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**Her Right**  
**(A Play in One Act)**

**P R Gopalakrishnan**  
**Kerala.**

*SCENE 1*

*The parlour of a house. It's 11 am. Sitting on a sofa, RESHMA dials a number into a mobile phone and starts talking.*

RESHMA: Hello, good morning Mr Jayant. I am Reshma. How goes you? . . I have to tell you something important. . .

*RESHMA'S mother MOHANA enters and stands still listening to RESHMA. RESHMA gets up and walks up and down the parlour continuing the call.*

I am sorry I can't marry you . . . I am in love with a man. . .

*MOHANA recoils.*

No. I can't. I can't think of a life without him. . .No sir. I can never forget him. . .I know your situation. But I have no other option. My parents were trying to. . . You please cooperate with me to cancel the marriage.

*RESHMA cuts the call with a serious face and sits back on the sofa.*

*Pause.*

MOHANA: So you broke it up?

RESHMA: I could do nothing else for I could never forget Shankar.

*MOHANA sits on the opposite sofa.*

MOHANA: But do you ever think of the situation your parents are in? How could we face the people? All the arrangements are on and then. . .

RESHMA: Many a time I told you not to impose the man on me. You passed through my age. Why can't you gauge my mind? You don't really love me. You only affect love.

MOHANA: Then, again about Shankar. How could I accept him as my son-in-law? His grandfather worked that against us. I can't forget it.

RESHMA: But he is well educated and a highly paid IT professional.

MOHANA: But I can't get off my past.

RESHMA: How could Shankar be responsible for his grandfather's actions, good or bad?

MOHANA: Had you been in my place, could you have forgiven his grandfather?

RESHMA: See, his grandpa is no more. Then, why should you have enmity for his progeny?

MOHANA: No use for arguments or philosophy. I can never accept him as my son-in-law.

RESHMA: But I have the right to take him as my husband.

MOHANA: If he gets into the house I will lose my peace of mind. Do you want it?

RESHMA: Don't you desire my happiness?

MOHANA: Should it be at my cost?

RESHMA: It affects only your ego, nothing else.

*Pause.*

In fact he is magnanimous. Otherwise, he wouldn't have loved me.

MOHANA: It's not magnanimity. Despite his best efforts his grandfather couldn't drive us off our land. And the young man wants to throw me out from here by marrying you.

RESHMA: It is time you put an end to your spirit for vengeance which only spoils your mind and body.

MOHANA: But to forget and forgive is not that easy for an ordinary human being like me.

RESHMA: Man alone could forget and forgive. The other animals can't.

MOHANA: Now back to the question. I can't take him into the house. If you insist on marrying him I will have to move off from here. The choice is yours.

RESHMA: Anyway, I won't allow the marriage with Jayant to take place.

*Pause.*

You don't know how human mind works. Though I am my parents' until I am married off, my mind is my own, not yours. I won't allow anyone to play with it. I should see that you pay for the breakup.

MOHANA: How come you are that cruel on me?

*Pause.*

You say I can't gauge your mind. Do you feel the anxieties and strains a girl's parents undergo until she is married off? You could do it only when you are the mother of a grown up daughter like you.

RESHMA: Better not to be a dictatorial mother like you. Father knows nothing else than dancing to your tunes. But, don't think I will ever dance to your tunes on my marriage.

MOHANA: The boy is good and the family is good. You should reconsider the case.

*Pause.*

The news about the cancellation of the marriage will spread like fire and people will have nothing but derision for us. What reasons could we give? Could we say you cancelled it of your own over your love with another man?

RESHMA: To me my life is more important than your vengeance for a dead man.

MOHANA: Stop arguing and think of it once again. We will try to convince them that it was over some misunderstanding that you called for the cancellation. We will go to any extent to save the alliance.

RESHMA: That means you will stoop before them to save your face. But why can't you shed your spirit for vengeance on a dead man when it confronts the very life of your daughter?

MOHANA: I can only say that you fail to grasp the realities.

*Pause.*

Pray you have a rethink.

*RESHMA'S father DAMODAR enters from the out and sits on the sofa by the right of MOHANA. He notices the grave faces of the two.*

DAMODAR: What's the matter? You are both that grave.

