

Flashman and the Mountain of Light: From the Flashman Papers, 1845-46 Study Guide

**Flashman and the Mountain of Light: From the
Flashman Papers, 1845-46 by George MacDonald
Fraser**

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Plot Summary

The novel *Flashman and the Mountain of Light* is one of a series of novels posing as the memoirs of Sir Harry Flashman. This novel, the "ninth packet" of the *Flashman Papers*, chronicles Flashman's adventures in the First Sikh War. Through an unbelievable series of events Flashman, acting as a spy in the Punjabi capital, meets a series of unforgettable characters, some who equal his own capacities for debauchery and cowardice.

The novel begins in 1887 when Flashman and his wife Elspeth have an audience with Queen Victoria. The Queen asks Flashman's advice concerning the Koh-i-Noor, the largest diamond in the world at that time, and the upcoming Golden Jubilee celebrations. Hearing of the diamond takes Flashman back in time over forty years to the First Sikh War.

Flashman arrives in India and soon acts to get assigned as a political service officer because he thinks the job will be easier and far less dangerous than his usual role of soldier. Flashman soon discovers that he has volunteered for what may be the most dangerous job of any British man in all of India. Under the direction of George Broadfoot, Flashman goes to Lahore where the ruling family of Punjab holds court. He is supposed to act as a spy relaying vital information to the British concerning what most believe to be an inevitable war between the British East India Company and the Punjabi military, the formidable Khalsa. Whether or not Flashman is an effective spy is uncertain, but what is absolutely certain is that he encounters an environment where his appetites for excess are tame by comparison.

The first memorable character Flashman meets during his assignment is his assistant Jassa. Jassa is not at all what he initially seems. In fact, his true identity and history shocks even Flashman, who dislikes the character at first. We later discover that the dislike might be based on the two men's many similarities.

At the court of Lahore where Flashman is supposed to be gathering intelligence under the guise of attempting to settle an inheritance dispute Flashman divides his time between two beautiful women. Maharani Jeendan is the seductive acting ruler of Punjab who spends her time drinking alcoholic beverage and collecting lovers. Mangla is Jeendan's trusted servant who puts physical demands on Flashman after Jeendan is temporarily satisfied.

When Flashman is not being drained of all energy and will by the appetites of the two women, he finds himself in one life-threatening situation after another. Once he escapes being roasted alive by the Khalsa only to find that he has to voluntarily join them again. Each time he escapes one situation he finds himself in an even more dangerous one, and they are usually devised by people who believe in Flashman's undeserved reputation as a hero. These people believe in Flashman "the Afghan slayer" when Harry Flashman himself unashamedly tells us that he is in fact the world's greatest coward.



At the center of all this adventure is the world's largest and most valuable gem, The Mountain of Light.



Explanatory Note and Chapters 1 & 2 (pages 6-35 and endnotes)

Explanatory Note and Chapters 1 & 2 (pages 6-35 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman and the Mountain of Light is another installment in the ongoing adventures of Harry Flashman, a hero by reputation and incorrigible rogue by nature. Flashman tells us about being sent to Punjab as a spy on the eve of a war between the Sikh army and the British East India Company. In order to complete his mission, he must survive encounters with renowned fighters and women with insatiable appetites.

In the Explanatory Note, the "editor" explains where Flashman and the Mountain of Light fits in with the rest of the Flashman papers. The editor says his main concern is verifying that the claims in Flashman's memoir are compatible with known historical facts.

Chapter 1 of the novel opens with Flashman and his wife, Elspeth, meeting with Queen Victoria. They attend an exhibition by Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and while watching a reenactment of a battle with Native Americans, Flashman thinks that only eleven years ago he was running for his life from real danger in America.

Flashman learns that the Queen has asked him and Elspeth to meet with her so she can ask his advice about a diamond that is part of the Crown Jewels. She wants to know about The Mountain of Light, or the Koh-i-Noor. Specifically, she wants to know how it was originally set and worn. While the Queen asks questions about "native setting," Flashman thinks back to the time he first encountered the jewel and the debauchery that occurred. The chapter concludes with Flashman leaving his wife and the Queen to talk while he goes outside to smoke and to remember.

In Chapter 2, Flashman remembers the events of 1845. After 1842 he decided never to go to India again, but three years later he says he had been forced out of retirement and back to India for the war with the Sikhs. In an endnote, the editor says that Flashman is mistaken in his memoirs in saying that he had been forced and that he had been previously retired. After Flashman had rescued his wife, he encountered an opportunity to return to India.

Flashman speaks with admiration of the Sikhs and gives a brief history of the Punjab. Since the death of a powerful and respected ruler, the Khlasa, or Punjabi army, is in control of itself and holds much power over the entire country because of weakened and frequently changing rulers at court. Flashman also notes that the Court of Lahore, or the ruling family, is known for its appetite for debauchery. Of particular significance is Flashman's recognition that the Khlasa is a formidable army, perhaps even a match for



the army of the British East India Company. The editor corroborates Flashman's account.

Flashman stays with General Sale and his wife, both characters who figure prominently in Flashman's earlier adventures in Afghanistan. That evening the Sales plan to entertain a guest, a German nobleman, and Flashman uses the opportunity to go into town and seek entertainment of his own. In very little time Flashman meets a married woman, Mrs. Madison, who is receptive to his advances. Flashman decides to take her back to his room at the Sales' house for more intimate contact, but when they arrive servants are inside arranging his room. Flashman and Mrs. Madison enter the adjacent room, the billiard room, and crawl under the billiard table. While Flashman and Mrs. Madison engage in their sexual escape, people enter the billiard room.

While General Sale, George Broadfoot, Henry Havelock, Prince Waldemar, and Sir Hugh Gough play billiards, Flashman tries to keep Mrs. Madison quiet, and Flashman eavesdrops. Based on the conversation he hears, it seems to Flashman that there are two jobs to which he might be assigned. One job is as a soldier and another job is of a more administrative nature in the political service. The men finish their billiard game without detecting Flashman's presence.

Explanatory Note and Chapters 1 & 2 (pages 6-35 and endnotes) Analysis

By adding an Explanatory Note and calling himself "editor" the author, George Macdonald Frazer, has inserted himself in this fictional work as a character.

In Chapter 1, we see something of Flashman's wit and attitude. He says that his wife speaks only English, and then he clarifies that he means that she speaks only heavily accented English. The discrepancy between his remembrances of actual events and the sanitized version he presents to the Queen is often a source of humor, as is his accidentally having taught the Queen to say the same words as some prostitutes in India.

Even before the text mentions a specific year, we know the time the current action in the novel is set because of the reference to the Queen's Golden Jubilee, which occurred in 1887.

The endnotes are not something frequently, or perhaps ever, seen in works of fiction. They have the tone and content of an editor providing additional information on an historical text. More unusual still, the plentiful references to other books provided by George MacDonald Fraser in his "editor" capacity are actual books, and most, if not all, are readily available should someone want to read further on a given topic. While confusing at first, the notes give an extra element of entertainment to the novel while at the same time providing valuable resources should a reader want to learn more about the history of the characters and era.



Chapter 2 marks the beginning of the dual voices of Harry Flashman. Since this work is supposed to be a memoir, some of the narrative comes from an older and wiser Flashman. However, in the narrative amid the action, the storytelling "in the moment," we also see things from the perspective of the young Flashman.

Chapter 2 also gives us an introduction to Flashman's lack of morals concerning sexual relationships. Not only is he not troubled by the fact that the woman he meets, Mrs. Madison, is married, but he is also not entirely certain of her name before he initiates the intimate encounter.



