

ONCE AN  
**ACTRESS**

JAYAKANTHAN



**Once an Actress**  
*Oru Nadigai Natakam Parkinal*

Jayakanthan

Translated from Tamil by  
KS Subramanian



INDIAN  
WRITING

Jayakanthan (b 1934) is known for his original thinking and thought-provoking ideas. A prolific writer, he has two autobiographies, two biographies, several novels and novelettes, anthologies of short stories and essays to his credit. He is a Jnanpith Award-winner and a recipient of the Chennai Sanskrita Academy award. His broad canvas often has characters drawn from the lower echelons of life, brought to life by his unique treatment.

*Once An Actress* is about an intense interplay of emotions in a relationship punctuated by intolerance, separation and eventual reunion. An essentially cerebral columnist, Ranga is a sensitive person struggling to overcome his feudal upbringing. For an actress brought up on mainstream theatre, Kalyani is a connoisseur of arts of uncommon maturity. Ranga adores Kalyani but seeks constant evidence of her love for him. Kalyani finds her life's meaning in her involvement with Ranga. Love for her is sincerity, honesty and compassion, not its overt demonstration. This unsettles Ranga. A helpless victim of his chauvinistic pettiness with its thin veneer of intellectual gloss, Ranga seeks and obtains separation from Kalyani. The eventual reunion with a now disabled Kalyani is a moving denouement.

Kalyani is perhaps the most sensitive woman character created by Jayakanthan. The novel offers rare insights into the inner reaches of the human mind. It is a perceptive portrayal of the low-intensity conflict between a sentimental man and a self-sufficient woman.

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