NOW A MOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE PRESENTATI

"THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN"

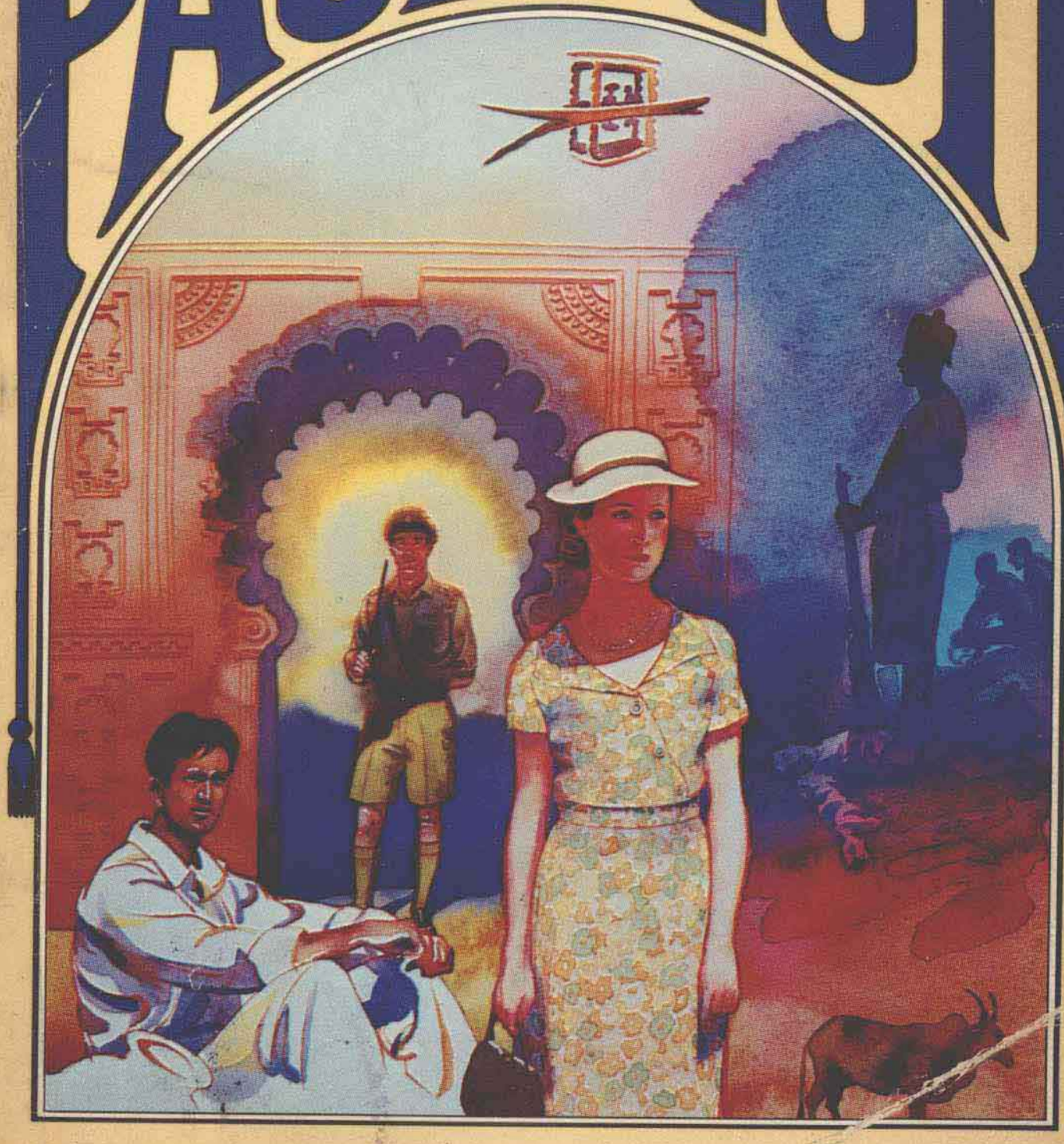
AVON 0-380-40410-9 $4.50

BOOK I
THE RAJ QUARTET

The Jewel in the Crown

A NOVEL BY

PAUL SCOTT



The Jewel in the Crown

A NOVEL BY

Paul Scott


AVON
PUBLISHERS OF BARD, CAMELOT, DISCUS AND FLARE BOOKS

This is a work of fiction
All the characters are imaginary

The Jewel in the Crown
first published in Great Britain 1966.