Chapters 3 & 4 (pages 36-61 and endnotes)

Chapters 3 & 4 (pages 36-61 and endnotes) Summary

Based on what he overheard during his liaison with Mrs. Madison, Flashman applies for the political service position. In a meeting with George Broadfoot, Broadfoot shows Flashman 140,000 British Pounds worth of gold, and says that his tasks will include negotiations about how the British East India Company will dispose of the gold. The gold came into possession of the East India Company from a Punjabi prince who has since died. The present Punjabi government wants the gold back.

Flashman soon learns that his negotiations concerning the gold are merely a cover for his real task in Lahore. He will serve as a spy for Broadfoot. Flashman is horrified to realize that this assignment is far more dangerous than had he stayed a soldier. Broadfoot tells Flashman that he will convey coded messages by leaving them in his bedside Bible, and then he goes on to tell Flashman about some of the legends concerning the woman Jeendan's sexual appetites. Broadfoot asks Flashman's age, and Flashman replies that he is twenty-three. Broadfoot worries about sending a young morally upstanding Englishman into such an immoral environment.

Broadfoot tells Flashman that should he encounter a dire emergency he can use the codeword "Wisconsin."

In Chapter 4, as Flashman travels to the frontier between British controlled India and Punjab, he feels apprehension. Flashman and his assigned assistant, Jassa, cross the river on a ferry and see a military escort waiting for them. Once on the other side of the river, Flashman meets Sardal Singh, commander of the group, and learns that the group is composed entirely of volunteers who joined the escort group after hearing that the arriving British envoy is the famous Flashman, "slayer of Afghans."

During the journey to Lahore the group spends the night near a beautiful garden, and the following morning Flashman sees the Khlasa. He observes that they are as formidable as any European army. In an endnote the editor corroborates Flashman's account of the Khlasa and gives a brief history of the army.

Flashman encounters one of the democratic committees who command the Khlasa and hears how many believe that Jawaheer, one of the rulers of Punjab in Lahore, murdered Peshora Singh, a respected Khlasa soldier. Many in the Khlasa want justice or revenge. A general speaks and says that the only leader in Lahore that the Khlasa recognize is Dalip Singh.

Once in Lahore, Flashman notices what appears to be a mercenary soldier that is wearing the full uniform of the 79th Highlanders, a British military regiment. Later, in his



room Flashman notices the Bible beside the bed, and he writes a coded message to Broadfoot and leaves it in the Bible. Flashman is beginning to relax when his door bursts open. Flashman fears for his life but sees only a seven-year-old boy with a toy sword. The boy shouts that he has come to see the great Afghan killer.

Chapters 3 & 4 (pages 36-61 and endnotes) Analysis

It comes as no surprise to the reader that Flashman chooses the position he believes presents the least amount of risk. However, when he learns of the nature of his job with the political service, Flashman immediately tries to think of ways to get out of the responsibility. Also of significance beyond the details of his job, Flashman reveals his attitude toward government and authority. In his unspoken thoughts while Broadfoot speaks we see that Flashman is not at all impressed with authority, and he is very much a cynic despite his young age. The issue of Flashman's age provides a moment of comedy and irony. Broadfoot is concerned about sending what he believes to be a fine young morally upstanding Englishman to a court known for its depravity.

Chapter 4 lays the framework for much of the rest of the novel. Some of the less noticeable figures like Jassa the assistant or the man wearing the uniform of the 79th Highlanders figure prominently later in the story. Of greater immediate significance is the portrayal of the Khalsa. The Khalsa is a formidable force indeed. They are unlike any force the British have had to face in any of their many colonial wars. However, when Flashman witnesses the committee meeting he sees what sets them apart from other modern armies. Unlike an effective and well-functioning military, the Khalsa lacks a central command.



Chapter 5 (pages 62-93 and endnotes)

Chapter 5 (pages 62-93 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman learns that the boy is Dalip Singh, the son of Jeendan. Flashman is immediately attracted to the boy's female servant, Mangla. Mangla sends the boy away, and Mangla kisses Flashman but then pulls away and says that Jeendan will want to spend time with Flashman before Mangla can become intimate with him.

After Mangla leaves, Flashman has several visitors. The first wants to know if the gold will be returned. Two other visitors also want to know about the gold, and one says he would like to secretly assign more men to ensure Flashman's safety. The last visitor, Tej Singh presents Flashman with the gift of a silk robe. After the guests have gone, Flashman notes that all of them seem to already know that he is really a spy, and that the gold dispute is simply his cover. He goes to compose another message to Broadfoot and notices that the first has already been taken. This lets Flashman know that the secret messenger is someone he has recently met.

That night Flashman looks outside into the courtyard and sees a man partially in the shadows staring up at him. Flashman goes into the corridor and sees men approaching and wearing swords. With no time to get his gun, Flashman runs back into his room and climbs over the balcony, crouches, and clings to the building. When one of the men walks by, he sees that it is the man who wears the uniform of the 97th Highlanders. This man also answers to the name Gurdana Khan. After the men leave, Flashman attempts to climb back over the balcony, but slips. Just as he is about to fall to his death, Jassa grabs him and pulls him over the railing. To calm himself Flashman drinks brandy, but this makes him drunk.

Flashman sets off in search of people and safety. He encounters Mangla who leads him to the durbar room, where a nightly celebration is in progress. Once there he notices that Jawaheer is drunk and shouting, angry that tomorrow Jawaheer must go before the Khlasa and answer for Peshora's death.

Mangla introduces Flashman to Jeendan, and Flashman observes that Jeendan is as beautiful as any woman he has ever seen. Jeendan begins dancing, and Flashman sees the Koh-i-Noor for the first time. It is lodged in Jeendan's navel. As Jeendan dances, a male dancer approaches her and seems to embrace her. When the two part, the male dancer has the diamond in his navel. He in turn tries to pass it to a female dancer who drops it. The diamond is returned to Jeendan who dances toward Flashman. The two retreat behind a curtain and have sex.

After Jeendan falls asleep, two women come for Flashman and say they must bathe him. During the bath, Flashman is nearly killed by a ceiling that is rigged to fall and crush him, but he escapes. Three men with swords approach. Before they can reach Flashman, another man arrives and kills them. Flashman notices that it is the man who



wears the uniform of the 97th Highlanders. He also notices that the man speaks with an American accent.

Chapter 5 (pages 62-93 and endnotes) Analysis

Almost before he is even settled, Flashman meets two of the more significant characters in the story, Dalip and Mangla. Broadfoot need not have worried about Flashman. His immediate advances on Mangla show that he is the right man to send to a place known for wanton revelry. Just as Broadfoot predicted, Flashman is immediately sought out by those seeking favor with the British.

A case of mistaken identity leads Flashman to confuse would-be assailants with his protectors. When he reaches the court where the royalty of Lahore entertain themselves and believes he is safe, the real assassination attempt occurs. Clearly Flashman is in an environment where he can take nothing for granted.

The scene with Jeendan dancing with the Koh-i-Noor in her navel explains why Flashman found the conversation with the Queen concerning "native settings" uncomfortable. At this time in history the object that Jeendan plays with is the largest and most valuable known diamond in the world.

The court of Lahore is a dangerous place for Flashman. In addition to those that want to do him physical harm, the court presents an environment where all of Flashman's personal weakness or vices are the norm.



Chapter 6 (pages 94-104 and endnotes)

Chapter 6 (pages 94-104 and endnotes) Summary

The man who saved Flashman says his name is Alexander Campbell Gardner, also known as Gurdana Khan. He is an American from Wisconsin. He heard that Flashman used the emergency word "Wisconsin," and he has been searching for Flashman ever since. Gardner explains that Jawaheer ordered the assassination attempt on Flashman, and he did so to force a war with the British. War with the British would keep the Khalsa occupied and perhaps save Jawaheer from having to answer for the murder of Peshora.

