SUMMARIES

1. Under the Greenwood Tree

Fancy Day in Under the Greenwood Tree was the new schoolmistress at Mellstock. Her father Geoffrey Day, the head game-keeper to the Earl of Wesex, had saved every penny for his daughter. Dick Dewy fell in love with her at first sight. He was the son of Reuben Dewy who was a tranter. His was a respectable family, though not rich. Reuben was the leader of the church choir. Parson Maybold wanted Fancy to be at the church cabinet-organ and take the place of the choir at the instance of Farmer Shiner, who was also interested in her. Maybold, too, loved her.

Fancy encouraged Shiner and Dick by dancing with both at the tranter's party. She, however, found out that shiner had not a steady temperament and so induced Dick to propose to her. Even after the proposal, Dick was often unsure of her love for him. She dressed herself with special care and enjoyed admiration from other men. She explained that it was her nature to appreciate flattery.

Fancy took the place of the village band at church. She and Maybold came closer. If Shiner was superior to her in wealth, Maybold was superior to her in status.

Dick asked Geoffrey Day for his daughter's hand in marriage. Geoffrey pointed out the difference in wealth
between his daughter and Dick, and sent him away. He had been encouraging Shiner in his courtship of Fancy.

Fancy dieted and became lean on the advice of a woman, who was considered a witch for her sharp mind. Geoffrey thought Fancy was unable to eat because of despairing of marrying Dick. Hence he gave her permission to marry Dick.

Maybold went to the school and proposed to Fancy. He did not know that she and Dick had already been engaged to marry. Fancy was tempted to agree to the proposal but needed two days to make up her mind. Later, Maybold found out about her engagement with Dick from Dick himself. His opinion about Fancy as an angel changed. He wrote to her stating that she was wrong to forsake Dick. Even before his letter reached her, she had sent a note to him asking his forgiveness for her vacillation and withdrawing the answer she had hastily given.

Fancy and Dick got married at last. She affirmed her devotion to him. He said that their joy was the result of their determination to have no secrets between them. She agreed. But, at once, she thought of a secret she would never tell.

Thus Dick's married bliss was questionable since Fancy had continued to be coquettish from beginning to end.
2. A Pair of Blue Eyes

Elfride Swancourt in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was the daughter of the rector Christopher Swancourt. The architect Stephen Smith stayed with them in order that he could make drawings of the isle and tower of the Parish church with a view to its renovation. Elfride had considered herself to be above the young men of her village. She thought that Stephen was a gentleman and so she was inclined to accept his advances. In certain respects he did not behave like a man equal to her in birth and breeding. For instance, his Latin pronunciation was awful. He did not know horseriding, too. Her father, however, thought that he belonged to the high family of Stephen Fitzmaurice Smiths of Caxbury Manor.

Meanwhile, Elfride and Stephen had gone for walks together. He had kissed her and embraced her. Suddenly he told her one day that he was not a nobleman but the son of Lord Luxellian's master-mason John Smith, who lived in the same village. Swancourt advised his daughter not to allow Stephen to court her any longer. She was angry with her father for having encouraged her in her love for him and then asking her not to love him. She and Stephen felt that they should do something so that their relationship would
remain strong forever. They agreed to elope. She reached Plymouth but found that the licence could only be used in Stephen’s parish in London. Hence they started for London. While in the train, her mind changed. Her action seemed rash. Hence she requested Stephen to allow her to go back home without getting married.

Mrs. Jethway alone had noticed Elfride while travelling. She was waiting for a chance to take revenge on Elfride. She believed that her son had died because Elfride had jilted him. Stephen left for India on business. Elfride’s father had married a woman six years older than him for her wealth so that his daughter could be settled well in life. After a season in London, Elfride’s outlook had completely changed. The love between her and Stephen seemed to be infatuation because both were young. She longed for a mature man’s love. Her stepmother’s kinsman by name Knight had written an article criticizing the romance that Elfride had written. When both met, she found out that he was more mature and intelligent than Stephen. Her love for Stephen faded as she moved closer to knight. On one occasion Knight fell down on the face of a crag and was precariously hanging about six hundred and fifty feet above the sea. Her rescue of him from death was the final stroke that erased Elfride’s love for Stephen completely.
Knight had the strange desire to marry a girl who had
had no previous experience of love. Elfride was confused. She was afraid that he would not marry her if he knew her past, especially her unsuccessful elopement. Knight, however, came to know that she had been kissed by somebody else. He also found out that, before Stephen, she had had another suitor. Her effort to explain that she had not encouraged Jethway by word or deed fell on deaf ears.