AVON BOOKS
A division of
The Hearst Corporation
1790 Broadway
New York, New York 10019

Published by arrangement with William Morrow and Company, Inc.
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 77-13249
ISBN: 0-380-40410-9

First Avon Printing, September, 1979

Printed in the U.S.A.

WFH 10

to Dorothy Ganapathy
with love

Contents

PART ONE

Miss Crane

IMAGINE, then, a flat landscape, dark for the moment, but even so conveying to a girl running in the still deeper shadow cast by the wall of the Bibighar Gardens an idea of immensity, of distance, such as years before Miss Crane had been conscious of standing where a lane ended and cultivation began: a different landscape but also in the alluvial plain between the mountains of the north and the plateau of the south.

It is a landscape which a few hours ago, between the rainfall and the short twilight, extracted colour from the spectrum of the setting sun and dyed every one of its own surfaces that could absorb light: the ochre walls of the houses in the old town (which are stained too with their bloody past and uneasy present); the moving water of the river and the still water of the tanks; the shiny stubble, the ploughed earth, of distant fields; the metal of the grand trunk road. In this landscape trees are sparse, except among the white bungalows of the civil lines. On the horizon there is a violet smudge of hill country.

This is the story of a rape, of the events that led up to it and followed it and of the place in which it happened. There are the action, the people, and the place; all of which are interrelated but in their totality incommunicable in isolation from the moral continuum of human affairs.

In the Bibighar Gardens case there were several arrests and an investigation. There was no trial in the judicial sense. Since then people have said there was a trial of sorts going on. In fact, such people say, the affair that began on the evening of August 9th, 1942, in Mayapore, ended with the spectacle of two nations in violent opposition, not for the first time nor as yet for the last because they were then still locked in an imperial embrace of such long standing and subtlety it was no longer possible for them to know whether they hated or loved one another, or what it was that held them together and seemed to have confused the image of their separate destinies.

In 1942, which was the year the Japanese defeated the British army in Burma and Mr. Gandhi began preaching sedition

in India, the English then living in the civil and military cantonment of Mayapore had to admit that the future did not look propitious. They had faced bad times before, though, and felt that they could face them again, that now they knew where they stood and there could be no more heart-searching for quite a while yet about the rights and wrongs of their colonial-imperialist policy and administration.

As they were fond of putting it at the club, it was a question of first things first, and when they heard that Miss Crane, the supervisor of the district's Protestant mission schools, had taken Mr. Gandhi's picture down from the walls of her study and no longer entertained Indian ladies to tea but young English soldiers instead, they were grateful to her as well as amused. In peace time opinions could be as diverse and cranky as you wished. In war you had to close the ranks; and if it was to be a question of sides Miss Crane seemed to have shown at last which she was really on.

What few people knew was that the Indian ladies themselves had taken the initiative over the question of tea on Tuesdays at Edwina Crane's bungalow. Miss Crane suspected that it was the ladies' husbands who had dissuaded them from making the weekly appearance, not only because Mr. Gandhi's picture had gone but in case such visits could have been thought of, in this explosive year, as a buttering-up of the *raj*. What hurt her most was that none of the ladies had bothered to discuss their reasons with her. They had one by one or two by two just stopped coming and made feeble excuses when she met any of them in the bazaar or on her way to the mission school-rooms.

