Train to Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF KHUSHWANT SINGH

Khushwant Singh was born to an affluent Sikh family and grew up in the Muslim-majority village of Hadali, then part of British India. His native tongue was Punjabi, but he was also fluent in Urdu and grew up reading the work of Urdu poets. Later, he would become a prolific translator of Urdu poetry. Singh earned a Bachelor of Arts from Government College in Lahore in 1934 before obtaining his law degree from London's King's College in 1938. He started his law practice in Lahore on the eve of the Second World War and practiced until the Partition of India in 1947, at which point he moved his family to Delhi and took a position with the Indian Foreign Service as a press attaché. During his four years in the foreign service, he took posts in London and Ottawa and also started to write fiction. He published his first short story collection, *The Mark of Vishnu, and Other Stories*, in London in 1950. The following year, he began a career as a journalist with All India Radio and spent the next two decades working as an editor of leading publications in India while continuing to publish fiction. From 1980 to 1986, he served in India's upper house of parliament and was a supporter of Indira Gandhi's government. He discontinued his support for the prime minister, however, after Indian troops attacked and killed hundreds of Sikhs at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. In addition to *Train to Pakistan*, Singh is also known for his two-volume work *A History of the Sikhs, 1469-1964* (vol. 1, 1963; vol. 2, 1966) and *The Company of Women* (1999). He received many honors for his work in journalism and fiction, including a lifetime achievement award for his contributions to Indian literature. Singh married his wife Kaval, who died some years before him, in 1939. They had two children—a son named Rahul, and a daughter, Mala. Singh died at the age of 99.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A Train to Pakistan takes place in 1947, the year in which India gained independence from Britain and the new nation of Pakistan was created from the Partition of India. An estimated 14 million people were displaced by the Partition, which aimed to divide the nations along religious lines and initially led to widespread chaos and violence. The years after World War II resulted in the restructuring of many nations devastated by the war, as well as a realignment in the international order. The Marshall Plan, a restructuring proposal organized by U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, provided more than $15 billion to help rebuild war-ravaged cities, industries, and infrastructure in Western Europe. Great Britain had to relinquish some of its colonies, including India, to finance the war effort. This action greatly diminished Britain, causing it to lose its status as a superpower. In its place, the United States became the most powerful Western nation, vying with the Soviet Union for international influence. The U.S. also became the assumed protector of Western democracy during the Cold War and thereafter.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

A Train to Pakistan was published after the Second World War and at the beginning of India's decolonization, alongside other literary works that featured the voices of former colonial subjects. Postcolonial English Literature used the language of the former colonizer, which had once been an instrument of obedience, to critique and undermine imperial values. Popular works from this movement include Aimé Césaire's essay *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), and V.S. Naipaul's *Mystic Masseur* (1957) and *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961). Singh was also a contributor to what is sometimes called Indo-Anglian literature, or Indian literature written in English. The movement began in the 19th-century but gained in popularity in the 1930s. Well known Indo-Anglian writers include the previously mentioned V.S. Naipaul, R.K. Narayan, who was mentored by the British author Graham Greene, as well as contemporary authors such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Rohinton Mistry. Their work, like Singh's, often deals with corruption, the caste system, and the complexities of religious life in India.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Train to Pakistan*
- **When Written:** 1950s
- **Where Written:** New Delhi, India
- **When Published:** 1956
- **Literary Period:** Postcolonial English Literature; Postwar Literature
- **Genre:** Historical Fiction
- **Setting:** Punjab, India
- **Climax:** A train arrives in Mano Majra from Pakistan, carrying the corpses of dead Sikhs.
- **Antagonist:** Malli, Religious bigotry
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Muhammad Iqbal. "Muhammad Iqbal" is not only the false name that the subinspector gives to Iqbal Singh, but is also the name of a real-life poet and philosopher who played a leading

role in the formation of Pakistan.

Indian National Army. Also called "Azad Hind Fauj," the Indian National Army was a liberation army formed by the Indian revolutionary and military leader Subhas Chandra Bose, in concert with Japanese forces. With the help of the occupying Japanese army, Bose trained about 40,000 troops in Southeast Asia. Without the support of an air force, however, the army was defeated by Allied forces and forced to retreat. For a while, the Indian National Army operated as a liberation army based in Myanmar and former Indochina, but it ceased all operations after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945.

PLOT SUMMARY

In the summer of 1947, ten million Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs flee from their homes on each side of the new border between Pakistan and India. Northern India is in turmoil, though the isolated village of Mano Majra remains, for now, at peace. A tiny place with only three brick buildings—a gurdwara, where Meet Singh presides as its resident bhai; a mosque led by the mullah and weaver Imam Baksh; and the home of the Hindu moneylender, Lala Ram Lal—Mano Majra becomes the site of a notorious dacoity, which results in Ram Lal's murder. While fleeing Ram Lal's house, the robbers pass by the home of former robber Juggut Singh, known as the most dangerous man in Mano Majra and often called "Jugga." One of the robbers throws stolen **bangles** into Jugga's courtyard to implicate him in the crime. Jugga, meanwhile, is having a tryst with Nooran when they hear the shots fired during the dacoity. While the couple lays in the dark, they see the five robbers pass on their way to the river. Jugga recognizes one as Malli—the gang's leader.

Hukum Chand, the magistrate and deputy commissioner, arrives to Mano Majra the morning before the dacoity. He asks the subinspector of police if there has been any trouble between the religious groups and the latter assures him that there have not been any "convoys of dead Sikhs" as there have been in a nearby town. Mano Majrans may not even know that the British have left or that India has been partitioned. Some know who Mahatma Gandhi is, but the subinspector doubts that anyone knows of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. When Chand then asks if there are any bad characters in the area, the subinspector mentions Jugga, but says that Nooran keeps him out of trouble. Chand asks if arrangements have been made for him to have a prostitute that evening, and the subinspector assures Chand that he will have his entertainment before returning to the police station. That evening, an old woman and a young girl wearing a black, studded sari arrive at the rest house. The girl's name is Haseena. While Chand is alone with her, he hears one of the gunshots from the dacoity.

The next morning, the railway station is crowded. When the train from Delhi to Lahore arrives, twelve armed policemen and the subinspector disembark. From the other end of the train, a young man steps out. The police party scrutinize him. His manners suggest that he does not belong in the village.

The young man goes to the gurdwara and asks Meet Singh if he can stay for a few days. The priest obliges and asks the young man for his name, which is Iqbal. Meet Singh assumes that Iqbal is a Sikh and identifies him as "Iqbal Singh." Meet Singh learns that the police have sent for Jugga to be arrested for the dacoity, and says that they have found some of the stolen money and the broken bangles in Jugga's courtyard. Jugga has run away, he says, which makes it obvious that the budmash has committed the crime. The priest is perturbed not by the murder, but by Jugga robbing his own village.

Later at the gurdwara, Iqbal meets Banta Singh (the village lambardar) and a Muslim man (implied to be Imam Baksh). The visitors talk favorably about the British and ask why they have left India, which annoys Iqbal, who resents the British and asks the men if they want to be free. Imam Baksh says that freedom is for the educated. The peasants will merely go from being the slaves of the English to the slaves of educated Indians or Pakistanis.

After the men leave, Iqbal is skeptical that he can do much in a land in which people's heads seem full of "cobwebs." He doubts himself as a leader and thinks that he should make a grand gesture—going on a hunger strike or getting himself arrested—to prove himself. The next morning, he is arrested. Ten constables also arrest Jugga, surrounding his house with rifles.

Jugga and Iqbal are led away. The policemen, however, suspect that the men are innocent. The subinspector asks the head constable about Iqbal, recognizing him as the same man who got off the train with them the day before. The subinspector then goes to see Hukum Chand and tells him about the arrests. Later, he has Iqbal stripped and sees that Iqbal is circumcised, a sign of being Muslim. This leads him to conclude that Iqbal is a member of the Muslim League. Chand instructs the officers to file Iqbal on the arrest warrant as "Mohammed Iqbal." He then directs the subinspector to get the names of the dacoits out of Jugga and raises no objections to the subinspector's suggestion of torture.

In early September, the train schedule goes awry. A train from Pakistan arrives one morning, but no one gets off. It is a ghost train, it seems. Officers then ask the villagers for all of the wood and kerosene they can spare in exchange for money, and they oblige. Around sunset, a breeze blows in, carrying the smell of burning kerosene, wood, and charred flesh. Hukum Chand spends the day watching the corpses of men, women, and children get dragged out of the train and burned. He tries not to think about them. He asks his servant for whisky and invites the same entertainers back to the rest house. Chand keeps Haseena overnight for comfort, but they do not have sex.

The next morning, the subinspector visits the rest house. He tells Chand that forty or fifty Sikhs have entered town. Chand asks about the investigation into Ram Lal's murder. Jugga has identified members of his former gang, including Malli, but was not with them. Chand asks if Malli and his companions are Sikh or Muslim. They are Sikh, but Chand wishes they were Muslim. This, along with the belief that Iqbal is a Muslim Leaguer, would persuade the village's Sikhs to send away their Muslims. Chand orders the subinspector to free Malli and his gang, and then to ask the Muslim refugee camp commander for trucks to evacuate the Mano Majra Muslims.

After a week alone in jail, Iqbal shares his cell with Jugga, whose own cell is now occupied by Malli and his gang. Iqbal asks Jugga if he killed Ram Lal and Jugga says that he did not; the banian gave him money to pay lawyers when his father, Alam Singh, was in jail. Iqbal thinks that the police will free Jugga, but Jugga knows that the police do what they please.

By mid-morning, the subinspector drives to the police station at Chundunnugger. He tells the head constable that he wants him to release Malli's men in front of the villagers. The subinspector then asks if anyone has seen Sultana and his gang. The head constable says that they are in Pakistan and that everyone knows this. The subinspector tells the head constable to pretend not to know. Next, he directs the head constable to ask the villagers if anyone knows what "the Muslim Leaguer Iqbal" was doing in Mano Majra. The head constable is confused and says that Iqbal is a Sikh who cut his hair in England. The subinspector strongly suggests that the head constable go with the story of Iqbal being a Muslim Leaguer named "Mohammed Iqbal."

Following orders, the head constable takes Malli and his men back to Mano Majra, releases them, and questions the crowd as the subinspector instructed. The villagers are surprised by the implication of Iqbal; "an urban babu" has no reason to commit a dacoity. The ruse works, however, in arousing suspicion; Muslims no longer trust Sikhs, and Sikhs no longer trust Muslims. That night, a group of Sikhs gathers at Banta Singh's house. The lambardar suggests that the Muslims go to the refugee camp until things settle down. The village will protect the Muslims' belongings while they are gone.

Imam Baksh goes home and tells Nooran that they must leave. She does not want to go to Pakistan, but, if they do not leave willingly, they will be thrown out. Nooran goes to Jugga's house and waits for Juggut's mother. The old woman is annoyed to see Nooran, until Nooran mentions that she is two-months pregnant. Juggut's mother says that, when Jugga gets out of jail, she will ensure that he reunites with Nooran. Nooran is grateful and returns home.

Early in the morning, a convoy of trucks bound for Pakistan arrives. A Muslim officer orders the Muslims to leave their houses and board the trucks, taking only what they can carry. The Muslim officer hurries everyone into the trucks while a Sikh officer appoints Malli as custodian of the property the Muslims' must leave behind. Malli, along with his gang and the Sikh refugees, ransack the Muslims' houses.

Meanwhile, the Sutlej River is rising. Banta Singh and some villagers see the corpses of men, women, and children float by, marked by stab wounds. They realize that these are the victims of a massacre. That evening, the villagers go to the gurdwara for evening prayers. Sikh soldiers enter. One is a boy leader is in his teens who encourages the Sikh men to kill Muslims, baiting them by saying that their manliness depends on it. The Sikhs then conspire to massacre the Muslim refugees, who will leave on the train after sunset. The Sikhs will stretch a rope across the first span of the **railway bridge**. When the train passes, everyone who is sitting on the roof will get swept off. Banta Singh alerts the police to the plan.

At the police station, Hukum Chand has grown exasperated with the growing pile of bodies. The subinspector tells him that all of Chundunnugger's Muslims have been evacuated and will be on the train to Pakistan, causing Chand thinks of Haseena. When Chand angrily asks why the subinspector did not warn the refugee camp commander about the train plan, the subinspector says that, if the train does not leave, all of the camp's refugees could be killed regardless. Chand arranges for Jugga and Iqbal's release and, in the official papers, writes Iqbal's name as "Iqbal Singh," explaining that no political party would send an educated Muslim to a Sikh village to preach peace.

Upon his release, Jugga learns that all the Muslims have gone, that Malli is the custodian of their property, and that Malli's gang has grown along with the thirst for Muslim blood. Iqbal, meanwhile, thinks about going back to Delhi and reporting his arrest in the context of an "Anglo-American capitalist conspiracy." He imagines looking like a hero and wonders if he should say anything to the murderous mob. He decides that Indians are unworthy of the potential risk to his life. Instead, he drinks whisky and goes to sleep.

That night, Jugga goes to the gurdwara, where he asks Meet Singh to recite a prayer. On his way out, Jugga sees Iqbal sleeping and calls to him. He asks Meet Singh to say "Sat Sri Akal" to Iqbal his behalf when Iqbal wakes up.

Hukum Chand agonizes over having allowed Haseena to return to Chundunnugger. If she were with him, he would not care what happened. He is less secure in his role as magistrate, and feels wretched upon thinking about all the colleagues he has lost to violence. He hears the train rumbling in the distance and prays.

A little after 11:00 p.m., men spread themselves out on both sides of the train tracks. They hear the train coming. "A big man" climbs the steel span of the bridge; it is Jugga, though no one recognizes him. The train gets closer and the leader yells for Jugga to come down. Jugga pulls out a small kirpan and slashes

at the rope. Realizing what he is doing, the leader raises his rifle and shoots. The rope is in shreds, but a tough strand remains. Jugga snaps it with his teeth. A volley of shots then rings out, sending Jugga to the ground. The rope snaps and falls with him. The train goes over his body, toward Pakistan.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Juggut Singh / Jugga – Juggut is a Sikh peasant who is jailed on the false charge of committing the dacoity, or robbery, of Lala Ram Lal. Described as six-foot-four and broad "like a stud bull," Juggut was once a member of Malli's gang—the true culprits of the crime against Lala Ram Lal—and is burdened by both his own criminal past and the notorious reputation of his father, the robber Alam Singh. Juggut's girlfriend, Nooran, whom he impregnates on the evening of the robbery, is the daughter of the Muslim weaver Imam Baksh. While in jail Juggut shares a cell with Iqbal Singh, whose education and experiences in Britain Juggut regards with admiration. At the end of the novel, the author implies that Juggut is the "big man" who rescues a group of refugees from being killed on a train going to Pakistan.

Iqbal Singh – A political worker with no clear religious background, though Meet Singh and Hukum Chand assume that he is Sikh, Iqbal comes to Mano Majra from Jhelum, Pakistan to raise awareness about land reform and to encourage peasants to demand more political and economic rights. He privately identifies himself as "comrade," suggesting that he works for a Communist organization. He is described a small, somewhat effeminate man and was educated in England. He quickly becomes known in Mano Majra as a political agitator, a fact that the subinspector uses against him to pin him for the murder and robbery of Lala Ram Lal. Upon his arrest, Iqbal is falsely identified as a Muslim (called "Iqbal Mohammed") who is working for the Muslim League. The authorities' invention of this affiliation makes Iqbal a prime suspect in the murder of Ram Lal—Mano Majra's wealthiest Hindu. Iqbal shares a jail cell with Juggut Singh, who has also been falsely charged. Hukum Chand thinks that Iqbal is an intellectual of "the armchair variety," a description supported by the fact that Iqbal has contempt for the people whom he was sent to help and is seemingly only interested in using them to pursue his own fame and ambitions.

Meet Singh – An old Sikh priest who privately admits that he joined the clergy only to avoid regular work. Meet Singh is a friend of both Iqbal Singh and Imam Baksh—a relationship that is described as having "an undercurrent of friendly rivalry." Meet was born a peasant and lives off of earnings from a small parcel of land that he leases out, as well as the offerings from the temple. He has no wife or children. For a priest, he is not particularly learned in the Sikh scriptures nor is he a gifted orator. Described as "short, fat, and hairy," he is also unkempt and seldom wears a shirt, instead donning only a pair of dirty shorts. He opposes the plot to kill the train of refugees heading to Pakistan but finds that his role as an "old bhai" makes his protests futile.

Hukum Chand – The magistrate and deputy commissioner in Mano Majra, sometimes referred to as nar admi. He holds authority over the subinspector and the head constable. Chand, a Hindu of "lower-middle-class origin," is in his fifties, "corpulent," and married. He once had children, including a daughter of whom he was fond, but they died. Chand is obsessed by a fear of death and aims to evacuate as many Muslims from Mano Majra as he can to prevent a massacre. After a drunken evening of entertainment, he begins a relationship with Haseena, a teenaged Muslim prostitute. He develops love for Haseena because she is around the same age that his daughter would have been had she lived.

Mahatma Gandhi – An Indian lawyer, politician, writer, and social activist known for his successful use of civil disobedience, or non-violent protest. In 1920, he became a leader in the Indian National Congress and used his political clout to promote Indian nationalism. Gandhi argued that Indians remained under British colonial rule not so much out of fear of British power and weaponry, but due to their own flaws. Gandhi started boycotts of British businesses and institutions in India, though this initial effort was unsuccessful in getting the British to relinquish power over the then-colony. In 1942, fed up with what he perceived as a dishonest offer from the British to transfer power to Indians, and upset, too, with their encouragement of discord between Hindus and Muslims, Gandhi demanded that the British immediately withdraw from India. In the same year, Gandhi was imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace (now the Gandhi National Memorial), as part of the British effort to crush the Congress Party. He was released in 1944. By 1945, a series of negotiations between the newly-elected Labor Party in England, the Indian National Congress, and the Muslim League led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, resulted in the Mountbatten Plan—an agreement to partition British India into the separate states of India and Pakistan. Gandhi sorely regretted his inability to help create a united, independent India. To protest the communal riots which broke out between Hindus and Muslims from 1946-1947, Gandhi went on hunger strikes. His fast in September 1947 helped end riots in Calcutta. On January 30, 1948, while walking to an evening prayer meeting in Delhi, he was shot and killed by Nathuram Godse, a young man who was a Hindu fanatic.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah – Also known as "Muhammad Ali" and Qaid-i-Azam ("Great Leader"), Jinnah was an Indian Muslim politician who served as the leader of the Muslim League and was the founder and first governor-in-chief of the newly formed state of Pakistan. He started his political career in 1906 and worked in concert with members of the Indian National

Congress. He initially viewed Muslim interests within the confines of Indian nationalism. An admirer of British institutions, he hoped that one day India could elevate itself to a similar functioning level and earn more respect in the international community. He sought unity between Hindus and Muslims and suggested that the Congress Party and the Muslim League hold joint annual meetings. When Mahatma Gandhi became a leader of the Congress Party in 1920, Jinnah opposed his boycotts against the British and disliked Gandhi's singularly Hindu approach to politics. Jinnah withdrew his memberships from the Congress Party and the Home Rule League—a political organization dedicated to self-government. However, he remained a vocal supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. By 1937, relations between Hindus and Muslims had deteriorated due in large part to the Congress Party's consolidation of power. Though Jinnah was initially reluctant to pursue the formation of a separate state, he emerged as the clear leader of what would become Pakistan. The Congress Party found the notion of a separate state ridiculous and opposed it, as did the British government, which was intent on maintaining the unity of India. However, Jinnah's political acumen and leadership within the movement eventually convinced both the Congress Party and the British to relent. Pakistan became an independent state in 1947.

Jawaharlal Nehru – The first prime minister to lead India after its independence from Britain. Nehru established parliamentarian government in the country and took a neutral position in world affairs. During the Independence movement, he was one of Mahatma Gandhi's primary associates, though he contrasted from Gandhi due to his modern political and economic outlook as well as his secular style and habits. Nehru, too, was a member of the Congress Party.

Lala Ram Lal – A wealthy Hindu in Mano Majra. Juggut Singh describes him as the village "banian," or moneylender. After being beaten and robbed by Malli and his gang, Ram Lal dies from a stab wound to the stomach. In jail, Juggut tells Iqbal Singh that he could not be so cruel as to kill Ram Lal, for he had given Juggut money once to pay lawyers while his father, Alam, was in jail.

Juggut's Mother – Juggut's mother, who is not named, lives with her son and disapproves of his relationship with Nooran. She begs him not to leave their home to see Nooran on the night of the dacoity. Later, when the police arrive at her home to arrest Juggut, she begs them not to take him away. When Nooran discovers that Juggut has impregnated her, she goes to Juggut's mother for help. The conversation results in an end to Juggut's mother's hostility toward Nooran, who refers to the elder woman as "beybey."

Imam Baksh – A Muslim weaver and Nooran's father, who is described as tall, lean, and bald. He is also blind, serves as the mullah of the local mosque, and is friends with Meet Singh. Imam is often a subject of pity, for his wife and son died "within a few days of each other," but he is also respected by many. He and Nooran plan to leave Mano Majra for Pakistan, and they are on the train that is the site of an intended massacre plotted by a group of Sikh conspirators. Nooran avoids telling her father that she is pregnant with Juggut's baby, out of fear that he will either marry her off or murder her.

Banta Singh – The headman, or lambardar, who collects revenue from the inhabitants of Mano Majra. Banta Singh fills a role that his family has had for several generations. He is described as a modest man and a "hard-working peasant like the rest of his fellow villagers." However, his dealings with government give him an official status and a title. While Iqbal Singh is staying with Meet Singh in the gurdwara, or temple, Banta Singh pays them a visit along with a "Muslim," who is probably Imam Baksh. Banta insists that Iqbal drink the milk that he has brought. During a conversation about Indian politics, Banta questions the wisdom of the British leaving India and talks about how much more he prefers British soldiers to Indian ones. At the end of the novel, he alerts the police in Chundunnugger to the train plot.

Malli – The leader of the dacoity against Lala Ram Lal. Juggut Singh was once a part of Malli's gang. When Malli is arrested and placed in a cell next to Juggut and Iqbal Singh, Juggut has a violent confrontation with Malli in revenge for the trouble that Malli has caused him. After Muslims leave Mano Majra, Malli is appointed by Sikh officers to be a custodian of the departed Muslims' property, which he and his gang promptly loot. Malli, in concert with his gang and a group of refugees from Pakistan, also participates in the plot to kill Muslim refugees going to Pakistan.

Haseena – A Muslim girl between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who works as a prostitute and who becomes Hukum Chand's concubine. Her grandmother acts as her procurer. She wears a black, sequined sari and identifies herself as a singer and dancer, disregarding Chand's belief that she is a prostitute. Chand chooses her because of her look of innocence. She is from the village of Chundunnugger, whose Muslim villagers were told by the subinspector, also called "Inspector Sahib," that they were allowed to stay. She is around the same age that Chand's daughter would have been had she lived. Chand falls in love with her and later regrets letting her return to her village, which he finds out has sent all of its Muslims away. He also knows that she is on the train where the intended massacre will take place.

The Subinspector / Inspector Sahib – A conniving Hindu official who works for the police and under Hukum Chand. He sees Iqbal Singh for the first time when the latter arrives at the Mano Majra train station the day after the dacoity, making it impossible for Iqbal to have been present during the robbery. He falsely imprisons Iqbal and Juggut Singh for the murder of Lala Ram Lal under orders from Hukum Chand, who wants the men to be held in jail so that they cannot make trouble in the

village. The subinspector plots with the head constable to frame Iqbal and threatens Juggut with torture to get the names of those who committed the robbery.