Mrs. Jethway was killed by suffocation when the church tower fell on her. Before her death, she had done what she had always wanted to do. She had written a letter to knight revealing Elfride's unsuccessful elopement with Stephen. Knight left Elfride for good. But Elfride came to his room in London and tried to explain her innocence. Her father traced her to Knight's room, accused her of having compromised his family name and took her away. Knight and Stephen met in London. Knight learnt from Stephen that Elfride's unsuccessful elopement with Stephen was the result of a whim similar to that which had brought her to his own room. He realized his mistake and decided to marry her. Stephen, on the other hand, guessed the strained relationship between Knight and Elfride and wanted to approach her again. Each started for Endelstow without the other's knowledge. Both, however, met at the station. At
Endelstow they discovered that Elfride’s coffin had been travelling with them in the same train.

They found out from Elfride’s maid Unity that Lord Luxellian had courted and married Elfride after his wife’s death. Elfride had married him only because she thought that it was her duty to make her family happy. Even after her engagement, she fell down unconscious at the mention of Knight’s name by her maid. So much was her love for him. Hence she remained very weak after the marriage and died of a miscarriage in London.

When Knight and Stephen visited Luxellian’s family vault, where the dead lay buried, they saw Lord Luxellian embracing Elfride’s Coffin in grief.
3. The Return of the Native

Eustacia Vye was educated, refined and very beautiful. She felt that providence was unjust in having wasted her accomplishments on Egdon Heath. Her grandfather was not rich enough to have her settled in Budmouth, the place she liked. Damon Wildeve was the only educated man in her vicinity. He was an engineer but ran an inn in the heath. Eustacia knew that Wildeve was beneath her in social standing. Still, for want of a better man, she half-heartedly permitted him to court her. She slighted him often. So he courted Thomasin Yeobright simultaneously. He would have married her but for a slight mistake. At the eleventh hour he discovered that the marriage licence was meant for his parish in London and not for the little town he had taken Thomasin to.

Clym was a native of the heath, who was returning from Paris, where he had a job in a jewel shop. Eustacia was delighted to hear about the return of Clym from her dream city of Paris. She thought that here was her chance to escape from the heath. They came to know each other and fell in love. Wildeve found that he was no more the object of Eustacia's admiration and hurriedly married Thomasin.
Mrs. Yeobright warned her son Clym not to pay his addresses to Eustacia, who, in her opinion, was an idle, voluptuous woman. Clym did not listen to her, and, at one stage, quarrelled with her on Eustacia’a account. He married Eustacia and lived away from his mother at Alderworth, which was in another part of the heath. Though Clym had told Eustacia that he would not return to Paris, she secretly hoped that he would take her there. His aim of educating the children of the heath miscarried since he had almost spoilt his sight by nightly reading as a preparation. Instead of obliging Eustacia’s longing to go to Paris, he became a furze cutter for a meagre income just like any uneducated peasant. When Eustacia came to know that Wildeve had suddenly inherited ten thousand pounds from a relative, her former interest in him revived.

Mrs. Yeobright one day started for Alderworth. When she approached the house, she saw a man enter. She did not know that he was Wildeve. She went to the door and knocked. Clym was asleep. Eustacia was talking to Wildeve in another room. She went to the window and looked out. Seeing Mrs. Yeobright, she backed away. Clym moved in bed. Eustacia thought that he would open the door when his mother knocked a second time. Clym, however, did not wake up. Mrs. Yeobright had seen Eustacia’s face at the window. She felt
so disappointed and exhausted that she thought her end was approaching. She was muttering to a small boy all that had happened on that day. A snake also had bitten her.

Clym had a bad dream about his mother, and at once set out for Blooms End, where she lived. On the way he found her unconscious and carried her to a shed. Treatment was of no use. Mrs. Yeobright died.

Clym found out from the boy all that had happened to his mother at his door. He tried in vain to make his wife reveal the name of the man who had been with her on that day. She, however, explained that she had not refused to open the door intentionally. She felt crushed and left for Mistover, her former house in the heath.

Eustacia had hoped in vain for a message from her husband. She was so vexed that she sought Wildeve's help for escaping from the heath. He readily agreed to take her to Budmouth. Her idea was to go to Budmouth first, and then to leave for some distant place. Meanwhile Clym made up his mind to write a note to his wife. But her grandfather, who received it just before her departure, decided to give it to her the next day. It had begun to rain heavily. Still, she set out with an umbrella. It suddenly dawned on her that she had not got the money to go
beyond Budmouth. She felt it beneath her dignity to ask Wildeve for money.