She was sorry about the ladies whom she had always encouraged to be frank with her, but not at all sorry about Mr. Gandhi's portrait. The ladies had an excuse. Mr. Gandhi did not. She believed he was behaving abominably. She felt, in fact, let down. For years she had laughed at Europeans who said that he was not to be trusted, but now Mr. Gandhi had extended what looked like an open invitation to the Japanese to come and help him rid India of the British—and if he thought that they would be the better masters then she could only assume he was out of his senses or, which was worse, revealing that his philosophy of non-violence had a dark side that added up to total invalidation of its every aspect. The Japanese, apparently, were to do his violence for him.

Reacting from her newly found distrust of the Mahatma and

her disappointment in the behavior of the ladies (the kind of disappointment she had actually become no stranger to) she wondered whether her life might not have been spent better among her own people, persuading them to appreciate the qualities of Indians, instead of among Indians, attempting to prove that at least one Englishwoman admired and respected them. She had to admit that a searching analysis of her work would show that in the main the people she had got on with best of all were those of mixed blood; which seemed, perhaps, to emphasise the fact that she was neither one thing nor the other herself—a teacher without real qualifications, a missionary worker who did not believe in God. She had never been wholly accepted by Indians and had tended to reject the generality of the English. In this there was a certain irony. The Indians, she thought, might have taken her more seriously if she had not been a representative of the kind of organization they were glad enough to make use of but of which old suspicions died hard. By the same token, if she had not worked for the mission she would, she believed, never have acquired an admiration for the Indians through love and respect for their children, nor been led to such sharp criticism of her own race, in whose apparently neglectful and indifferent care the future of those children and the present well-being of their parents were held. She had never been slow to voice her criticism. And this, possibly, had been a mistake. The English always took such criticism so personally.

However, Miss Crane was of a generation that abided by (even if it did not wholly believe in) certain simple rules for positive action. It was, she told herself, never too late to mend, or try to mend. Thinking of the young British soldiers who were in Mayapore in ever-increasing numbers, and remembering that most of them looked fresh out from home, she wrote to the Station Staff Officer, had an interview with him, and arranged to entertain a party of up to a dozen at a time at tea every Wednesday afternoon from five o'clock until six-thirty. The SSO thanked her for her generosity and said he wished more people realised what it meant to an English lad to be in a home again, if only for an hour or two. For all their flag-wagging the ladies of the cantonment tended to have a prejudice against the British Other Rank. The SSO did not say this but the implication was there. Miss Crane guessed from his speech and manner that he had risen from the ranks himself.

He said he hoped she would not have cause to regret her invitation. Young soldiers, although mostly maligned, were indeed apt to be clumsy and noisy. She had only to ring him up if things proved too much for her or if she had anything to complain about. She smiled and reminded him that the life she led had never been sheltered and she had often heard herself referred to in Mayapore as a tough old bird.

The soldiers who came to Miss Crane's bungalow for tea spoke with cockney accents but they were not clumsy. With one exception, a boy called Barrett, they handled the bone china with big-fisted dexterity. They were not too shy and not over noisy. The parties always ended on a gratifyingly free and easy note. Afterwards, she stood on the front verandah and waved them down the path that led through her pretty, well-kept garden. Outside the gate they lit cigarettes and went back to barracks in a comradely bunch making some clatter with their boots on the hard surface of the road. Having helped her old Indian servant Joseph to clear away, Miss Crane then retired to her room to read reports and deal with letters from the headquarters of the mission, and—since the soldiers' tea was on a Wednesday and Thursday was her day to visit and stay overnight at the school in Dibrapur, seventy-five miles away—prepare her gladstone bag for the journey and look out a tin of boiled sweets as a gift for the Dibrapur children. While she did these things she also found time to think about the soldiers.

