

Master Turkish author Yaşar Kemal dies at 92

» ONE of Turkey's most celebrated authors and the country's first candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature, Yaşar Kemal, died at the age of 92 in Istanbul on Saturday. He was hospitalized in mid-January due to a lung infection and heart rhythm problems. He had been under intensive care at Istanbul University's Hospital since Jan. 14, 2015. The author will be laid to rest today at Istanbul's Zincirlikuyu cemetery, according to the statement by [Yapı Kredi](#) Publishing House.

Political figures and statesmen have offered their condolences to the family and friends of the senior author. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called Kemal's family and offered his sympathy. "We have deep sorrow over the death of the author," he said. Parliament speaker Cemil Çiçek issued a written statement wishing God's mercy on Kemal, saying, "Kemal will continue to live with us with the works he commended [sic] to his readers." Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu also said in a written statement that he failed to find a word to describe his sorrow for the loss of the "great artist" Yaşar Kemal. "During times when it

was difficult to utter a word, maintaining his dissident attitude and expressing facts without fear moved him to a very special and prestigious position," Davutoğlu said. Main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu called Kemal "one of the giant plane trees of our literary tradition."

Kemal, who wrote more than 20 novels and nearly 10 experimental works, short stories, is also famous for his contributions to recreating Turkish as a literary language. Having both Turkish and Kurdish origins, he was born in October 1923 in Osmaniye. Losing his right eye due to a knife accident, the writer experienced a difficult childhood. He first worked as a letter-writer for illiterate citizens in small villages, then became a journalist and finally a novelist, always believing in "human beings and nature," defining his art as "being at the proletariat's service."

Receiving international acclaim for *İnce Memed* (Memed, My Hawk), which was first published in 1955, Kemal used a mythological hero - the eponymously named *İnce Memed* - to criticize society and its values. In the novel,

Memed runs away to the mountains due to the oppression of the Agha (landowner). Published in 40 languages, the book is based on the lives and sufferings of the Anatolian people. "Though the novel depended upon folkloric material, 'İnce Memed' was not a simple romance of the outlaw. Kemal showed Memed as the potential leader of a peasant rebellion. The novel includes many descriptive and normative passages interpreting the conditions surrounding Memed's run through a socialist point of view," said Hakan Arslanbenzer in his Daily Sabah article. "I am against those who oppress and exploit the people; it does not matter whether oppression comes from feudalism or the bourgeoisie. Whoever is preventing the happiness of the public, I am against it with my art and with my whole life," Kemal said in a 1971 newspaper interview. Including the Cino del Duca World Prize in 1982 and the Legion d'Honneur in 1984, he was awarded with many international and national prizes. In 2013, Armenia's Culture Ministry also awarded him with the Grigor Narekatsi Medal. **DAILY SABAH WITH AA**