Finding some movement at the door, Eustacia’s grandfather searched for her. When he did not find her, he rushed to Blooms End, where Clym had gone to live after his mother’s death. Mrs. Wildeve also went there with her baby and told Clym that her husband had left with a lot of money to elope with Eustacia. Clym went out in search of his wife. He met the Reddleman Mr. Venn near his cart. Both heard a sound as if somebody had jumped into the weir nearby. They ran and found a heap of female clothes floating on the water. Clym jumped in. Wildeve followed suit. Venn got in floating on a plank. He alone could keep himself floating on the seething water. He caught hold of somebody’s hair and pulled that person out on to the bank. It was Clym. Wildeve was clinging to Clym’s legs. Thomasin also had come there with some men. Together they found out Eustacia. All the three unconscious persons were transported to the inn. Clym alone revived. The doctor declared the other two dead.

Clym rejected Thomasin’s advances. He decided to remain unmarried. Thomasin married Venn. Clym became an itinerant preacher.
4. The Woodlanders

Grace Melbury in The Woodlanders had got educated at her father's instance and found herself above the range of the uneducated young man Giles Winterborne, who had been the lover of her girlhood. Dr. Edred Fitzpiers had moved into Hintock, where he had a small practice. He was a man of noble birth, though penniless. Grace’s father Melbury had married the woman who had been meant for Giles’s father. He had always wanted to make amends by giving his daughter in marriage to Giles. But he doubted whether he could keep his word since he found Giles far below Grace’s refinement. Marty was a poor plain girl, who loved Giles.

Grace was strangely affected whenever she went near Fitzpiers. She was caught between the sincerity of Giles and the refinement and fascination of Edred Fitzpiers. The house and properties in Giles’s possession were actually leased to him for Mr. Marty’s life. When South died, Giles became poor, his properties having returned to Mrs. Charmond. Melbury was determined not to encourage Giles for the hand of his daughter. When he saw his daughter in the company of Fitzpiers often, he induced her to marry him.

Soon after her marriage, Grace was worried to see her husband Fitzpiers getting interested in Felice Charmond.
She was the owner of the neighbouring glades and groves. As a young girl, Felice had met Fitzpiers briefly. She was poor then. She became a play-actress. Later she married Mr. Charmond, and, after his death, she inherited all his wealth. When Fitzpiers met her a second time he felt that he ought to have married somebody like her and not an uneducated man's daughter. When he had been courting Grace, he had had a secret affair with the village girl Suke Damson. Grace found it out immediately after Fitzpiers had run away with Felice Charmond. Fitzpiers's infidelity gave her the freedom to revive her former friendship for Giles.

Melbury heard of the legal possibility of getting a divorce for his daughter based on her husband's disloyalty. He went to London with this intention. In his eagerness to make amends for his having gone back on his word to Giles, he wrote to him and his daughter to renew their friendship. Giles on one occasion gave her a kiss at her invitation. But Melbury soon returned with the confirmation that Fitzpiers's disloyalty was not enough cause for her to get a divorce from him.

A letter came to Grace from Fitzpiers informing her that he was returning to Hintock in repentance. She was unable to face her disloyal husband and decided to go to her friend's house in a neighbouring village. On her way she
met Giles in a small hut in the woods. She requested him to help her reach her friend's house. She had to stay in the cottage since it began to rain. He was suffering from a disease then. It was the second attack after the gap of a few months. He did not reveal it to Grace. He spent the night in another hut far smaller and ill-equipped for a patient. Several days she remained hidden and finally discovered him fully wet and far advanced in his disease. She knew that her husband alone had the talent to cure Giles, if possible. She ran to him. He readily came but found him dead.

Fitzpiers had to move out of Hintock to accommodate his wife in her house. So very vexed was she with her husband. She, however, had to take the medicine her husband had given her to cure the disease she had contracted from Giles.

A former lover of Lady Charmond had shot her dead before shooting himself. The path was now clear for the reunion of Fitzpier and Grace. Grace was too devoted to Giles to accept Fitzpiers at once. She accepted him, however, when she found him more reasonable than before. He had a good practice in a distant town. Her father and the villagers, however, were not very optimistic about her happiness with her wayward husband.
5. *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*

Tess Durbeyfield in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* was a poor but beautiful girl of the village of Marlott. Her father John Durbeyfield one day heard that he belonged to the great family of the d’Urbervilles. His wife Joan asked her daughter to visit the rich noble lady Mrs d’Urberville at Trantridge to claim kin. Tess happened to run her cart into the mail-coach one might; and her horse, which was the main support of the family, died. She thought that she ought to do something for the family. So she reluctantly left for Trantridge.