Gardner asks about Flashman's orderly, Jassa, and as Flashman describes him, Gardner becomes more interested. He tells one of his men go find Jassa. When Jassa arrives, he sees Gardner and appears shocked. Gardner greets him as "Josiah" and asks what he is doing in Lahore. Jassa answers that he is an agent for the British, and Flashman is shocked to hear Jassa speak with an American accent. Gardner explains that Jassa is really Dr. Josiah Harlan of Philadelphia, and he is a notorious impostor and con man. Gardner goes on to give a long list of Jassa's more infamous deeds. Gardner wants to imprison Jassa, but Flashman refuses.

When Flashman finally returns to his room exhausted and in need of sleep, he finds Mangla in his bed.

Chapter 6 (pages 94-104 and endnotes) Analysis

While Gardner and Jassa are both American, the similarity ends there. The two men are polar opposites. Gardner is brave and loyal, a trusted and dependable man. Jassa, if Gardner's account is accurate, is an opportunist who uses guile and duplicity as a means to an end. In some ways the characters Gardner and Jassa portray the two extremes of Flashman. There is the Flashman of reputation, a heroic figure, and this is akin to Gardner. There is also the Flashman of reality, an admitted coward whose chief and perhaps only loyalty is to himself, and this is similar to the character Jassa.

Perhaps because Flashman realizes he has more in common with Jassa than Gardner, he refuses to allow Jassa to be imprisoned.



Chapter 7 (pages 105-120 and endnotes)

Chapter 7 (pages 105-120 and endnotes) Summary

In the morning Flashman speaks to Jassa. He decides that despite Jassa's past he might still be useful in helping with the current mission. Jassa tells Flashman that the whole palace knows about Jawaheer's attempted assassination of Flashman. Most assumed that Jeendan would immediately have Jawaheer arrested, but she did not, and the meeting with the Khalsa will go as planned.

Flashman dresses in his best clothes to reflect his status as a diplomat and attends the meeting between the royal family and the Khalsa. While he is waiting with the others to board elephants for the procession to the meeting, he speaks with Lal Singh about how Punjabi firearms compare to the British. Lal Singh tells Flashman that if war comes, he will likely command the Khalsa against the British. Lal Singh wants to know about the leadership style of Sir Hugh Gough, and Flashman says he is perhaps the toughest military man he knows.

As the procession of elephants passes out of Lahore, 4000 Khalsa troops join in and march along. When they reach the full Khalsa, all 80,000 assembled troops, all but Jawaheer, climb down from the elephants. Gardner suggests to Flashman that perhaps he should help Jawaheer down from his elephant that he rides with young Dalip. As Flashman approaches he notices that Jawaheer wears the Koh-i-Noor. Before Flashman can reach Jawaheer, many Khalsa soldiers attack Jawaheer. Flashman grabs Dalip and runs for cover toward some nearby tents. When Flashman gives Dalip back to his mother, Flashman sees that Dalip has the Koh-i-Noor in his hand.

After the Khalsa kill Jawaheer, Jeendan kneels over her brother and screams in grief. She shouts curses at the Khalsa, and says that if they do not surrender the killers they will pay dearly. When Jeendan walks back to the tent, Flashman notices that she is smiling.

Chapter 7 (pages 105-120 and endnotes) Analysis

While the treachery of the Khalsa comes as no surprise to Flashman, their desperation at an ineffective government and willingness to defy the royal family supports Broadfoot's view that war between the Khalsa and the British is probably unavoidable. Jeendan's smile after cursing the Khalsa is a mystery. It could mean that her display of grief after the death of her brother was merely a theatrical display. Or her smile could be the mark of a cold resolve to make good on her promise to destroy the Khalsa. Either way Jeendan is more than a woman interested in nothing but drunken pleasures. She is beginning to show the traits of a calculating and shrewd politician.



Chapter 8 (pages 121-144 and endnotes)

Chapter 8 (pages 121-144 and endnotes) Summary

At Jawaheer's funeral, according to the tradition of suttee, his widows and slave girls are burned alive along with his corpse.

Jeendan and the Khalsa reach a compromise. She will name a new wazir, or leader of the military, and they will recognize her as ruler and turn over the men who plotted and committed the murder of Jawaheer.

Flashman notes that it has been two weeks since he has seen Jeendan. One day Mangla comes to his room, and said she is there to summon him to a "royal audience." Flashman is immediately excited and thinks he is on his way to see Jeendan. Instead Mangla takes him to a room where Dalip is playing with toy soldiers. Dalip thanks Flashman for his help the day his uncle, Jawaheer, was killed. The two talk for a while before Mangla says that Flashman must come with her. Before Flashman leaves the room, Dalip hugs him.

Mangla leads Flashman through narrow and secret passages. She says that Flashman must remain quiet. Jeendan has instructed her to bring Flashman to a place where he can witness her meeting with the Khalsa undetected. Mangla and Flashman arrive at a place overlooking a room where many Khalsa soldiers are assembled before Jeendan. The Khalsa are trying to decide who should be named wazir. Different factions want different men.

Jeendan says she will name Lal Singh. Many of the Khalsa soldiers protest. One even shouts insults that Jeendan is naming one of her male whores as wazir. Jeendan counters by asking each man who has never visited a brothel to step forward. The soldiers laugh and then listen to Jeendan. She explains that Lal Singh is the best choice because he is competent but does not have so much ambition that he will not follow her orders. The Khalsa agrees. Many soldiers want to know when they can fight the British. Jeendan says they are not ready because they do not have enough provisions. She tells the Khalsa that they should disperse through the countryside and wait another season. Some shout that the British will see this as weakness because they have spies in the court of Lahore, and one soldier even names Flashman. Jeendan says that Flashman knows what she wants him to know. Satisfied, the Khalsa leave.

Mangla leads Flashman back through the passageways to a room to wait for Jeendan. When Jeendan arrives, she tells Mangla to show Flashman where to bathe. When Flashman returns, Jeendan says they must talk before having pleasure. Jeendan wants Flashman to tell Broadfoot not to withdraw any British soldiers from the frontier. She also wants Broadfoot to know that Lal Singh and Tej Singh will command the Khalsa.



Chapter 8 (pages 121-144 and endnotes) Analysis

Flashman's thoughts on the practice of suttee reveal something of his ideas on the nature of religion. He believes that blind observance of religion and ignorance go hand in hand. This may be an instance of the older Flashman who composes the memoirs bringing a lifetime of experience to his remembrance and evaluation of an event long passed, but the passage also provides some surprising insight into Flashman's thoughts on women. For a man who has spent most of his life as what some might call a womanizer, Flashman does not convey chauvinistic thought. On the contrary, he says that no good came come from keeping women in ignorance.

Jeendan continues to prove that she is more than a pretty drunken reveler. She masterfully controls the Khalsa. She seems to anticipate both their demands and the ways in which she can comply that to them will seem like victories when in fact they are conceding to her every desire.



Chapter 9 (pages 145-170 and endnotes)

Chapter 9 (pages 145-170 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman notes that in October of 1845 both sides knew there would be no war that autumn. Jeendan moves her court from Lahore to Amritsar, and Flashman is grateful. He has recently been on a four-day sexual spree with Jeendan, and while her appetite never wanes, he is exhausted.

When the royal court returns to Lahore, Mangla is the first to visit Flashman. He wants to know everything, but Mangla is interested only in pleasure. She spends the night, and in the morning Flashman finds a message in his bible. The message directs Flashman to dress in disguise and go to the French Soldier's cabaret and wait for Bibi Kalil. Flashman does not know anyone named Bibi Kalil.

