

Detailed Summary:

The poem 'Partition' by WH. Auden deals with the historical event of the partition of sub-continent into India and Pakistan. Partition was a job that was heroic and of an epic dimensions but it was done away in such a haste, such a short time, with such carelessness that resulted in the catastrophe, the tragedy that is called partition. This act of partition was done in such a way as to split a piece of log. Around 12 million people displaced and millions were left homeless. The trains through which migration was done were so full and there was hardly a space to breath in. Over one million were killed on both sides of the border.

Radcliffe has never seen sub-continent before, never knew the geography, never knew the population of statistics and still he was given this task of splitting the sub continent into two parts i.e. India and Pakistan. Radcliffe, the British officer, who was given this duty, did not India, its people, religion, geography and emotionally charged atmosphere of sub continent. He had no idea and this is what is conveyed by Auden in this poem. This was an epic dimension task but it was done in such a haste, carelessness which resulted into a monumental tragedy. It tells you that there would be many wrongs in the working of the person he talks about.

- **Unbiased at least. . . his mission.**

He is for Radcliff. Mission was to draw the boundaries between two countries. The word at least is ironical and the word unbiased shows that Radcliff was not unbiased but the job he was asked to perform was done in such a haste that it resulted in chaos.

Indians believed in many gods, and had a different lifestyle and culture than Muslims. So there was no chance of reconciliation or patch up between the two nations. Actually British thought Muslims and Hindus division is irrational when they have been living together for centuries. They could not see the differences because the viceroy Lord Mount Batten wanted to maintain a neutral position but we all know that he did not like Quaid e Azam and he was inclined towards Nehru. Quaid e Azam would not listen to the dictation of Mount Batten. So Viceroy thought Mr. Radcliff should keep away himself from the Viceroy so that people would not question his working. So he was given as a team 4 judges, two Muslims and two Hindus but still they told him you would take the final decision.

- **Shut up in. . . . get shot.**

So the accommodation that was provided to Radcliff, it should be lonely mansion and it should not be visited by people. He was told there will be assassination attempts on his life and for this reason there will be police guarding his house and gardens all the time and he must quickly work. He was given obsolete maps. He was given some kind of helping documents, but outdated maps and census results were all incorrect. Gurdaspur was cut from Pakistan's map at the very last moment before the announcement of Radcliff's report. That's why Quaid e Azam said we were given moth-eaten Pakistan.

Radcliff came to sub-continent on 8th July, 1947. India was very hot at that time as compared to England. His stomach was very upset and he was running constantly to toilet. Poet has not mentioned even a single time about how many people were killed etc. But the very details about this sensitive task done in such a haste, tells how much chaos it would have bring.

After this, Radcliff sailed to England. He quickly forgot is an ironical expression. It was said, he

never accepted the 40000 Euros as a fee for this work. He forgot all the medals etc. because he was extremely guilty that he has done something that he shouldn't have done. All his life he lived with guilt, for what he did, and with fear that he might get shot someday.