She met Alec d’Urberville, who got enamoured of her beauty. She did not like him. Alec did not introduce her to his mother. Tess came back home and told her mother that she would not go back to Trantridge. Her mother mistook Alec’s interest in Tess for a desire to marry her and sent her back to him. He took advantage of her innocence and defencelessness and deflowered her. Nor was he a true d’Urberville. His father, who had been in business, had assumed the title and bought Tranridge to give his family a semblance of high standing. Alec wanted to retain her without ever proposing to marry her. Hence she returned to Marlott.
Her family became the laughing stock of the entire village since she had become pregnant without getting married. When the baby died, the parson refused to give it a holy burial. Tess had to go out to work on the field very soon. The instinct to enjoy her youth could not be repressed by her for long. Hence she sought a new life in a distant dairy called Talbothays. A gentleman called Angel Clare had come there to learn the ways of farming. He was the man whom Tess had met briefly years ago on the village lea at Marlott when a dance was going on. She had taken a liking for him. He did not, however, remember seeing her.

Angel fell in love with Tess both for her beauty and for her sad ideas on life, which were the result of her education up to the sixth standard, her poverty and her miserable experiences. She could not resist falling in love with him. She accepted his proposal but put off marriage lest he should reject her on knowing her past. She could not, however, postpone their marriage endlessly. She wrote a detailed letter about her past and pushed it under his door before their marriage. He did not see it. On their first night he confessed that he had had forty-eight hours of dissipation with a strange woman. Made bold by his confession, she revealed her unhappy past. Angel accused her of having deceived him and left for Brazil.
Tess gave her family whatever little money her husband had given her. There was no employment available at dairies since it was the lean season. She went to an arid place called Flintcomb-Ash, where Tess had to do hard outdoor work. Her attempt to meet her husband's parents miscarried because she found them too good and noble for her. But she had misjudged them. Had they known her sin and misery, they would have readily gone to her rescue. Angel's father was one of the most renowned parsons of the locality. She happened to meet her rapist, who had become a preacher. His ardour for her revived when he saw her.

Tess's family was turned out of their house when her father, on whose life the house was held on lease, died. Lodging was not available at Kingsbere, where, outside her ancient family's funeral vault at the churchyard, they had to stay for the night. Alec offered to provide her family with food and shelter in exchange for her body.

A stranger in Brazil advised Angel to return to his wife Tess. He had seen cultures wherein marriages like that of Angel were not strange. Angel returned to England and traced her to a hotel at Sandburne, a watering place. She was living with her rapist there. Angel blamed himself for having neglected her and walked down the lane. Tess went in, stabbed Alec to death, and ran out to join her husband.
They entered New Forest to avoid detection. The few days they spent together were heaven on earth. Angel wanted to take her out of England to some distant land. But Tess said that she had had enough. She requested him to marry her sister Liza-Lu after her death. At Stonehenge she was arrested and at Wintoncester she was hanged.
1. Parisukku Po

The novel *Parisukku Po* begins with the heroine Lalitha and her husband Mahalingam receiving the hero Sarangan at the airport. Sarangan was coming home to his father Seshaya from France, where he had been for the last ten years. Lalitha and her husband were the admirers of Sarangan for his liberal ideas on music. She was attracted to Sarangan at their very first meeting.

Seshaya was a traditionalist while his last son Sarangan was a modernist as far as music was concerned. Seshaya revered Indian music and considered anything foreign to be a curse. On the other hand, Sarangan held that music was a universal language. Still Seshaya received him warmly thinking that his son had returned as a responsible person. Sarangan got angry with his father for not having informed him of his second brother's death three years ago. He felt that this incident was an example of the kind of estrangement that existed between him and his father.

Seshaya's was a joint family. His first son Narasimhan with his wife, his second son's widow with her child, and his daughter Palammal with her son Murali and his wife, lived under the same roof. Sarangan had to spend his days in his own room with drinks and non-vegetarian foods, which he enjoyed without the knowledge of others, who were
traditionally vegetarian. His nephew Murali gave him clandestine company. Sarangan soon found out that it was difficult to live in that house. Hence he moved to an outhouse.