The Head Constable – A rather simple-minded police officer who arrests Iqbal Singh and Juggut Singh. To cover the police's error in arresting these suspects, the subinspector orders him to frame Iqbal for involvement in the dacoity of Lala Ram Lal and to mischaracterize the political activist as a Muslim working for the Muslim League.

Prem Singh – Hukum Chand's Sikh colleague who takes trips to Lahore, Pakistan to buy his wife jewelry. While there, Prem spends a lot of time at Faletti's Hotel—a frequent meeting place for European sahibs and their wives. He offers them beer, particularly the Englishmen, in an effort to establish friendly relations. The Englishmen describe him as "a nice old Wog," which reflects their approval of his character but also makes it clear that the English do not respect him as an equal.

Sundari – The daughter of Hukum Chand's orderly. She has been married to Mansa Ram for four days when a group of Muslims surround their bus on the way to Gujranwala. They strip her husband naked and cut off his penis, then hand it to Sundari. The mob then rape her and smash the red lacquer **bangles** that she had been given for good luck after their marriage.

Sunder Singh – A Sikh soldier who had fought in Burma, Eritrea, and Italy and won medals for his bravery in battle. The government gives him land in Sindh, Pakistan. Along with his wife and three young children, he attempts to take an overcrowded train to Sindh, in a compartment crammed with five hundred men and women. When the train is held up at a station for four days with no one permitted to get off, he kills his wife and children to relieve them of their severe hunger and thirst. He shoots them shortly before the train begins moving to its destination. When he attempts to kill himself, too, he decides that there is no point. He heaves the corpses of his wife and children off of the train and makes his way to Pakistan.

Boy Leader – Described in the text as only a "lad" and as somewhat "effeminate" in his youthful appearance, he is an aggressive teenage soldier who encourages the Sikhs of Mano Majra to murder Muslims. At one point in the text, he entices a crowd with a speech in which he questions the manhood of the male villagers and says that they should kill "two Musulmans" for every Sikh and Hindu that the Muslims kill.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Nooran / Nooro – Juggut Singh's girlfriend and the daughter of the Muslim weaver Imam Baksh. This gives her a higher caste status than Juggut, who is a peasant and former robber. However, her being a Muslim puts her at odds with the Sikhs and Hindus in Mano Majra.

Alam Singh – The father of Juggut Singh, Alam is a dacoit, or armed robber, who is hanged two years before the story takes place. He is also the son of a dacoit. Juggut's mother fears that Juggut will end up hanged like his father.

Bhola – The tonga driver who takes Juggut Singh and Iqbal Singh to and from the police station in Chundunnugger. He is in the habit of beating his skinny brown horse out of frustration with circumstances in his life.

Mansa Ram – The husband of Sundari. During an attack on his bus by a group of Muslims, he is stripped naked and has his penis cut off, while his new wife is raped by the mob.

TERMS

Dacoity – An act of armed robbery. A 'dacoit' is a member of a gang who commits the act of armed robbery.

Bhai – "Brother" or "cousin" in Hindi. "Bhaiji" is a similar term of endearment, but it includes the gender-neutral honorific ending "-ji," which is commonly used in many South Asian languages and dialects to show respect.

Sepoy – A designation for an Indian soldier serving under European orders.

Charpoy – Traditionally used in India, it is a bed woven with tape or rope, consisting of a wooden frame that looks like a bench.

Chapatti – Also spelled "chapati," this is an unleavened flatbread that serves as a staple food in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as in parts of East Africa and the Caribbean. Another common name for the bread is "roti."

Budmash – A term that refers to a notorious person, a worthless person, a thug, or a person of poor character. The term is also used playfully among friends and family members.

Punkah – A large fan suspended from a ceiling, sometimes run on electricity, which moves back and forth. Traditionally, punkahs can be moved backward and forward by pulling on a cord.

Muezzin – A person appointed by a mosque to lead followers in prayer. The muezzin calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret, or mosque tower, and leads them in worship five times per day.

Lambardar – A title in India that applies to powerful landowners and members of their families. The title is hereditary and gives its holders wide-ranging powers, including police powers and the ability to collect revenue from tenants.

Betel – A leaf that is frequently chewed, along with its seeds, like tobacco. The betel nut is the seed of the betel plant, a popular stimulant in southern Asia, particularly in India. It is estimated that one-tenth of the world's population regularly chews betel, making it the fourth most commonly used drug in the world, after nicotine, alcohol, and caffeine.

Shikar / Shikari – A hunt.

Sahib – A term meaning "sir" or "master." It was commonly used in colonial India when natives addressed a European or someone with an official or higher-class status.

Gurdwara – In Punjabi, the term means "doorway to the Guru," or "house of God." A gurdwara is a Sikh temple. Like other houses of worship, Sikhs conduct the business of worship in the gurdwara. They also use the space to officiate weddings and religious initiation ceremonies.

Nar Admi – A male administrator. "Nar" in Hindi and Punjabi means "male." The term is used to refer to **Hukum Chand**, the magistrate for Mano Majra.

"Sat Sri Akal" – A common Sikh greeting in Hindi. It roughly means, "Blessed is the person who believes that God is Truth."

Babu / Babuji – An honorific title for a man, particularly one who is educated. The inclusion of the suffix "-ji" emphasizes the respect shown to someone with an elevated social status.

Banian – A title used for someone who is a member of the merchant class. It was sometimes used pejoratively to refer to an Indian trader who worked with a British firm, implying that the person's loyalties were with the British imperialists and not with the native people.

Toba – "Penance" in Hindi.

Mem-sahib – A term used by Indians to refer to a white, upper-class European woman, usually the wife of a colonial official.

Houri – In Muslim faith, a houri is a beautiful young virgin who will serve as a reward for just and faithful men in Paradise, or Heaven.

Kirpan – A small, curved sword or dagger traditionally carried by Sikh men.

Beybey – A term of endearment similar in meaning to "mother" or "aunt" and used by younger people to refer to elder women.

Pathan – Another name for a "Pashtun" or, often, an Afghan. The Pathan people are natives of southern and eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan. They speak Pashto and are usually Sunni Muslims.

Tonga – A small carriage used for transportation in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh that can hold up to four people and is pulled by a single horse or pony.

Hijra – A group that includes both transgender and intersex people. They feature prominently in both Hindu and Muslim history and are characterized by their heavily made-up faces and dazzling saris. As eunuchs, they were the protectors of harems during the Mughal Empire. Currently, they dance in temples and on the streets, often begging for rupees in traffic. Out of a commonly-held superstitious belief that hijras have the power to bestow powerful blessings or curses, Indians frequently give them money in return for a blessing. The failure to give alms could, some believe, result in a curse.

The Muslim League – A political party founded in 1906 to protect the rights of Muslims in India. The organization received support from the country's colonizer, Great Britain, until 1913. In that year, the party began to push for the prospect of Hindu-Muslim unity, in favor of gaining independence from Britain. Its most notable leader was **Mohammed Ali Jinnah**, who initially supported the alliance but, in 1940, joined the rest of the league in calling for a separate state for Muslims, which became Pakistan. To reflect the change, the party later called itself the All Pakistan Muslim League.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

THE PARTITION OF INDIA AND RELIGIOUS WARFARE

Khushwant Singh's historical novel *A Train to Pakistan* is set in the fictional town of Mano Majra during the summer of 1947, the year of the infamously bloody Partition of India. Following World War II, Great Britain granted its former colony independence and then divided it into the states of India and Pakistan—an attempt to dispel bitter religious tensions by providing a separate homeland for Indian Muslims. Murderous chaos ensued, however, as millions of Muslims attempted to cross the partition into Pakistan, and Hindus and Sikhs into India. Singh uses the tiny frontier village of Mano Majra, once an "[oasis] of peace," as a microcosm of the religious, caste, and moral divisions that had long existed but were exposed during the nation's literal rift. Singh suggests that the violence that erupted from India's partition had less to do with outside influences and more to do with the willingness of people to succumb to pre-existing prejudice and hatred.

At first, Mano Majra, a religiously diverse border town, is blissfully unaware of the tumult surrounding it despite its proximity to a **railway bridge** that connects India with Pakistan. For example, when the magistrate Hukum Chand asks the subinspector what "the situation" is like in Mano Majra, the latter says that he is not sure if anyone "even knows that the British have left and the country is divided into Pakistan and Hindustan." He thinks that some of the villagers know who Mahatma Gandhi is, but he doubts that anyone is aware of Muhammad Ali Jinnah—the founder of Pakistan. This blissful ignorance quickly changes in favor of wrathful violence, however, when a trainload of dead Sikhs arrives from Pakistan at the Mano Majra train station. Singh shows how this tragic

event, coupled with a pre-existing prejudice, spurs a dangerous cycle of hostility and violence.

The first sign that things are changing in the village is when the train schedule goes awry, causing passenger trains to arrive exceptionally late. For Mano Majra, which uses the arrival and departure of the trains to determine its daily schedule, this disrupts the sense of normalcy in the village. The second sign is the arrival of the "ghost train" from Pakistan, which plants the first seed of suspicion in the villagers' mind. Finally, Sikh officers show up and ask the villagers to give all the wood and kerosene they can spare. The villagers are kept in the dark about why the soldiers need these materials, but later they smell the stench of burning wood and kerosene mixed with that of charred flesh. The secrecy of the Sikh officers and others in authority, including Hukum Chand, who presides over the burning of the bodies, instills the villagers with the sense that something is very wrong and that they are under possible threat.

Later, following the dacoity at Lala Ram Lal's house, the head constable asks if anyone has spoken to "a young Mussulman babu called Mohammed Iqbal who was a member of the Muslim League." The villagers find it strange that the police think that an educated, middle-class man would be a suspect in a dacoity, and begin to suspect that the Muslims have sent Iqbal as a spy. The head constable's questions succeed in dividing Mano Majra "into two halves as neatly as a knife cuts through a pat of butter," revealing how easily people can be manipulated to mistrust those whom they call friends.

The village is exposed to further violence after the monsoon, when the rainwater causes the Sutlej River to rise. When the villagers witness several people floating in the water, they see stab wounds and the mutilated breasts of women, making it clear that these people had been massacred. The sight of these bodies, coupled with the knowledge that hundreds of Sikhs and Muslims were murdered in Pakistan before being sent into India on the "ghost train," spurs the Sikhs into violent action, convincing many to partake in the plot to kill Muslim refugees going to Pakistan.

Not all of the inhabitants of Mano Majra succumb to hatred. The local bhai, Meet Singh, is not a particularly gifted priest, but he uses his position of respect to appeal to people's sense of decency. His efforts to remind his fellow Sikhs that their Muslim neighbors should not be blamed for the behavior of Muslims across the border prove to be futile in tempering the violent impulses stirred up by visiting Sikh soldiers. Indeed, one evening Mano Majra receives a visit from a group of Sikh soldiers with rifles slung on their shoulders, one of whom—a boy leader—entices the crowd to engage in revenge killings in response to the massacres of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. He urges the male villagers to kill "two Musulmans" for "each Hindu and Sikh [the Muslims] kill." Meet Singh highlights the lack of sense this makes; the Muslims of Mano Majra have nothing to do with the violence in Pakistan. The priest reminds the crowd that it is more important to regard Muslims individually than to condemn an entire group, but his measured appeals to rationality prove futile as he is outdone by the boy leader's appeal to the crowd's thirst for revenge.

Toward the end of the novel, the boy leader plots with Sikh villagers to kill hundreds of Muslim refugees who will be sitting on the roof of a Pakistan-bound train. Meet Singh advises his fellow Sikhs on proper moral action, but he does not interfere too much out of fear of also becoming a victim of retributive violence. However, the bhai's words do inspire Juggut Singh, a former robber well-known for violence, to take redemptive action. Juggut visits Meet Singh and asks the priest to read him a prayer. He then asks if the prayer is good, and the priest assures him that the Guru's word is always good and can help those who do good. If people perform evil, the Guru's words will work against them. Juggut goes on to "do good" by sacrificing his own life in order to save the train full of Muslim refugees. Through this, the author suggests that language alone cannot either stop or spur violence but, like the head constable's manipulative suggestions to the villagers, language can be a catalyst that prompts people to act on already existing desires.

By refusing to cast blame toward any particular religious group for the violence of the partition, Singh illustrates the complexity of humanity during a time when people were simplified to their religious allegiances. He gives detailed accounts of the cruelties committed by all to emphasize that such habits are not limited to certain religious factions, but rather, are common to humanity. Yet even as Singh uses the story of India's partition as a cautionary tale of what can occur when people succumb to their baser instincts, his depiction of Jugga's destruction of the rope shows that humanity is also capable of extraordinary acts of courage and heroism in the face of hatred.

POSTCOLONIAL ANXIETY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

A Train to Pakistan details how the Partition of India not only divided the nation geographically, but also demarcated the British colonial era from that of postcolonial independence. In the novel, some characters claim that India was better off under British rule, despite the partition being Britain's solution, according to the historical record, for stemming the rise of religious strife. Singh depicts India as a place looking to define itself after colonial rule and struggling to create its own path towards progress. The novel ultimately illustrates how overcoming colonial rule is not merely a task of reasserting control over one's political destiny, but of surmounting the psychological impact of decades of subordination.

The author uses Iqbal Singh, a political worker, who, along with Juggut Singh, is falsely accused of committing the dacoity

against Lala Ram Lal, to represent the desire for Indian independence and progress without the aid or presence of the British. Iqbal was educated in Britain and is the only character in the novel who is frank about his distaste toward the British Empire. Unlike Imam Baksh, whom he meets through Meet Singh, Iqbal does not trust the British to protect India from violence. He also recoils from his cellmate, Juggut's comparison of English women to "houris," or angels, and Indian women to "black buffaloes," and argues against others' near worship of the British and lack of faith in Indian institutions.

When Banta Singh, the lambardar who joins Meet Singh and an unnamed Muslim during a visit to Iqbal, asks Iqbal why the English left India, Iqbal explains their departure in the context of fear among the English that the country would eventually turn against them, evoking the vague example of "the mutiny of the Indian sailors" against the British during the Second World War. He highlights a growing trend in India toward resistance after World War II that was necessary in helping India fulfill its own destiny. By joining the Japanese war effort, for instance, some Indians were performing a major act of defiance against the British, while also subtly pointing out the hypocrisy of fighting with the British against Japanese imperialism while the British perpetuated their own empire. Though "independence" is an abstract concept to Iqbal's listeners, he believes that the idea of political freedom can serve as the basis for fostering a new economic reality—that is, for creating a system in which fewer Indians suffer from poverty. With the perpetual presence of the British in India, however, self-determination would remain elusive.

Nevertheless, some characters claim that India was better off under British rule. For example, when Banta Singh details how he fought with the Allied Powers on behalf of the British in World War I, he insists that the other Indian soldiers "liked the English officers" and thought that they "were better than the Indian." Meet Singh confirms this view with an anecdote from his brother, "a havildar," or sergeant, who says that all of the "sepoys are happier with English officers than with Indian" and that his niece still receives gifts from London from his "brother's colonel's mem-sahib." The language that both men use is distinctly comparative and tends to elevate the British soldier over the Indian, not based on military skill or leadership, but on the quality of their personal interactions with the British officers. Banta Singh, Meet Singh, and Imam Baksh use these positive experiences to subtly justify the presence of the British in India and use these anecdotes to overlook the cruelties of their former colonizers. Their comments also suggest that the three men believe that the British were superior and, therefore, better equipped to lead India—a notion which frustrates Iqbal.

Iqbal contradicts this notion of superiority when he describes the British as "a race of four-twenties," in reference to Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code which "defines the offense of cheating." If the British were trustworthy, he says, they "would not have spread their domain all over the world." He further makes a distinction between their "nice" disposition as human beings and how they behave politically. It is possible for the British to learn Indian religious customs and language, as Lord Mountbatten—"the handsome, Hindustani-speaking cousin of the King"—did, while still undermining India through destructive policy, such as the partition, which was Mountbatten's idea. Iqbal compares Mountbatten's love for India to that of "the missionaries"—it is a not a form of love built on acceptance and equality, but one that seeks to transform India in favor of British customs and values. Iqbal's criticism of the British as "cheats" is his effort to get the others to see them as flawed and not as the superior rulers Indians have been conditioned to regard them as. This effort refers back to Iqbal's political work of helping Indians overcome their view of themselves as subjects instead of as self-determining citizens.

Iqbal's experiences in Britain have allowed him to know the British on more egalitarian terms, however, while the others know them primarily as ruling officers. Access to such experiences, as a result of his higher social class, make it more difficult for Iqbal to understand the fears of poorer Indians who believe that they cannot rely on themselves to develop their own path forward. Indeed, Imam Baksh further explains his skepticism toward independence by asserting that the departure of the British will make little difference for the poor and ignorant. He believes that educated people such as Iqbal will get the jobs that formerly went to the British, while poor Indians—"once slaves of the English"—will simply "be slaves of the educated Indians—or the Pakistanis." Imam Baksh's outlook for India after independence is a negative one, which envisions that there will always be an underclass over whom others will rule.

The author ultimately uses the conversation between Iqbal, Meet Singh, Banta Singh, and Imam Baksh to highlight the uncertainty that many Indians felt in the post-Independence era. Though British rule may have been unjust, some believed that the imperialists gave the country a structure that it would not otherwise have had. From these conversations, the author describes the nature of postcolonial anxiety—and how self-doubt, lack of education, elitist rule, and, now, sectarian warfare, made a successful post-Independence government seem increasingly elusive.

POWER AND CORRUPTION

Iqbal Singh and Juggut Singh are two men of different castes who end up sharing a cell together, both imprisoned on the false charge of conspiring to commit the dacoity against the Hindu landowner Lala Ram Lal. Both Iqbal and Juggut are easy targets of the corrupt local police, who have no justification for imprisoning either man and arrest them simply because it is politically expedient and they

can. Iqbal represents a threat to established authority, while Juggut—already a known criminal in the village—is a convenient scapegoat for the avoidance of investigative work. Through the experiences of these men, the novel depicts a country in which police powers are broad, unchecked, and abusive. This corruption is also key to maintaining a caste system in which many Indians are guaranteed to remain poor and powerless.

Iqbal is pegged as a troublemaker due to his work to bring political change to Mano Majra, including attempts to end the unmitigated rule of wealthy Indians over the nation's poor. The head constable, under the guidance of the subinspector, eventually works to frame Iqbal as a member of the Muslim League. The police do this partly to cover for their initial error in arresting Iqbal for the dacoity; the subinspector forgot that he saw Iqbal arrive in Mano Majra on his train the day after the dacoity, meaning he could not possibly have been responsible. Beyond covering their mistake, however, they also want to prod the Sikh villagers of Mano Majra into sending away their Muslims. The subinspector's "proof" that Iqbal is a Muslim political meddler is that Iqbal is circumcised. The subinspector plots with the magistrate Hukum Chand to rename Iqbal as "Iqbal Mohammed." The arrest and intentional misnaming of Iqbal Singh reveals the arbitrary nature of justice in India after Independence, and how people of different social classes and religions are vulnerable to the nation's police corruption.

A particularly lurid example of this corruption occurs when Juggut Singh is brought in for questioning. Juggut is easily blamed for the crime due to his own criminal past. Additionally, Malli, the actual leader of the dacoity, threw **bangles** stolen from Ram Lal into Juggut's courtyard to implicate him. To then force Juggut to talk, the subinspector threatens to whip his buttocks or put "red chilies" into Juggut's rectum. Juggut, however, has already been through torture and knows what it feels like to have his "[h]ands and feet pinned under legs of charpoys with half a dozen policemen sitting on them" and his "[t]esticles twisted and squeezed" until one goes numb. The subinspector is pleased to watch Juggut wince from the memory of such pain, and his knowledge that he can both inflict harm and use it to "solve" a case gives him a feeling of omnipotence. In each instance, the police assert dominance in India, not through cooperative and legal means, but by imposing physical harm on suspected criminals and suspending any rights to due process.

After Iqbal and Juggut are imprisoned and sharing a cell, Iqbal asks the latter if he is responsible for the killing of Ram Lal, which Juggut firmly denies. Juggut explains that Ram Lal was a source of money for people in the village, and that he had given Juggut money once to help get his father, Alam, out of jail. Iqbal supposes that this will be enough evidence for the police to release Juggut from custody, but Juggut tells him that the police will only release him "when they feel like it" and might even go as far as to "trump up a case of [him] keeping a spear without a license or going out of the village without permission." Juggut's explanation of police power over peasants like him demonstrates the ways in which the authorities can control people's movements and bring false charges against those who have no means to secure their defense. Ironically, Ram Lal was one of few people in power, it seems, who sympathized with those who could not defend themselves against such abuses of authority.

Despite his education and higher social station, Iqbal is no more capable of defending himself against the police's scheming. The subinspector's resentment of Iqbal, which influences his wish to frame the social worker, is the result of his envy toward Iqbal's education, higher social class, and foreign manners, all of which the subinspector first noticed upon their encounter at the train station. The subinspector mocks Iqbal's expressed desire for habeas corpus, or due process, before being jailed. When Iqbal requests being moved to another cell after Juggut violently attacks Malli, the subinspector again mocks Iqbal, asking if he would also like to have "an electric fan" installed in his cell for greater comfort. This interaction reveals that, in a policing system in which officers can frame and imprison anyone they please, everyone is vulnerable. Iqbal's education and refined manners serve him no better than Juggut's six-foot-four frame; both are rendered small and powerless.

The author depicts specific instances of police corruption in *A Train to Pakistan* to underscore their prevalence throughout India's political infrastructure, the powerlessness of peasants, such as Juggut, in response to it, as well as the difficulties that political agitators, such as Iqbal, face in transforming a society mired under the weight of its own moral decay.

HONOR AND HEROISM

Iqbal goes to Mano Majra, a town that he has never visited and where he knows no one, expecting to inspire the villagers to foster political change. With his help, Iqbal imagines that the village peasants will assert stronger political and economic rights. Juggut, on the other hand, regards himself as a budmash—someone who is inherently bad and whose legacy of crime works against him. Regardless, it is ultimately Juggut and not Iqbal who proves himself a hero at the end of the novel. By exploring the contrast between both men's words and deeds, Singh suggests that genuine honor is achieved only through selfless sacrifice.

Iqbal is a political worker from Delhi—urban, educated, and, despite his professed goals, rather aloof to the concerns of Indians in Mano Majra. He belongs to a political organization that is probably Communist, due to his self-identification as a "comrade" as well as his aim to overthrow the landowning government. However, Iqbal's apparent good intentions are marred by his contempt for the people whom he was sent to serve. Singh uses Iqbal to illustrate the hypocrisy of so-called political revolutionaries who are, very often, no more

honorable or legitimate than the politicians whom they seek to overthrow.

Iqbal is particularly irritated by the religious extremism in the region. He realizes that, if not for his keeping company with the Sikh bhai Meet Singh and Juggut, who is also Sikh, his being circumcised could have gotten him killed. He is annoyed that he has "to prove his Sikhism to save his life." He contrasts the Mano Majrans' murderous loyalty to religion with attitudes in Delhi, which he considers to be "civilization." What Iqbal overlooks, despite his supposed dedication to alleviating poverty and ignorance in Mano Majra, is that the villagers are so fiercely loyal to their religious tribes because of the upper classes' long-standing indifference toward their poverty and ignorance. With his tendency to look down upon the simpler villagers and to regard them as the antithesis of civilization, Iqbal shows that he cannot identify with the Mano Majrans and that he does not really wish to.