Flashman finds the cabaret and orders a drink and waits while periodically giving the secret hand signs. A woman approaches Flashman and asks him what he had expected, Bibi Kalil? Flashman follows the woman outside and through an alley. She stops before a house and tells Flashman his friend is inside the house.

Rather than go directly into the house Flashman quietly looks around first. Upstairs he sees an attractive woman and hopes this is Bibi Kalil. On the ground floor of the house he is shocked to see several Khalsa soldiers including General Maka Khan. While Flashman tries to decide what to do, the woman upstairs whispers to him and calls him by name. Flashman hurries upstairs and there, in addition to the woman, is an old man.

The old man is Goolab Singh, a man who once tried to be king of Punjab and now rules an area in Kashmir. Goolab tells Flashman that the woman, Bibi Kalil, is also the widow of Sochet Singh, the Punjabi prince who invested the gold with the British, the same gold that Flashman is supposed to be in negotiations about. Bibi Kalil and Goolab had recently overheard the Khalsa's plans to capture Flashman by sending him a fake message. They had arranged for a man with horse to meet them so they could help Flashman escape, but now they cannot find the man.

A Khalsa soldier knocks on the door. Bibi Kalil lets him in, and Goolab kills him. Bibi Kalil and Flashman run down the stairs outside, and Goolab tries to follow, but he has a bad foot and limps. Bibi Kalil and Flashman help him along, and the three walk up an alley. Two Khalsa soldiers attack. Goolab kills one of them, and Flashman runs away, abandoning Bibi Kalil and Goolab. As he flees he encounters another group of Khalsa soldiers and points the way toward Bibi Kalil and Goolab. The trick does not work, and Flashman tries to run again. Flashman gets lost in his frantic running, and he finds himself back out the same house where it all began. He is captured by Khalsa soldiers. Maka Khan approaches Flashman and says they know he has been sending and receiving messages via his Bible. He says they also know the code, and they have enough information to justify killing Flashman for being a spy.



Chapter 9 (pages 145-170 and endnotes) Analysis

Flashman does not believe that Jeendan wants war with the British. He thinks that if she really wanted war she would have sent the Khalsa to fight while the British were still unprepared and at a disadvantage. As the weeks stretch into November, Flashman has not heard from Broadfoot in two weeks, so all he knows about the impending war is what he hears through rumor. In many ways Flashman's opinions seem overly simplified, and we can begin to understand what Broadfoot meant when he tried to explain to Flashman that matters were more complicated than most understood.

Despite his repeatedly admitting that he is a coward at heart, Flashman's flight and abandonment of an old man and a woman in an alley is shocking. It would seem that even by Flashman's standards this is an act of extreme cowardice. Perhaps this adds to the humor of the situation because the reader who finds his behavior surprising has to admit that, on second evaluation, one could expect nothing else from Flashman.



Chapters 10 & 11 (pages 171-197 and endnotes)

Chapters 10 & 11 (pages 171-197 and endnotes) Summary

Maka Khan and other Khalsa soldiers hold Flashman captive inside the house. Maka Khan tells Flashman that the Khalsa is already crossing the Sutlej River, and war is about to begin. He also tells Flashman that that for some time they have known how Flashman sent his coded messages. As for breaking the code, Flashman is reminded that cryptography is an Indian invention. In addition to knowing Flashman's purpose and the code, they know Jassa's true identity.

Maka Khan tells Flashman that he wants to know all that Flashman knows regarding the Khalsa military capabilities and strategies, or he plans to have Flashman taken to the cellar and tortured. Flashman, nearly in hysterics, begins telling him that he does not know much but that he will tell everything. Maka Khan says that because of Flashman's reputation for bravery, he believes that Flashman is only faking cowardice in order to confuse the enemy. He orders Flashman taken to the cellar.

In the cellar Flashman is chained to a metal frame suspended over a bed of hot coals. The Khalsa intend to burn Flashman very slowly to force him to talk. The Khalsa soldiers leave the cellar, and Flashman begins shouting his own name in hope that some passer by will hear. Flashman goes in and out of consciousness. Jassa arrives and frees him, and the two flee. Flashman badly injures his ankle while escaping the house. As the two flee, Jassa explains that he saw Flashman leave the palace and he followed him. When Jassa saw the Khalsa, he ran back to Gardner for assistance.

Jassa takes Flashman to a camp outside of Lahore where Flashman meets Gardner. Gardner believes Flashman should go back to British territory immediately. He believes the fastest route is for Flashman to go with the Khalsa disguised as a Khalsa soldier.

In Chapter 11, Gardner says that by going with the Khalsa Flashman can make their defeat a certainty. Gardner also tells Flashman that the entire plan is Jeendan's. She wants the Khalsa weakened so they can no longer challenge her rule. In fact, she ordered the start to the war in the hope that the Khalsa would be destroyed. Flashman will ride with four of Gardner's men to the camp of Lal Singh and Tej Singh. Once Flashman finds out their battle plan he will return to the British and tell them everything.



Chapters 10 & 11 (pages 171-197 and endnotes) Analysis

No matter what he does, Flashman cannot escape his reputation as a hero. Even when he displays the behavior of a genuine and unmitigated coward, Flashman is regarded as a conniving strategist trying to confuse the enemy. If he runs from a fight, he is trying to draw the enemy away from some target of value. If he breaks down, cries, and confesses, as he does with Maka Khan, he is being a shrewd warrior who merely pretends to be afraid in order to lure the enemy into a trap. This determination of all people around Flashman to see him as a hero says something about human nature in general. Just as we are capable of being too critical of some people, we can also let our desire for heroes allow us to manufacture heroics in the most unlikely of characters. If asked, Flashman would probably say we are fools in both instances.

In Chapter 11, Flashman finds that there is no end to the preposterous situations in which he finds himself. Until the moment Gardner tells him that Jeendan ordered the start of the war, he has believed that she wanted to avoid a war. Now, in what seems to him the most ridiculous and dangerous way to get back to the British, he must carry out a mission devised by yet another person who seems to believe that Flashman has superhuman qualities.



Chapters 12 & 13 (pages 198-226 and endnotes)

Chapters 12 & 13 (pages 198-226 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman arrives at Lal Singh's camp and finds that Lal Singh is glad to see him. Lal Singh is frantic and has no idea what to tell the Khalsa, and he asks for Flashman's advice. Flashman had assumed he would arrive, learn Lal Singh's plans, and then take them to the British. Instead he discovers that Lal Singh has no plans. Flashman observes that if any man is more of a coward than himself, it must be Lal Singh.

Flashman knows that the Khalsa outnumber British forces, and that the only way the British can win the upcoming battle is if the Khalsa forces are divided. Flashman tells Lal Singh not to attack nearby Ferozepore under the command of General Littler. Instead he tells Lal Singh to send part of his forces to fight the approaching Gough. Flashman tells Lal Singh if the Khalsa generals do not agree, to tell them he has received intelligence reports saying the British have mined the defenses at Ferozepore and that Lal Singh refuses to fight any but the most senior British general, Gough.

Tej Singh arrives, and Flashman tells him the plan. While Lal Singh and Tej Singh go out to announce the plans to the Khalsa generals, Flashman stays hidden in Lal Singh's tent. That night Flashman rides a half-mile outside camp and waits for dawn. After dawn he enters the British camp. When he gives his report, Peter Nicolson and Colonel Van Cortlandt think Flashman is the bravest, most brilliant man they have ever met. They immediately send for General Littler.

General Littler does not immediately praise Flashman. Instead he points out that Flashman made his decision without consulting any more senior British officers. Flashman tries to protest that there was no other option. Littler says he understands that, but he also says that Flashman must understand that if Gough wins the battle, all credit will go to Gough. If Gough loses the battle, Flashman will be tried and possibly executed.