Seshaya expected Sarangan to get married and settle down in some business. Sarangan refused to do so. He wanted to devote his life to music. To Seshaya, this sounded irresponsible. Sarangan had squandered away his money on drinks. His French wife had divorced him for his drunkenness. Seshaya believed that Sarangan’s life had become a failure because of his impossible idealism. On the other hand, Sarangan had the lofty aim of taking Karnatic music to international levels.

Sarangan and Lalitha came close to each other. His ideas on art and music came to her as a pleasant surprise. Her sufferings in her youth and her promiscuity as a result touched his heart. He felt that Mahalingam was unsuited to her since he did not understand the artist in her. He believed that he could make his life meaningful if he had the permanent company of Lalitha. Sarangan and Lalitha met often and their love ended in sexual relationship.

Sarangan was planning to start a music school. Lalitha advised him to write a book on music with her help. Before doing any of those things, they had to make their
relationship meaningful. Mahalingam had once said that being true to each other within marriage is morality. Lalitha was true neither to Mahalingam nor to Sarangan. She had either to divorce Mahalingam and marry Sarangan or to give up Sarangan and continue her life with Mahalingam.

Palammal’s husband Narasaya was living with a dancer by name Ganga. She had left him when she saw him in her own bed with Ganga. Narasaya had pleaded with her to forgive him since it was his first mistake. But she had ignored him and left him for good. Nor did she go to see him when he was on his deathbed. Narasaya argued against divorce and said that one should not leave one’s spouse just for a mistake. Love between the spouses should be strong enough to overlook mistakes.

Sarangan decided to leave for Paris because he had no encouragement either from his family or from the public in his effort to realize his aim. Lalitha was unable to divorce her husband, who was a god to her. Sarangan disliked his secret relationship with her. Hence she gave him up. Fortunately, on his way to Paris, a man from Calcutta, who had already requested him to help him run his music academy, met him in Delhi. Sarangan was happy that here was an opportunity for him to put his lofty ideals into practice, and so he agreed.
The clash between tradition and modernity is the central theme of this novel. Sarangan's father Seshaya was against modernization of Indian music. Palammal's husband Narasaya was against divorce. On the other hand, Sarangan was in favour of both modernization of Indian music and divorce. There are plenty of ideas in support of both the attitudes. The main action of the novel, namely, the story of love between the hero Sarangan and the heroine Lalitha revolves round their extramarital relationship.
2. Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal

The story of *Sila Nerangalil Sila Manitharhal* is in continuation of the short story "Agnipravesam." The girl who had lost her chastity in the short story is sketched in this novel as a woman of thirty living as a spinster. The only difference between the short story and this novel is that her foolish mother had made the heroine of the novel Ganga’s loss of chastity known to the people and that her chances of a decent marriage had been spoilt. Her brother had turned her out of their house. Her uncle Vengu, who was a learned lawyer, had her educated and placed in a decent job. He gave the verdict that Ganga was fit to be a concubine to someone but not a wife to anyone. Thereby he meant that she should agree to be his concubine. Though he was seventy, he embraced her and kissed her whenever there was an opportunity. She alone understood his intentions. Others did not see anything wrong in what he was doing. He looked like a grandfather playing with his grandchild.

Ganga one day happened to read the short story "Agnipravesam," in which the mother of the girl who had lost her chastity cleansed her daughter by pouring a pot of water on her head and kept the rape secret. Ganga threw the short story in her mother’s face. Her mother Kanaham realized her
mistake on reading the story. She felt that she had been solely responsible for the frustrated life her daughter was leading. But her cousin Vengu disagreed with her. He said that Kanaham had done a great service to tradition by declaring the sin of her own daughter. He opined that it was sinful to marry her off as a virgin. He pronounced the judgment that her rapist was her husband.

Ganga happened to hear his words and decided to seek out her rapist. She felt that if she approached the short-story writer R.K.V., she would get her rapist's address. She was right. Her rapist's name was Prabu. He had a daughter of fifteen and two younger sons. Prabu had been a married man when he raped her twelve years ago. Now he was a gentleman and felt miserable at Ganga's plight. He said that she was the only woman he had raped. He would not have seduced her if he had known that she was a virgin. He advised her to marry someone. But she affirmed that she wanted to be known as his keep, though, in fact, they would be no more than two good friends.