Iqbal also has fantasies in which he imagines how the public would respond to his perceived political sacrifices. He imagines news headlines reporting his arrest and contemplates confronting the crowd of Sikhs who conspire to murder refugees heading to Pakistan on an evening train. Iqbal does not wish to take a stand out of any moral imperative to prevent bloodshed; he is, instead, fascinated by how heroic he would look, "like the heroes on the screen who [become] bigger and bigger as they walk right into the camera." However, knowing that no one of importance would be present to witness this self-sacrifice disabuses Iqbal of any sense that he should risk his life to prevent a wave of violence in Mano Majra. From these examples, it is clear that Iqbal's political convictions are superficial. He is not truly interested in helping Indian people transition to life after colonial rule or in eliminating the caste system that oppresses them. He is interested in making people think that he can rescue them from their circumstances so that his own sense of glory can loom large.

Juggut, on the other hand, is already a man with a big reputation in Mano Majra. He is known as the most dangerous man in his village—a legacy that he inherited from his grandfather and his father, Alam Singh. However, Juggut has abandoned his previous life of crime in favor of farming. Where Iqbal fantasizes, Juggut takes action. Upon learning that Mano Majra has slipped into the grip of the villainous Malli, who now leads the mob that plans to massacre Muslim refugees heading to Pakistan, Juggut goes to the gurdwara to see Meet Singh and pray. The priest is surprised to see Juggut, who has never before come to the temple, arrive at such a late hour. Juggut's pursuit of faith is a sign that he seeks moral guidance, likely due to distrust of his own instincts. He wishes not only to overcome the reputation that somehow justified his false arrest, but to find a path toward rightful action so that he can do right by his Muslim lover Nooran and his community.

Though Singh never mentions Juggut by name, the evolution of the plot strongly suggests that Juggut is the "big man" who, at the end of the novel, scales up the **railway bridge** and onto the rope that is intended to cut through a crowd of Muslim passengers who will be riding on the roof of the train. The fact that none of the villagers recognize the "big man" as Juggut suggests a transformation in character that renders the former robber unrecognizable. Juggut ultimately sacrifices his life in the process of cutting the rope—going down in the midst of "a volley of shots"—so that Nooran and her father, who are on the train, will not be killed. Juggut does this with no knowledge of Nooran's pregnancy, instead entirely out of love for her. His action contradicts Hukum Chand's expectations that "[h]is type never [risks] their necks for women," and that any retaliation against Malli would only be a matter of "[settling] scores." Juggut's sacrifice breaks his family's criminal reputation and saves his village from infamy, revealing that even a former dacoit is capable of redemption.

Through Juggut, Singh illustrates how anyone is capable of performing feats of heroism—that is, acts that benefit others without offering immediate personal reward. Iqbal, meanwhile, presents himself as someone who wants to help Mano Majra, but who in reality only wishes to use the village to facilitate his own fame. He desires heroism yet shrinks from the sacrifices that he must make to earn it. The fact that the villagers, including Meet Singh and other elders, assume that Iqbal is a good man despite his selfishness raises the question of what it doing "good" actually means, as well as what mistaken assumptions people make based on social status. Singh's study of heroism through these two men ultimately reveals the complexity of morality as well as the price of honor.

GENDER AND MASCULINITY

Even as love proves a powerful force within the desperate world of *A Train to Pakistan*, women in the story are routinely denied autonomy and defined primarily by their relationships to men. At the same time, men in the story are subject to stringent expectations of masculinity that shape their prevalence towards violence. By highlighting the highly-restrictive attitudes that prescribe both male and female behavior throughout the novel, Singh suggests that, in addition to religious and caste tensions, gendered prejudice is heavily to blame for the horrors following the Partition.

Women in the story lack their own subjectivity. When they are discussed, it is in the context of their relationships to men. Even Nooran, who is more fully detailed than any other female character in the novel, is defined as Juggut's lover and the daughter of the Muslim weaver, Imam Baksh. Juggut's mother is given no name at all, though Nooran calls her "beybey," a reference to her status as a female elder and a term that reinforces her role as a nurturer. Muslim prostitute Haseena is perhaps the most powerless female character in the story, whose thoughts and feelings are filtered through her client,

Hukum Chand's, perceptions of her. These characterizations of women reinforce the notion that they lack individual agency.

Women are also regarded as objects or vessels for men's desires. During a conversation with Iqbal in their shared cell, for example, Juggut speaks of British women as unattainable sexual objects ("houris") and calls Indian women "black buffalos" due to their darker skin. The comparison of English women to houris, or angels, reinforces a myth, learned through colonial rule, that white women are superior to darker-skinned women and are more desirable because they were long forbidden to Indian men.

When women are not rendered sex objects, they become emblems of purity whose chastity determines their value. Chand says Hindu women are so "pure that they would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them." This indicates that Hindu women who become rape victims worry that the crime committed against them will devalue them in the eyes of Hindu men. Chand's comment is especially hypocritical given that he happily uses the services of Haseena, the teenaged Muslim prostitute, while rhapsodizing about the "purity" of Hindu women. This indicates grossly disparate standards of behavior for Hindu men and women, which constrain the latter while ensuring the sexual license of the former.

When men cannot prove their masculinity through the sexual exploitation or objectification of women, they resort to violence. Sikh men in the novel in fact characterize their manhood by a willingness to confront or commit violence. For example, when a group of Sikh soldiers goes to the gurdwara during a community meeting, a boy leader stands out among them and baits the Sikh male villagers into killing Muslims by saying that their masculinity depends on it. Singh describes the young man as "small in size, slight of build" and "somewhat effeminate." This indicates that the boy leader is using his military authority to rouse the male villagers into violence, as a means of validating his own manhood.

Manhood is also threatened by the presence of the hijras, whose transgender or intersex identities place them outside of traditional modes of masculinity and femininity. The hijras' flagrant disregard for social norms allows them to call attention to the performative nature of gender. During a confrontation with a Sikh and Hindu mob that threatens to kill a Muslim infant, for example, the hijras "[whirl] around so fast that their skirts [fly] in the air," revealing their genitals and prompting them to ask the mob if they are "Hindus or Muslims," a comic stroke that pokes fun at rigid obedience to categories of identity. When the Sikhs offer to let the hijras live in exchange for their immediate departure from the village, one hijra "[runs] his finger in a Sikh's beard" and asks if he is afraid that the men will become like the hijras and stop having children—which sends the crowd, including other Sikhs, into laughter again. The comment is a not-so-subtle reference to the tendencies of some Indian men to have sexual affairs with hijras while denying any affiliation with them in public. Singh uses the hijras' mockery of the mob, particularly of the Sikhs, who are most hostile toward them, to address the hypocrisy of the men. The animosity toward the hijras further suggests that masculinity is often constructed as a rejection of anything approaching femininity.

The novel's treatment of women and hijras exposes their vulnerability in a country that does not value them individually, and ultimately highlights how sexism and gender discrimination were related to the vicious cycle of violence that engulfed the country. The gendered nature of that violence is evidenced in the novel's repeated mention of rape as a weapon of war. For example, Muslims in Mano Majra speak of rumors "of gentlewomen having their veils taken off" and being "raped in the marketplace." The story of Sundari is another horrific account, as Muslims rape the newlywed and then cut off her husband's penis—this literal unmanning being the basest and most humiliating of punishments. This routine denial of humanity to women and hijras is one of the precursors, Singh suggests, to the wider violence that overtook India in 1947.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

ANTIMONY

In the novel antimony is a symbol of the pleasures and dangers posed by love and sex. Antimony is a hazardous mineral falsely believed to be the main ingredient in kohl—the material that Juggut Singh's Muslim girlfriend Nooran and the Muslim prostitute Haseena use to line their eyes. In the midst of their dacoity of Lala Ram Lal, Malli and the other robbers discuss Nooran—a girl who looks innocent during the day but who "puts black antimony in her eyes" at night, reflecting the connection between antinomy with lust and sin. Nooran, they say, "is dark, but her eyes are darker." Haseena also lines her eyes "with antimony and lampblack." Both Nooran and Haseena exist in the novel as sources of pleasure for the men who love them, albeit reluctantly. Both women, too, like the "antimony in [their] eyes," are associated with danger due to their being Muslim. For example, upon becoming pregnant with Juggut's child, Nooran fears that a pregnancy out of wedlock with prompt her father to kill her. She also fears that, if her future Pakistani neighbors discover that her baby has a Sikh father, the child will be killed. The middle-aged, married magistrate Hukum Chand, meanwhile, falls in love with Haseena, whose youth, religious affiliation, and social status are in stark opposition to his own. The antimony that lines both women's eyes ultimately marks them as, often unwilling, objects of lust, pleasure, and danger.

RAILWAY BRIDGE

The railway bridge is a symbol of India's connection with Pakistan, which persists despite the Partition and persistent religious animus, as well as of both the positive and negative aspects of modernity. The bridge, which physically connects India to the new state of Pakistan, was built during India's colonial period and is the only evidence of Western-style infrastructure in the tiny village of Mano Majra, which barely has roads. Trains filled with both passengers and goods cross it daily, underscoring its status as Mano Majra's only connection to the outside world. The bridge is not only the conduit through which Mano Majra receives goods, however, but it also one of the means by which the insular and relatively peaceful village gets caught up in the violence that has engulfed neighboring and distant cities. It is this bridge that carries a trainload of refugees to Pakistan, and which, toward the end of the novel, becomes the site of a Sikh conspiracy to kill passengers on that Pakistan-bound train. The bridge thus signals the religious tensions between the two nations while also underscoring their inherent bond.

BANGLES

In the Sikh faith, a bangle symbolizes the Kara, or the belief in eternity—that God, or the Guru, has no beginning or end. The Kara is one of the five "K's," or articles of faith, in the Sikh religion. In the novel, however, bangles come to be associated with a certain dissolution or undermining of religious faith. Malli and his fellow robbers take bangles from Lala Ram Lal's home and throw them into Juggut Singh's courtyard, where they break into pieces, to implicate Juggut in the dacoity. The broken bangles symbolize both the perceived loss of a connection with God, while also serving as a metaphor for India's geographical rupture. Newly married women, such as Hukum Chand's orderly, Sundari, also wear many bangles for good luck. However, when she and her husband, Mansa Ram, are pulled from a bus by a mob of Muslims, who then rape Sundari, the power of this symbolism is undermined. Through the narration of this anecdote, the author seems to suggest that such religious symbols mean nothing when the tenets of a faith are disregarded in favor of violence and political tyranny. The Sikhs in the novel are just as guilty of this behavior as the Muslims.

The author further implies that bangles are empty of true religious power and meaning when several characters, including Meet Singh and the subinspector, assume that Iqbal Singh is a Sikh because he wears the steel bangle that many Sikh men adorn to demonstrate their faith. The bangle, however, could merely be an adornment to help the religiously-ambiguous Iqbal pose as a Sikh. This, coupled with the fact that Iqbal is circumcised, a sign of being Muslim, makes it unclear what his true religious identity is. Personally, he identifies with none. This detail of ambiguous religious identity makes the violence between the religious groups seem all the more absurd. If Sikhism is merely defined by the wearing of bangles, which easily slip on and off, then the faith becomes a superficial thing, which anyone can wear for political convenience, or even a need to survive.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Grove Press edition of *Train to Pakistan* published in 1956.

1. Dacoity Quotes

❝ Iqbal stood up and looked all around. From the railway station to the roof of the rest house … the whole place was littered with men, women, children, cattle, and dogs …. Where in India could one find a place that did not teem with life? Iqbal thought of his first reaction on reaching Bombay. Milling crowds—millions of them—on the quayside, in the streets, on railway platforms; even at night the pavements were full of people. The whole country was like an overcrowded room. What could you expect when the population went up by six every minute—five millions every year! It made all planning in industry or agriculture a mockery. Why not spend the same amount of effort in checking the increase in population? But how could you, in the land of the Kama sutra, the home of phallic worship and the son cult?

Related Characters: Meet Singh, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 44

Explanation and Analysis

Soon after arriving in Mano Majra, Iqbal goes for a walk to familiarize himself with the village. He walks to the railway bridge and loiters in the area—an activity that the authorities will later use to justify his arrest. As he looks around, Iqbal finds that even this tiny village is overwhelmed with people. Iqbal's perception of the village feels claustrophobic—the buildings and structures seem to close in on him because they are teeming with people. This passage indicates that, despite his claim that he aims to improve others' lives, Iqbal does not seem to like people very much and has a particular distaste for other Indians. His use of the word "littered" suggests that he views members of the crowd as excessive waste. He justifies his misanthropy with his quiet condemnation of the nation's absence of family planning, which, he surmises, makes it

impossible to achieve progress in any other area of life. Iqbal concludes that India is hopelessly stuck in ways that inhibit its own progress. This attitude seems to contradict his purpose for being in Mano Majra, until the reader learns that Iqbal intends to use Mano Majra as a stepping stone to leadership in his party.

❝ Independence meant little or nothing to these people. They did not even realize that it was a step forward and that all they needed to do was to take the next step and turn the make-believe political freedom into a real economic one.

Related Characters: Imam Baksh, Banta Singh, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 47

Explanation and Analysis

Iqbal is having a conversation with the village's lambardar, Banta Singh, and the village's most respected Muslim, Imam Baksh, whom he identifies in the narrative as "the Muslim" because Meet Singh never formally introduces them. Iqbal does not particularly feel like meeting with the men, whom Meet Singh has invited to the temple for the evening. The imam and the lambardar appeal to Iqbal to tell them why the English ended its colonial rule of India. To Iqbal, the question is too "simple," or silly, to answer. He neglects to realize that that, though the lambardar and the imam are respected elders in their communities, they are illiterate, which makes it difficult for them both to get news and to understand the little they receive. Therefore, the elder men do not understand the significance of decolonization and only know that, without the guidance of the English, their country has descended into disorder. Iqbal's lack of empathy for their ignorance, which is directly related to colonial rule, causes him to refer to the elders as "these people," which distances him from their concerns. He rightly regards decolonization as "a step forward," but he does not realize that a largely illiterate populace will find it difficult, if not impossible, to form the economically egalitarian society that Iqbal envisions. Iqbal's indifference and snobbish attitude toward the villagers proves that he is not genuinely interested in providing them with the guidance that they need.

❝ "They are a race of four-twenties," he said vehemently. [Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code defines the offense of cheating.] "Do not believe what they say." Once again he felt his venom had missed its mark. But the Big Lord's daughter sitting cross-legged with her eyes shut for the benefit of press photographers, and the Big Lord himself—the handsome, Hindustani-speaking cousin of the King, who loved India like the missionaries—was always too much for Iqbal .... "They would not have spread their domain all over the world if they had been honest. That, however, is irrelevant," added Iqbal. It was time to change the subject. "What is important is: what is going to happen now?"

Related Characters: Iqbal Singh (speaker), Imam Baksh, Banta Singh, Meet Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

As the four men continue their conversation in the temple about the decolonization of India, Meet Singh and Banta Singh talk about their admiration for British soldiers and offer anecdotes about Indians who have had good relationships with the British. They also mention the famous photo of Lord Mountbatten (the "Big Lord") and his daughter at a prayer meeting with Gandhi to demonstrate that the British have respect for men of religion. The men's praise of the British irritates Iqbal, who distinguishes between the British being nice individually and the injustice of their imperial rule over India and other lands.

To relate the problem more directly, Iqbal uses a section of the Indian Penal Code to illustrate the dishonesty of the British in a way that the men would understand. They still do not recognize the duplicity that Iqbal sees in Lord Mountbatten's pose for the camera, which is meant to portray the British as benevolent rulers. He compares Mountbatten to the missionaries to indicate that the nobleman's appreciation for India does not mean that he regards Indians as equals. On the contrary, like the missionaries, he likely thinks that they need the guidance of the West. According to Iqbal, if the British truly respected India and the other countries filled with non-whites over which they rule, they never would have become conquerors in the first place. The Indian's relationship to the British will, therefore, always be one of subordination. British politeness is merely a disguise for their deviousness, in Iqbal's view.

Iqbal then decides that talk about British colonialism is not helpful to his immediate cause, which is to motivate the

peasants to take their next political step. This indicates that Iqbal is not much of a student of history or causality. If he were, he would realize that the Indians' near-worship of the British is precisely part of the reason why they are reluctant to trust themselves to rule over their own country.

What could he—one little man—do in this enormous impersonal land of four hundred million? Could he stop the killing? Obviously not. Everyone—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Congressite, Leaguer, Akali, or Communist—was deep in it. It was fatuous to suggest that the bourgeois revolution could be turned into a proletarian one. The stage had not arrived. The proletariat was indifferent to political freedom for Hindustan or Pakistan, except when it could be given political significance like grabbing land by killing an owner who was of a different religious denomination. All that could be done was to divert the kill-and-grab instinct from communal channels and turn it against the propertied class. That was the proletarian revolution the easy way. His party bosses would not see it.

Related Characters: Imam Baksh, Banta Singh, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 50

Explanation and Analysis

After the lambardar and the imam have left the temple, Iqbal wonders how effective he can be at rousing the villagers in Mano Majra to overthrow the landowners and establish a more communal system of living. Iqbal does not think that he is much of a leader because he has not yet demonstrated any willingness to sacrifice his comfort, such as getting arrested. On the other hand, he believes that he has the knowledge and talent to help India progress if only people were receptive to him.

At the same time, Iqbal feels overwhelmed by the enormity of the population, which makes it that much more difficult to impart his party's message. Indian society is diverse, with each group requiring a different message, it seems. Each group is also seemingly invested in divisive politics—not in the communitarian message of his party. He begins to think of how he can use the sectarian violence to his political advantage. He reasons that if he can shift religious resentments toward class, such as showing how particular religious groups have more land or money than others, then it would become easier to condition the poor to see that the problem is more about economic inequality than religion. The reader learns here that Iqbal is willing to manipulate religious hatred to his advantage, which would be taking "the easy way" toward revolution and to the realization of his fantasies of becoming a great leader. Meanwhile, the party insists that he limit their message to a discussion of the class problem.

"Yes, the Englishmen have gone but the rich Indians have taken their place. What have you or your fellow villagers got out of independence? More bread or more clothes? You are in the same handcuffs and fetters which the English put on you. We have to get together and rise. We have nothing to lose but these chains." Iqbal emphasized the last sentence by raising his hands up to his face and jerking them as if the movement would break the handcuffs.

Related Characters: Iqbal Singh (speaker), Mahatma Gandhi , Lala Ram Lal, Juggut Singh / Jugga

Related Themes:

Page Number: 60

Explanation and Analysis

Iqbal Singh and Juggut Singh have just been arrested for suspected participation in the dacoity against Lala Ram Lal. On the way to jail, Jugga makes conversation with Iqbal about politics and says that he has heard that Indians have their own rule (he knows that the British have left) and that Mahatma Gandhi now leads the government in Delhi. Iqbal verifies this, but asserts that the problem of caste division remains. He does not share Jugga's belief that Indian faces in government mean that poorer Indians will have power. He sees Gandhi and the others in Congress as representative of the interests of the ruling class rather than those of peasants such as Jugga. To illustrate his point, Iqbal tries to relate India's independence to Jugga's own life and asks him what, if anything, has changed. He uses the literal example of the handcuffs which are now on both of their wrists to indicate that they are both "enchained" in an oppressive system. The difference between them is that Iqbal has had far more economic privilege.

Iqbal's description of class oppression is very generic, suggesting that he has little experience with poverty outside of his party propaganda, which teaches him to simplify class struggle to more bread and clothes for those who have less. He does not ask Jugga about his specific life and experiences, though Jugga is the first village peasant with whom he has interacted.

2. Kalyug Quotes

The northern horizon, which had turned a bluish gray, showed orange again. The orange turned into copper and then into a luminous russet. Red tongues of flame leaped into the black sky. A soft breeze began to blow toward the village. It brought the smell of burning kerosene, then of wood. And then—a faint acrid smell of searing flesh. The village was stilled in a deathly silence. No one asked anyone else what the odor was. They all knew. They had known it all the time. The answer was implicit in the fact that the train had come from Pakistan.

Related Characters: Imam Baksh, Banta Singh

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 84

Explanation and Analysis

The Mano Majra villagers are smelling burning corpses from the "ghost train" that has recently arrived from Pakistan. The train was full of dead Sikhs, who had been traveling to India as refugees but were massacred before they could reach their destination. Shortly before the incineration of the corpses, a policeman asks the villagers to provide as much wood and kerosene oil as they can spare. All of the villagers, including Imam Baksh, offer what they can. The officer then asks the lambardar Banta Singh to keep the villagers away from the railway bridge and the train station.

Singh focuses the reader on "the northern horizon"—the direction toward Pakistan. It is sunset and the colors of the setting sun blend with the orange of the fire. The change in color reflects the mood of the village, which has shifted from its previous calm and now is marked by the growing flame of tense relations between religious groups, a tension that will soon engulf Mano Majra. Singh seeks to make this tension sensorial so that it is more palpable to the reader. The "red tongues of flame" are also reminiscent of the bloodied bodies on the train. The village mimics the "deathly silence" of the corpses. The villagers' denial, they think, will protect them from the inevitable.

He lay down again with his hands over his eyes. Within the dark chambers of his closed eyes, scenes of the day started coming back in panoramic succession. He tried to squash them by pressing his fingers into his eyes. The images only went blacker and redder and then came back. There was a man holding his intestines, with an expression in his eyes which said: "Look what I have got!" There were women and children huddled in a corner, their eyes dilated with horror, their mouths still open as if their shrieks had just then become voiceless … And all the nauseating smell of putrefying flesh, feces and urine.

Related Characters: Hukum Chand

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 85

Explanation and Analysis

Hukum Chand is recalling the scene at the train station. He directed the incineration of the bodies on the "ghost train" from Pakistan. Chand tries to shut out the "scenes" from his mind's eye, but they flicker back to him from "the dark chambers" like cinematic images. His inability to "squash" such images partly explains his later need to drink whisky and to seek the company of prostitutes. Though Chand gives the impression of a man who seeks only to be efficient at his work, this scene illustrates how affected he is by the macabre scene on the train. Through the author's description, it seems as though Chand is imagining how the Sikhs felt as they were being murdered—shocked, terrified, and desperate to escape. They are people with stories that will never be told. The portrait that Singh paints with his prose, which is cinematic in its quality, avoids glamorizing death and instead depicts the reality of people being so afraid for their lives that they wet themselves or empty their bowels before being left to rot in the open air.

It all came from his belief that the only absolute truth was death. The rest—love, ambition, pride, values of all kinds—was to be taken with a pinch of salt. He did so with a clear conscience. Although he accepted gifts and obliged friends when they got into trouble, he was not corrupt. He occasionally joined in parties, arranged for singing and dancing—and sometimes sex—but he was not immoral. What did it really matter in the end? That was the core of Hukum Chand's philosophy of life, and he lived well.

Related Characters: Haseena , Hukum Chand

Related Themes:

Page Number: 87

Explanation and Analysis

Chand has finished reflecting on the train massacre and is preparing himself to receive his entertainment for the evening, which will include two musicians and Haseena accompanied by her grandmother. The evening rendezvous will be their first. Chand's inability to forget the day's events is part of his obsession with death. Unlike the passengers on the train whose corpses looked frozen from the terror of anticipating and experiencing pain, Chand thinks that what frightens him more is the knowledge that, once his existence ceases, he will no longer matter. This fear causes him to strive to be remembered in a positive way. Love, at this stage, matters less, though Chand is married and has children. His attitude toward love evolves over the course of the novel, but, for now, Chand has a hedonistic view of life. This pleasure-seeking also justifies his engagement in dishonorable behavior, such as accepting bribes. He reasons that death will one day void these actions, as well as any debate over whether they were moral or immoral.