*Long pause.*

Why don't you open your mouths? You quarrelled over something? Come on, we will solve it.

RESHMA: No you can't. If you could have, matters wouldn't have gone that far.

DAMODAR: I am sorry I can't get you.

RESHMA: As long as you are a hen-pecked husband how could you think of your daughter?

*Pause.*

For you your wife is everything and you love me for your wife not as a father would his daughter. Better to hate me of your own than to love me for your wife.

*Pause.*

Have you of your own ever catered to my needs? Whenever I ask you for something you will ask me to tell Mom, and if she Okays it you will have it for me. Mom is the all-powerful Prime Minister and you the rubber-stamp President here. Why you are that scared of your wife? And to satisfy her ego you collude with her to impose on me a man of her choice as my husband.

*Pause.*

No. I won't submit to anyone on my marriage. I am to choose my husband. It is my right.

*Both DAMODAR and MOHANA have sad faces and they look at each other. And, RESHMA has a triumphant air about her.*

*Pause.*

*RESHMA'S elder sister USHA, her husband ASHOK and son BALU enter with their baggage. They are settled in Canada. DAMODAR, MOHANA and RESHMA have affected smiles for them. RESHMA gets up, moves towards BALU, holds him and kisses on his right cheek. Then she picks him up and the two sit on a sofa. USHA and ASHOK sit on a third sofa.*

USHA (*to her parents*): It seems there is an air of sadness here.

ASHOK: I too feel it.

*Pause.*

DAMODAR: Sometimes something unexpected is in the air.

USHA: It is about the marriage?

MOHANA: We will discuss it. You are back from a long and tedious journey. So get refreshed and have food and rest.

USHA: Mom, please say what it is.

DAMODAR: Reshma has a rethink on the alliance.

USHA: Reshma, say what is there at the eleventh hour.

RESHMA: Please ask Papa and Mom.

MOHANA: She refuses to accept Jayant.

USHA: For what?

DAMODAR: She wants to go with another man.

USHA: What bloody non-sense she is putting up? And who is the guy?

MOHANA: He is none else than Shankar. You know his connections with our family.

USHA: The bloody rascal's grandson?

RESHMA: Usha, mind your words. Shankar is well educated and a highly paid IT professional.

USHA: What is the problem with the other man? He is also well educated and well placed.

RESHMA: He may be good. But I can't leave my man.

USHA: My man! There is something wrong with you.

RESHMA: The marriage with the man you have chosen for me will spoil his life as well as that of mine.

USHA: How?

RESHMA: No arguments. I can't take him into my life. And I have informed him.

ASHOK: So, you broke it up?

RESHMA: What else could I do?

MOHANA: We will request them to . . .

DAMODAR: The boy's parents are good. And they too may find difficulty in saving their face over the abrupt cancellation of the marriage.

RESHMA: My word is final.

ASHOK (*to Usha*): It seems the matter is over. We can't withstand the embarrassment. Get ready. Off to my house and then back to Canada the next week.

*ASHOK gets up and leaves the parlour to the out. USHA looks at him.*

## **SCENE 2**

*A few days later. A restaurant. It's about 5 pm. RESHMA and her lover SHANKAR are sitting at a small table in a corner.*

SHANKAR: You broke it up?

RESHMA: Yeah.

SHANKAR: I feel you went too far.

RESHMA: What you mean? You don't love me?

*A BOY enters.*

BOY: What should you have sir?

SHANKAR: Coffee and banana fry for both.

*The BOY leaves.*

SHANKAR: I do love you. And I am prepared to marry you braving anything. But. . .

RESHMA: But?

SHANKAR: It so happens that your mother can't accept me as her son-in-law. My grandfather brought her family much harm and though he is dead and gone she can't forget and forgive him. I can't blame her. It is but natural that man gets emotional on certain matters. Now, suppose we marry despite her objections. Could we have a peaceful life? Her mind will always be in rage against you and me. And, it will be a torture to her as well as to us. Should we give rise to such a situation?

*The BOY returns with tea and banana fry, places them on the table and leaves.*

RESHMA: That means we should part ways?