Meanwhile, the writer R.K.V. proposed a bridegroom for Ganga, who was prepared to marry her even after knowing her past. Her brother and mother insisted on her getting married. But Ganga had fallen in love with Prabu. She felt that if she married anyone else it would be prostitution.
She did not allow her uncle to touch her as usual and quarrelled with him. She thought that she had to do so for the sake of her love for Prabu. Her brother requested Prabu to keep away from her. Prabu did so. But Ganga did not change her mind. Prabu wilfully kept away from her. She thought that there was a conspiracy against her. In frustration she resorted to liquor.

Prabu was disillusioned with Ganga. He felt that the respect that he had shown Ganga would have turned any base woman into a noble lady.

Thus ends the novel without showing the heroine a way out of her problem. At the instance of the readers, Jayakanthan wrote the novel *Gangai Enge Pohiral* to give a proper ending to Ganga’s life.
3. Oru Nadihai Nadaham Parkiral

Kalyani in Oru Nadihai Nadaham Parkiral was the proprietor of a drama company. Annasamy, who had a Government job, helped her. The novel begins with a loud quarrel between Annasamy and Ranga, a journalist, in the theatre itself. Ranga had written an article in a journal criticizing the drama company unfavourably. Annasamy as the guardian of Kalyani was shouting at him for his mean act. The spectators were divided into two groups supporting one each. Kalyani, who was applying make-up, rushed to the screen and peeped. She saw Ranga suddenly appealing to the spectators to be calm. He brought Annasamy behind the screen and pacified him. Annasamy cooled down. Ranga noticed Kalyani looking at him with shining eyes.

Kalyani felt attracted to Ranga. One day she wrote a note to him without signing, asking him to meet the person who had written it. A month later he wrote back to her demanding an interview. In the meeting Kalyani found out that he was a widower of thirty three with a daughter of five.

Kalyani was a Devadasi's daughter. When Devadasis were not expected to live according to strict morality, Kalyani's mother had lived as a chaste woman without being able to
marry Kalyani’s father. When no such taboo existed, Kalyani had not been able to get married. She too had been in a Government job. Her mother was determined to see her daughter as a cinema actress. Kalyani became a drama actress hoping that it would help her become a cinema actress. After her mother’s death, she gave up her job as well as her desire to be a cinema actress. She was sorry that she had wasted her youth in the name of drama. She decided to live with Ranga as his mistress till the end of her life. She thought that Ranga suited her admirably. She watched life as a drama. She loved her beauty, her acting on the stage, the school-going children and the roses in her garden. Ranga, on the other hand, was an intellectual. He was efficient as a journalist. Great men in public life were afraid to meet him at interviews. He had the ability to ask questions that they were unable to answer. He caught them napping and published their silly answers to his difficult questions.

Annasamy had a family with a wife and a daughter. He told Kalyani that everyone around believed there was an affair between him and her. He asked her whether she would be his keep. Kalyani understood the justification in his request. She declined the offer since she had already decided to accept Ranga as her lover.
Ranga lived in a room among the common people in a street that carried his grandfather's name. His father had squandered the family's wealth. Still, the people held Ranga in great respect both for his job as a journalist and for his grandfather who had been a popular person in his time. He knew that they did not like his affair. But he loved Kalyani for her beauty and for her good qualities. They met often. At Annasamy's instance, they got married, and had their marriage registered.

Ranga was unable to appreciate certain habits and principles of his wife. He did not understand her over-much love for roses, for instance. He considered it to be a costly habit. She held that romantic love evinces immaturity and that honesty, sincerity and compassion are the qualities that sustain marriage. Ranga felt that she was unable to understand the value of his love for her. He had not loved his first wife as he loved Kalyani. In fact, such an experience of love was novel to him. He accused her of having no such love for him. She was sad that he was unable to understand her capacity for love. He asked her whether she could move in his room and sacrifice drama for his love. She thought that one sacrifice would lead to another, and sacrifices would be endless. Already she had moved in a house rented by him. He declared that they had
better be separated since marriage was meaningless without love. The lawyer whom they met laughed away his idea of obtaining a divorce and said that the court did not compel a married couple to love each other. He found them in love with each other and advised Kalyani to give her husband a long rope. He explained that a married couple could apply for a divorce after three years of their marriage and that they should not withdraw their application for one more year. They should also live in separation for one year.