In Chapter 13, when Flashman thinks about what Littler said, he realizes that Littler was not trying to criticize him but merely trying to warn him of the future possibilities. Flashman overhears some high ranking British officers discussing the incident, and all agree that no matter what happens that Flashman will not be blamed because he is too valuable a hero after his performance in Afghanistan years earlier.

Flashman can hear cannon fire, and he knows the battle has begun. Later he receives word that Gough wants to see him. Despite his injured ankle, Flashman rides thirty miles to Gough's camp. When Flashman first arrives he sees his friend Sale's body and learns that he was killed in the battle. After Flashman gives his report, both Gough and



Broadfoot are delighted and congratulate him. However, Hardinge does not agree and is critical of Flashman.

As Flashman is preparing for bed, Broadfoot arrives with liquor. He wants to hear more about Lahore. When Flashman finishes recounting the details, Broadfoot says that he had known Jassa's identity all along. Broadfoot also tells Flashman that he has additional plans for him. Tomorrow Flashman must pretend to be unable to walk so he will not be expected to take part in battle. Instead, Flashman will let his beard grow and return to Lahore disguised as a common native of the region.

Chapters 12 & 13 (pages 198-226 and endnotes) Analysis

With Flashman's own admission that at the time of the meeting with Lal Singh and Tej Singh that he did not know a great deal about war and complex battlefield strategies, we begin to see another facet of his character. Flashman is more than a self-professed coward that has an uncanny knack for being in the right places at the right times. Though he does not state it himself, Flashman possesses an incredibly high degree of intelligence. With no preparation and little training Flashman examines the situation, processes the information, and devises a solution that some of his fellow British officers see as nothing less than genius. However, one high-ranking British officer, General Littler, tells Flashman that with responsibilities come greater consequences for failure. For all his quick wit, Flashman may have made a decision that will bring criminal charges. The irony here is readily apparent: when he is his usual roguish self, he is lauded as a hero. When Flashman does his job to the best of his ability, he is faced with a possible death sentence.

In Chapter 13, the disparity between Flashman the legend and Flashman the real man becomes even more apparent. When he overhears the conversation between the officers discussing how Flashman's reputation will protect him against any possible charges, we see once again that the Flashman the public knows is very different from the Flashman that Flashman himself introduces us to. Once again someone else's preposterous scheme will place Flashman in harm's way. Broadfoot intends to send him back to Lahore, a place where he might be the most hated person known.



Chapter 14 (pages 227-246 and endnotes)

Chapter 14 (pages 227-246 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman says the little village of Ferozeshah, a place not found on most maps, is where the fate of India is decided. That is where Lal Singh, at the advice of Flashman, has positioned half his force. The British under the command of Gough must defeat this force before it is reinforced by Tej Singh's troops.

As instructed by Broadfoot, Flashman feigns being unable to walk or take part in the fight. Gough says Flashman can help with paperwork and administrative duties during the battle. Flashman is carried on a stretcher to a place near field headquarters and there he witnesses a heated argument between Gough and Hardinge. Gough wants to make a frontal assault, but Hardinge says he must wait for reinforcements. Gough says he is Commander-in-Chief. Hardinge says he is Governor General. Hardinge prevails.

Flashman does not witness most of the actual battle. He is in a hut where orderlies rush around with paperwork, but he is able to hear reports from the battlefield. Both sides make mistakes in battle. The British take Ferozeshah and then give it up again. The British plan to attack again at dawn. Flashman hears that Broadfoot has died. While he is sad to hear that Broadfoot died, he realizes that Broadfoot's death means that he will likely not have to return to Lahore.

Flashman passes out due to exhaustion. He has not slept for a week. He regains consciousness after being wounded in the hand from enemy artillery. When he is fully awake he finds himself next to Gough. While Gough tends to the wound in Flashman's hand, he tells Flashman to look ahead. Flashman sees Khalsa cavalry about to charge, and the British position looks hopeless. Then he sees a British counter-charge. Flashman believes that this counter-charge prevents a British defeat.

Though the Khalsa cavalry charge is stopped, the Khalsa artillery kills many British soldiers. Sensing defeat, Gough shouts for Flashman to follow him, and Gough rides on horseback down from the British position and out into the open. Flashman has no intention of following, but the horse he sits on follows Gough's horse. For a moment Gough is able to draw fire away from the British troops, but then Gough and Flashman see British cavalry retreating and Khalsa infantry advancing. The British are again hopelessly outnumbered. Gough says to Flashman that they are about to die.

Suddenly, for no reason that Flashman can see, the Khalsa stops marching toward certain victory and retreats.



Chapter 14 (pages 227-246 and endnotes) Analysis

When the horse Flashman rides follows Gough's horse despite Flashman's determination not to further risk his life, we see yet another instance of how fate seems to govern Flashman's life. Time and time again Flashman is determined to stay out of harms way, yet the universe thrusts him into situations where simply by being present he is regarded as a hero, in this case a fearless and valiant warrior.

With the Khalsa retreat and the British victory it seems that the possibility of Flashman facing any criminal charges has vanished. With Broadfoot's death the plan to send Flashman back to Lahore may have also died.



Chapter 15 (pages 247-263 and endnotes)

Chapter 15 (pages 247-263 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman talks about the way various historians have explained the reason for Tej Singh's retreat. Flashman knows the answer because years later Tej explained it to him. When Tej saw the retreating British cavalry, he convinced his officers that it was not a retreat but an attempt by the British to encircle the Khalsa forces.

Flashman had hoped that his injuries would cause him to be sent away from the battle, but he remains for administrative duties. Broadfoot's replacement, Henry Lawrence, sees in Broadfoot's papers that he had intended to send Flashman back to Lahore, but Lawrence cannot understand why and sees no reason Flashman should return.

Flashman hears of events among the opposition. Lal Singh escapes back to Lahore and is in hiding under the protection of Jeendan. Jeendan still humors and encourages the Khalsa while ordering Gardner to increase the palace guard in case the Khalsa turn on her. Goolab Singh pretends to be on the side of the Khalsa but delays joining them. Tej Singh continues to stall Khalsa action and tries to find ways to ensure the Khalsa's defeat.

One evening Flashman is summoned to a tent with all the British senior officers. Jassa is in the tent, and Hardinge wants to know if Flashman knows Jassa. Jassa has brought a message from Gardner. Hardinge is disgusted that Jassa is an American, and upset again when he finds out that Gardner, the main contact in Lahore, is also an American. Lawrence explains that Jassa arrived an hour ago with news that the Khalsa is considering murdering Jeendan and kidnapping Dalip. This will allow the Khalsa to replace Tej Singh with a more competent leader and perhaps defeat the British.

Jeendan has asked that Flashman secretly take Dalip from Lahore and into the custody of the British. Hardinge is against the idea but is persuaded by the other officers. Still, Hardinge refuses to allow Flashman to conduct the operation. Lawrence reminds Hardinge that Flashman is known and trusted in Lahore, and Hardinge relents.

Chapter 15 (pages 247-263 and endnotes) Analysis

Flashman's world does not operate according to the laws of everyone else's universe. The man that admires his abilities, Lawrence, wants to send Flashman into an incredibly dangerous environment. A man that seems to have taken an instant dislike to Flashman and seems to hold him in contempt, wants to keep him safely away from any danger. Flashman's ability to measure and manipulate people is evident when he says aloud that he assumes he will be given a "free hand" in the mission. This, of course, angers Hardinge, but it does not relieve Flashman from having to complete the task. If anything,

his attempt to cause Hardinge to remove him may have simply made Hardinge more determined to discredit Flashman later.