SHANKAR: If your mother's objections were not from an emotional plane, we could have disregarded them. Then, if you are bent on joining me despite everything, I will gladly take you into my life.

*Pause.*

RESHMA: Your points carry weight. But how could we forget each other and the visions we had?

SHANKAR: Visions won't stand before realities. Am I right?

*Pause.*



RESHMA (*embarrassed*): I feel you are. (*Aside*) He desires peace. I was wrong to have expected a different approach from him.

SHANKAR: Come. We will have the coffee.

*SHANKAR has a smile on his face and RESHMA struggles for one.*

### SCENE 3

*After six months. The parlour of RESHMA'S house. It is about 4 pm. RESHMA is sitting on a sofa reading a newspaper. MOHANA enters and sits on the opposite sofa.*

MOHANA: There is another proposal. The boy is a high paid executive in Mumbai.

RESHMA: Who is he?

MOHANA: He is Rammohan. His mother has put it up.

RESHMA: The woman in dirty clothes rearing cattle?

MOHANA: Though poor they are good. You will have a bright future with him.

RESHMA: Bright future! His father is a low paid government servant.

MOHANA: But they worked hard to bring up and educate their only child. You should respect them. And the boy now earns enough to raise them up.

RESHMA: But the woman doesn't give up the remnants of their past. Then how could she rise in life? I don't think she will extend me a decent life. She will pull me down to her level. I will have to tend cattle.

MOHANA: Don't despise the poor. Cattle-rearing is a noble work. My parents did it.

RESHMA: Now you won't despise the poor. What you were doing all these years? Boast of your father's wealth and deride the poor. In fact, Papa married you for your wealth.

*Pause.*

What you want is not my welfare. Otherwise you wouldn't have taken me off Shankar.

MOHANA: It seems you have only hate for me.

RESHMA: You hate me and you say I hate you.

MOHANA: How could I hate my own child?

RESHMA: Your hate for Shankar was nothing but your hate for me. Even after his exit from the scene with his marriage with another girl you continue hating me and your hate comes off in many ways. Otherwise, you wouldn't try to marry me into a wretched family.

MOHANA: They are not wretched. The boy is good in every way. He knows our standards. And he will never pull you down.

RESHMA: He may not. But the woman would. She would treat me as a servant.

MOHANA: Don't speak that deridingly of the poor woman. Has she done anything against you?

RESHMA: You want to spoil my life. So the proposal. I can't accept it.

MOHANA: Then, whom do you want to marry?

RESHMA: So you are at the end of your search for a husband for me? You want to send me away with someone, no matter whom?

MOHANA: Don't be that cruel towards your mother.

RESHMA: I am not cruel towards you. It is the other way round.

*Long pause.*

Anyway, as I have no other option, I will accept the proposal.

MOHANA (*aside*): Thank God, the long strain is over.

*Shortly RESHMA marries RAMMOHAN and moves to his parental home.*

#### **SCENE 4**

*One morning, a few days after the marriage. The kitchen of RAMMOHAN'S house. Breakfast is laid on the table. RAMMOHAN and his father GANGADHAR are sitting side by side at one side of the table. RAMMOHAN'S mother LAKSHMI enters and serves them food.*

GANGADHAR: Where is Reshma?

LAKSHMI: She is out on a purchase. She will be back soon.

*RESHMA enters with a parcel in hand, sits at the table opposite RAMMOHAN, opens the parcel and transfers parathas and chicken curry to the plates before her. Then, she starts having the items. GANGADHAR and RAMMOHAN are stunned at the action of RESHMA.*

GANGADHAR: Why should you have separate food from the out? Can't you go with us?

RESHMA: No. I have for days been on the dirty things you people consume. I am not used to having such things at home. So I am in for a change.

GANGADHAR (*getting up*): I don't feel like having breakfast.

LAKSHMI: Be patient. Let her have what she likes.

*GANGADHAR exits.*

RAMMOHAN: But, how could she alone have special food and that too from the out? It can't be allowed.

RESHMA: What do you say? I can't have the food of my choice?

RAMMOHAN: You may have it at your house, not here.

RESHMA: Why did you bring me here? To eat your cheap food? No. I should have what I want.