"Toba, toba! Kill my own village banian? Babuji, who kills a hen which lays eggs? Besides, Ram Lal gave me money to pay lawyers when my father was in jail. I would not act like a bastard."

"I suppose they will let you off now."

"The police are the kings of the country. They will let me off when they feel like it. If they want to keep me in, they will trump up a case of keeping a spear without a license or going out of the village without permission—or just anything."

Related Characters: Iqbal Singh, Juggut Singh / Jugga (speaker), Alam Singh, Malli , Lala Ram Lal

Related Themes:

Page Number: 106

Explanation and Analysis

Iqbal and Jugga are now sharing a jail cell at the police station in Chundunnugger because Malli and his crew have been moved into Jugga's former cell. Iqbal bluntly asks Jugga if he killed Ram Lal. Jugga insists that he did not and that it would be particularly dishonorable to do so, given that Ram Lal gave him money to pay lawyers while Jugga's father, Alam Singh, was in jail. Jugga insists that he is "not a bastard," which indicates that, despite his past criminal life and his attachment to his dangerous reputation, he adheres to a moral code. That code would forbid him from robbing and murdering a man who did him a favor. Iqbal thinks that, once the police become aware of Jugga's innocence, they will let him go. Jugga tells him that the police have an absolute, unchecked power in India, similar to that of kings. Like kings, their words—even their lies—have more validity than Jugga's innocence. His hopelessness about police power seems to partly explain Jugga's unwillingness to fight the system. Unlike Iqbal who, though Indian, is an outsider with no awareness of this underbelly of Indian life, Jugga knows that he is up against a power that he cannot fight.

It was not possible to keep Indians off the subject of sex for long. It obsessed their minds. It came out in their art, literature, and religion … One read it in the advertisements of quacks who proclaimed to possess remedies for barrenness and medicines to induce wombs to yield male children. One heard about it all the time … Conversation on any topic—politics, philosophy, sport—soon came down to sex, which everyone enjoyed with a lot of giggling and hand-slapping.

Related Characters: Nooran / Nooro, Lala Ram Lal, Juggut Singh / Jugga, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 107

Explanation and Analysis

Iqbal and Jugga are still talking in their shared cell. After Jugga says that he did not kill Ram Lal, Iqbal asks if Jugga was out of the village. Indeed, Jugga was outside of Mano Majra, despite the violation to his probation. He jokes that he was not murdering but that he "was being murdered." The metaphor alludes to Jugga's encounter with Nooran on the evening of the dacoity. Iqbal is annoyed by Jugga's mention of his sexual encounter, though Jugga is offering an honest account of his whereabouts that evening.

Iqbal regards the preoccupation with sex as another example, it seems, of Indian backwardness. The national obsession with sex, as he argues elsewhere, is partly to blame for the India's excessive birthrate as well as what he perceives as its relatively stagnant culture. As much as Iqbal claims to despise the British, it seems that he holds India to

a Western cultural standard and cannot appreciate Indian culture in its own right. On the other hand, the country is rife with superstition, including "curatives for ill effects of masturbation" and "remedies" to improve fertility. Indians also have a bias toward men, which would explain "medicines" to ensure sons. What Iqbal cannot appreciate is India's relative openness about sexual matters. Westerners, particularly the British, are no less obsessed with sex but seek to hide sexual behavior from public view.

> "The mem-sahibs are like houris from paradise—white and soft, like silk. All we have here are black buffaloes."

Related Characters: Juggut Singh / Jugga (speaker), Lala Ram Lal, Malli , Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 107

Explanation and Analysis

Jugga and Iqbal are sharing a cell together because Malli and his gang have been brought in for committing the robbery against Lala Ram Lal. While massaging Iqbal's feet, the conversation between the men turns toward sex and Jugga curiously asks Iqbal if he has ever had sex with a European woman. Iqbal says that he has. The massaging of Iqbal's feet, initially a tender gesture, takes on an eroticized dimension when Jugga begins to ask about Iqbal's sexual experiences. By rubbing Iqbal's feet and asking about his former European lovers, Jugga seems to be trying to have a vicarious sexual experience because he knows that he will never be with a European woman. By calling them "mem-sahibs" Jugga demonstrates that he still regards white women as figures connected to white male authority, which make them forbidden to him and other Indian men. This obsession is a psychological remnant of colonial rule—that is, Jugga desires white women because they were long forbidden to him. This aspect causes him to idealize white women and to denigrate Indian women who, in his estimation, are less worthy of respect due to their being both Indian and female. Jugga thinks that Indian women exist in a category beneath him, and his placement of women is hierarchical. European women are, therefore, "houris" because he cannot reach them, while Indian women are as common as "black buffaloes."

> "Sir, the Babu's name is Iqbal Singh. He is a Sikh. He has been living in England and had his long hair cut." The subinspector fixed the head constable with a stare and smiled. "There are many Iqbals. I am talking of a Mohammed Iqbal, you are thinking of Iqbal Singh. Mohammed Iqbal can be a member of the Muslim League." "I understand, sir," repeated the head constable, but he had not really understood. He hoped he would catch up with the scheme in due course. "Your orders will be carried out."

Related Characters: The Head Constable , The Subinspector / Inspector Sahib (speaker), Juggut Singh / Jugga, Hukum Chand, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 113

Explanation and Analysis

The subinspector is instructing the head constable to frame Iqbal as a Muslim working for the Muslim League. The subinspector, in turn, is following orders from Hukum Chand to identify Iqbal in the police ledger as a Muslim, to release Malli and his gang, and to leave Iqbal and Jugga in jail for an indeterminate length of time. The head constable does not yet understand what is going on. The subinspector's smile and stare mix friendliness with firmness. He wants to be subtle about the illegal or, in India, the extralegal act that he expects the head constable to perform. Therefore, he will not resort to direct orders or intimidation. The subinspector expects the head constable to carry out his orders without question, just as the subinspector is carrying out Chand's orders without question. The head constable's obedience, in spite of his lack of understanding, suggests that the author believes that India's bureaucracy is filled with yes-men who do what they are told. This attitude among the police fosters the conditions for corruption and abuse of power.

3. Mano Majra Quotes

Muslims sat and moped in their houses. Rumors of atrocities committed by Sikhs on Muslims in Patiala, Ambala and Kapurthala, which they had heard and dismissed, came back to their minds. They had heard of gentlewomen having their veils taken off, being stripped and marched down crowded streets to be raped in the marketplace ... They had heard of mosques being desecrated by the slaughter of pigs on the premises, and of copies of the holy Koran being torn up by infidels. Quite suddenly every Sikh in Mano Majra became a stranger with an evil intent ... For the first time, the name Pakistan came to mean something to them—a haven of refuge where there were no Sikhs.

Related Characters: Lala Ram Lal, Iqbal Singh, The Head Constable

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 120-121

Explanation and Analysis

The head constable's recent visit, in which he raised the suspicions that a Muslim gangster may have committed the dacoity and that Iqbal could be working for the Muslim League, has divided the formerly peaceful town and turned its resident Sikhs and Muslims against each other. In this instance, the author expresses the Muslims' perspective. They are vulnerable to the Sikhs' wrath and worry about the violence that could be committed against them, particularly in lieu of the violence against Muslims in other places.

Due to their illiteracy and the absence of modern technologies, the Muslims can only rely on rumors to know what is going on in Pakistan. It is unclear how many of these stories are true, however. They are offended by the ways in which they have heard that Muslim women have been disrespected, particularly the public shame of being unveiled and exposed sexually. Each example of Sikh offenses against Muslims, in fact, involves violations of the things that Muslims hold sacred, including women, mosques, and the Koran. They forget, or disregard, Hindu involvement in the massacres because the Muslims in Mano Majra are only in the presence of Sikhs. Unable to defend fellow Muslims in other places, and afraid for their own safety, they become mistrustful of their own Sikh neighbors. Here, Singh illustrates how fickle human relationships can become in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, and underlying prejudice.

The Sikhs were sullen and angry. "Never trust a Mussulman," they said. The last Guru had warned them that Muslims had no loyalties. He was right. All through the Muslim period of Indian history, sons had imprisoned or killed their own fathers and brothers had blinded brothers to get the throne. And what had they done to the Sikhs? Executed two of their Gurus, assassinated another and butchered his infant children; hundreds of thousands had been put to the sword for no other offense than refusing to accept Islam; their temples had been desecrated by the slaughter of kine; the holy Granth had been torn to bits. And Muslims were never ones to respect women. Sikh refugees had told of women jumping into wells and burning themselves rather than fall into the hands of Muslims. Those who did not commit suicide were paraded naked in the streets, raped in public, and then murdered. Now a trainload of Sikhs massacred by Muslims had been cremated in Mano Majra.

Related Characters: Lala Ram Lal, Iqbal Singh, The Head Constable

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 121

Explanation and Analysis

The head constable's visit to Mano Majra has raised the Sikhs' suspicion that Iqbal could be a spy with the Muslim League and that Muslim robbers may have committed the robbery against Lala Ram Lal. The Sikhs accept the head constable's story, just as they have accepted the last Guru's story that Muslims do not respect Sikhs and are generally disloyal and murderous. This default acceptance of others' narrative authority discourages the Sikhs from developing a view based more on personal experience and the awareness of people as individuals. The Sikhs, too, then use rumors about disrespect toward women to justify what will soon become murderous anger towards their Muslim neighbors. What is ironic is that members of both groups permit misogyny, but not when the offender is of another religious group.

4. Karma Quotes

❝ It was a dead cow with its belly bloated like a massive barrel and its legs stiffly stretched upward ... The faint sound of a moan was wafted across the waters ... Horses rolled from side to side as if they were scratching their backs. There were also men and women with their clothes clinging to their bodies; little children sleeping on their bellies with their arms clutching the water and their tiny buttocks dipping in and out. The sky was soon full of kits and vultures ... They pecked till the corpses themselves rolled over and shooed them off with hands which rose stiffly into the air and splashed back into the water.

Related Characters: Banta Singh

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 141-143

Explanation and Analysis

Banta Singh gets news that the Sutlej River has risen and goes to see for himself. Indeed, as a result of the melting of snow caps, the Sutlej rises faster than he has ever seen in such a short period. In this scene, a dead cow floats by, though the villagers do not initially recognize it as such. This first misperception lends itself to the atmosphere of disorientation that overtakes the crowd when they see, but cannot bring themselves to believe, that there are dead bodies floating down the river. Nothing appears as it ought to; a horse is on its back in the water, which is not how one would normally see a horse, as though scratching itself. Whereas the cow is misperceived as a random object, the horse is given an anthropomorphic, or human-like, quality.

Next, the villagers hear sounds that they cannot place. The "moan" is distant and visceral, but there is a quiet, collective denial in the possibility of the sound emanating from a person. The denial comes from the worry that people somewhere are being hurt and that the villagers could be next. When they see the floating human corpses, their fear becomes tangible. The sight of the children is both desperate ("clutching the water") and peaceful, for they appear to be "sleeping on their bellies." It is not until the scavenger birds descend that the bodies again appear animated with movement, a description that adds to the sense of disbelief that so many were killed so indiscriminately.

❝ "Well, if the village is not dead, then it should be. It should be drowned in a palmful of water. It consists of eunuchs," said the visitor fiercely with a flourish of his hand ... The leader had an aggressive bossy manner. He was a boy in his teens with a little beard which was glued to his chin with brilliantine. He was small in size, slight of build and altogether somewhat effeminate ....] He looked as if his mother had dressed him up as an American cowboy ... It was obvious to the villagers that he was an educated city-dweller. Such men always assumed a superior air when talking to peasants. They had no regard for age or status.

Related Characters: Boy Leader (speaker), Banta Singh, Meet Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 147-148

Explanation and Analysis

Late night visitors arrive in Mano Majra in a jeep. They are Sikh soldiers, and a boy leader stands out among them. They go around asking if the villagers are still alive and Banta Singh, somewhat annoyed, declares that they are all fine. In response, the boy says that they should all be dead and declares the Sikh men unworthy. By calling them "eunuchs" who should be "drowned in a palmful of water," the boy is calling the male villagers both weak and foolish due to their unwillingness to go out and kill any Muslim they can find.

What is unique about the leader is that he is a boy whose "aggressive bossy manner" and "little beard" seem to be forms of costume to dress himself up as a strong, authoritative figure. To make up for his slightness, which could be perceived as physical weakness, he has adopted a macho persona to intimidate anyone who would challenge him. His idea of masculinity seems handed down through popular culture—hence, the perception that "his mother had dressed him up as an American cowboy." In addition to his masculine posturing, the boy leader is an urban outsider and also an example of how younger generations regard elders—that is, with less traditional deference.

❝ "For each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home they loot, loot two. For each trainload of dead they send over, send two across. For each road convoy that is attacked, attack two. That will stop the killing on the other side. It will teach them that we also play this game of killing and looting" … "I was going to say," said Meet Singh haltingly, "I was going to say," he repeated, "what have the Muslims here done to us for us to kill them in revenge for what Muslims in Pakistan are doing? Only people who have committed crimes should be punished." The lad glared angrily at Meet Singh. "What had the Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan done that they were butchered? Weren't they innocent?"

Related Characters: Meet Singh, Boy Leader (speaker), Banta Singh

Related Themes:

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

To further bait the Sikh villagers into turning on their Muslim neighbors, the boy leader advocates an "eye for an eye" policy of justice. Interestingly, he establishes solidarity between the Hindus and Sikhs in getting revenge against the Muslims. The boy reasons that the Sikhs will win this religious war only if they establish dominance in the "game of killing and looting."

Meet Singh serves as the boy leader's foil, for the priest is old and lives according to an oath of peace. His halting speech contrasts with the boy's charismatic articulation of violent revenge. Meet Singh senses that his calm words will only reinforce the Sikh men's fear of seeming weak. Still, the priest seeks to distinguish between the villagers' Muslim neighbors and the strangers across the border. The boy leader appeals to the Sikhs' sense of tribal loyalty, in addition to their fears of appearing weak or being killed out of weakness.

❝ Iqbal realized that it was the company of Jugga and the constable, who were known Sikhs, that really saved him from being stopped and questioned. He wished he could get out of this place where he had to prove his Sikhism to save his life … He cursed his luck for having a name like Iqbal, and then for being a… Where on earth except in India would a man's life depend on whether or not his foreskin had been removed? It would be laughable if it were not tragic … If only he could get out to Delhi and to civilization! He would report on his arrest; the party paper would frontpage the news with his photograph: *ANGLO-AMERICAN CAPitalIST CONSPIRACY TO CREATE CHAOS* (lovely alliteration). *COMRADE IQBAL IMPRISONED ON BORDER*. It would all go to make him a hero.

Related Characters: Meet Singh, Juggut Singh / Jugga, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 164

Explanation and Analysis

Iqbal and Jugga have been released from jail. Iqbal realizes that his association with "known Sikhs" prevented his being suspected as a Muslim, due to his being circumcised, and killed as a result. Ironically, he curses "his luck" for being named "Iqbal"—an Arabic name which means "luck" or "fortunate." Indeed, Iqbal has not had any good fortune since arriving in Mano Majra and the only connection he made is with the village's most notorious character.

The author is intentionally elusive about Iqbal's religious identity. Though the authorities later conclude that Iqbal is a Sikh, this is never confirmed. Singh allows Iqbal's thought about his identity to trail off, as though to leave the reader to wonder if he is actually a Sikh, or if his Arabic given name proves that he is a Muslim. At the same time, the author's refusal to give an answer causes the reader to wonder if Iqbal's religious identity matters at all, for nothing would turn out any differently for him if the truth were revealed. Iqbal expresses the absurdity over all this fuss concerning religious affiliation and how tests of faith are reduced to foreskin, suggesting that Sikh faith matters less than superficial displays of membership, such as beards, turbans, and bangles. Nonetheless, Iqbal intends to use the arrest to his advantage. A headline in which he characterizes himself as "Comrade Iqbal" again strongly suggests that he is a Communist. This is the only form of identification that Iqbal asserts in the novel.

> He felt a little feverish, the sort of feverishness one feels when one is about to make a declaration of love. It was time for a declaration of something. Only he was not sure what it should be. Should he go out, face the mob and tell them in clear ringing tones that this was wrong—immoral? Walk right up to them with his eyes fixing the armed crowd in a frame—without flinching, without turning, like the heroes on the screen who became bigger and bigger as they walk right into the camera. Then with dignity fall under a volley of blows, or preferably a volley of rifleshots. A cold thrill went down Iqbal's spine. There would be no one to see this supreme act of sacrifice. They would kill him just as they would kill the others … They would strip him and see. Circumcised, therefore Muslim.

Related Characters: Meet Singh, Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 169

Explanation and Analysis

Iqbal is packing his things to prepare to leave the gurdwara and Mano Majra for good. He has just learned from Meet Singh that the Sikh villagers are preparing to massacre hundreds of Muslim refugees leaving for Pakistan by train. Iqbal wants to tell the crowd how immoral it is for them to kill those whom they formerly called neighbors and friends, but his wish to do so is informed less by honor than self-aggrandizement.

The author misleads the reader a bit with Iqbal feeling something akin to "a declaration of love." The analogy to love is really about Iqbal's need to say something important in order to look important. He imagines talking to the crowd in "clear ringing tones," as though he is already enamored by the sound of his voice commanding a crowd and appealing to its conscience. Like the boy leader, who seems to take his cues of masculine strength from the movies, Iqbal uses tropes from cinema to visualize himself as a hero. Here, the author takes the cinematic image further and has Iqbal not only loom larger than the villagers and the inhumanity of religious warfare, but also has Iqbal imagine himself as a primary victim of their perpetual violence. The "thrill" of envisioning his own martyrdom dies down when he realizes that his body would simply go with those of many others. If no one sees his sacrifice, he thinks, it does not count, and he has no interest in taking risks that do not offer guaranteed rewards.

> India is constipated with a lot of humbug. Take religion. For the Hindu, it means little besides caste and cow-protection. For the Muslim, circumcision and kosher meat. For the Sikh, long hair and hatred of the Muslim. For the Christian, Hinduism with a sola topee. For the Parsi, fire-worship and feeding vultures. Ethics, which should be the kernel of a religious code, has been carefully removed. Take philosophy, about which there is so much hoo-ha. It is just muddleheadedness masquerading as mysticism. And Yoga, particularly Yoga, that excellent earner of dollars! … And all the mumbo-jumbo of reincarnation … Proof? We do not go in for such pedestrian pastimes as proof! That is Western. We are of the mysterious East. No proof, just faith. No reason; just faith.

Related Characters: Iqbal Singh

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 171

Explanation and Analysis

After packing, Iqbal pours himself some whisky and wonders if it might not be better for Indians to kill each other off, so that the country can "wipe the slate clean," leave behind its religious fanaticism and superstitions, and finally embrace a mode of modern life that would leave religion behind. Religion, for him, epitomizes the "humbug" that constipates India—that is, the blind faith that, he believes, inhibits its progress. However, it is unclear what that progress really entails for Iqbal. Given his tendency to speak in platitudes and his lack of concern for people's lives, Iqbal does not seem genuinely interested in politics beyond its self-serving possibilities. He would like India to adopt Western reason, but he does not want India to be like the West. Westerners, after all, have their own "humbug"—Christianity. The "sola topee" is a Hindi term for a pith helmet—a symbol of colonial rule. Iqbal alludes to how Europeans used Christianity to justify their takeover of non-Christian peoples.

The narrative is Iqbal's internal rant. He is angry with India for not producing any cultural product that he deems worthy of admiration. He seems both ashamed of its backwardness ("fire-worship and feeding vultures") and annoyed that it is characterized by a mysticism that has become popular and profitable.

The leader raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired. He hit his mark and one of the man's legs came off the rope and dangled in the air. The other was still twined round the rope. He slashed away in frantic haste. The engine was only a few yards off … Somebody fired another shot. The man's body slid off the rope, but he clung to it with his hands and chin. He pulled himself up, caught the rope under his left armpit, and again started hacking with his right hand. The rope had been cut in shreds. Only a thin tough strand remained. He went at it with the knife, and then with his teeth. The engine was almost on him. There was a volley of shots. The man shivered and collapsed. The rope snapped in the center as he fell. The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan.

Related Characters: Iqbal Singh, Meet Singh, Nooran / Nooro, Juggut Singh / Jugga

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 181

Explanation and Analysis

The author describes "a big man" climbing the span of the railway bridge. Though Singh does not name him—reflecting the group leader's own unawareness of who is climbing the bridge—the reader infers that it is Jugga. Jugga knows that Nooran is likely on the train to Pakistan and, therefore, may become a victim in the Sikhs' murderous conspiracy. He has also just asked Meet Singh to read him a prayer, in an effort to determine how to know if an act is good or bad. Jugga's earlier discussion with Iqbal regarding his innocence in the robbery and murder suffices as evidence that Jugga knows the difference between right and wrong. However, this situation is more morally complicated: should he save Nooran and go against his village, or let her die and preserve his own life? Jugga's choice to do the former shows a transformation in his self-perception. He once believed himself to be inherently bad—a budmash—but now sees that acts determine character. The problem of how to survive in a village that would make him a permanent outcast for foiling their plot is solved when he is killed in his effort to cut the rope and save the refugees.

Singh illustrates how Jugga uses his body to stop the plot, sacrificing himself in a way that Iqbal never would. Here, there is a reversal of expectations. The political worker, who fantasizes about being a hero, does nothing but drink while a village plots an atrocity. Meanwhile, the village's most notorious criminal commits a selfless act out of love for someone else, while Iqbal only toyed with the possibility of doing something out of love for himself. The volley of rifle shots that Iqbal imagined taking actually pierce through Jugga's body. The author juxtaposes Jugga's body, which is also "tough" in response to the bullets, with that of the rope. Like the rope, Jugga, too, falls away from the bridge like debris while the train continues toward Pakistan.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

1. DACOITY

In the summer of 1947, the heat felt different from other summers—hotter, drier, and dustier. The heat lasted for too long and the monsoon season was late. The previous summer, there were riots in Calcutta after reports that the country would be divided into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. Several thousand people died. Hindus blamed Muslims, and Muslims blamed Hindus; but, both sides killed, tortured, and raped. The riots spread, resulting in more massacres. Hindus and Sikhs abandoned their homes on the Northwest Frontier, where they had resided for decades, and fled east to areas where their religious groups dominated.

Singh uses the heat of summer as a metaphor for the intensity of tensions between religious groups. The author draws a parallel between the unusual summer heat and the change in relations between Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims as a result of the Partition of India. The lateness of the monsoon season, which typically cools the heat of the summer, correlates with the expansion of the violence, which becomes so unbearable that people flee their homes.

On their way east, Hindus and Sikhs traveled on foot and in bull-drawn carts. Others crammed themselves into trucks or held on to the sides of trains. On their way east, they ran into Muslims who were traveling west. Ten million people—Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—were leaving their homes in the summer of 1947, when the new state of Pakistan was formally announced. When the monsoon finally arrived, about a million of the migrants were dead and northern India was in a state of panic. There were a few scattered oases of peace in the remote parts of the frontier. One of those villages was Mano Majra.

The partition resulted in a mass exodus, with Muslims going to Pakistan—their new homeland—and Sikhs and Hindus claiming India. During this forced separation, the groups "[run] into" each other, indicating how they share an experience of migration and displacement, despite their insistence on living as enemies. Mano Majra is an oasis, or a space in which there is relief from the constant hostilities.

In 1947, Mano Majra is tiny. The town has only three brick buildings (the home of the moneylender Lala Ram Lal, a Sikh temple, and a mosque), and the rest of the village is mud huts. Of the seventy families there, Lala Ram Lal's is the only Hindu family—the others are Sikh and Muslim, about equal in their numbers. The Sikhs own all the land around the village, while the Muslims are tenants and till the land with the land's owners. Mano Majra is about half a mile from the Sutlej River, the largest river in the Punjab region, and it is known for its railway station and its enormous **railway bridge** about a mile north of town.