There was one particular boy who came regularly of whom she was very fond. His name was Clancy. He was what middle-class people of her own generation would have called one of nature's gentlemen. It was Clancy who sat down last and stood up first, Clancy who saw to it that she had a piece of her own fruit cake and that she did not go sugarless for want of the passing back up the table of the bowl. He always asked how she was, and gave the most lucid answers to her inquiries about their training and sports and communal life in the barracks. And whereas the others called her Mum, or Ma'am, Clancy called her Miss Crane. She was herself meticulous in the business of getting to know their names and dignifying them with the prefix Mister. She knew that private soldiers hated to be called by their surnames alone if the person talking to them was a woman. But although she never omitted to say Mister Clancy when addressing him, it was as Clancy that she thought of him. It was a nice name, and his friends called him that, or Clance.

Clancy, she was glad to notice, was liked by his comrades. His attentiveness to her wasn't resented, or laughed at. He seemed to be a natural leader. He commanded respect. He was good-looking and fitted his uniform of khaki shirt and shorts better than the other boys. Only his accent, and his hands—with torn finger-nails, never quite clean of vestiges of oil and grease from handling rifles and guns—marked him as an ordinary member of the herd.

Sometimes, when they had gone and she worked on her files and thought about them, she was sad. Some of those boys, Clancy more easily than the others because he was bound to get a position of responsibility, might be killed. She was also sad, but in a different way, when the thought passed through her head, as it couldn't help doing, that probably they all laughed at her on the quiet and talked about her when she wasn't there to hear as the old maid who served up char and wads.

She was, as mission headquarters knew, an intelligent and perceptive woman whose understanding, common sense and organising ability, more than made up for what in a woman connected with a Christian mission were of doubtful value: her agnosticism, for instance, and her fundamentally anti-British, because pro-Indian, sympathies.

Edwina Crane had lived in India for thirty-five of her fifty-seven years. She was born in London in 1885 of moderately well-to-do middle-class parents; her mother died early and she spent her youth and young womanhood looking after her lost lonely father, a schoolmaster who became fond of the bottle and his own company so that gradually the few friends they had drifted away along with the pupils who attended his private school. He died in an Edwardian summer when she was twenty-one leaving her penniless and fit for nothing, she felt, except the job of paid companion or housekeeper. The scent of lime trees in fading flower stayed with her afterwards as the smell of death. She thought she was lucky when the first job she got was as governess to a spoiled little boy who called her Storky and tried to shock her once with a precocious show of sexuality in the night-nursery.

She was not shocked. In the later stages of her father's illness she had had to deal with his incontinence, and before that with his drunken outbursts in which he had not been above telling her those facts of life she had not already learned or

ridiculing her for her long nose and plain looks and slender hopes of marriage. Sober, he was always ashamed, but too uncourageous to tell her so. She understood this, and because of it learned to value courage in others and try hard, not always successfully, to show it herself. In some ways her father was like a child to her. When he was dead she wept, then dried her eyes and sold most of the few remaining possessions to pay for a decent funeral, having refused financial help from the rich uncle who had kept away during her father's lifetime and moral support from the poor cousins who reappeared at his death.

So the little boy did not shock her. Neither did he enchant her. Living alone with her father she had tended to believe that he and she were of a kind apart, singled out to support a special cross compounded of genteel poverty and drunkenness, but the wealthy and temperate household in which she had now come to live seemed unhappy too, and this had the effect of making the world she knew look tragically small just at the moment when it might have been opening up. It was the desire she had to find a place in an unknown world that would come at her as new and fresh and, if not joyful, then at least adventurous and worth-while, that made her apply for a post as travelling nurse-companion to a lady making the passage back to India with two young children. The lady, who had a pale face and looked delicate, but turned out resilient, explained that if proved satisfactory the person who obtained the post could stay on in India after they arrived, with a view to acting as governess. If unsatisfactory, such a person would easily find a similar job with a family taking the passage home, failing which her passage home would be paid. The lady seemed to take a fancy to her and so Miss Crane was employed.