*RAMMOHAN gets up and makes to the door.*

RESHMA: It doesn't matter whether you have food or not. I should have food.

*RAMMOHAN exits.*

LAKSHMI (*holding RESHMA'S left hand in her hands*): Dear girl, tomorrow I will give you anything you want. Now call in Rammohan. I will bring his father. Let's have breakfast together.

RESHMA: He left of his own. Why should I try to bring him back?

*LAKSHMI'S face exhibits tension.*

*Pause.*

Do you bother about my toils here? I can't work that hard in the kitchen.

LAKSHMI: Don't worry. I will do all the work if it is difficult for you.

RESHMA: Then, why should you keep the cattle's pots, etc., here? Can't you keep them in the cowshed?

LAKSHMI: We are giving an extension to the cowshed to keep such things.

RESHMA: But I am not accustomed to such things.

LAKSHMI: Don't worry. I will remove them from here now itself.

*LAKSHMI exits with some pots, etc., and soon returns.*

*Pause.*

I fear things are getting out of hand. I can't bear it. I am a poor woman who has so far stood for the welfare of my husband and son. And, now I stand for the welfare of my daughter also. I take you as my daughter, not as daughter-in-law.

*Tears come off LAKSHMI'S eyes and she exits and when she is out RESHMA has a smile on her face. RAMMOHAN enters.*

RAMMOHAN: How could you smile when there is no peace in the house?

RESHMA (*angrily*): I don't take away anyone's peace. When I stand for my rights you say I break peace.

*Pause.*

Don't think I will submit to anyone. And, don't try to coerce me into anything.

RAMMOHAN: There is no question of submission or coercion.

*Pause.*

Please try to understand the situation and adapt to it.

RESHMA: No. I am not adaptable. Your parents and you should accept me as I am. That is the way to peace. So far I hoped for it. But this morning I felt you people wouldn't.

*Pause*

What comforts do I have here? Don't you know I need money to meet my personal needs? So far I have been going on with my mother's money. Now, after my marriage, could I ask her to provide for my needs? Or, should I tap on the mercy of your parents for my needs?

RAMMOHAN: Next month on you will have some pocket money.

RESHMA: But, please don't try to monitor my spending.

*Pause*

RAMMOHAN: My parents are simple. They know only to love.

RESHMA: I don't think they do love me. And, you too don't really love me. Your love is reserved for your parents.

RAMMOHAN: I love you as your husband and my parents as their child.

RESHMA: I can't take your words until they are followed by actions.

RAMMOHAN: See, we will be here until I join back for duty. Can't you go well here for a few more days? Once we are at my workplace you can have everything you want.

### **SCENE 5**

*Two months later. It's about 10 pm. The drawing room of RAMMOHAN'S flat in Mumbai. It's in between the front door and a bedroom. RAMMOHAN is sitting on a sofa and RESHMA on an opposite sofa. In between is a tea table.*

RAMMOHAN: You took some bills from my purse?

RESHMA: Yeah.

RAMMOHAN: I provide for you and I give you some pocket money too. Then, why the need for more money?

RESHMA: A sales executive called in and I placed an order.

RAMMOHAN: A costly purchase?

RESHMA: Is it that costly?

RAMMOHAN: I spend over a plan for each month. And, when the spending increases it affects the savings.

RESHMA: Why should you now be that serious about savings? Can't we have it later?

RAMMOHAN: We have to build a house in place of the poor one we now have.

RESHMA: There is enough comfort here. Then why should you think of the old house there?

RAMMOHAN: Don't you see my parents' condition? Don't they deserve some comfort after their long struggle to bring me up?

RESHMA: We will think of it later.

RAMMOHAN: You have little regard for my parents?

RESHMA: You have regard only for your parents, not at all for me.

RAMMOHAN: It's only your feeling. But I can't go with you if you have no regard for my parents.

*Pause.*

RESHMA: The chunk of your income goes to your parents and I am left with something like a paltry allowance. You treat me like a servant. I toil here and your parents reap the benefits. But for me you would lose a servant's wages. Why not shed a part of the savings on me?