Mano Majra's three buildings symbolize the presence of the three religious groups. The division of the land also shows that the village's caste system is based on religious membership. Ram Lal is in the minority, but his wealth depends on his role as a lender. The Muslims occupy the lowest social position, for they own no land; but, without their assistance, the Sikhs could not maintain their farms. The system is hierarchical, but it is also built on codependency.

While the station seems busy because of the shopkeepers and vendors that work nearby, not many trains stop at Mano Majra. The goods and passenger trains that do come to the village help to determine the villagers' daily schedule.

Most of the villagers are illiterate, so they rely on the arrival and departure of the trains to determine their day. The trains are one of few aspects of modernity that are accessible to them.

In August 1947, five armed dacoits come out of a keekar grove near Mano Majra and are walking toward the Sutlej River. Two of them have spears. The leader asks the spearman if he has the **bangles** for Juggut Singh. Another suggests that Juggut could give the bangles to "that weaver's daughter," Nooran. They talk about her "little mango breasts" and the **antimony** on her "large gazelle eyes."

The robbers intend to frame Jugga with the bangles. This is the first mention of Nooran in the narrative, who is not named but instead defined in relation to her father and Jugga and recognized only for her supposedly seductive looks.

The goods train arrives, interrupting their laughter about Juggut (also called "Jugga") Singh's lust for Nooran and telling them that it is time to go to the home of Lala Ram Lal. Once there, the leader pounds on the door with the butt of his gun, but there is no reply.

There is an ironic parallel between the arrival of the goods train and the robbers' intention to loot the home of the wealthiest family in town.

The men continue to hammer the door with their weapons, and behind the door a woman's voice asks who calls. The leader demands that she let them in, but she tells them that Lala Ram Lal is not in. Inside, two women sit "crouching" in one corner of the room, while a seven-year-old boy "clings to the elder" of the two women. The older woman begs the men to take the family's things and offers them her jewelry. One of the men takes her handful of bracelets, anklets, and earrings, then asks where Ram Lal is.

The women are the protectors of the home, but they are vulnerable during the confrontation with the robbers. Singh's description of the women "crouching," the boy who "clings to the elder," and the older woman who "begs" reinforces their helplessness and contrasts with the men's forceful actions of hammering, demanding, and taking the old woman's handful of jewelry.

The older woman tells the man that Lala Ram Lal is out, but one of the robbers separates the boy—the woman's grandson—from her lap and holds a gun to his face. The women beg him not to kill the child, but he kicks them away and asks the boy about the whereabouts of his father. Shaking with fear, the boy stutters that his father is "upstairs." The robbers give the boy back to the women and head upstairs.

The robbers have a ruthless disregard for life, which Singh amplifies by illustrating their ill treatment of women and children. This scene contradicts Hukum Chand's later comment about Muslims being disrespectful of women. The robbers, whom we learn are Sikh, are equally violent.

Upstairs, they find the moneylender, Lala Ram Lal, hiding under a charpoy. The robbers drag him out and demand the keys to the safe, kicking and slapping him. The moneylender begs the crew to take all that he has in exchange for not killing anyone and he offers money from his pocket. Again, they demand the keys to the safe and the leader hits Ram Lal in the face with the butt of his gun.

Ram Lal hides to protect himself and his money, leaving the women and children to fend for themselves. Though he begs the crew not to kill anyone, his choice to hide and abandon an old woman and a small boy to armed robbers is a subtle indication of his greed.

The robbers continue to beat Lala Ram Lal. They smash two of his teeth and he spits blood, but he still will not give them the keys to the safe. Tired of his resistance, one of the men stabs Ram Lal in the belly with his spear and kills him. The men leave the house and one of them fires two shots in the air. All of the noise in the village stops. The robbers walk down the lane and arrive at a "small hut on the edge of the village." It is the home of Juggut Singh. They remember to give their "gift" of the **bangles**, which they toss over the wall into the courtyard. They hear the glass break while they mock the imagined love sounds of Juggut Singh. However, Juggut does not hear their laughter; he is not at home.

When the robbers kill the only Hindu in Mano Majra, as well as the only man with the wealth to provide the villagers with money, they disrupt the power dynamic which has long existed. The description of Jugga's home and its position suggest that he lives modestly, despite his former life as a dacoit. These details also indicate that he is an outcast member of the community because he lives "on the edge of the village."

For both Juggut Singh and the dacoits the sound of the goods train's arrival is a signal. Jugga will only be gone from his home for an hour, but before leaving he and his mother argue about his probation, which forbids him from leaving the village after sunset. She worries that, if he goes to jail, he will hang like his father, Alam Singh. Jugga leaves the house and goes for a walk. Suddenly, a hand covers his eyes. The hand belongs to Nooran. They make love. Suddenly, they hear a gunshot.

Jugga's most important relationships are with his mother and Nooran. His mother reminds him of his ties to his notorious past, while his trysts with Nooran are moments in which he can forget his obligations and his criminal legacy. When the gunshot rings out, it acts as another signal, calling him back to his legal concerns.

Nooran worries that the sound will cause her father, Imam Baksh, to worry and wonder where she is, so she tells Juggut that she must go home. He tells her that the sounds of gunshots were only in her imagination. Nooran begins to cry, worried about what happened in the village and the inevitability of her father waking up and looking for her. Jugga does not listen. He is worried about the possibility of getting trouble with the police for violating the terms of his probation. However, what bothers him more is the possibility of Nooran not seeing him again out of fear of her father. She sobs. Jugga threatens to slap her. He puts his hand over her mouth when he hears someone coming.

Jugga worries about going back to jail, but he is indifferent to Nooran's more serious concern about her father finding out that she has been making love out of wedlock—an offense that can result in the penalty of death for Muslim women. Jugga's thoughts and responses to Nooran in this scene are focused on his own needs, and as such make it difficult to believe that he loves her. There is an evolution of his feelings over the course of the novel.

Juggut and Nooran see five men walking in the dark with spears and guns. Nooran asks if Jugga knows them, and he says that the one holding the torch is Malli. Jugga is angry that Malli has brought his gang into Jugga's village. The robbers walk downstream, so Jugga and Nooran head back toward Mano Majra. The village is awake. Jugga asks if Nooran will see him again tomorrow, but she is worried that her father will murder her if he finds out about her tryst with Jugga. Jugga insists that she lie to her father—after all, Imam Baksh is nearly blind. He would not notice her silk shirt or the **antimony** on her eyes. Still, she swears to Jugga that she will never see him again. Jugga walks toward his house. When he sees several villagers talking to his mother, he turns back toward the river.

This passage tells the reader that Malli is a rival dacoit from another village, though he was once a part of Jugga's old gang. This visit from Malli to Jugga's village is another way in which Jugga's criminal past continually resurfaces. When he turns and walks back toward the river, it is likely out of a fear that he will be implicated in the dacoity; he does not want anyone to see him. Similarly, Nooran does not want anyone to see how she adorns herself for Jugga's pleasure. Both worry about their reputations and their lives, albeit for very different reasons.

On the morning before the dacoity, the rest house is cleaned, swept, dusted, and organized to receive an important guest. At eleven o'clock, the subinspector of police and two constables show up to inspect the house. They wear white uniforms "with red sashes around their waists and white turbans." An hour later, a large gray American car arrives and Hukum Chand steps out. He has been traveling all morning "and is somewhat tired and stiff."

The constables' uniforms and the "large gray American car" signify the importance of Hukum Chand. He is a man who can afford an American car and whose arrival requires preparations. The officers demonstrate an efficiency in these preparations that does not always extend to their work in other areas.

Hukum Chand asks if there has been any communal trouble in Mano Majra. The subinspector tells him that trucks of Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan have come through and some Muslims have gone out, but there have been no incidents. Chand tells the officer about dead Sikhs coming through their side of the frontier from Amritsar. They are being killed on refugee trains across the border.

Chand's comment implies that he is worried that the trouble in Amritsar, a nearby city, could spread to Mano Majra. Mano Majra also has a train station and, if Muslims are killing Sikhs and sending dead bodies to India by rail, it might not be long before the same occurs in the peaceful village.

Hukum Chand tells the subinspector how the Sikhs retaliated by attacking a Muslim refugee train and sending it back across the border with over a thousand Sikh corpses. On the engine, they scrawled, "Gift to Pakistan." The subinspector talks about how some believe in the "eye-for-an-eye" strategy, but he does not believe that Hindus are capable of vindictive violence, due to their faith. Though Hindus are capable of fighting, he says, the Sikhs "have lost their manliness." For example, the subinspector wonders why the Sikhs allow Muslims to live in their villages and why the Sikhs call the Muslims their "brothers." The subinspector reasons that the Sikhs are getting money from the Muslims.

The subinspector has a cynical and stereotypical view of those who are not of his Hindu faith. He thinks that the Sikhs are weak for tolerating the Muslim presence, overlooking the fact that, in villages such as Mano Majra, Sikhs and Muslims have been living side-by-side for centuries and have close personal relationships that override religious affiliations. He exposes his cynicism by explaining their friendship in the context of a financial arrangement.

Hukum Chand asks if there are any rich Muslims in the area. The subinspector says that there are not, for most of them are weavers or potters. Chand then notes that Chundunnugger, which the subinspector manages, is a "good police station." He hints that the subinspector and others must benefit from bribing murderers, illegal distillers, and the prosperous Sikh peasants. Chand tells the subinspector that he has no problem with graft, for everyone does it, just that he should be careful due to the new government's talk about stamping out corruption. The subinspector scoffs at their hypocrisy, believing that the "Gandhi disciples are minting money" while pretending to be "as good saints as the crane."

This conversation deals most explicitly with the theme of police corruption. The authorities, who are Sikh and Hindu, do not want Muslims in India yet are willing to profit from those who remain in the country. There is an atmosphere of mistrust through every level of government. Chand scoffs at Gandhi's saintly reputation, arguing that the man who led India to independence and a new phase of democracy is also the head of an elitist government that still keeps many people poor.

Hukum Chand asks about the political situation in the village, and the subinspector says that people are barely aware that the British have left and that the country has been partitioned. Some may know who Gandhi is, but he doubts that anyone knows Jinnah. Chand is happy to hear this and insists that they "keep an eye on Mano Majra," due to its proximity to the **railway bridge**. He then asks if there are any "bad characters." The subinspector mentions Juggut and tells the story of Juggut's father, Alam Singh's, hanging two years ago. However, he tells Chand that Jugga stays out of trouble because of Nooran. The subinspector asks for permission to return to the police station. Chand asks if the subinspector has arranged for his prostitute for the evening. The subinspector assures Chand that he has, then leaves so that the magistrate can take his late afternoon siesta.

Due to their illiteracy, the villagers would be unable to read a newspaper and keep up with the latest events. They are also too poor to have access to radios. Chand thinks that their isolation and naivete will prevent the arousal of religious strife, but he neglects the possibility that such ignorance could also make the villagers more vulnerable to rumor and rabblerousing. Chand's use of a prostitute is more evidence of his corruption. However, his exploitation of women is something that he shares in common with Jugga, who makes love to Nooran in a way that is not reciprocal.

The sound of Hukum Chand's car leaving the bungalow wakes him from his nap. He is dressed by the time his driver arrives back. Two men and two women step out of the vehicle. The men carry musical instruments. One of the women is old and the other is young and has a mouth full of betel leaf.

Like the arrival and departure of the trains, the arrival and departure of Chand's car is another device that the author uses to show the passage of time, while also alluding to Chand's privilege.

Hukum Chand shouts for his servant to bring him whisky. When he walks out, everyone but the girl, whose name is Haseena, greets him excitedly; she stares at him. Her large eyes are "lined with **antimony** and lampblack." The servant pours Chand a whisky and soda and the group performs. Haseena spits out the juice from the betel leaf and sings. Chand pours himself another whisky. He feels uneasy, but he dismisses his conscience, insisting that life is too short for guilt.

Chand drinks to numb his feelings of guilt. The privileges of his position have conditioned him to having others at his service. However, the girl's youth and aloofness put him ill at ease. She is too young to be impressed by him. Having such a young prostitute makes him feel dirty, but not enough to put his sense of ethics over his demand for pleasure.

Hukum Chand compliments Haseena's singing and encourages her to drink a bit of whisky. The old woman tells him that the girl does not drink because she is only sixteen. Chand then offers her food, which she gamely eats. He pulls Haseena onto his lap and plays with her hair. The musicians and the old woman leave, and the servant puts dinner on the table; Chand says he and the girl will serve themselves.

To engage himself in the moment, Chand flirts with Haseena. He flatters her and tempts her with all of the good things that he can afford. The interactions in this scene imply that there is a predetermined understanding of how the evening will go and how everything is arranged to satisfy Chand's desires.

Hukum Chand indulges Haseena, but he is not interested in how she feels; he paid for her. They hear a gunshot. She thinks that it may be a shikar, but Chand insists that no one would be hunting on a dark night. The silence after the shot tells Chand that all is well and he puts his arm around the girl again. He clears off the table and lays her on the tablecloth. She covers her face with the loose end of her sari to avoid his breath. Then, Chand hears the sounds of people shouting and dogs barking. Two more shots ring out and Chand leaves the girl.

Chand's flirtation is merely an attempt to display good manners. The girl's attribution of the gunshot to a hunt suggests her naivete. In this instance, the sound of gunshots disrupts lovemaking, while in Jugga and Nooran's case, it signals the end of the consummation of their relationship. Both relationships, though, are disrupted by the dacoity.

The next morning, the railway station is more crowded than usual. The passenger train is an hour late. Iqbal steps off of it. The stationmaster bows obsequiously to the subinspector, who has also returned to Mano Majra on the train, and opens the gate widely for him, but Iqbal gets there first. The stationmaster quickly takes his ticket, but Iqbal does not move to make way for the subinspector. Instead, he asks about a place to stay in Mano Majra. The stationmaster is irritated and doubly so after hearing Iqbal's urban accent. He sarcastically tells Iqbal that there are no hotels or inns, only the Sikh temple. Iqbal thanks him and moves on.

The stationmaster's obsequiousness toward the subinspector shows how all of Mano Majra is obedient toward the police, probably less out of respect, given the authorities' well-known corruption, than out of fear. The stationmaster's aversion to Iqbal, on the other hand, suggests that he is also governed by an attitude of inferiority and a suspicion toward outsiders.

The police eye Iqbal as he walks away. They find it curious that he says "thank you," which is rare in Mano Majra, except among the "foreign-educated." The police know of young men who were educated in England and have returned to motivate the peasants politically. Some are Communists, while others are the sons of millionaires or high government officials.

The police know that Iqbal is an outsider, but they wonder if he is the sort who will cause trouble. If he is a political agitator, they wonder if he is one whom they can quietly rid themselves of, or if he is too high-caste to be touched.

Iqbal walks out of the station and toward the village, feeling that the police are watching him. In town, he sees Meet Singh bathing beside a well. The men greet each other, then Iqbal asks if he can stay for two or three days. The bhai agrees but tells the young man to cover his hair and not to bring in any cigarettes or tobacco. The priest then tells him to take off his shoes. He offers Iqbal something to eat, but Iqbal has brought his own food.

The simplicity of the priest's manner of living—he bathes from a well—differs from that of Iqbal, who arrives in a small Indian village expecting public accommodations, such as a hotel, and has the personal wealth to travel with his own supply of food. The priest's strict religious customs also differ from Iqbal's secular tastes.

Meet Singh shows Iqbal to the spare room, then goes back to the well where he was bathing. The only furniture is a charpoy. There is also a calendar on the wall with a picture of the Guru "on horseback with a hawk on one hand." Next to the calendar are nails to hang clothes. Iqbal empties his sack, takes out his air mattress, and places it on the charpoy. He also lays out his pajamas and a silk dressing gown. For food, he has "a tin of sardines, a tin of Australian butter, and a packet of dry biscuits."

This passage is more specific about the various comforts on which Iqbal depends, which contrast with the sparseness of the room at the temple. The heroic image of the Guru correlates with Iqbal's self-image as a political activist, which contrasts with his propensity for self-indulgence—detailed through the descriptions of his food and clothing.

Meet Singh reenters and asks Iqbal what his name is. Iqbal tells him, then asks the priest for his. The priest assumes Iqbal to be Sikh and addresses him as "Iqbal Singhji," which relieves the younger man. It is better for everyone to assume that he is Sikh. Personally, he has few religious feelings. He introduces himself to the priest as "a social worker" sent by his party. Meet Singh is not interested in this, but he is interested in where Iqbal is from, meaning his ancestry.

Meet Singh is a man steeped in tradition and, thus, concerns himself with aspects of people's backgrounds, such as religion. Iqbal is firmly in the present and worries only about his political activity. If this means that he must fit the traditional image that Meet Singh has for him to get his work done, Iqbal will oblige.

Iqbal Singh says that he belongs to district Jhelum, which is now in Pakistan, and has lived in foreign countries for a long time. His travel experiences, he says, have helped him understand how backward India is and that something should be done about it. Meet Singh asks how much he is paid and if his salary covers the expenses of his wife and children. Iqbal tells him that he is not married and says that he is twenty-seven. Iqbal then asks if other social workers come to the village, questioning the priest to avoid further interrogation.

Iqbal's affiliation with Pakistan is strange, given that he has come from Delhi, and the author does not further explain this choice. It is possible that Iqbal wishes to use the more secular government in Pakistan, led by Jinnah, as an example of what India should aspire to, but Meet Singh would not know any of this and, therefore, resorts back to conversation that he understands.

Meet Singh tells Iqbal Singh that missionaries are usually the only other visitors. The priest does not have a problem with the presence of Christians in Mano Majra and asks how many religions they have in Europe. Iqbal tells him that they are all Christians in one way or another, and that they do not quarrel about faith as Indians do or even bother much about religion. The priest surmises that this is why they have so few morals, using the example of foreigners in India who sleep with each other's wives. Iqbal argues that at least they do not lie about their behavior as Indians do. He goes on to say that morality is a matter of money, but that poor people cannot afford to have morals, so they use religion instead. He insists that if people have more food, clothing, and comfort, they can stop being exploited by the rich. First, the government must change, Iqbal says.

Iqbal distinguishes between morality and religion, while Meet Singh thinks that they are one and the same. Iqbal's explanation of Christianity in Europe overlooks the sectarian rifts between Catholics and Protestants, which had existed on the continent for five hundred years, and during the time of the novel had most recently occurred in Ireland. For Iqbal, morals develop when people have access to the resources they need. He excludes education, however, which is essential in helping people to understand and contemplate their conditions. Iqbal instead simplifies the needs of the poor to food and clothing, which are withheld from them by the rich.

Iqbal eats his sardines and Meet Singh watches as Iqbal pulls a white pill from his pocket and drops it in the tumbler. The priest asks if he is ill, but Iqbal says that he needs the pill to digest his food. He goes on to talk to the priest about police corruption. Meet Singh nods in agreement but listens absent-mindedly while Iqbal tells him about the group of policemen he saw at the train station. He insists that they do nothing "but fleece people." Talk of the police reminds Meet Singh of the dacoity. He gets up and says that he has to go to the moneylender's house. The whole village will be there.

The white pill is a water purification tablet. Iqbal probably refrains from telling the priest this because he does not want him to think that Iqbal is too good to drink the local water, or even that his stomach would be unable to handle the bacteria. Meet Singh's comfort with the unsanitary water, as well as with the corrupt police, illustrate that the stark differences between the men's lifestyles and social conditioning.

Iqbal is surprised to hear about a village murder. He asks Meet Singh many questions. Meet Singh is amused that a man who says that he has come to stop such things is upset by news of one murder. He insists that Mano Majra is usually safe and that robberies only occur there once a year. When the next robbery occurs in another village, people will forget about this one, the priest says. Meet Singh then hobbles out of the courtyard, leaving Iqbal to wash his dining utensils.

Robberies and murders are commonplace in the village. Iqbal was insulated from such realities in England and Delhi, where such incidents were likely just as commonplace but more likely to go unacknowledged in large cities. Furthermore, Iqbal's middle-class lifestyle largely protected him from the problems of crime and poverty.

This afternoon, Iqbal cannot sleep. His room is hot and smelly. There are flies buzzing around. He puts a handkerchief over his face. When he manages to doze off, Meet Singh enters excitedly. The priest has learned that the police have sent for Juggut to be arrested for the dacoity. Meet Singh is outraged that Juggut, who had run away, would loot a neighbor's home. The stolen money and a bag of **bangles** were found in his courtyard. Meet Singh insists that this is not the first murder that Juggut has committed, and that Alam Singh and Juggut's grandfather were also robbers who were hanged for murder. However, these men had never robbed their own village. In fact, when they were home, no robber dared to come to Mano Majra. Juggut, the priest reasons, has no honor.

Meet Singh distinguishes between goodness and honor. A robber is never a good person, it seems, which would justify Alam Singh's hanging. However, even a robber can have a code of honor, such as refusing to rob members of his own village, or even using his strength and dangerous reputation to protect the village from foreign robbers. The priest's disappointment lies in Jugga's lack of a moral code.

Iqbal finds this code of morals puzzling. He finds it strange that Meet Singh, a priest, is not bothered that Juggut committed a murder, but that he killed a fellow villager. Iqbal is already weary of talking to him and people like him, for they do not understand each other. Meet Singh insists that, despite Juggut's efforts to go straight by plowing and looking after cattle, he is "a snake" who cannot "keep straight." Crime, the priest says, is in his blood.

Meet Singh thinks that Jugga and people like him are inherently bad. On the other hand, Iqbal thinks that murder is inherently bad. He finds it strange that Meet Singh cares less about the murder than he does about Jugga breaking an unspoken code of honor.

Iqbal stands up to take a walk. When he goes out, he sees that the door of Lala Ram Lal's house is open. He sees women crying outside of the house. Iqbal walks in the shade alongside the wall of the gurdwara. Children and men have used it as a bathroom. He sees a mangy dog there nursing her eight skinny pups. Iqbal walks along a watercourse to the riverside and watches the express train from Lahore come across the **railway bridge**.

Iqbal's first walk in the city gives the impression of a place steeped in misery and poverty. The locals' respect for religious institutions is questionable, given how many people have used the wall of the temple for a urinal. The village's only connections to the outside world are the river and the railway bridge.

Iqbal walks back to the gurdwara. He goes to his room and lies down on his charpoy. Meet Singh appears and says that Banta Singh, the lambardar, will visit that evening and is bringing some milk. He then offers Iqbal another charpoy on the roof, so that he can escape the heat of the room. Iqbal does not like the idea of talking to the lambardar. He gets a silver flask out from under his pillow and takes a swig of whisky. He then takes his mattress to the roof and lies there watching the stars until the visitors arrive.

Iqbal's aversion to talking to the lambardar is partly due to his being tired and wanting to be alone. He has not had a moment to himself since arriving at the temple. It is also due to the fact that Banta Singh is a landowner, whose status makes him distasteful to Iqbal and a perceived enemy of his party's political agenda.

Later at the gurdwara, Iqbal meets Banta Singh and a Muslim man. The men talk about the Partition. Banta Singh asks Iqbal why the English left. Iqbal does not know how to answer and is annoyed that the visitors cannot see decolonization as a step forward. Banta Singh and Meet Singh talk favorably about English officers. Iqbal, in a moment of impatience, asks they why they do not want to be free. The men say that freedom is fine for the educated, and it will not get the people more land or buffaloes. The Muslim says that they will go from being the "slaves" of the English to the slaves of the educated Indians or the Pakistanis. Iqbal is startled but urges them—peasants and workers—to fight to get the elitist government out. Meet Singh then mentions how another fellow had once told them the same thing—a Communist whose atheism offended him. Iqbal asks for the comrade's name, thinking to himself that he should report the worker, but Meet Singh cannot remember it.