Ranga stopped meeting Kalyani. In his absence Kalyani fell ill. She was unable to use her legs. Meanwhile, Ranga realized that his love for her had increased in her absence. He was sorry that he had not done anything in return for all the care that she had taken of him when they had been together. When he learned that she was ill, he rushed to her, applied for leave for a month and stayed to take care of her. She asked him to move for a divorce since he could get it at once on the strength of her illness. He was, however, angry with the law. It does not allow a couple to separate when their health is sound. When either of them is ill it allows them to separate. Kalyani needed his support and care. Hence he would not seek a divorce now. Kalyani said that he should not think of a divorce hereafter. Thus she boldly put an end to all her problems.
4. Ovoru Koorai Kume Keele

Malathi in Ovoru Koorai Kume Keele was so poor that she was doing odd jobs for the neighbours like buying milk from the booth. Her father was a clerk earning a meagre sum. At school her teacher Packiam had advised her to complete her school studies so that she would put her in a training school to become a teacher. Unfortunately her father had been laid up with typhoid during the examination. She had to take care of her father and so discontinued her education at the eighth standard.

She thought that her poor father would not be able to find a groom for her since he did not have the money to give her as dowry at her marriage. Her schoolmate Raju owned a four-wheeler mechanic shed near her house. He was the son of the rich man for whom her father was working. He was dissatisfied with his marriage and appealed to Malathi to be his keep. She knew that he would support her after her father and agreed. He promised to marry her if their affair came to light. Afraid of getting pregnant she had met him only five or six times in the course of a year.

Suddenly one day her father announced Shivagurunathan as a probable bridegroom for her. She was confused. She was unwilling to let go of this opportunity to get decently
married. At the same time her conscience accused her of being dishonest to her future husband. She consulted her lover Raju himself. He became sad. But he was good enough to advise her to marry Shivagurunathan. She met her former teacher Packiam for further advice.

Packiam had got her daughter married off. Her husband had passed away. She found herself lonely and so she got married a second time. Her daughter called the marriage indecent and refused to visit her. Packiam accused her daughter of not being able to understand her mind. Her advice to Malathi was that she should forget her past and accept her father's decision.

Packiam voiced her opinion about modern ways of life. She said that her daughter was not modern enough to see that she was justified in marrying a second time. She affirmed that it was her right to decide whether she needed a male support or not. She held that sexual lapses are common among women in modern life.

Malathi, however, made a clean breast of her past to Shivagurunathan. He admired her for her honesty in confiding her past in him and accepted her as his wife. Malathi ignored her past and decided to begin her life afresh.
5. Sundara Gandam

Sita in Sundara Gandam was a Ph.D. scholar. Her father Sundara Sharma was the editor of the Tamil journal Sundari. He had made it popular by publishing sexy stories under the pseudonym Sundari. He had written stories and articles of high literary quality once. But he had not been able to earn much. He had incurred large debts at the marriage of his first two daughters. The journal Sundari earned name and money for him. He had, however, contracted aristocratic tastes. He drank foreign liquor and slept with costly prostitutes. Hence once again he had become a debtor.

Suhumaran was a rich friend of Sundara Sharma. He was a widower of thirty seven without issue. Sundara Sharma had been telling him a lot about his last daughter with a view to inducing him to marry her. One night when Suhumaran visited Sundara Sharma’s house, he happened to see the seductive beauty of Sharma’s third daughter Sita in the blue light of the refrigerator that she was just then opening. He at once fell prey to her sex attraction. He agreed to marry her.

Sita was a girl of high moral character. She admired the Sita of the Ramayana as the model of Indian womanhood. She happened to read the short story "Hei Sithe" written by
Ramadas, a young devotee of the god Hanuman. According to the writer, most fathers, brothers and husbands were Ravanas. These men considered women to be chattel. Sita, who had regarded Sharma as an ideal father, began to look upon him as a Ravana. She told him that she did not want to marry Suhumaran, who was a philanderer. Sharma replied that he was in debt, and that he had not got the money to give her as dowry at her marriage. Suhumaran expected no dowry. Sharma said that he would commit suicide if she refused to marry Suhumaran. Sita believed his acting and agreed. Both her parents were overjoyed. Sita thought that her marriage would be an excuse for being independent of her parents.

Sita met Ramadas with the help of her friends. She found out that he was not the Rama she had been searching for. He reminded her of Hanuman, who had given hope to the Sita of the epic when she was imprisoned in Sri Lanka.

Sita met Suhumaran before their marriage. He told her that he had bought her for four lakh rupees (Rs. 400,000/-). He meant that he had purchased the journal Sundari for her sake and helped her father pay his debts.

Their marriage was celebrated amidst pomp and glory. She, however, did not yield to him sexually in their first night. Days passed, but she did not change her mind. Among
his innumerable girl friends was his mother’s nurse Meena, whom he slept with in his own house.