RAMMOHAN: Why should you take you and me as two disconnected beings? Your savings is my savings and your loss my loss. Likewise my savings is your savings and my loss your loss.

RESHMA: Ideals won't stand before hard realities. A realistic and practical approach is the need. It's your duty to provide for my wants, especially when I have no income of my own. When you married me I thought you will look after my welfare.

RAMMOHAN: No need for quarrel. Next month on you can have a higher amount of pocket money.

*RESHMA has a naughty smile for RAMMOHAN. She sits by the left of RAMMOHAN and kisses on his right cheek.*

### SCENE 6

*A few days later. The same scene and time. RESHMA and RAMMOHAN are sitting on opposite sofas.*

RESHMA: I feel like having some clothes. Shall we have a purchase tomorrow?

RAMMOHAN: We will have it the next Sunday.

RESHMA: Better I will have them myself tomorrow itself. And what should you have, clothes for pants and shirts or ready-mades?

RAMMOHAN: I already have enough. So nothing more for me. You may have what you want. It's month end. So you may use my credit card.

RESHMA: My friend Gita has a new beautiful watch, a new brand. See, she has sent me a message.

*RESHMA sits by the right of RAMMOHAN and shows him a WhatsApp message on her mobile phone.*

Shall I have a similar one also tomorrow?

RAMMOHAN: We will have it next month.

RESHMA: Anyway we are using the credit card. Then, why not have it too now itself?

RAMMOHAN: If you that want it you may have it tomorrow.

RESHMA: You are a sweet boy.

*RESHMA embraces RAMMOHAN with a kiss.*

## SCENE 7

*A few days later. The same scene. It is about 8 pm. The front door opens and RAMMOHAN and RESHMA enter. RAMMOHAN has an air of anxiety and tension about him and RESHMA that of triumph. RAMMOHAN sits on a sofa and RESHMA stands before him.*

RAMMOHAN: Please take your seat.

*RESHMA sits on the opposite sofa. RAMMOHAN removes his shoes.*

Who is that fellow you were talking with when I entered the lawns?

RESHMA: He is Manohar, a sales executive. Last month I had the purchase order through him.

RAMMOHAN: He lives here in the flat?

RESHMA: Yeah. In H 39, on rent.

RAMMOHAN: Then, about him?

RESHMA: He is a divorcee.

RAMMOHAN: With or without children?

RESHMA: Without children.

RAMMOHAN: He told you the grounds for divorce?

RESHMA: He says his wife eloped with another man shortly after marriage.

RAMMOHAN: It seems you have more than necessary information about him.

RESHMA: He gave me the details. That's all.

RAMMOHAN: But you so precisely remember them!

RESHMA: You don't know how the world moves. So the unwanted comments. See, I am educated and I know my limits. He is a smart young fellow with good manners and so nothing happens from an interaction with him.



RAMMOHAN: How come his newlywed wife leaves him for another man?

RESHMA: Maybe over her fault.

RAMMOHAN: See, when a newlywed young man's wife deserts him for another man there may be wrong with either of them or with both. And a deserted husband may try to seduce other women just to exhibit his masculinity. So be cautious about making friends with such men.

RESHMA: I know how to safeguard me. Why should you foresee that he may go for some misadventure on me?

RAMMOHAN: Just a cautioning. That's all.

*Pause*

This morning the bank asked me to pay One Hundred Fifty Thousand into the Credit Card account. Apart from the clothes and the watch what else you had to incur that high a debit?

RESHMA: I had some ornaments too to wear on special occasions, four bangles and two pairs of studs. They cost one hundred thousand, then the clothes and the watch about fifty thousand.

RAMMOHAN (*with a gasp*): How come you make such costly purchases without informing me?

RESHMA: I don't think it is that costly, when you are highly paid.

RAMMOHAN: Though highly paid, I can't now afford such luxuries. I was born poor. So my first preference is for savings, not luxuries.

RESHMA: You knew before our marriage that I belonged to a rich household. Then, why you couldn't have seen that I could not that easily comport with your standards of life?

RAMMOHAN: When two persons marry they should both compromise on many factors for a happy married life. But you are not in for compromise on anything. Please consider my affordability on luxuries.

RESHMA: It is better to part ways if you can't meet my wants.

