Vararuchi walked up and down, wringing his hands in sheer exasperation. At length his gait slackened as he quietened visibly. Looking all around in the darkness, as though searching for someone who would hear him, he declared at the top of his voice, 'Let this be heard, oh Lords of the cardinal directions, Mother Nature, Clairvoyant Messengers! I have heard my fate, my destiny. But I, Vararuchi, am capable of rewriting my destiny... I will prove destiny wrong by my actions. Bear witness, divine forces, that Vararuchi shall not be turned back in his resolve, come what may.'

Speaking thus, he gathered his staff and belongings and disappeared into the night. Presently the skies darkened, the stars hid under heavy clouds and lightning flashed threateningly. A maddening wind tore through the heart of the forest, shaking trees in its wake. Thunder rent the night air as it began to pour heavily.