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Nina, a lecturer in English at a college in Delhi, dreads her thirtieth birthday. She is still unmarried, a condition much bewailed by her mother. Following her diplomat father’s death, she and her mother had been forced to live in reduced circumstances, first with her disapproving grandparents and now sharing one room. Their every move is noticed and commented on by others. Her mother arranges an astrologer reading and choosing then they should contact the Journal Editorial Office by e-mail (journal@fsrh.org) in the first instance with details of their nominated title.

Eventually, the arranged marriage is completed and Nina moves to join her husband in Canada. She is isolated and unsure; her Indian clothes appearing strange to Andy’s friends and relations. She buys Western clothes that make her look plump and middle-aged. Andy thinks she needs nothing but him and will soon be a mother.

Andy dwells on his premature ejaculation; Nina, bored and lonely (she cannot teach without re-qualifying), finds her way to the library where she devours the books and tries to make Andy read about sexual therapy. Andy secretly goes off to Canada, adding to our understanding of the traditional ways of behaving and have to find, or perhaps are enabled to find, their own solutions.

The storyline drifts along and the occasional sentence construction and proofreading errors are irritating. The contrasts between the propinquity of too many people, the overwhelming impressions of life in India – cool, solitary and often isolated life in Canada are striking. The certainties of the codes of conduct and obligations to relations in India are contrasted with the among the confusing lack of any sort of social life in Canada, adding to our understanding of the different cultures. Much of the book is about the adjustments, difficulties and misunderstandings in marriage. Couples may marry for love, for money, because of pregnancy, convenience, or by arrangement. The differences between the necessary adjustments between two people in this arranged marriage and any other seem slight, except that these two people are isolated from their traditional ways of behaving and have to find, or perhaps are enabled to find, their own solutions.