Chapter 16 (pages 264-301 and endnotes)

Chapter 16 (pages 264-301 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman leaves for Lahore with Jassa and another soldier. Gardner's plan involves Flashman entering Lahore during the daytime. Flashman thinks this is a bad idea, but Jassa says that the city is too well guarded at night. The three men disguise themselves as traders and set up shop inside Lahore. To get inside the palace, Jassa and Flashman carry a palki, an enclosed chair with four poles.

Mangla says that officers of the Khalsa have come for a meeting with Jeendan. If they do not get what they want, they may kill Jeendan. Flashman wants to take Dalip and run, but Mangla says that is not possible, and that Jeendan wants to see Flashman before he departs.

Mangla takes Flashman to the same spot where he previously observed a durbar session. The Khalsa demands food, and Jeendan says that Goolab Singh sends them food. The Khalsa demands that Goolab Singh be made leader of the Khalsa, and Jeendan says that Goolab is an ally of the British. Jeendan's taunts go too far, and the Khalsa men draw swords and intend to kill Jeendan. Jeendan rips off her petticoat that throws it at the Khalsa men. She tells them to wear that garment, and she will wear pants and go fight the British. The Khalsa soldiers are shocked for a moment, and then they leave.

Mangla leads Flashman to another room, and Gardner arrives and tells Flashman he is sorry to hear about Broadfoot. He also says the time is now past four in the evening, and Dalip must be out of the city by six in the evening. Flashman will leave the same way he arrived, by carrying a palki, but this time Dalip will be inside dressed as a girl. Gardner acts peculiar as if he has something else to say. After a few moments he tells Flashman that Jeendan wants to marry him. Shocked, Flashman says he is already married, and Gardner says he knows but this is not the time to inform Jeendan. He says that for years she has wanted to marry a British officer. With all the other calamity, now is not the time to dash her hopes.

Jeendan arrives, but she does not talk much. Instead she insists on immediately having sex. Later, as the group prepares to leave, Jeendan talks to Dalip who is angry at having to wear girl's clothing. Jeendan tells Dalip to go with Flashman, and she gives Dalip the Koh-i-Noor inside a large silver locket. Dalip is still upset, so Flashman speaks to him and promises to give him a pistol once they reach their destination.

Once outside the city, the group is spotted by a gorrachara officer. When he tries to take a closer look, the group flees. By midnight the group has covered twenty miles, but they are being pursued by twenty to thirty men on horses. Three hours before dawn



Flashman climbs a tree to check his directions and sees that the group is three miles from their destination, but he also sees that only a mile behind is a group of cavalry closing at full gallop. As the group flees, Flashman fires a pistol to notify Gardner's men that they are approaching. As their pursuers are almost upon them, Flashman sees a group of five hundred gorracharra come from hiding and encircle the cavalry.

Once Flashman thinks the group has reached safety he sees Goolab Singh and immediately believes Gardner has betrayed him. Goolab explains that there is no other way to rescue Dalip. If Dalip is taken directly to the British and the Khalsa find out, they are likely to kill Jeendan. Flashman wants to know why he must be involved, and Goolab says that Jeendan would trust her son to no one else.

In the morning Flashman gives Dalip the news that he must stay with Goolab. Dalip offers mild protest but is more interested in getting the pistol Flashman promised. Flashman unloads his pepperbox and gives it to Dalip. Dalip is initially angry that the pistol is unloaded, but Flashman says that others will load it for him when the time comes. Dalip is moved to tears, and he gives Flashman the locket holding the Koh-i-Noor. He asks Flashman to keep it for him until it is safe to return it. As Flashman departs, he is impressed that a boy so young could realize that the diamond is not safe in his present situation.

On the way to reunite with the British forces, Flashman daydreams about what it would be like to run away with the diamond. He comes out of his daydream to find Jassa pointing a pistol at him. Jassa demands the diamond, and Flashman gives him the locket. Jassa takes the locket and Flashman's horse. As soon as Jassa is out of sight, Flashman runs toward a patch of jungle near the river. As he runs he feels the lump of the Koh-i-Noor in his sash. Flashman had anticipated that the temptation might be too great for Jassa.

Once in the jungle, Flashman waits for night before crossing the river. Shortly before dusk Flashman heads toward the river and is captured by a group of Khalsa cavalry. Flashman claims to be a captain in the Khalsa, and the soldiers go to find their own officer. The officer turns out to be Sardul Singh, the man who escorted Flashman to Lahore months earlier. Flashman claims to be on a secret mission from Lahore involving secret negotiations, but Sardul says that before he can release Flashman they must first meet with Tej Singh. They arrive at Tej Singh's location just as the battle begins.

Chapter 16 (pages 264-301 and endnotes) Analysis

The prospect of entering the city during the daytime strikes Flashman as yet another idea devised by someone intent on putting him in as much danger as possible. Jeendan, the architect of many of the plans concerning Flashman's mission, also seems bent on self-destruction. She angers the Khalsa until they are ready to kill her in the same gruesome manner in which they attacked her brother. Then, just as suddenly, she stops them, leaving her adversary confused and compliant.



The absurdity of the situation reaches a high point when Gardner tells Flashman that Jeendan wants to marry him. The idea is shocking to Flashman too, so much so that he looks at his own reflection in the mirror as he wonders why.

Many readers must be shocked to learn that Flashman promises and later gives a firearm to a seven year old boy, but it seems in keeping with his trait of being willing to do whatever it takes to see his way out of danger. In his effort to get out of danger, Flashman has once again failed to understand the complexities involved in the political intrigue. When Flashman sees Goolab, his first thought is betrayal. Later he sees that everyone involved seems to both use others and be used.

The daydream Flashman has concerning the Koh-i-Noor tells us much more than that he wonders, like all of us, what it might be like to be fabulously wealthy. When he thinks of what he could not give up in order to live a life of luxury, he thinks of his wife Elspeth. These occasional thoughts of Elspeth show that, despite his behavior with other women, he truly loves Elspeth.

When Jassa takes the locket from Flashman, he says that knowing that Flashman shares his own scoundrel nature is the very reason he will not invite Flashman to join in the thievery. The fact that Flashman has already anticipated this event proves that scoundrels do recognize each other.

Meeting Sardul once again makes Flashman's time in India seem as if it has come full circle. Sardul once escorted Flashman from the river, and now he escorts Flashman to the river.



Chapter 17 (pages 302-318 and endnotes)

Chapter 17 (pages 302-318 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman follows Sardul to a point high above the river where he can see the entire battlefield. He sees the British advance and wonders if this time Gough's reckless style will cause a British defeat. Flashman continues to follow Sardul, and when they reach Tej, Flashman sees a strange looking stone structure that looks like a giant beehive. An old man tells Tej that he must measure his circumference. Tej is annoyed and goes inside the stone structure, and Flashman follows.

Tej begins crying and says the Khalsa have removed him from command, and he cannot stop them from defeating the British. Flashman leaves Tej inside the structure crying, and once outside Flashman notices that Sardul and his troops have left. No one is watching Flashman. With a running start Flashman jumps into the river. Flashman says that the newspaper reports of his daring escape under fire were fiction. He says no one noticed him, and no one tried to follow.

The current takes Flashman down the river, but he finds that he cannot reach the other side. The current keeps pushing him back to the north bank. Flashman climbs out of the river and finds a hiding place with a view of the entire battle. He watches as the British keep making assaults on the Khalsa fortifications until the Khalsa finally retreat. During the retreat, the bridge over the Sutlej River breaks free, and thousand of men are thrown into the river. Flashman watches as the river fills with men and equipment. He looks away, unable to watch the carnage any longer.

Flashman decides to wait in his current position for a while longer, rather than risk running into any angry Khalsa survivors.

Chapter 17 (pages 302-318 and endnotes) Analysis

Again the difference between Flashman the legend and Flashman the man is wide. Flashman the legend eludes a horde determined to kill him. Flashman the man steps into a river unseen and drifts to safety.