RAMMOHAN: What we want is acceptance of a mid-point. You come down a few steps and I will climb a few.

RESHMA (*with a wry face*): I don't know how much I could descend.

### SCENE 8

*After a week. The drawing room of RAMMOHAN'S flat. It is about noon. RESHMA and MANOHAR are sitting on opposite sofas. RESHMA is going through some brochures on the tea table. The calling bell rings. RESHMA opens the door. RAMMOHAN enters. Seeing him MANOHAR gets up. RESHMA is unaffected.*

RESHMA (*to RAMMOHAN*): This is Mr Manohar the sales executive I have told you about.

RAMMOHAN: Hello, how do you do?

MANOHAR: How do you do?

RAMMOHAN: My head aches. So I left office early. I want rest.

*RAMMOHAN gets into the bedroom. MANOHAR collects his papers from the tea table and exits. RESHMA closes the door and sits on a sofa.*

*Pause.*

*RAMMOHAN comes off the bedroom and sits on the opposite sofa.*

RESHMA: Your head really aches or you are come for a surprise check on me, I mean to see whether I entertain him when you are out?

RAMMOHAN: My presumption was right. You often keep me off and when I am out you entertain another man. What is your intention?

RESHMA: Could you stop me from entertaining someone I like.

RAMMOHAN: You bloody. . .

*RAMMOHAN gets up and advances towards RESHMA with his raised right hand.*

RESHMA: No. Don't raise your hand. I have done no wrong by interacting with a sales executive. If you have doubts about my integrity we can part ways.

*RAMMOHAN withdraws from her and exits the front door.*

### **SCENE 9**

*A few days later. The same scene. It is about 2 pm. The calling bell rings continuously. Some minutes go by. RESHMA comes out of the bedroom, closes its door, moves towards the front door and opens it. RAMMOHAN enters.*

RAMMOHAN: Why the delay?

RESHMA: I fell asleep while reading a book.

*RAMMOHAN walks towards the bedroom. RESHMA stops him on the way.*

RESHMA: Come, please sit on the sofa.

*RAMMOHAN steps back and sits on the sofa. RESHMA sits opposite him.*

Why back home so early?

RAMMOHAN: I had a meeting with the executive of another firm and when it was over I returned.

RESHMA: You look tired. I will get you some cool drinks. Please come to the kitchen.

*RAMMOHAN and RESHMA enter the kitchen.*

*Pause.*

*The bedroom door opens, MANOHAR comes out and silently walks to the front door. Seeing him RAMMOHAN rushes out the kitchen and falls on him. MANOHAR resists and a scuffle breaks out. RESHMA rushes in and helps MANOHAR in assaulting RAMMOHAN. RAMMOHAN falls down with his forehead hitting the ground with a thud. He swoons and his forehead bleeds. RESHMA picks up a mobile phone and makes a call.*

Hello, this is from the Royal Apartment. Could you please send a taxi? The matter is urgent.

*Long pause.*

*A taxi's horn is heard. RESHMA and MANOHAR lift RAMMOHAN and carry him out the front door.*

### **SCENE 10**

*After half an hour. A room in a mental hospital. The door is open. RAMMOHAN is brought in by two ATTENDERS on a stretcher and laid on the bed. RESHMA and MANOHAR enter. In a few minutes a DOCTOR and a NURSE enter. RESHMA and the ATTENDERS stand near the bed and MANOHAR a few feet away from the bed.*

DOCTOR: What happened?

RESHMA: He is not well for days. He can't sleep and often cries aloud at nights in fear. Often loses temper and sometimes assaults me. Sometimes he leaves office at midday and returns home or wanders around. Though I tried my best I couldn't have him treated. A while ago this gentleman called in for a purchase order. And, all on a sudden he pounced on him and over a scuffle between them he fell down with his head hitting the ground. I was now in the kitchen.

*The doctor examines RAMMOHAN.*

DOCTOR (*to the ATTENDERS*): You keep watch on him.

(*to the NURSE*): He will wake up in about an hour and when he wakes up inform me.

NURSE: Yes sir.