The Muslim man is implied to be Baksh, whom Iqbal identifies in the narrative as "the Muslim" because Meet Singh never formally introduces them. Iqbal does not sympathize with the men's concerns that the departure of the British still leaves them vulnerable to a system of injustice in which the poor will always be at the bottom. There is also the possibility that India could be invaded by Pakistan. Iqbal's desires are somewhat contradictory—he seeks to throw off Western rule but overlooks all of the ways in which he has become accustomed to a more Western lifestyle and outlook, which makes it difficult for him to understand the peasants' feelings of vulnerability. In this passage, too, it is strongly implied that Iqbal is a member of the Communist Party.

Meet Singh recalls a photo of white British people, including the "Big Lord" and his daughter, at a prayer meeting with Gandhi. The priest uses this example to say that even the English respect men of faith. Iqbal is annoyed at the comment and tells the others that the English may be nice individually but, culturally, they are cheats. He tells them about his years in England and insists that, if the British were honorable people, they would not be imperialists. Then, he says that the colonial past is irrelevant; what matters is what will happen now. Banta Singh argues that the present is filled with the promise of destruction, and that the only people who enjoy freedom are criminals. He concludes that they were better off under the British who, at least, offered security.

Iqbal uses the example of Lord Mountbatten—here referred to as the "Big Lord"—to illustrate how such displays of respect were superficial and were even ruses for the British to maintain and justify their colonial power. He also distinguishes between regarding the British individually, in recognition of the appeal of someone like Mountbatten to many Indians, and looking at the nation's policies, which exploited the Indian people and were counterproductive to the nation's growth and progress. Mountbatten, too, was responsible for the hasty and poorly handled partition.

The men sit quietly and listen to the goods train, which tells the visitors that it is time to leave. They all shake hands and the visitors depart. Iqbal lies down and gazes at the stars. He feels lonely and depressed. He wonders how much he can really do to change India. He thinks about how the proletariat does not really care about political freedom, unless it offers a chance to kill a lambardar of a different religious denomination. He could do his best to turn that "kill-and-grab instinct" against the moneyed class.

Iqbal reveals his own hypocrisy about murder. In a political context, it seems, he is fine with killing people. He does not wish to allay the sectarian violence but seeks to manipulate it toward his own ends. He does not think that India can change its habits, but figures that their behaviors can be redirected.

Iqbal wishes that another worker were sent to this village instead of him. He does not feel like a leader and has not made the sacrifices, such as hunger strikes or time in jail. He decides that, when he gets back to Delhi, he will find ways to get himself arrested and jailed. By then, the massacres will be over and he will be safe. As he falls asleep, he hears the goods train leave the station and rumble across the **railway bridge**. Iqbal dreams of a peaceful life in jail.

Iqbal has left Delhi to escape the massacres there, suggesting he is afraid of violence and left town to avoid getting hurt. He is not willing to risk his life for his political beliefs, but he is open to others risking their lives for his political ends. The sacrifices that he is willing to make are the sort that would earn him attention.

The next morning, Iqbal is arrested. Two constables go into his room and rudely shake him awake. He sits up, bewildered. They show him a warrant for his arrest. Iqbal tells them that they have no right to arrest him and asserts that their "days of police rule are over." The policemen are surprised by his accent, his possessions, and his aggressive attitude. All of this makes them uneasy. One officer tells him politely that they are merely doing their job and that he can settle the matter with the magistrate, Hukum Chand. The other officer fumbles to get Iqbal handcuffed.

In a strange twist of fate, Iqbal gets the arrest that he wished for the night before. However, when it occurs, he is unprepared and angry that the police would arrest him without cause. The police are equally ill at ease, for Iqbal is not a local. It also seems, based on his accent and his attitude of entitlement, as though he might be too important to arrest.

At the same time that Iqbal is arrested, ten men are sent to arrest Juggut. Armed policemen surround his house and six of them rush into his courtyard with revolvers. Jugga lies on his charpoy, sleeping. He was in the jungle hiding for two nights and a day with no food or shelter and came home early in the morning when he thought everyone was asleep. The police put his feet in fetters and cuff his right wrist while he sleeps. Then, they prod him awake with the butt of their guns. Juggut's mother enters and starts crying. Four constables search the house. Jugga's mother brings out the broken **bangles** as evidence that the dacoits attempted to frame Jugga. They believe that this means that he knows who the robbers are. The constables slap and kick Jugga, then lead him out of the house.

Singh reveals the disparity in the arrests of Iqbal and Jugga to show that the police has less respect not only for people with criminal records, but also for those who are of a lower social class. Their polite manner and gentle handing of the handcuffs when arresting Iqbal contrast with hitting Jugga and putting his feet in chains. They assume that Jugga is automatically guilty, due to the belief that he is an inherently bad character. The police do not know anything about Iqbal, but they assume that he is decent based on his higher-caste accent.

Juggut walks out of the house and past the villagers. He has a jauntiness in his step and a devil-may-care attitude. The policemen feel uneasy. Iqbal was too belligerent during his arrest, suggesting that he is innocent. It is also unlikely that Juggut would commit a dacoity in his own village. It is also clear that Iqbal and Juggut do not know each other.

The police begin to realize that they have pinned this crime on the wrong men, but it is too late for them to correct their mistake, having already arrested the men in front of the villagers. Saving face is more important than properly solving a crime.

Iqbal's pride is hurt. He initially believed that he was being arrested for his politics. He wanted to be handcuffed so that the villagers could see his willingness to sacrifice himself for their civil liberties, while also witnessing the dignity of his bearing. He feels that the villagers should also be able to attest to his innocence. They saw him when he arrived in Mano Majra. However, during the arrest, the men stare dumbly and the women ask each other who he is. Juggut, on the other hand, does not mind being arrested and has spent a lot of time in jail. Crime is his inheritance. When Alam Singh was convicted of a dacoity, Juggut's mother mortgaged their land to pay lawyers. Jugga got money to get back the land. Though no one could prove how he got the funds, Jugga was arrested and labeled a budmash.

Singh uses this contrasting description to show the difference between the men's ideas of honor. Iqbal is annoyed to be arrested, but he is equally annoyed that the police have handled him so gingerly that he cannot make a display of his arrest and use it for his political ends. However, he also does not wish to remain in custody and expects the villagers to defend his innocence. Jugga expects no one to defend him nor his actions. It is suggested that he turned to a life of crime out of survival, so that his family could keep their farm.

When the police bring Juggut and Iqbal to the subinspector, the subinspector recognizes Iqbal from the train station the day before. The head constable feigns ignorance and says that he does not remember seeing Iqbal. He insists that he only carried out the subinspector's orders to arrest a suspicious-looking, loitering stranger. The subinspector is furious and curses the head constable.

The head constable has made the mistake of bringing in Iqbal as one of the robbers in the dacoity, despite the fact that Iqbal arrived after the dacoity and is a newcomer in town. The arrest reveals both the corruption of the police and their incompetence.

The subinspector goes to Hukum Chand to tell the magistrate about the two arrests. Iqbal is explained to Chand as a man "whose presence had been reported by the headman" under orders from Chand. The magistrate detects the subinspector's attempt to fob off responsibility for the arrest. He asks for Iqbal's full name. The head constable goes to Iqbal to ask. The head constable reports that Iqbal is educated, which makes Chand wonder about his family. The head constable says that Iqbal refuses to give his full name or to report his religion. Chand orders that they get the information out of him through whippings, if necessary.

Neither the head constable nor the subinspector want to take responsibility for the mistake, and the latter tries to say that Chand ordered the head constable to arrest a strange man. For Chand, the justification for the arrest is less relevant than Iqbal's background. He wants to ensure that Iqbal is not someone of importance. However, Iqbal's perceived elevated status does not prevent the police from possibly using torture on him.

When the subinspector goes back to Hukum Chand he says that he is sure that Iqbal is a member of the Muslim League and he uses Iqbal's being circumcised as proof that he is a really a Muslim. They fill in the arrest warrant as "Mohammed Iqbal." Chand also orders him to say that more information is expected to come in regarding Lala Ram Lal's murderers. He orders them to beat Juggut to get the names of the other dacoits, though the subinspector thinks that he can do it without any beatings.

Chand and the subinspector frame Iqbal as a Muslim agitator based on no evidence other than Iqbal's interest in politics and his being circumcised. They do this both to cover for their error in arresting him and to avoid investigative police work. This detail is key to understanding how the police exercise unquestioned and unlimited power.

The police take the prisoners into the police station in Chundunnugger. First, they go to the reporting room. Then, the men are taken to their cells. Juggut's arrival provokes hilarity and someone jokes that he is in the station so often that it seems like his father-in-law's house. The policemen regard Iqbal differently. They remove his cuffs apologetically. They fill his cell with a table, chair, and a charpoy. They also provide him with newspapers and magazines in English and Urdu. Jugga, on the other hand, gets no furniture and the policemen fling his food into his cell.

The police are still worried that Iqbal is someone of importance, so they wish to treat him as humanely as possible so that they can protect themselves against any future accusation of police brutality. On the other hand, they know that Jugga has no such power, so they treat him as they would any other criminal—with little respect. The flinging of food is treatment normally reserved for a wild animal.

Iqbal is not surprised by the difference in treatment and views it as typical of caste distinctions in the country. Iqbal eats his midday meal and lies down on his charpoy. He hears Juggut sleeping, but Iqbal cannot sleep; he reads the news and wonders if his time in jail would be considered a "sacrifice." He thinks about how he will get word to the party about his whereabouts. He falls asleep dreaming about "banner headlines announcing his arrest, his release, [and] his triumphant emergence as a leader."

Iqbal is not surprised by the difference in treatment, but he also does nothing to protest it. He enjoys the comforts provided by the police and thinks about how he will use this arrest to construct his public image as a Communist hero. He seeks to turn the arrest into an opportunity to scale the ladder in his party and become a leader.

In the evening, the subinspector goes to Iqbal's cell and says that Iqbal's circumcised penis and his inability to declare his purpose in Mano Majra are evidence of his being a Muslim. Iqbal tells the officer that his purpose in the village is none of his business and he threatens to take the department to court, where he will file a habeas corpus petition and tell the court about how the police conducts its business. The subinspector laughs and tells Iqbal that he has been living in foreign lands for too long.

Iqbal is naïve about police power in India and speaks to the subinspector as though they were talking in a cell in England. On the other hand, the subinspector thinks that his excessive and unjust exercise of power is normal and typical of how police do their work in India, revealing that the corruption is systemic and not particular to Mano Majra.

The subinspector then leaves abruptly and goes to Juggut's cell. He asks where Jugga was on the night of the dacoity. Jugga insists that he was not involved, but the subinspector does not believe him. The subinspector asks for the names of the robbers. Jugga does not respond and the officer threatens to whip him or perform other acts of torture. Jugga winces from the memory of previous tortures. He flings himself to the floor and begs the subinspector for mercy, saying that he is innocent. The subinspector is excited to see such a large man grovel at his feet. It reminds him of the efficacy of torture, when done properly. He gives Jugga two days to tell him the names of the robbers. He frees himself from Jugga's grip and walks away. The subinspector thinks of how frustrating it is to deal with two such different people.

The subinspector threatens torture against Jugga and not Iqbal, contrary to Hukum Chand's suggestion, because it would not be as pleasurable to watch Iqbal, a slight and less conventionally masculine man, gravel at the feet of the subinspector. The subinspector delights in using his power to intimidate men whom he would not be able to dominate under normal circumstances. Jugga's submission reasserts the subinspector's sense of masculine power.

2. KALYUG

In early September, the trains became less punctual than ever. Additionally, a unit of Sikh soldiers arrive and pile a six-foot-high square of sandbags near the **railway bridge**. They then mount a machine gun in front of each. Armed sentries start to patrol the platform and no villagers are allowed near the railings. One morning, a train from Pakistan stops at Mano Majra station. The train seems different from the others. It is a ghost train, for there are no people on it. Men and women gossip about it.

There are changes in the village that people cannot explain and about which no one informs them. This air of secrecy reveals the disconnect between the authorities, who exercise power beyond the control or influence of the people, and the citizens of Mano Majra, who rely on gossip to stay informed.

During a meeting in the gurdwara, people are melancholic. Imam Baksh says that they are living in bad times. Meet Singh agrees and says that they are living in Kalyug—the dark age. They all talk about what the empty train could mean. Suddenly, a policeman appears in the doorway of the temple. Banta Singh talks to him. He says that there are trucks waiting outside. They need the villagers to get all of the wood and kerosene oil they can spare. In exchange, they will be paid. A few minutes later, the villagers return with oil and wood.

The village elders know that something is wrong but cannot explain it. They are still largely unaware of the political situation in the rest of India. Their conclusion, based on the arrival of the ghost train, is that they have entered a dangerous time. Still, the villagers are helpful and generous and give the Sikh officers what they demand, without question, revealing their trust in authorities.

Two Sikh soldiers, one of whom is an officer, are near the trucks. Imam Baksh greets the officer, who ignores him. When Imam Baksh seeks the officer's attention again, the Sikh snaps at him. When the trucks are loaded, the officer instructs Banta Singh to go to the camp in the morning to get the payment. The villagers ask Banta Singh what he knows, but he insists that he has not been told anything. The villagers shout to each other from their roofs, asking if anyone has learned anything. In their excitement, they forget about their afternoon routine. Then, the day gives way to twilight. At night, a soft breeze blows into the village, carrying the smell of "searing flesh." No one in the village asks about the smell, for they all know it comes from Pakistan.

The Sikh officer is rude to the imam because he is a Muslim. This shows that there is religious prejudice not only among civilians, but within institutions. The villagers, in their simple ignorance, have not connected the smell of the "searing flesh" to the oil and wood that the officers asked them to provide earlier. Accustomed to peace in their village, they are either unaware or in denial of the possibility that dead bodies occupied the ghost train and are now being burned.

It has been a difficult day for Hukum Chand, who has been out of the rest house since morning. Chand's fatigue comes from all the corpses he saw earlier in the day. The servants and their families watch the flames shoot up in the distance. After a bath and a change of clothes, Chand feels somewhat refreshed. Then, the memory of all of the dead bodies on the train comes back to him in a flood. Chand asks his servant for some whisky. Chand thinks about his experiences with death, an obsession he has had since childhood. His fear of death is the reason he insists on living well.

Chand is the novel's anti-hero—that is, a central character with no particularly heroic attributes nor aims. Unlike Iqbal, he has no pretensions. Devastating personal experiences affirm his insistence on living without moral guilt. He gets rid of the bodies because it is his job, but, in order to maintain the comfort and ease of his position, the bodies must remain a secret.

The headlights of a car light the verandah. The same musicians from before, as well as the old woman and Haseena, step out of the car. Hukum Chand orders his servant to tell the driver to send back the musicians and the old woman. Haseena enters and stands, staring at him. He invites her to his bed and begins to fondle her. He smells her perfume and her breath, which smells of cardamom and honey. Chand snuggles against her like a child and falls asleep.

Chand takes comfort in whisky and in Haseena's company. He does not use her for sex, but as a source of comfort. Haseena is the only character who offers Chand companionship. His high position makes it impossible for him to form friendships with the other officers. Therefore, her presence assuages his loneliness.

Hukum Chand awakes to a roll of thunder. The monsoon rains have arrived. He thinks about how the rain must have put out the fire on a thousand charred corpses. He has a headache from drinking too much whisky. He sees Haseena, who is "asleep on the big cane armchair, wrapped in her black sequined sari." The sight of her in the armchair makes him feel "old and unclean." His conscience begins to attack him. He remembers his daughter who, if she had lived, would be the same age as Haseena. He feels remorse, but he also knows that he would do this all over again—drink, sleep with the same girl, and feel bad about it. This depressing cycle characterizes life, he thinks.

Chand wishes to avoid reminders of his fear of death. By keeping company with Haseena, who reminds him of his daughter, he can stave off the pain of having lost his child. Though he knows that it is inappropriate for a man his age to keep company with a teenaged prostitute, he justifies it by telling himself that he must take his pleasure and comforts where he can get them.

The tinkling of the tea china and the silver do not disturb Haseena, who continues to sleep soundly. Hukum Chand cannot understand his feelings toward her. He would only sleep with her, he decides, if she wants to be slept with. Chand hears the sound of shuffling feet on the verandah and figures that the subinspector is visiting. He steps out onto the verandah and sees the subinspector reading a newspaper. Upon seeing Chand, the subinspector jumps out of his chair and salutes.

Chand makes a deal with himself that he will not expect sex from Haseena, despite her being a prostitute. He will allow her to choose if she wants to have sex or not. This helps Chand to avoid the guilt of taking advantage of a girl who reminds him of his dead daughter. If it is her choice, then she demonstrates agency and will decide on the nature of their relationship for him.

The subinspector tells Hukum Chand that he sent word to the lambardar, Banta Singh, that no one is allowed near the **railway bridge** or the station. He tells Chand that the Sikh officer counted more than a thousand corpses. Another four or five hundred were killed on roofs of the train, on footboards, and between buffers. The roof was covered with dried blood. The subinspector says that Muslims in some villages have started to leave for the refugee camp. Chundunnugger has been partly evacuated. However, Mano Majra Muslims remain in their village. Banta Singh reported the arrival of forty or fifty Sikh refugees who crossed the river at dawn and are staying at the temple.

The "ghost train" was the scene of a massacre. To keep the tragedy a secret, the authorities plot with the landowner to keep people away from the area. This indicates how systems of power operate to keep people uninformed about what goes on in their community. The Mano Majra Muslims make up the only substantial number of people in their religious group left in the area. They are oblivious to their vulnerability.

Hukum Chand is upset to hear that incoming refugees were allowed to stay instead of proceeding to the camp at Jullundur. He worries that the Sikh refugees may start a massacre in Mano Majra. The subinspector assures him that the situation is under control and that no other refugees have shown up. Chand figures that, during the rainy season, the river will rise, making it impossible to cross. He insists on getting the Muslims out of the area as soon as possible.

Chand worries, rightly, that the Sikh refugees could be a source of future trouble. This is an instance of foreshadowing in the novel, for these same Sikhs will later play a role in the plot against the train to Pakistan. Chand does not worry because they are a relatively small group and he is focused on evacuating Muslims from the town.

Hukum Chand asks the subinspector what he is doing about Lala Ram Lal's murder. The subinspector says that Juggut Singh gave him the names of the culprits—former members of his old gang. He confirms that Jugga was not with them at the robbery and that he sent constables to arrest the others that morning. Chand listens with little interest. The subinspector admits that they were wrong about Jugga and Iqbal. Jugga was kept busy by Nooran on the night of the robbery and Malli threw the **bangles** into Jugga's courtyard after committing the dacoity.

The police have all of the information that they need to prove that Jugga and Iqbal are innocent and to arrest Malli and his crew. Chand's silence, however, suggests that he intends to use the capture of Jugga and Iqbal to the advantage of the police—both to avoid acknowledgement of their mistake and to see how the botched arrests can serve as a justification to evacuate Muslims from Mano Majra.

The subinspector suggests that they release Juggut and Iqbal after capturing Malli and the other robbers. Hukum Chand asks if Malli and his companions are Sikh or Muslim. The subinspector says that they are all Sikhs, which makes Chand think that it would have been more convenient if they had all been Muslims, for that would have convinced the Sikhs in Mano Majra to let their Muslims leave town. He decides to let Malli and his gang go for now, but he tells the subinspector to keep an eye on them. Chand also decides to hold on to Jugga and Iqbal, in case the police needs them. Before the subinspector leaves, Chand orders him to send word to the commander of the Muslim refugee camp asking for trucks to evacuate the Mano Majra Muslims.

Chand is unconcerned with Malli and his gang's participation in the dacoity, or even with the fact that a man was killed. He contemplates how he can use the incident to manipulate the Sikh villagers to let their Muslim neighbors leave the village. Chand figures that if he calls for the evacuation on his own, the village would protest and would protect the right of their Muslim neighbors to remain in their homes. However, if they have a reason to mistrust their Muslim neighbors, the Sikhs will be eager to get rid of them.

Hukum Chand does not concern himself with the morality of his decision; he is a magistrate, not a missionary. His primary concern is to save Muslim lives. He shouts for his servant to bring breakfast. Haseena sits on the edge of the bed, stands, then sits on the bed again with her eyes fixed on the floor. An awkward silence ensues. She says that she wants to go home to Chundunnugger. For the first time, he asks for her name and she tells him. He asks if the old woman is her mother. She tells him that the woman is her grandmother. Chand asks how old she is. She is unsure, but she thinks that she is between sixteen and eighteen. She jokes that she "was not born literate," so she "could not record [her] date of birth."

Chand finally asks Haseena's name, granting her more agency and respect than he has thus far by acknowledging that she is a human being who exists apart from his own desires. Haseena's youth shows when she asks if she can go home. Without her grandmother and the musicians there, she feels lonely and awkward in Chand's presence.

Hukum Chand asks Haseena how long she has been in her profession, which she thinks is a silly question because she comes from a long line of singers. Chand suggests that he is really asking about her prostitution. Haseena pretends not to understand and insists that she only sings and dances for money. She tells him that they did not have sex the night before because he fell asleep and snored "like a railway engine." She laughs at him and Chand strokes her hair. The sight of her reminds him more of his daughter. He thinks that he does not want to make love to Haseena. He instead wants her to sleep in his lap with her head resting on his chest.

Haseena's playfulness, as well as her denial about her profession and Chand's knowledge that they did not ever have sex, put him at ease. He realizes that he seeks comfort from his arrangement with Haseena, who reminds him both of his daughter and of innocence. Her naivete and playfulness offer him a reprieve from the death and tragedy that have engulfed him.

Hukum Chand asks Haseena how she manages to stay in Chundunnugger, given that he heard that Muslims had been evacuated from her town. She tells him that the subinspector has permitted them to say, for "singers are neither Hindu nor Muslim." When Chand asks if there are any other Muslims in the community, she says that the hijras remain, but they, too, do not fall into any particular category. Talking about the hijras embarrasses her and she blushes. Chand says that she is "not Hindu or Muslim, but not in the same way as a hijra is not Hindu or Muslim."

"Singers" operates as a metaphor for "prostitute," and they are permitted to stay because they are perceived to be a necessity. It does not matter what their religious backgrounds are, for they, along with the hijras, exist in their own caste and are not perceived as religiously devout anyway. Talking about the hijras embarrasses Haseena because they fall outside of gender norms.

Hukum Chand asks how the hijras were spared. Haseena animatedly tells him the story of how a child was born to a Muslim living in a Hindu locality. The hijras went there to sing, not thinking about the violence in the area. Some Hindus and Sikhs (Haseena mentions that she does not like Sikhs) wanted to kill the hijras, who sang "in their raucous male voices" and whirled around, sending their skirts fluttering. Jokingly, they asked the leaders of the mob, who had seen them with nothing on underneath the skirts, if they are Hindus or Muslims. The whole crowd, except for the Sikhs, laughed. The Sikhs let the hijras go but threatened to kill them if they did not leave town. A hijra ran his finger through a Sikh's beard and asked if he was afraid of becoming a hijra himself. At that, even Sikhs began to laugh.

The hijras use their gender nonconformity to poke fun at people who are so rigid and strict about religious membership that they would kill an infant. The hijras are neither male nor female. They use their inability to fit into a binary to ask if the mob can tell whether they are Hindus or Muslims. The point of this is to demonstrate that, if one cannot tell if someone is one thing or another, what, then, does it matter? Predictably, the Sikhs threaten the hijras with violence for upsetting this standard, which prompts a hijra to question the Sikh's own manhood.