Sita asked her husband to give her a job in one of his firms. In the dinner party on her birthday he announced her as the editor of her father’s journal. Sharma had resigned his position as editor when he came to know that his daughter and Suhumaran did not live as husband and wife. He was determined to face life as the literary writer that once he had been.

Ramadas had brought his friend Dr. Giridharan to the dinner party. Sita and Giridharan fell in love at first sight. Suhumaran noticed the exchange of glances between his wife and Giridharan and decided to encourage them. When Sita came to know the secret relationship between her husband and Meena, she asked him to marry her. Suhumaran said that he would not divorce Sita and marry Meena because, if he did so, he would soil his family reputation. He was prepared to accept Sita’s child as his own, whenever she bore one, even though its father was not himself. Sita was disgusted with his moral depravity and walked out of his house. She stayed at Ramadas’s house as his permanent guest.

The Ramayana is in sex books. “Sundara Gandam” is the fifth one. Sita in it is in prison in Sri Lanka, and her
husband is in Kishkintha. Ravana's servants surround Sita. Similarly, the heroine of this novel was unable to join her lover. She said that the social condition was not conducive to virtuous men and women falling in love and getting married. She decided to remain single until the situation changed.

Thus the heroine of this novel did not make any effort either to seek a divorce from Suhumaran or to cohabit with her lover Giridharan.
Ganga in *Gangai Enge Pohiral* continued to live in despair at her rejection by Prabu and got drunk at night in the company of Mrs Manuel, who was her subordinate at the office. She did not bother about people’s low opinion about her. The bottle and gray coat that Prabu had left behind in her room were her permanent companions. One day she received a letter from her uncle Vengu. He had gone to Kasi to spend his last days on the bank of the Ganges. He had named Ganga his heir in his will. She, his wife and his servant Thanu Iyer went to see him. Within two days Vengu died.

Ganga’s brother had a sudden attack of paralysis and was bed-ridden. She paid his debts and shifted his family to her house. She did not interfere with the quarrels that often broke out between her mother and sister-in-law. She remained confined upstairs mostly.

Ganga met Prabu on the roadside after a long time. She took him to her house in her car. This time she drove the car herself. He was shocked to see Ganga drinking liquor. Prabu was not living with his wife and children. His wife had accused him of squandering the family’s wealth and
locked him out of the house in rain throughout one night. He felt insulted and moved away to another house.

Prabu disappeared from that house also one day. His family as well as Ganga did not succeed in discovering his whereabouts. She happened to read the short story “Lakshathipathihal” (which means those who have Rs.100,000/- and above each) by R.K.V. She identified the hero as Prabu. He had betted on racehorses and lost all his money. He had to leave his house. He drove his car recklessly. He wanted to kill himself in an accident. But on the way he had to take a pregnant woman to a hospital. His timely help brought a new life into the earth. That incident changed his mind. He had covered hundreds of miles to reach that place. He moved with the people. He liked their way of life. He erected a mechanical four-wheeler shed and adopted a small boy.

Meanwhile, Manju’s marriage was arranged. She insisted on meeting her father before her marriage. The writer R.K.V. took Ganga and Manju to Prabu’s mechanical shed. Prabu was happy to meet them. He attended Manju’s marriage. His wife Padma tried to induce him to stay with her. But he refused. Ganga wanted to join him. He asked her to wait until she retired from her job.
The eldest daughter of Ganga’s brother by name Santha married Nanu Iyer’s son. Vengu’s wife and Nanu Iyer did not like Ganga being the sole heir to Vengu. Hence Ganga handed over the property to them. The second daughter Vasantha refused to get married. She had the permanent companionship of her college-mate Arjunan. After they had become doctors, they served the poor people. They did not get married.

Ganga bade farewell to her family and friends after her retirement and joined Prabu at his workshop. Both left for Kasi to spend their last days on the bank of the Ganges like her uncle Vengu. They visited the holy places of pilgrimage in north India whenever they liked.

One morning Ganga got up before sunrise and, without disturbing Prabu’s sleep, went down the bank to bathe in the ice-cold water of the Ganges. As she turned while in water, she saw Prabu coming in search of her. He spotted her and waited. Suddenly she slipped and fell and was being washed down in the current. Her dying thought was that the water in her uncle’s holy kamandal (her uncle’s religious jug which had been her permanent possession since her uncle’s death and which now stood filled with the water of the Ganges on the bank) was no different from the water that was pulling her down to her death. She meant that her soul was part of God.