*The DOCTOR exits and a few minutes later MANOHAR exits with a communicative look on RESHMA.*

***After an hour***

*RAMMOHAN opens his eyes and sees RESHMA standing before him.*

RAMMOHAN: You bloody. . .

*RAMMOHAN gets up from the bed and attempts to pounce on RESHMA and RESHMA moves to a corner. The ATTENDERS catch him. RAMMOHAN resists them. But they succeed in forcefully laying him on the bed. One ATTENDER holds his hands tight and the other his legs.*

You rascals leave me, leave me. . .

*RAMMOHAN tries to free himself from the grip of the ATTENDERS and the tussle continues. The NURSE presses the calling bell button and in a few minutes the DOCTOR enters.*

DOCTOR: What happened?

NURSE: He tried to attack his wife.

*The DOCTOR makes a sign to the NURSE and the NURSE injects a medicine into RAMMOHAN. Soon RAMMOHAN falls asleep. RESHMA has a hidden smile on her face. The DOCTOR, the ATTENDERS and the NURSE exit.*

### SCENE 11

*The next morning. The same scene. RAMMOHAN comes off his sleep and sees RESHMA sitting before him on a sofa with a smile. Soon RAMMOHAN gets up and embraces her.*

RESHMA: No. You can no more have me.

*RESHMA gets off RAMMOHAN'S embrace, moves to a corner, punches her throat with her right hand and presses the calling bell button. In a few minutes the DOCTOR and the NURSE enter.*

DOCTOR: What happened?

RESHMA: He tried to strangle me.

*RESHMA shows the DOCTOR the red mark, caused by her punching, on her neck.*

RAMMOHAN: No. I only tried to. . .

*The DOCTOR makes a sign to the NURSE and she administers an injection of medicine on RAMMOHAN. Soon RAMMOHAN falls asleep.*

### SCENE 12

*A morning after two days. The same scene. RAMMOHAN wakes up and sees LAKSHMI sitting on his bed and GANGADHAR on a sofa before the bed. RAMMOHAN sits up and LAKSHMI holds him with her left hand.*

RAMMOHAN: Where is she? She is a . . .

LAKSHMI: Please don't talk. Take rest.

*RAMMOHAN lies down and falls into a nap. RESHMA enters and moves towards the bed.*

RESHMA: How is he?

LAKSHMI: He asked for you.

*GANGADHAR exits and LAKSHMI enters the bathroom. RESHMA walks to RAMMOHAN and pulls him down the bed.*

RAMMOHAN: You bloody. . .

*RESHMA scratches her left arm with her right fingers and screams. LAKSHMI rushes in from the bathroom.*

LAKSHMI: What happened?

RESHMA: He attacked me and when I resisted he fell down.

*LAKSHMI notices the bruises on RESHMA'S left arm. RESHMA moves her right hand over the bruises and weeps. LAKSHMI presses the calling bell button. The DOCTOR and the NURSE enter.*

DOCTOR: What happened?

LAKSHMI: He tried to harm her.

*The DOCTOR, the NURSE, RESHMA and LAKSHMI lift RAMMOHAN and lay him on the bed. The DOCTOR makes a sign to the NURSE and she injects a medicine into RAMMOHAN. Soon RAMMOHAN is asleep*

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### SCENE 13

*After three days. The same scene. It is 10 am. RAMMOHAN is lying in bed and LAKSHMI sitting by him on the bed. The door opens and RESHMA and MANOHAR enter with broad smiles on*

*their faces and move towards RAMMOHAN. On seeing them RAMMOHAN loses his control and, over his attempt to pounce on them, he throws LAKSHMI on to the floor with his legs and he falls down on the ground with his head heavily hitting the ground. RAMMOHAN screams and LAKSHMI tries to get up. RESHMA and MANOHAR exit.*

## **CURTAIN**

### **Third-person Biographical Note:**

P R Gopalakrishnan was born at Mulanthuruthi, Travancore-Cochin (now Kerala), in 1950. He had BSc (Mathematics) from the Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, Kochi, and a Post-graduate Diploma in Journalism from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. For 28 years he was on the service of the erstwhile State Bank of Travancore. He resides at Chottanikkara, Kerala. Some of his writings have been published in 'The Criterion'.