Hukum Chand enjoys the story but says that Haseena should be careful. She says that she is not frightened, knowing that Chand can protect her. Smiling mischievously, she asks him if he wants her to go to Pakistan. Chand feels feverish. He nervously asks her if she will stay. She agrees to stay with him in exchange for "a big bundle of notes." Chand says, "with mock gallantry," that he does not care about money, for he is ready to sacrifice his life for her.

In this moment, Chand reveals his love for Haseena, though he is not yet aware of his feelings. He desires her companionship and feels protective of her. His desire to protect her gives him renewed purpose. She, on the other hand, still seems to view their relationship as a business transaction.

Iqbal is left alone in his cell for a week. Iqbal does not see much of Juggut, who was removed from his cell after the first two evenings but brought back after an hour. Iqbal does not know what the police did to Jugga during that time, and he never asked about it.

It is implied that Iqbal suspects that Jugga was tortured. He has noticed already the differences in their treatment. He avoids asking Jugga any questions, probably out of a mixture of fear and courtesy.

One morning, five men enter the station in handcuffs. As soon as Juggut sees them, he becomes furious. Iqbal overhears part of the conversation about the men, which is mentions a spree of looting and killing. He remembers seeing "the pink glow of fire" near the police station and hearing screaming in the distance, but at the time the police had made no arrests. Jugga enters Iqbal's cell, which they will now be sharing.

Iqbal does not yet connect these overheard bits of conversation to the news about the dacoity, which he first heard about from Meet Singh. Outside of the station, the village seems to be in chaos yet the police do nothing.

Juggut takes Iqbal's feet and starts to massage them with his large hands. He asks Iqbal to teach him some English. Iqbal asks Jugga who will be in his former cell. Jugga is unsure but says that the police have arrested Lala Ram Lal's murderers. Iqbal is confused, for Jugga was arrested for the murder. Jugga smiles and says that the police always arrest him when a crime occurs in Mano Majra because he is a budmash. Iqbal asks if Jugga killed Ram Lal, which Jugga denies, for Ram Lal was the town banian and lent him money once to pay lawyers while Alam Singh was in jail. Iqbal thinks that the police will let Jugga go now, but Jugga explains that the police do as they please and will let him go when they please. Iqbal asks if Jugga was out of the village that night and Jugga says that he was, but that he "was not murdering anyone," he "was being murdered."

Iqbal still does not know that, he, too, was foolishly arrested by the head constable as a suspect in the dacoity. It does not occur to him that Jugga was also wrongfully arrested. When Jugga denies killing Ram Lal, Iqbal believes him but still naively assumes that the police will do the just thing and let Jugga go. Jugga reveals the nature of both his and Iqbal's condition—that they are at the mercy of the police. Jugga's playful comment on "being murdered" could be a reference to "la petite mort"—a French expression for an orgasm. Though, this would be an odd reference for Jugga, an uneducated person, to make, and suggests he has more worldly knowledge than one would expect.

Iqbal understands the meaning of Juggut's mischievous metaphor. He does not want to know more, but Jugga asks him if he has slept with many mem-sahibs. Iqbal is irritated by the question as well as with what he perceives as an obsession with sex among Indians. Nevertheless, Iqbal casually answers that he has been with many. His response excites Jugga, who describes white European women as "houris from paradise" and Indian women as "black buffaloes."

Iqbal is annoyed by the question but indulges it and shows off his sexual prowess by saying that he has been with "many" white women. Jugga is fascinated by white women because he has never gone to bed with one, and because they were once forbidden to Indian men. His sense of them as more beautiful is an internalization of racism.

Juggut changes the conversation back to Iqbal teaching him English. Iqbal says that, since the sahibs have left, it is more important for Jugga to learn his own language. Jugga is unconvinced, clerks and letter writers are literate in local languages, such as Urdu, but he thinks that the truly educated know English. Besides, with Lala Ram Lal dead, the only person in the village who can read is Meet Singh. Jugga says that he knows a little verse in English and Hindustani. Iqbal teaches Jugga to say "good morning" and "goodnight." Then, the five new prisoners enter and Jugga's mood darkens.

This exchange indicates that in India, one's competence in languages is related to caste. Middle-caste people, such as clerks, are literate in local languages. Jugga's aspiration to learn English, which he associates with the higher castes, indicates that he, too, is an ambitious person but has merely lacked Iqbal's opportunities.

By midday, the rain lets up and the day brightens. The subinspector drives as fast as he can to the police station and file a report about Malli's arrest. The head constable has experience, but the foolish arrests of Iqbal and Juggut make the subinspector less confident in the constable's abilities to handle situations that are not routine. The constable is also a peasant, full of admiration and awe for the middle-class. The subinspector concludes that the constable would not have the nerve to disturb Iqbal with the lock-up of the new prisoners and, if he puts Malli and Jugga in the same cell, the criminals would discuss the murder and dacoity and find a way to help each other.

The subinspector's thoughts reveal his cynicism both toward the head constable, who holds a lower station and whom he perceives as less intelligent, and toward Jugga whom he thinks would work with Malli, who has just robbed Jugga's village. To the subinspector, all criminals are the same in their propensity for ill-doing, just as all peasants, such as the head constable, are the same, he thinks, in their admiration of those of a higher social station.

The subinspector arrives at the police station and asks the present officers if the head constable has returned. One of them confirms that he has. He brought in Malli and his gang a few minutes ago, but has since gone to have tea. The subinspector asks if he has filed a report and the officer says that the constable insisted on waiting for the subinspector before doing that. The subinspector is relieved and goes into the reporting room. A constable brings him a cup of tea and the subinspector asks if Malli and Juggut have been placed in the same cell. The constable exclaims that, if they had done that, there would have been a murder in the police station. He says that Jugga erupted into a fury as soon as he saw Malli. So, they moved Jugga into Iqbal's cell—the Babu—and put Malli's men in Jugga's.

The subinspector is relieved at the head constable's unwillingness to take any action without prior approval, particularly after the mess he made with Iqbal's arrest. The present arrangement of placing Iqbal and Jugga in the same cell works in the authorities' favor. If Jugga was furious to see Malli, whom he knows is the actual culprit in the dacoity and, therefore, responsible for Jugga's arrest, he will be especially upset to see Malli and his men released. This sets Jugga up to seek revenge against Malli when he, too, is eventually released.

The subinspector tells the constable that he is going to release Malli's men, a decision which puzzles the constable. He then sends the constable to see if the head constable has finished his tea. The head constable enters the reporting room with a smug expression, as though expecting commendation of his work. The subinspector asks him to shut the door and sit down. He orders the head constable to take Malli and his men to Mano Majra and to release them in front of the villagers, near the temple, perhaps. He then instructs the head constable to ask the villagers if anyone has seen the robber Sultana and his gang, but not to respond to any questions about why he is asking. When the head constable says that Sultana and his gang left for Pakistan and that everyone knows that, the subinspector suggests that the head constable act as though he does not know this and to suggest that the robber left after the dacoity.

The decision to release Malli and his men, which was handed down by Hukum Chand, will convince the villagers that Malli and his men did not commit the dacoity, but that it may instead have been the work of the Muslim gangster Sultana and his gang. The subinspector assumes that the villagers will overlook the fact that Sultana and his men left long before the dacoity. He seems to be relying on the villagers' inability to tell time, which would cause them to doubt their memory of whether Sultana and his men left before or after the robbery.

The subinspector also tells the head constable to ask if anyone knows what "the Muslim Leaguer Iqbal" was doing in Mano Majra before his arrest. The head constable is confused, for Iqbal is a Sikh and only cut his hair because he was living in England. The subinspector, again, makes a strong suggestion to the head constable—this time to identify "Iqbal Singh" publicly as "Iqbal Mohammed," a person who could be a member of the Muslim League. The head constable catches on and agrees to carry out the orders. Finally, the subinspector tells him to get a constable to take a letter from him to the commander of the Muslim refugee camp. He also asks the head constable to remind him to send some constables to Mano Majra tomorrow when Pakistani soldiers arrive to evacuate Muslims. The last part, the head constable realizes, is added to help him understand the plan's purpose. He salutes and leaves.

The head constable catches on to the plan to use the robbery and the arrest of Iqbal as an excuse to evacuate Muslims from Mano Majra. By causing the villagers to suspect that Sultana was actually responsible for the dacoity and that Iqbal is working secretly for the Muslim League, the Sikh villagers will begin to resent the presence of Muslims in their communities. Friendships between the villagers, the police figure, will quickly sour and, when they do, the Muslim refugee camp will be ready to receive more refugees.

Malli is frightened of Juggut—the most violent man in the district. However, Malli is also the leader of his own gang and must not appear weak. The policemen handcuff Malli and his companions and attach them to one long chain attached to a constable's belt. The head constable then leads them away. As he leaves his cell, Malli mocks Jugga and his companions laugh. The policemen encourage the gang to keep moving. Malli then mentions Nooran, but Jugga ignores him. When Malli bends near Jugga's iron bar door and starts to say "Sat Sri Akal," Jugga's hands shoot through the bars and grab the hair that protrudes from Malli's turban. He pulls Malli's head, as though to bring him through the bars, and shakes him. While smashing his head into the bars, Jugga curses Malli.

Malli attempts to establish dominance with his gang by indicating that he is tough enough to mock and challenge Jugga. This does not work out because Malli ends up bruised, bloodied, and crying by the time Jugga finishes battering him. It is not Malli's mention of Nooran that upsets Jugga, but Malli's words wishing Jugga peace. One possible reason for this is that Malli mocks the "truth," which is that he committed the robbery. Another possible reason is that Jugga is angry that Malli will be released and allowed to roam Mano Majra, which could fall under his influence.

3. MANO MAJRA

When Mano Majra finds out that the ghost train brought corpses, a "brooding silence" falls onto the village. People are frightened. The head constable arrives and releases Malli and his gang in front of the villagers, as instructed. As part of their release, the men are fingerprinted and told to report to the police station twice a week. The villagers watch the police uncuff them, knowing that Juggut Singh and Iqbal Singh ("the stranger") did not commit the dacoity. They also think that, by arresting Malli and his gang, the police are on the right track. The release confuses them, though. Perhaps some members of the gang did not participate in the robbery, but it is not possible that none of them were involved. The villagers conclude that the police must be certain of the gang's innocence to release them in Mano Majra, where they committed the murder.

The knowledge that the "ghost train" has brought corpses instills an atmosphere of terror in the village. The villagers rely on the police and their lambardar to understand what is going on, which makes it much easier for the police to lie to them or to instill seeds of doubt. The villagers ultimately trust the police more than their own instinctive sense. They find it hard to believe that the authorities would release Malli and his men in the village in which they committed their offense. The authorities' indifference to the village's safety further demonstrates their corruption.

The head constable speaks privately to the lambardar, Banta Singh, who then addresses the crowd, asking if anyone has seen or heard anything about Sultana or his gang. A few villagers have news that the Muslim gang went to Pakistan. The lambardar asks if this occurred before or after Lala Ram Lal was murdered and the villagers agree that the criminals were evacuated afterward. The villagers are puzzled by the question. Then, the head constable asks if any of them saw or talked to "a young Mussulman babu called Mohammed Iqbal who was a member of the Muslim League?" The lambardar is surprised by the question, for, when they met, he remembers Meet Singh and Imam Baksh calling the young man "Iqbal Singh."

The head constable follows the script that the subinspector gave him. The reaction, as he predicted, is confusion. However, the villagers do agree that Sultana and his gang left after Ram Lal was murdered, which makes it possible that they could have committed the dacoity. The head constable's claim that Iqbal is a Muslim further perpetuates the notion that the Sikh villagers are threatened by a nefarious Muslim influence—one which seeks to pillage their community and another that seeks to dominate them politically.

Before the head constable leaves with his subordinate constables, Meet Singh goes to him and says that Iqbal Singh is a Sikh. The head constable ignores the priest and busies himself with something that he writes on a yellow piece of paper. He then calls a constable to take the letter that he has just written to the commandant of the Pakistani military unit and to tell the commanding officer that he has come from Mano Majra and that the situation is serious. The commandant must send his trucks and soldiers to evacuate the Muslims at once. The constable clicks his heels and heads out to follow the order.

The head constable ignores Meet Singh, figuring that the old man does not know what he is talking about; Iqbal could have pretended to be a Sikh. Furthermore, the subinspector confirmed that Iqbal is circumcised, which makes it far likelier that Iqbal is a Muslim. Even without this proof, the head constable is likelier to accept the word of his boss, just as he expects his subordinates to accept his knowledge and orders.

The head constable's visit divides the town. Muslims worry about the rumors of "gentlewomen having their veils taken off" and of being stripped and raped. They start to regard their Sikh neighbors as strangers "with an evil intent." The Sikhs decide that they can never trust Muslims. They, too, knew of stories of Sikh women who saved themselves from dishonor by jumping into wells. They also know from history that Muslims imprisoned and killed their own fathers and brothers, which meant that they have no sense of loyalty. Then, there is the unsolved the murder of Lala Ram Lal. The stranger (Iqbal)—who has no turban or beard—has been hanging around the village. They have reasons to be angry, they think. So, they decide to be angry with Muslims whom they deem "basely ungrateful." When the Sikhs are roused, logic does not matter.

The seeds of suspicion planted by the authorities sprouts a weed of distrust that threatens to choke the town, killing the peace that had long existed between the disparate religious groups. The arousal of suspicion reminds people of historical slights, while also calling to mind the rumors about how Sikh women had been threatened with assault at the hands of Muslim men in Pakistan. Iqbal gives no sign of being a fellow Sikh, though he claims to be one. Confused by all that is happening, the Sikh villagers resort to anger. This gives them a reason to avoid thinking through their confusion.

At night, a group of Sikhs gathers around the house of the lambardar. Meet Singh is with them. They believe that God is punishing them for their sins and they wonder what they have done to deserve it. One of the younger men asks why the Muslims, whom they have regarded as brothers, would send a spy. Meet Singh tells the crowd that Iqbal Singh is a Sikh, but the young man does not believe him. To Meet Singh, it does not matter; he knows that the babu was not involved in the dacoity. He adds, more confidently, that Malli has been arrested for the dacoity and explains how Malli plotted to frame Juggut. The priest also questions the head constable's distracting mention of Sultana. Another youth acknowledges that Meet Singh may have a point.

The Sikhs, devoted to the notion that events happen largely out of human control, believe that God is responsible for their current suffering. Their trust in higher powers, which also includes the legal authorities, makes them vulnerable and dissuades them from taking any action in response to the situation. However, it is the priest, the person who guides this sensibility in favor of faith, who tries to stir the crowd into understanding the lack of logic of the story that the police have told.

The youth then says that something must be done about the Muslims. Meet Singh speaks angrily on the subject, asking the villagers if any Muslim has personally ousted them from their homes or seduced their women. The same youth tells Meet Singh to ask the refugees what the Muslims have done. Meet Singh shifts the focus back to Mano Majra, asking what their own Muslims have done. For the youth, it is enough that they are Muslims. Meet Singh shrugs in futility and the lambardar, Banta Singh, decides that it is up to him to settle the argument. He says that all that matters is what they will do now. The refugees they have taken in so far are a peaceful lot, but that could change, and the local Muslims might be in danger. The village decides that, despite their loyalty to fellow villagers, it might be best if the Muslims leave, though no one knows how to tell them to go.

Again, Meet Singh attempts to appeal to logic, as well as to the villagers' sense of loyalty. He distinguishes between the Muslims in their community and the ones in Pakistan, trying to help the angry young people understand that one's religious faith does not determine character. The landowner settles the argument because he is the most powerful member of their community. The villagers justify sending away their Muslim neighbors by saying that they would be ensuring their safety. What really concerns them, however, is their own safety and the possibility of violence spreading to Mano Majra.

The lambardar advises Imam Baksh and the other Muslims to go to a refugee camp until things settle down. He tells them to lock their houses and says that their Sikh neighbors will look after their belongings. The Muslims agree to pack up their bedding and belongings. The lambardar embraces Imam Baksh and starts to cry loudly. His sadness ripples around the house. The Sikh and Muslim villagers fall into each other's arms and weep like children.

The village reaches a compromise with its Muslims, agreeing to send them away temporarily to a local camp. However, this ostracism, even if it is to ensure everyone's protection, causes the villagers to feel guilty and sad. Imam Baksh is one of the most respected members of the community, whose absence would be palpable.

Before notifying the other Muslims of what to do, Imam Baksh goes back to his own home. Nooran is already in bed. He wakes her. He tells her to get up and pack because they have to go to Pakistan in the morning. Nooran protests, but her father says that, if they do not go, they will be thrown out. He leaves her sitting in her bed. She thinks about Juggut and hopes that he has been released because she knows that Malli was released. The hope gives her a reason to do something. She goes out into the rain. In the village, she sees people packing. Women sit on the floors in some houses, crying and holding each other, as though someone has died.

Though Imam Baksh is loyal to his community and a respected member of the village, the imam is not averse to thinking that his Sikh neighbors could get swept up in religious fervor and eventually turn on him. Though the evacuation was presented as a temporary solution to avoid an outbreak of violence, the extreme reactions of the villagers suggest that they know that they will never see each other again.

Nooran shakes the door of Juggut's house, but there is no response. Because the door is bolted from the outside, she unlocks it and goes in. Jugga's mother is out. Nooran sits and waits, then she hears the sound of footsteps, which stop outside of the door. The voice of an old woman asks who is in the house. Nooran, suddenly scared, does not move. Then, she mumbles, "beybey." The old woman, Juggut's mother, steps inside, expecting to see her son. Nooran announces herself and the woman angrily asks why Nooran is in her home at such a late hour. Nooran asks if Jugga has returned, to which the old woman replies that Nooran is the reason why Jugga is in jail and that it is her fault that he is a budmash.

Perhaps to avoid her own sense of guilt that Jugga did not turn out to be much different from his father or his grandfather, Jugga's mother unconvincingly places blame on Nooran for all that has transpired. Nooran's use of a term of endearment when addressing Jugga's mother indicates that she seeks to establish a relationship with the older woman, who seems to worry that Nooran will displace her in her son's affections, leaving her with no one.

Nooran cries and says that she and her father are leaving tomorrow. Juggut's mother does not care and asks why Nooran is in her home. Nooran says that Juggut has promised to marry her. Jugga's mother curses Nooran and scoffs at the idea of a Muslim weaver's daughter marrying a Sikh peasant. However, she agrees to tell Jugga that Nooran has gone to Pakistan. Nooran then hesitantly tells the old woman that she is two months pregnant. She fears that, if the Muslims in Pakistan find out that she is carrying a child with a Sikh father, they will kill it. She also worries that her father will marry her off or kill her when he finds out.

Juggut's mother is obedient to social restrictions that forbid the relationship between Nooran, who is of a different religion and comes from a more respectable family, and her son, whom she knows no father would accept as a son-in-law. However, the knowledge that Nooran is pregnant dissolves the importance of these social codes. The pregnancy also ties Nooran's family to that of Jugga.

Juggut's mother commands Nooran to stop crying and asks why she did not think about the consequences of her actions when she was doing her "mischief." The old woman says that she will ensure that Jugga will marry Nooran. A sense of hope settles inside of Nooran, who suddenly feels at home. She hugs Jugga's mother and goes home to pack. When the younger woman leaves, Jugga's mother sits on her charpoy and stares into the dark for several hours.

Juggut's mother's acceptance of Nooran and the pregnancy indicate that love and family could be the keys to ending the broader sectarian violence. Whereas Juggut's mother initially resented her son's relationship with a Muslim, she abandons her hostility in favor of doing what is best for Nooran and the baby.

A Muslim officer tells the lambardar, Banta Singh, that the Mano Majra Muslims are going to Pakistan. The lambardar agrees to look after the Muslims' houses while they are gone, but he refuses to look after their other property. The Muslim officer is initially skeptical about the lambardar's talk of brotherhood, but he agrees that it is up to him, the Sikh officer, and his fellow villagers to decide how they will handle the remaining property.

The officer seems to suspect that the lambardar either does not care very much about the Muslims' property or he does not trust the other Sikhs to look after it properly. He does not understand that the Sikhs do not want to inspire temptation or covetousness. To avoid this, the lambardar thinks it best that no one take charge of the Muslims' property.

Suddenly, Malli and his five companions appear in the crowd. They are accompanied by a few refugees who are staying at the temple. Malli tells the Sikh officer that he will look after the property. The Sikh officer speaks about it with the Muslim officer, who agrees to this plan. The villagers protest, but the Muslim officer tells them to "shut up." The commotion dies down and, once again, the Muslim officer orders the Muslims to get into the trucks with as much luggage as they can hold in their hands. The Sikh officer says that he has arranged with Malli and his companions to look after the departing Muslims' cattle, cart, and houses. The Mano Majra Sikhs and Muslims helplessly watch as the officers make this arrangement.

In a cruel twist of irony, the Muslims' property is left with the most dishonorable and villainous character in the novel. The officers' decision, made despite the protests of the villagers who are aware of Malli's reputation, reveal the extent of the indifference among those in power toward the departing Muslims. Even the Muslim officer is less concerned with ensuring that the property is protected than he is with getting the matter sorted as quickly as possible.

The truck engines start. The Pathan soldiers round up the Muslims, and the Muslim officer drives his jeep around the convoy to ensure that everything is in order. The villagers can only shout their "goodbyes." The Muslim officer then mechanically shakes hands with his Sikh colleague and departs. The jeep takes its place at the front of the convoy and the officer shouts "Pakistan!" His soldiers answer, in unison, "Forever!" The Sikhs watch the convoy, which is moving toward Chundunnugger, until it is out of sight. The Sikh officer then summons the lambardar. Banta Singh, arrives, accompanied by all the Mano Majra villagers. The Sikh officer says that anyone who interferes with Malli's role as custodian of the Muslims' property will be shot. Malli's gang and the refugees then unyoke the steers, loot the carts, and drive the cows and buffalo away.

Predictably, Malli and his gang and use their newfound position as an opportunity to rob the departing Muslims. However, dishonorable as their actions are, they ultimately do not matter. The Muslims will never return—a fact that is confirmed by the Muslim officers' shout that the convoy is departing forever for Pakistan, contrary to everyone being told that the Muslims would only be going to a refugee camp until tensions cooled. The dishonesty that impacts the Muslims is not limited to criminals like Malli, it is also rife throughout the bureaucracy, which is not forthcoming with the villagers.

4. KARMA

Banta Singh, the lambardar, goes to look at the river before sunset. He has never known the Sutlej to rise so high in so little time. The river is "a terrifying sight," but Mano Majra is far from its banks and the mud bank looks solid and safe. Still, he arranges for men to keep watch over it throughout the night. The lambardar cannot sleep. Shortly after midnight, the three men on duty come back, talking loudly and excitedly. They say that they hear cries across the river. Banta Singh goes with them and asks if they are sure that the voices are human. A black oval object hits the bridge pier and moves towards Mano Majra's embankment. They see that it is a dead cow, floating belly up.

The dead cow is an omen of what is to come. The village seems to be contending with the strength of two nearly insurmountable forces—the violence which is encroaching upon them from neighboring towns and villages, and nature, embodied by the rising river. The lambardar is unsure if the cries that the men hear are human or animal. When the cow floats by, he is briefly put at ease and thinks that a neighboring village was flooded.

The sun comes up. The river has risen further. Its "turbid water" carries carts "with the bloated carcasses of bulls still yoked to them" and dead horses rolling from side-to-side. There are also men and women floating along, with their clothes sticking to their bodies, and children whose arms clutch the water, while "their tiny buttocks [dip] in and out." The sky becomes overwhelmed by scavenger birds. Banta Singh still insists that a village flooded overnight. One of his companions asks who would yoke bulls to carts at night. The lambardar admits that this would be strange. Seeing stab wounds, they all finally accept that these people were murdered.