Rather than feel delight at seeing a vanquished enemy, Flashman feels compassion for the fellow humans he sees struggling in the river. In fact, he is so moved by the scene that he looks away, unable to watch the destruction and death. Despite his tendencies of self-preservation at any costs, Flashman is not without empathy for others. In fact, his lack of belief in blind patriotism and his admitted cowardice in some ways make him a more genuine and caring person.



Chapter 18 (pages 319-338 and endnotes)

Chapter 18 (pages 319-338 and endnotes) Summary

Flashman wakes the next morning and tries to rejoin British forces but discovers he is ill and weak with dysentery. He tries to walk but cannot. Flashman crawls until he is discovered by a group of British cavalry. When he arrives at a field hospital he sends a note to Lawrence, and Lawrence replies that he hopes Flashman can join him immediately. Flashman finds some civilian clothes and sets off to meet Lawrence.

When he arrives in Gough's camp, Flashman speaks to Lawrence and learns that Hardinge wanted to have Flashman charged and tried for failure to rescue Dalip. Goolab arrives in camp tomorrow, and Lawrence wants Flashman to meet him so that the first British officer that Goolab meets will be one he knows and trusts. Lawrence has additional plans for Flashman. After the signing of the treaty there will be a British presence in Lahore headed by Lawrence. Lawrence wants Flashman as his assistant. When Flashman tells Lawrence that he will never return to Lahore, Lawrence is at first angry and wants to know why. Flashman tells Lawrence that Jeendan has taken an interest in him, and Mrs. Flashman would not approve. Lawrence agrees that Flashman cannot return to Lahore but can at least stay long enough to meet Goolab.

When Goolab arrives he informs Flashman that Dalip is fine, and as soon as the treaty is signed he will take Dalip back to Lahore. Flashman is surprised to learn that Goolab already knows all of the terms of the treaty. The British will get Kashmir, which they will let Goolab rule, and, though not formally mentioned in the treaty, the British will also get the Koh-i-Noor.

When Flashman escorts Goolab to the tent where negotiations will be held, Hardinge is visibly upset at the sight of Flashman. Seeing that he is no longer needed, Flashman leaves the tent and begins to make preparations for departing the following day. Gough learns of Flashman's plans for departure and invites him to his tent. While Flashman is in Gough's tent with many other senior officers, a young officer arrives with a message for Flashman from Hardinge. The message is supposed to be private, but the young officer loudly states the message, and it is insulting. Flashman is angry and decides to embarrass Hardinge.

Flashman waits outside Hardinge's tent for the negotiations to conclude. After Goolab leaves, Lawrence invites Flashman for a drink.

Flashman and Lawrence enter a tent where many British officers are present. Flashman approaches Hardinge, and Hardinge is rude as usual. Flashman tries to talk, and Hardinge repeatedly cuts him off. Flashman says that in order for the treaty to be



fulfilled the British ought to return the Koh-i-Noor to the Punjabis so they can properly present it to the Queen. Flashman tosses the diamond to Hardinge.

The editor notes that the memoir papers abruptly end.

Chapter 18 (pages 319-338 and endnotes) Analysis

Flashman thinks about the outcome of the war and how just three years later they will fight another in Punjab. He also notes the irony that all the times he was hailed a hero it was undeserved, yet this time he has done a good job, and it is not recognized.

Readers should enjoy the humor of Flashman citing his marital status and devotion to marital fidelity as a reason for not being able to return to Lahore. More significantly, we see that even Flashman has limits. He tells Lawrence that he absolutely will not remain in India at any costs.

Flashman's surprise that Goolab knows the terms of the peace treaty even before the meeting is short lived. It seems that Flashman finally acknowledges that the complexities and intrigues are more than he will ever comprehend, but whatever they are, they are normal for India.

After Flashman endures Hardinge's insult and decides to do something, readers should feel both a sense of apprehension and delight. Flashman is already someone Hardinge dislikes, and it will not be to Flashman's advantage to further anger such a respected and influential figure. On the other hand, Hardinge has earned an insult, and there is no telling what Flashman and his incredible imagination will devise. The revelation that he has succeeded in capturing the Koh-i-Noor is the perfect answer to Hardinge's accusations of incompetence.

Appendix I, Appendix II, & Appendix III

Appendix I, Appendix II, & Appendix III Summary

Appendix I: The Sutlej Crisis

The editor discusses the larger historical forces that caused the First Sikh War. He says that Flashman's account of the war itself is accurate, and here he examines behavior on both sides that led to what most historians call an inevitable outcome.

Appendix II: Jeendan and Mangla

The editor states that there is no way to verify all of Flashman's claims about Jeendan, but he also states that all of Flashman's claims are similar to those of other writers of the time. The editor offers a brief biographical account of the life of Jeendan, both before and after the events covered in Flashman's memoir. In reference to Mangla, he says that she was perhaps even more influential in the Lahore court than Flashman knew. She influenced rulers and even had control of the treasury.

Appendix III: The Koh-i-Noor

The editor states that until 1905 the Koh-i-Noor was the largest and most precious stone in the world. In this section the editor also mentions biographical information of Maharaja Dalip Singh after the period of Flashman's memoir.

Appendix I, Appendix II, & Appendix III Analysis

The reappearance of the "editor" completes the picture of Flashman and the Mountain of Light as a real historical text. More importantly it leaves the readers with some extra detail concerning the events and characters they have come to care about.



Characters

Harry Paget Flashman

Harry Flashman, Sir Harry Flashman at the time he composes his memoirs and Lieutenant Flashman at the time of the story, is a man regarded as a hero but presents himself to us, the readers, as the greatest of cowards. At the time of the story in *Flashman and the Mountain of Light*, Flashman has already gained a great deal of fame. Most notable in the region of the world where this story takes place are his exploits during the Anglo-Afghan War. In that adventure Flashman is lauded as a hero when his acts of cowardice land him in unexpected circumstances.

Aside from his reputation as a hero and self-professed tendencies of cowardice, we can tell much about Flashman from his writing and from the way others react to him. From his writing we can tell that he is an educated man. In fact, the "editor" George MacDonald Fraser tells us that the subject of Flashman's time at school is also in part the subject of another well known British book, *Tom Brown's School Days*. In regard to how others react to Flashman, the most notable reaction comes from the women. They all seem to find him irresistibly attractive, and he is all too willing to return their affections. As for men, they all seem willing to believe Flashman's reputation as a hero.

Flashman's principle trait as a narrator may be what makes him so likable despite frequent less-than-likable, even deplorable acts. As narrator, Flashman never tires of drawing attention to his own weaknesses and shortcomings.

Maharani Jeendan

This character provides some of Flashman's greatest pleasures as well as some of the moments of greatest danger in the novel. When Flashman first sees Jeendan, she is drunk and lounging in a state of partial undress. Soon thereafter she begins dancing with the Koh-i-Noor, the world's largest diamond at the time of the story, in her navel. She immediately takes an interest in Flashman, and the two have the first of many intimate encounters with only partial privacy. It is after this initial encounter that the first attempt to kill Flashman is undertaken.

Jeendan is a woman of seemingly insatiable appetites. Even before Flashman reaches Lahore he hears that she has a number of lovers and always keeps a few on standby nightly to ensure that she receives the pleasure she demands. Despite her appetites, Jeendan has a genuine affection for Flashman. When he is her lover, she dismisses the others, and before the story ends she decides that she wants to marry Flashman.

