



The Raj Quartet: The Jewel in the Crown, The Day of the Scorpion (Everyman's Library)

Paul Scott

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The Raj Quartet, Paul Scott's epic study of British India in its final years, has no equal. Tolstoyan in scope and Proustian in detail but completely individual in effect, it records the encounter between East and West through the experiences of a dozen people caught up in the upheavals of the Second World War and the growing campaign for Indian independence from Britain.

The first novel, *The Jewel in the Crown*, describes the doomed love between an English girl and an Indian boy, Daphne Manners and Hari Kumar. This affair touches the lives of other characters in three subsequent volumes, most of them unknown to Hari and Daphne but involved in the larger social and political conflicts which destroy the lovers. In *The Day of the Scorpion*, Ronald Merrick, a sadistic policeman who arrested and prosecuted Hari, insinuates himself into an aristocratic British family as World War II escalates.

On occasions unsparing in its study of personal dramas and racial differences, the *Raj Quartet* is at all times profoundly humane, not least in the author's capacity to identify with a huge range of characters. It is also illuminated by delicate social comedy and wonderful evocations of the Indian scene, all narrated in luminous prose.

The other two novels in the Raj Quartet, *The Towers of Silence* and *A Division of the Spoils*, are also available from Everyman's Library. With a new introduction by Hilary Spurling

(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

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