



# **The Raj Quartet: The Jewel in the Crown/the Day of the Scorpion/the Towers of Silence/a Division of the Spoils**

*Paul Scott*

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The Raj Quartet is a 4 volume novel sequence, written by Paul Scott, about the concluding years of the British Raj in India. The Times called it one of the most important landmarks of post-war fiction. The begins in 1942. WWII is at its zenith, and in S.E. Asia, the Allied forces have suffered great losses. Burma has fallen, and the Japanese invasion of the Indian subcontinent from the east appears imminent. The year 1942 is also marked by Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi's call for the Quit India movement to the British rulers of India. The series is set in this tumultuous background where British soldiers and civilians in India who have a duty to manage this part of the British Empire, known as the "jewel in the crown" of the British Monarch. To justify the racism of the older British general and combat the danger of anomie and disintegration, the British characters let themselves be trapped by codes and principles, which were in part to keep their own fears and doubts at bay. Most of the major characters suffer difficulties, and some die. Some critics have compared The Raj Quartet to the epic novels of Proust and Tolstoy. Though some critics have thought the Quartet to be a straightforward example of 19th-century style realism, others have argued that its non-linear narrative style give it an added dimension. The lead characters in the 1st novel are Daphne Manners, a young Englishwoman who has recently arrived in India, and her British-educated Indian lover, Hari Kumar. Ronald Merrick, a British police officer belonging to the Indian Police Service, is another main character. The voices shift as well as the perspective, from a third-person narrative to a first-person narration by another. This shifting chronology, while never confusing, has inspired much discussion. The four novels are "The Jewel In the Crown" (1966), "The Day of the Scorpion" (1968), "The Towers of Silence" (1971), and "A Division of the Spoils" (1975).

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