The voyage was pleasant because Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith treated her like a member of the family, and the children, a blue-eyed girl and a blue-eyed boy, both said they loved her and wanted her to live with them for ever. When they reached Bombay Major Nesbitt-Smith met them and treated her like one of the family too; but Miss Crane could not help noticing from then on that the major's wife gradually withdrew, and by the time they reached the husband's station in the Punjab was treating her not exactly like a servant but like a poor relation with whom the family had somehow got saddled and so for the present made use of. It was Miss Crane's first experience of social

snobbery abroad, which was never the same as snobbery at home because it was complicated by the demands, sometimes conflicting, of white solidarity and white supremacy. Her employers felt a duty to accord her a recognition they would have withheld from the highest-born Indian, at the same time a compulsion to place her on one of the lowest rungs of the ladder of their own self-contained society—lower outside the household than in, where, of course, she stood in a position far superior to that of any native servant. Miss Crane disapproved of this preoccupation with the question of who was who and why. It went against the increasingly liberal grain of her strengthening conscience. It also seemed to make life very difficult. She thought that Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith was sometimes hard put to it to know what expression to wear when talking to her and decided that the confusion she must often have been in accounted for the frequent look of concern, almost of pain, at having to speak at all.

She was with the Nesbitt-Smiths for three years. She had a strong constitution which meant she was seldom ill even in that difficult climate. She was fond of the children and reacted to the politeness of the servants by overcoming the shyness she had been used to feel at home. There was, as well, India, which at first had seemed strange, even frightening, but presently full of compensations that she found difficult to name but felt in her heart. She had few friends and still felt isolated from people as individuals, but she was aware now of a sense of community. That sense sprang, she knew, from the seldom-voiced but always insistent, even when mute, clan-gathering call to solidarity that was part of the social pattern she had noted early on and disapproved of. She still disapproved of it but was honest enough to recognise it as having always been a bleak but real enough source of comfort and protection. There was a lot of fear in India, and it was good to feel safe, to know that indifferently as Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith might sometimes treat her, Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith and her like would always rally round if she found herself in any kind of danger from outside the charmed circle of privilege on whose periphery she spent her days. She knew that the India she found full of compensations was only the white man's India. But it was an India of a kind, and that at least was a beginning.

At this stage she fell in love, not with the young assistant chaplain to the station who sometimes conducted the services

at the local Protestant church (which would have been a possible match, indeed was one that in her good moods Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith chaffed her about and smilingly pushed her towards) but hopelessly and secretly with a Lieutenant Orme who was as handsome as Apollo, as kind, gentle and gay with her as any hero in a romantic novel, as ignorant or unheeding of her regard as his good looks so well enabled him to be in a station remarkable that year for the number of pretty well-placed girls of whom he could have his pick: hopelessly in love, because she had no chance; secretly, because she found she did not blush or act awkwardly in his presence, and Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith, even had she bothered to observe the reactions of her children's governess to a man so splendidly equipped, in every sense, as Lieutenant Orme, would not have been able to tell that Miss Crane had longings in directions which were, by tradition, totally closed to her. That she neither blushed nor acted awkwardly puzzled Miss Crane. Her heart beat when he stood close by and perhaps there came a slight dryness into her mouth, but her feelings, she decided, must have been too intense, too adult, for her to act like the fluttering stupid girls who knew nothing of the world's reality.

When Lieutenant Orme was posted away, still uncommitted and with his usual glittering luck, as ADC to a general, to the frenzied disappointment of up to twenty pretty girls, as many plain ones and all their mothers, no one, Miss Crane believed, could have suspected the extent to which his departure darkened her own life. Only the children, her two most intimate human contacts, noticed that her manner changed. They gazed at her through those still remarkably blue but now older and calculating upper middle-class eyes and said, "What's wrong, Miss Crane? Have you got a pain, Miss Crane?" and danced round her singing, "Old Crane's got a pain," so that she lost her temper, slapped them and sent them away screaming through shadow and sunlight to be comforted by the old ayah of whom, she knew, they had become fonder.