The lambardar does not want to believe that a massacre occurred so close to Mano Majra. However, when he sees the stab wounds in the corpses' bodies, he can no longer deny to himself what happened. What is most shocking is how indiscriminate the attackers were, killing children as easily as the elderly, and animals as well as humans. It is as though the attackers wanted to destroy everything connected to the murdered villagers.

That night, no one can sleep. Late night visitors arrive in a jeep. They go from door to door, asking if the inhabitants are still alive. The lambardar angrily asks them what they want. They are Sikhs, he notices, in khaki uniforms. One of them says that the village looks quite dead and, if it is not, it should be. He says that it is full of eunuchs. One of them, the boy leader, has "an aggressive bossy manner," though he is only "in his teens" and is somewhat "effeminate." He looks as if his mother dressed him as "an American cowboy."

The young Sikh soldier attempts to bait the men in the crowd by attacking their manhood. He seeks to manipulate them into murdering Muslims by belittling them and calling them weak. The author reveals the performative aspect of the boy's speech by focusing on his appearance and manner, which give the impression that he is pretending to be a tough guy.

Banta Singh asks what they can do about the massacres. He says that if the government goes to war in Pakistan, they will fight; but, there is nothing they can do in Mano Majra. The boy leader sneers at the mention of the government, which he says consists of "cowardly banian moneylenders," and encourages them to engage in their own killing—two Muslims for each Hindu or Sikh that the Muslims kill. He determines that only "an eye for an eye" will stop the killing on the other side. People listen, stunned by the boy's words. Meet Singh is the only one who speaks and asks what the Muslims in their village have done to warrant being killed in revenge for what those in Pakistan do. The boy uses the example of innocent Hindus and Sikhs killed by Muslims, but Meet Singh insists that there is no bravery in killing innocent people.

Meet Singh reiterates his assertion that the villagers must not confuse the actions of Muslims in Pakistan with the those of the Muslims whom they know in Mano Majra. The boy appeals to tribal sentiment and the desire for revenge by mentioning the innocents whom the Muslims have slaughtered. By framing the conflict as one between a "guilty" party vs. an "innocent" party, it becomes easier for the boy to convince the villagers that the Muslims are an inherent source of evil that they must eliminate themselves, due to the apathy and incompetence of their government.

The boy leader loses patience with Meet Singh. The priest loses the argument and the boy turns his attention back to the crowd, which he is beginning to win over. He asks if anyone is willing to sacrifice his life for the Guru. The boy leader's earlier words made them uncomfortable, and they are eager to prove their manliness. The lambardar asks what they should do and the boy directs them to kill a trainload of Muslims who will cross the **railway bridge** to Pakistan.

The villagers dismiss Meet Singh, the village elder, in favor of heeding the boy soldier, whose vigor and ability to command help the male villagers feel less weak and vulnerable to a series of circumstances that they can neither explain nor control.

The boy leader spreads out a map and asks if everyone can see the position of the **railway bridge** and the river from where they are on the map. They agree that they can. Then, he asks if anyone has guns; no one does. He says that it does not matter, for they will have six or seven rifles. He encourages them to bring swords and spears, which would be more useful anyway. The plan, he says, is that tomorrow, after sunset, they will stretch a rope across the first span of the bridge. It will be a foot above the height of the engine's funnel. When the train passes under it, the rope will sweep away all of the people who will be sitting on the roof off of the train. That, he estimates, should be about four to five hundred people. The listeners are delighted by the plan.

The listeners like the plan, for it does not threaten them with any personal danger. They will also not be asked to handle guns, which they do not own and probably do not know how to use. The plan allows them to prove to themselves and to the boy leader that they are, indeed, sufficiently masculine without anyone having to risk their lives to prove the point. The villagers have forgotten that the people whom they will kill so cavalierly are their former neighbors, whose well-beings suddenly matter less than the male villagers' sense of virility.

The boy leader sees that it is past midnight. He closes the meeting and encourages everyone to get some sleep. The group disperses. Some visitors, along with Malli and his gang, stay in the gurdwara. Others go home so as not to be implicated in the crime, due to their presence during the conspiracy. The lambardar Banta Singh takes two villagers with him and goes to the police station in Chundunnugger.

The lambardar, normally an authority in the community whose advice the villagers seek, has been displaced by the boy leader who inspires the people to tap into the worst parts of themselves—specifically, their vindictiveness and violent impulses.

At the police station, Hukum Chand is indifferent to news of the plot. He only asks that the subinspector get help from other stations, to show that they did their best to prevent the killings. Chand is tired. He wails that the whole world has gone mad. He does not think that it matters if another thousand people die. The subinspector does not take his boss seriously. He knows that Chand is merely trying to expel the despair from his system. The subinspector then complains about all of the abuse he got from the Muslims for helping them, and all that he got from the Sikhs for not allowing them to have the loot they were expecting. He complains that the government will abuse him next "for something or other."

Both Chand and the subinspector regard the matter selfishly, worrying only that they do not get blamed for not responding properly to the conspiracy. The subinspector believes that people do not show him sufficient gratitude. Chand, on the other hand, thinks that there is nothing left for him to do. Unlike the subinspector, Chand feels the futility of his position in response to the mounting violence. This indicates that bureaucratic authority has its limitations in the face of mob rule. Furthermore, members of the military are working against the police.

The subinspector talks about the situation in Chundunnugger, which they evacuated the night before. He says that if he had shown up five minutes later, there would not have been a single Muslim left alive. This gets Hukum Chand's attention. He asks if there is a single Muslim family left and the subinspector confirms that they have all gone. Chand wonders if they will return when everything has settled. The subinspector does not think there is anything for them to return to, given that their homes have either been burned to the ground or occupied. Chand reassures himself that this will not last. Soon, Sikhs and Muslims will go back to drinking from the same water pitcher, but even he does not believe this.

The subinspector imagines that, if not for his intervention, the Muslims would have been massacred. Chand is unconcerned with the subinspector's attempts at grandstanding, but the mention of Chundunnugger reminds him of Haseena. When he wonders if the Muslims will return, he is really thinking solely of her and his hope that he will see her again. He is less interested in peace between the warring religious groups than he is in Haseena's safe return to India.

The subinspector says that the magistrate may be right, but that Chundunnugger refugees are being taken on the train to Pakistan that night and he does not know how many will cross the bridge alive; those who do may not want to return to India in a hurry. Hukum Chand goes pale and asks how the subinspector knows that the refugees from Chundunnugger are going to Pakistan by night train. The subinspector says that the refugee camp commander told him. Worrying about an attack on the camp, he decided to get the first available train to get the refugees out. If they do not go, the subinspector reasons, everyone will be killed. If the train goes at top-speed, some will get to Pakistan. The villagers, he explains, do not plan to derail the train; they want it to go to Pakistan full of corpses.

Chand "goes pale" with fear, for he imagines that Haseena could also be on that train. The situations that the subinspector presents are dire. If Haseena and the others do not go to Pakistan, everyone who was sent to the refugee camp will be massacred. However, many of those on their way to Pakistan will never get there alive. Chances of survival are minimal in each circumstance.

Hukum Chand asks if there are any Muslims, particularly "females," who have refused to leave Mano Majra. The subinspector assures him that not one remains; everyone has left. Chand then asks about Nooran. The subinspector mentions that she is pregnant with Juggut Singh's child. Chand then remembers that Iqbal was said to be a political agitator of some sort, whom the subinspector still identifies with the Muslim League. Chand asks for blank official papers for orders. The subinspector hands them over and Chand writes down the names of the prisoners. When the subinspector identifies Iqbal as "Iqbal Mohammed or Mohammed Iqbal," the magistrate insists on "Iqbal Singh." He says that no political party would be so foolish as to send an educated Muslim "to preach peace to Sikh peasants thirsting for Muslim blood."

Chand still seeks assurance that Haseena has, indeed, left. His concern for the Muslim girl will mirror Jugga's later concern for Nooran. It is possible that, in this moment, Chand develops some sympathy for Jugga, for both men are intimately involved with Muslim women who are in danger. Chand also concludes that Iqbal is a Sikh, which he had probably believed all along. However, Iqbal's true religious identity is never confirmed in the book and the author is intentionally elusive about it.

The subinspector admits that Hukum Chand must be right and that he has seen Iqbal wearing the steel **bangle** that all Sikhs wear. He asks what all of this has to do with preventing the attack on the train. Chand encourages him to think about it on his way to the police station at Chundunnugger, and to release both men and ensure that they leave Mano Majra right away. The subinspector takes the papers and salutes on his way out. As he cycles back to the station, Chand's plan becomes crystal clear.

Chand intends to use both men as a means to stop the plot, given that he does not care to do anything himself to stop the conspirators. Chand's plan is also a moral test to see if Iqbal truly is as politically committed to India's progress as he claims to be, and to see if Jugga truly loves Nooran. Chand, interestingly, has little incentive to use his power to help Haseena.

Back at the station, the subinspector looks at Juggut and Iqbal and tells them that they will find that Mano Majra has changed. Neither Jugga nor Iqbal knows what to make of the comment. The subinspector pulls out another paper and reads Iqbal's name and his status as a "social worker." Iqbal notices that his fake Muslim name has been erased. The subinspector says that he should be grateful for the arrest, for if the Sikhs found out that Iqbal is circumcised, they would have killed him. Iqbal is indifferent to his words. Once again, the subinspector warns them that they will find "big changes" in Mano Majra. He then says that all the Muslims have left. Jugga asks where they have gone. The subinspector explains that they first went to a refugee camp; but tonight, they will go to Pakistan by train. If they do not leave, Malli and his men will kill them.

The subinspector justifies his corruption by saying that, if Iqbal had not been arrested, he would have been killed. The subinspector's need for appreciation knows no bounds. He delights in telling the men that Mano Majra has not only changed but has become a place that would be uniquely hostile to the two of them. Malli has overtaken the village and could easily kill Jugga with the help of his mob, and the villagers now suspect that Iqbal is a spy with the Muslim League.

The mention of Malli's name riles Juggut's temper. The subinspector smiles. He says that Malli and his men are armed and that many others have joined his gang. Jugga still vows revenge and pumps himself up as the toughest man in his village. The subinspector is amused and tells the men to go home. He assures Iqbal that he need not worry, for he is in the company of the toughest man in Mano Majra.

Jugga clings to an image of himself that can no longer hold. The subinspector knows it, so Jugga's display of masculine power amuses him. Just as he delighted in watching Jugga grovel in response to a threat of torture, the subinspector delights in seeing the tough criminal lose his power.

Iqbal wants to get out of this place, where he has to prove his Sikh identity to survive. He finds it absurd that his life depends on having foreskin. It is both laughable and tragic. He resents needing Meet Singh, an unclean man who defecates in the fields, for protection. He yearns to go back to civilization. In Delhi, he could report on his arrest. He envisions headlines implicating him, "Comrade Iqbal," in an "Anglo-American capitalist conspiracy to create chaos." He would look like a hero.

This passage indicates that Iqbal never had any wish to connect with the people of the village and that he never developed any respect or sympathy for them, due to their backward ways. He expected that they would yield to his superior knowledge and listen to him. He would then use his influence in Mano Majra to develop his reputation.

Juggut thinks of Nooran. He no longer cares about Malli. He assumed that Nooran would remain in Mano Majra, for no one would want Imam Baksh to go. He continues to think that Nooran is hiding somewhere or that she would have gone to Juggut's mother. If the old woman rejected her, he would let her have it. Then, he would leave and never return.

At this moment, Jugga lets go of his tough guy image. He realizes that he loves Nooran and that her well-being matters most to him. He still does not know about the pregnancy.

The tonga arrives at the gurdwara. When Meet Singh greets Iqbal and opens the door to his room, the priest talks about the trainloads of dead people that came to Mano Majra. He talks about how they burned the bodies and the river flooded with more corpses. Muslims were evacuated and refugees from Pakistan have replaced them. Iqbal takes out his silver flask. Meet Singh asks him what is in it. Iqbal explains that it is his medicine, which helps him to get an appetite. The priest laughs, remembering the pills that he takes "to digest" food.

Meet Singh briefs Iqbal on all of the changes to the community, resulting from religious strife and the partition, that Iqbal missed when he was in jail. In response, Iqbal drinks but hides the existence of the alcohol from the naïve priest, who clearly does not know what a flask is for. This makes it easy for Iqbal to break the temple's rules right under Meet Singh's nose.

Iqbal asks if there has been any killing in the village. Meet Singh says there has not, but that there will be. He mentions the plan to attack the train to Pakistan. He details how the Sikh soldiers came in the middle of the night and hatched the plan with the cooperation of the community. In the midst of this narrative, he expresses his fascination with Iqbal's air mattress by asking a litany of questions about it.

Iqbal is afraid of impending violence, but the priest is unfazed. His interest in the air mattress shows that he and the other villagers have little to no access to the modern conveniences that Iqbal takes for granted. On the other hand, they are accustomed to violence, which shocks Iqbal.

Iqbal ignores Meet Singh's questions about the mattress and figures that this is why the police released Malli. He guesses that Juggut will also join the mob. Iqbal asks if Meet Singh can stop it, for people listen to him. The priest says that no one listens to an old bhai. In bad times, there is no faith or religion. Iqbal insists that this cannot be allowed to happen. He tells the priest to remind the conspirators that they would be killing those whom they previously addressed as "uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters." Meet Singh sighs and wipes away a tear. He thinks that his words would be futile; the crowd knows what it is doing. If the plot is a success, they will come to the gurdwara for thanksgiving and make offerings to wash away their sins.

Iqbal understands now how the police have conspired to get rid of the Muslims in Mano Majra. Iqbal appeals to Meet Singh's position as a respected member of the community and says that the priest has an obligation to serve as the mob's conscience. Iqbal addresses the hypocrisy, as well as the odd change of heart, in Sikh villagers who had once embraced the Muslims like family but are now rejecting them as mortal enemies. Worse, they seem to believe that their faith permits them to commit murder as long as they do penance.

Meet Singh changes the subject by asking how Iqbal was treated at the police station. Iqbal quickly answers the question, then goes back to asking why the priest will not act. Meet Singh insists that he has done all that he can and that the rest is for the police and Iqbal to do. Iqbal says that he cannot do anything, for he barely knows these people. Meet Singh reminds him that, when he arrived in Mano Majra, it was to speak to the people about something, so why not do it now? Iqbal says that, when people want to talk with weapons, the only way to talk back is with weapons. Otherwise, one should stay out of their way. Meet Singh says that he shares the same view.

Meet Singh acknowledges the limitations of faith and prayer. He can only appeal to those who acknowledge their moral consciences. The villagers will not listen to him if they are in the midst of a violent fervor. The priest tells Iqbal that it is now his turn to act, but Iqbal balks. Both acknowledge that language has its limitations. However, Iqbal has only interacted with the most powerful members of the village and he even agreed to that begrudgingly.

Iqbal puts his things into his sack. He wonders if he should face the mob and lecture them on their immorality. However, there would be no one present to see his act of defiance and they would strip him, see that he is circumcised, and kill him. It would be a waste of his life. Besides, he sees the situation as a "few subhuman species" slaughtering their own kind, making it less likely that they would have their annual population increase of four million. He concludes that self-preservation is best, under the circumstances.

Iqbal is only interested in addressing the crowd if doing so will result in a personal reward—that is, fame and respect within his political party. His cynicism and disgust toward not only the villagers but India in general is on display in this passage. He sees the massacres as a form of self-cleansing.

Iqbal pours himself a whisky and thinks that if one's mission is "to wipe the slate clean," maybe it would be best "to connive with those who make the conflagration." After all, India is full of a lot of nonsense, particularly that which is related to religion. Its philosophy, too, does not amount to much, and he regards yoga as nothing but a moneymaker. The East relies on faith, not reason—reason is Western. Even art and music seem hopeless because it is always backward-looking. He pours himself another whisky and surmises that it is pointless to build another story on a house that is rotting from within. It would be best to demolish it.

Iqbal's frustration with India is that it is not like the West. His thoughts do not exactly convey a hatred for his people but a resentment for the fact that India seems stuck in cycles of violence and superstition, which stunt its progress. In a moment of defeatism, he drinks and wonders if it might be best to let all of the religious fanatics kill each other so that the country can see the error of its ways and start over.

At the gurdwara, Meet Singh is awake. He is sweeping the floor and tidying up when someone bangs at the door. The priest asks who it is. He undoes the latch and Juggut steps inside. He asks Meet Singh to read him a verse. Meet Singh finds this odd, for Jugga has never before come to the gurdwara and people are asleep. Jugga insists that he read, so the priest gets out a small prayer book, puts it to his forehead, and reads the verse on the page to which he has opened the book. Jugga asks if the verse is good and Meet Singh assures him that all of the words of the Guru are good. If one does something good, the Guru will help; if one does something bad the Guru will try to stop it. They say "Sat Sri Akal" to each other and Jugga prepares to leave.

In his effort to change and redefine his purpose, Jugga goes to the temple to seek counsel. However, Jugga is illiterate and does not know much about the world beyond his village, so when he seeks guidance, he seeks it from his faith. Jugga was never a devout Sikh and knows nothing about the prayers, but it is all that he has to rely on. Jugga's use of prayer as a source of guidance reverses Meet Singh's previous comments about the futility of prayer in the face of violence. Here, the word of the Guru will inspire someone to act.

As Juggut gets up to leave, he recognizes one of the sleeping heads on the pillow as that of Iqbal. He quietly says, "Sat Sri Akal, Babuji" and tries to see if Iqbal is awake. Meet Singh asks him not to disturb Iqbal for he is not feeling well. Jugga sees the silver flask lying on Iqbal's chest. Meet Singh explains that it contains the medicine that Iqbal needs to sleep. Jugga asks the priest to say "Sat Sri Akal" to Iqbal on his behalf, then he leaves the gurdwara.

This is the last time that Jugga and Iqbal see each other. Jugga likely knows that Iqbal has been comforting himself with alcohol. In a sense, the priest is right to say that Iqbal does not feel well, given the violent tensions in town. However, Iqbal, the political worker, dissipates himself in drink instead of doing something.

Hukum Chand is no longer feeling the elation that his plan gave him that morning. He feels anxious and foolish. He thinks about his release of Juggut and Iqbal and what it will mean for the train plot. He figures that Iqbal is an intellectual of "the armchair variety" and will do nothing daring. As for Jugga, Chand thinks that the only reason the budmash has for doing anything is to get back at Malli. If Malli leaves town, Chand assumes that Jugga will do nothing about the train plot. He is skeptical of the depth of Jugga's love for Nooran and figures that, if she is killed on the train, Jugga will merely find another girl. His type never risks anything for women.

Typically, Chand's mood swings from contentment to melancholy. He thinks that Iqbal is insincere about his political commitments, which is true, but wrongly thinks that Jugga is more committed to his criminal reputation than in doing right by Nooran. Ironically, Chand accuses Jugga of being the "type [who] never risks anything for women," but does not recognize himself as a similar type; he has done nothing to save Haseena, and is instead leaving it to Iqbal and Jugga to do something.

Hukum Chand also thinks about his role as magistrate. It does not seem that the government in Delhi is doing anything to make his job easier. All they do is make speeches and hang around with "lovely-looking foreign women." He thinks of the people who work with him. There is his colleague, Prem Singh, who goes to buy his wife jewelry in Lahore and spends time with sahibs who flirt with each other's wives.

Chand thinks that his position as a middling bureaucrat is not only difficult and, in the current circumstance, useless, but that it does not come with any of the rewards that those in higher positions get. He envies his colleague who evidently makes more money and has access to better-looking women.

Hukum Chand also thinks of his orderly, Sundari, and how she was not married to Mansa Ram for four days before her bus was ordered off the road by a mob of Muslims. Sikhs were hacked to death. The Muslim attackers held Mansa Ram by his arms and legs while a man cut off his penis and held it out to Sundari. The mob then raped her. Her friends warned her before her wedding not to take off her **bangles**—it was bad luck. She saw them smashed in the road while she was taken by one man after another.

In this anecdote, Chand thinks about how the religious warfare destroyed his orderly's happiness. He sees the personal dimension of the strife and stops thinking about it in terms of countless bodies. In this instance, the smashed bangles symbolize the rupture of life.

Finally, Hukum Chand thinks of Sunder Singh. Singh was a big, brave Sikh who had fought in battles in Eritrea, Burma, and Italy. The government gave him land in Sindh and he went by train with his wife and children to seize his bounty. However, his overcrowded train was held up at the station for four days with no one allowed to get off. Food and water ran out and it was over 115 degrees in the compartment. Sunder Singh's children cried for food and water. He gave his children his urine to drink. When that ran out, he pulled out his revolver and shot his family. Sunder Singh tried to kill himself, too, but he could not bring himself to do it. Then, the train began to move. He hauled the bodies of his wife and children off and came to India.

Sunder Singh appears to be a man who epitomizes masculine strength in Chand's imagination. The anecdote about how such a strong man was unable to protect his family and save them from thirst and starvation during the massacres reminds Chand of how helpless even the strongest have become as a result of the endless violence. Singh's inability to kill himself is an indication that he killed his family, not so much out of desperation, but to end their misery because he loved them. His instinct to survive prevents him from killing himself.

Hukum Chand begins to think about Haseena and asks himself why he allowed her to go back to Chundunnugger. If she were with him in the rest house, he would not care what happened in the rest of the world. He starts to cry as he listens to the rumble of the train in the distance, knowing that she is on it.

In this moment, Chand realizes that he loves Haseena. Believing that he can do nothing to save her life, he cries helplessly. The scene is an illustration of the limitations of power.

It is a little after 11:00 p.m. There is little moonlight near the **railway bridge**. A jeep sits at a good distance from the embankment. No one is in it, but its engine rumbles. The men from the jeep spread themselves out on either side of the railway line. They talk loudly to each other because it is too dark for them to see each other. They hear a steady rumbling, signaling the train's arrival. They look at the rope. If the train moves quickly, the rope will cut many people in two. The men look toward the lights of the train.

The author starts to build tension in this scene. The Sikhs have organized a military-style operation. The darkness of the night causes the plotters to focus on the train, which they know will carry the Muslim refugees—some of whom are riding on the roof of the train in the darkness. They are unknowingly riding toward their deaths.

A big man (implied to be Juggut) climbs the steel span of the **railway bridge**. The others think that he is testing the strength of the knot as he stretches himself over the rope. The train gets closer. The leader stands up and commands him to come down. Suddenly, the big man pulls a kirpan from his waist and slashes at the rope. He hacks at it vigorously. The leader, realizing what he is doing, raises his rifle and fires. One of the man's legs comes off of the rope, but the other is still wrapped around it. The train's engine is only a few yards away. Someone fires another shot and the man begins to slide off of the rope, but he clings to it with his hands and chin. A tough strand holds the rope in place. He hacks at it with the kirpan, then he uses his teeth. The men on the ground send forth a volley of shots. The man collapses at the moment that the rope snaps. The train goes over him and moves on to Pakistan.

In the final scene of the novel, the author details how Jugga redeems himself by cutting the rope intended to kill the Muslim refugees riding on the roof of the train. Jugga's action is an attempt to save Nooran from harm because she could be on the roof of the train. However, it is also a chance for him to use himself—a man who has led a violent, criminal life—to prevent sectarian violence from overcoming his village. Where the government, symbolized by Hukum Chand, and religion, symbolized by Meet Singh, have failed, Jugga succeeds and becomes an unlikely hero.

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