Before the next hot weather began Major Nesbitt-Smith's regiment was ordered home. "I and the children will be going on ahead," she overheard Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith say to a friend, "and of course Crane will be coming with us." Speaking of her to others Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith usually referred to her as Crane, but as Miss Crane to her face and the children, and, in rare moments of warmth and gratitude, as Edwina, as when for instance she lay in her darkened punkah-cooled room with

Miss Crane kneeling by her bedside soothing with cologne one of her raging headaches.

For many days after the news of the regiment's impending return to England, Miss Crane went about her duties with no particular thoughts in her head because she had firmly put Lieutenant Orme out of them some time ago and nothing had come to take his place. "And he," she said to herself presently, "was a fancy, a mere illusion that never stood a chance of becoming real for me. Now that I've banished the illusion from my thoughts I can see them for what they are, what they have always been, empty, starved, waiting to be filled. How will they be filled at home, in England? By care of the children as they grow, and become old, beyond me? By substituting different children for these and a different Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith for this one? Households that are not the same household and yet the same? And so on, year after year, as Crane, Miss Crane, and sometimes, increasingly rarely, until no more, Edwina?"

In the evenings between five o'clock—when the children had had their tea and became the temporary sole charge of the ayah for play and bath—and seven o'clock when she supervised their supper before going in to dine alone or, if circumstances permitted, with the family, Miss Crane was free. Mostly she spent those two short hours in her room, having her own bath, resting, reading, writing an occasional letter to another of her kind who had exchanged this station for another or gone back to England. But now she began to feel restless and took to putting on her boots and—parasol opened and protectively raised—walking down the lane of the civil lines in which the Nesbitt-Smiths' bungalow stood. The lane was shaded by trees that thinned out gradually as the bungalows gave way to open cultivated fields. Sometimes she walked in the opposite direction, towards the cantonment bazaar beyond which lay the railway station and the native town which she had entered only on one occasion—with a group of laughing ladies and timid companions in carriages, stoutly accompanied by gentlemen—to inspect a Hindu temple which had frightened her, as the native town had frightened her with its narrow dirty streets, its disgusting poverty, its raucous dissonant music, its verminous dogs, its starving, mutilated beggars, its fat white sacred Brahmini bulls and its ragged population of men and women who looked so resentful in comparison with the servants and other officiating natives of the cantonment.

On the day that she found herself questioning the prospect

of a future that was, as it were, an image seen in a series of mirrors that reflected it until it became too small for the eye to see—a diminishing row of children and Nesbitt-Smiths and Edwina Cranes—the walk she went on at five was the one that brought her out to the open spaces where the road led on into the far distance. Reaching this point she stopped, afraid to go farther. The sun was still hot, still high enough to make her narrow her eyes as she gazed from under the brim of her hat and the cotton canopy of the parasol, towards the horizon of the flat, wide, immense Punjabi plain. It seemed impossible, she thought, that the world continued beyond that far-away boundary, that somewhere it changed its nature, erupted into hills and forests and ranges of mountains whose crests were white with eternal snows where rivers had their source. It seemed impossible too that beyond the plains there could be an ocean where those rivers had their end. She felt dwarfed, famished in the spirit, pressed down by a tremendous weight of land, and of air and incomprehensible space that even the flapping, wheeling crows had difficulty keeping up in. And she thought for a moment that she was being touched by the heavy finger of a god; not the familiar uplifting all-forgiving God she went through the motions of praying to, but one neither benign nor malign, neither creating nor destroying, sleeping nor waking, but existing, and leaning his weight upon the world.

Acknowledging that women such as herself tended to turn to if not actually to seek sanctuary in religion, she walked on the following evening in the other direction and when she came to the Protestant church she turned into the compound and went up the broad gravel path, past the hummocky graves marked by the headstones of those who had died far from home, but who in their resting place, had they woken, might have been comforted by the English look of the church and its yard and the green trees planted there. The side door of the church was on the latch. She went in and sat in a pew at the back, stared at the altar and gazed at the darkening east window of stained glass which she saw every Sunday in the company of the Nesbitt-Smiths.

The god of this church was a kind, familiar, comfortable god. She had him in her heart but not in her soul. She believed in him as a comforter but not as a redeemer. He was very much the god of a community, not of the dark-skinned community that struggled for life under the weight of the Punjabi sky but

of the privileged pale-faced community of which she was a marginal member. She wondered whether she would be Crane to Him, or Miss Crane, or Edwina. If she thought of Him as the Son she would, she presumed, be Edwina, but to God in His wrath, undoubtedly Crane.

"Miss Crane?"

Startled by the voice she looked over her shoulder. It was the senior chaplain, an elderly man with a sharp pink nose and a fringe of distinguishing white hair surrounding his gnomic head. His name was Grant, which caused restrained smiles during services when he intoned prayers that began Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee. She smiled now, although she was embarrassed being found by him there, betraying herself as a woman in need almost certainly not of rest but of reassurance. A plain somewhat horse-faced woman in her middle twenties, alone in an empty Protestant church, on a day when no service was due, was somehow already labelled. In later years, Miss Crane came to look upon that moment as the one that produced in her the certainty of her own spinsterhood.

"You are resting from your labours," Mr. Grant said in his melodious congregational voice, and added, more directly, when she had nodded and looked down at her lap, "Can I be of any help, child?" so that without warning she wanted to weep because child was what her father had often called her in his sober, loving moments. However, she did not weep. She had not wept since her father's death and although there would come a time when she did once more it had not arrived yet. Speaking in a voice whose steadiness encouraged her, she said, "I'm thinking of staying on," and, seeing the chaplain's perplexity, the way he glanced round the church as if something had begun to go on there which nobody had bothered to forewarn him of but which Miss Crane knew about and thought worth staying for, she explained, "I mean in India, when the Nesbitt-Smiths go home."

The chaplain said, "I see," and frowned, perhaps because she had called them the Nesbitt-Smiths. "It should not be difficult, Miss Crane. Colonel and Mrs. Ingleby, for instance, strike me as worth approaching. I know you are well thought of. Major and Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith have always spoken highly."

The future looked dark, a blank featureless territory with, in its centre, a pinprick of light that seemed to be all that was left of Edwina Crane.

"I think I should like," she said, giving expression to a thought that had never properly been a thought until now, "to train for the Mission."

He sat down next to her and together they watched the east window.

"Not," she went on, "no, not to carry the Word. I am not a truly religious woman." She glanced at him. He was still watching the window. He did not seem to be particularly upset by her confession. "But there are schools, aren't there?" she said. "I meant train to teach at the mission schools."

"Ah yes, I see, to teach not our own children but those of our dark brethren in Christ?"

She nodded. She found herself short of breath. He turned to look at her fully, and asked her, "Have you seen the school here?"

Yes, she had seen the school, close to the railway station, but—"Only from the outside," she told him.

"Have you ever talked to Miss Williams?"

"Who is Miss Williams?"

"The teacher. But then you would be unlikely to know her. She is a lady of mixed blood. Would you like to visit the school?"

"Very much."

The chaplain nodded and presently after the appearance of having thought more deeply, said, "Then I will arrange it, and if you are of the same mind I will write to the superintendent in Lahore, not that there is anything much for you to judge by in Miss Williams's little school." He shook his head. "No, Miss Crane. This isn't an area where we've had much success, although more than the Catholics and the Baptists. There are of course a great number of schools throughout the country, of various denominations, all committed to educating what I suppose we must call the heathen. In this matter the Church and the missions have always led the way. The government has been, shall we say, slow to see the advantages. So, perhaps, have the Indians. The school here, for instance. A handful of children at the best of times. At the times of the festivals none. I mean, of course, the Hindu and Moslem festivals. The children come, you see, mainly for the chappattis, and in the last riots the school was set fire to, but that was before your time."

The mission school was not the one she had had in mind which was close to the railway, the Joseph Wainwright Chris-