Jeendan's licentiousness is by no means the only notable quality of this character. She also displays the qualities of a cold and calculating ruler, including a ruthlessness that seems almost superhuman. While most of the description Flashman offers seems larger than life, too wild to be believed, the editor corroborates Flashman's account in one of



the appendices by citing an author who calls Maharani Jeendan "a strange blend of the prostitute, tigress, and Machiavelli's Prince."

Mangla

This is the first woman Flashman has contact with in Lahore, and he is immediately attracted to her. She is the servant of Maharani Jeendan, though she fulfills more of a role of trusted confidant and advisor. Despite being a servant, Mangla is one of the most powerful individuals in the Punjabi court. She has daily contact with Maharani Jeendan and shares much with the ruler, including Flashman. In one of the appendices we learn that the real-life Mangla had a life as interesting as any fictional character. Sold as a child, she works her way up in wealth and influence.

Jassa, a.k.a. Dr. Josiah Harlan

Upon first meeting this character, Flashman thinks he is a "native assistant" and describes him as a "pock-marked, barrel-chested villain." In other words, Flashman takes an instant dislike to the man. Later, after Jassa has saved his life the first time, Flashman learns that his "native assistant" is really an American infamous for a variety of absurd schemes over the course of many years. Among Jassa's more notorious deeds include being a military doctor, attempting to have himself installed as a king, using an appointment as regional ruler to start a counterfeiting operation, and many more. Flashman sees a bit of himself in Jassa and keeps him on his staff, and this is a wise decision because Jassa saves Flashman's life more than once.

George Broadfoot, a.k.a. The Black-coated Infidel

This character is Flashman's superior officer in the political service. Some of Broadfoot's plans are so outlandish that on more than one occasion Flashman wonders if the man is sane. It is Broadfoot who concocts the idea to send Flashman to Lahore posing as a diplomat, and it is Broadfoot who devises a plan to send Flashman back after his first escape.

Gurdana Kahn, a.k.a. Alexander Campbell Gardner

This colorful character is originally from Wisconsin and is head of the palace guard at Lahore. This character has been in many battles and has many injuries. He can swallow only with the aid of a metal device. As a palace guard he wears the uniform customary to a British regiment, the 79th Highlanders. In Flashman's first encounter with this character, Flashman believes he is a would-be assassin. Instead, this character saves Flashman more than once. Despite his American origins, this character is wholeheartedly devoted to the protection of the Punjabi royal family.



Maharaja Dalip Singh

This seven-year-old boy is the ruler of Punjab. His mother administers the government while he is still young. Dalip has heard of Flashman before he ever meets him, and once he meets him he takes an instant like to Flashman. He even tells Flashman that he hopes to be a British soldier when he is older. After Flashman takes this character from Lahore and delivers him to the custody of Goolab Singh, Flashman gives him a pistol.

Goolab Singh

This old and wily character was once in competition for the throne of Punjab. At the time of the novel he rules the region of Kashmir. This character is both a fearsome warrior, despite his advanced age and problems with gout, and a shrewd politician. He claims to be on the side of the Khalsa and even sends them supplies, but he is really on the side of the British in hope that once they defeat the Khalsa they will give him control of the region of Kashmir.

Sir Hugh Gough

This character is the hard-charging Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in India. He is known for wearing a white coat into battle so his enemies can see him clearly and know that he defies them. This character thinks highly of Flashman, but Flashman thinks this character is reckless despite winning every battle. In the moments before the battle at Ferozeshah this character has an argument with Governor General Hardinge, who wants Gough to take a more cautious approach to the upcoming battle.

Lal Singh

This character is one of Maharani Jeendan's many lovers. She names Lal Singh Wazir, or leader of the military because he follows her orders. Flashman find this character agreeable, even likable, but he thinks Lal Singh might be the only person he has ever met who is a bigger coward than Flashman himself.

Elspeth Flashman

This is Harry Flashman's wife. In her younger days she is a blonde-haired blue-eyed beauty. Like her husband she often strays from marital fidelity. Despite Flashman's escapades with other women, it is obvious that he truly loves his wife, even fifty years later when the two have an audience with Queen Victoria.



Queen Victoria

The first chapter of the novel involves Flashman and his wife meeting with this British monarch before her Golden Jubilee.

General Robert Sale

Flashman has known this high-ranking British officer for a long time. Though Flashman typically resents authority, he likes this officer. Flashman is saddened by this officer's death at Ferozeshah.

Jawaheer Singh

This brother of Maharani Jeendan is drunk and cowardly. He orders the murder of Peshora Singh and orders the attempted assassination of Flashman. One of the novel's more memorable and gruesome events involve this character answering to the Khalsa for his crimes.

Florentina Sale

This is the wife of General Sale. She displayed heroics during the retreat from Afghanistan, and while she often picks on Flashman, she likes him.

Captain Henry

Flashman knows this character from his adventures in Afghanistan, and this character is one of those present while Flashman is under the billiard table with Mrs. Madison.

Prince Waldemar, a.k.a. Count Ravensburg

This German prince is among the guests discussing the impending war while Flashman and Mrs. Madison are under the billiard table.

Mrs. Madison

Flashman meets this woman while staying with the Sales. Soon after meeting her, Flashman has an intimate encounter with her under a billiard table where he hears information that he uses to secure a job with the political service.



Soochet Singh

This character dies before the beginning of the novel, but he has invested a large sum of gold with the British East India Company. This gold and the uncertain rules of inheritance provide Flashman's diplomatic cover.

Sardul Singh

This character leads the military escort that takes Flashman into Punjab, and by a strange coincidence this character also escorts Flashman back to the British.

Peshora Singh

This character is murdered by Jawaheer Singh, and the murder inspires the Khalsa to exact revenge.

Tej Singh

This general, along with Lal Singh, works from within the Khalsa to ensure its defeat. If this character had not ordered a Khalsa retreat at Ferozepore, the British would have been defeated.

Bibi Kalil

This is the widow of the Punjabi prince who invested money with the British East India Company. She works with Goolab Singh to attempt to rescue Flashman from the Khalsa.

Maka Khan

This high-ranking officer orders Flashman to be tortured because he does not believe that one so brave as Flashman would truly break down and confess.

General Littler

This General commands the British military forces at Ferozepore. While he thinks that Flashman did the right thing in advising Lal Singh to send troops against Gough, he warns Flashman of the consequences of the action.



Colonel Van Cortlandt

Flashman meets this character upon his first escape from Lahore. Along with Nicolson, this character is impressed with Flashman's courage and brilliance.

Governor General Charles Hardinge

This man is the highest-ranking British official in India. He takes an instant dislike to Flashman.

Major Henry Lawrence

This man replaces Broadfoot. He is impressed with Flashman's abilities and wants him to be assigned to Lahore after the war.

Peter Nicolson

This man administers the frontier area in British India. He dies four months after the events in this novel, and Flashman wonders if anyone but him remembers Nicolson.



Objects/Places

The Koh-i-Noor

Until the last century the Koh-i-Noor was the world's largest and most valuable diamond. At the time of the action in *Flashman and the Mountain of Light*, it belongs to the court in Lahore.

Golden Jubilee

In 1887 Queen Victoria celebrates fifty years on the throne. The first chapter of the novel takes place shortly before this event.

Sikh

This is the name for a devotee of the religion Sikhism that begins in India in the sixteenth century. The Sikhs in this novel inhabit the region of Punjab.

Punjab

This is an area of what is now Pakistan and northwestern India. This is where Flashman is sent as a spy before the war between the Khalsa and the British.

John Company

This is an informal name for the British East India Company, which controls most of India at the time the novel is set.

Khalsa

This is the Punjabi military. Unlike other Asian armies, this military force is trained by European mercenaries and functions in many ways like a European army.

Lahore

This is the capital of Punjab at the time of the novel.

Pathan

These people are traditionally from Afghanistan.



Ferozapore

This is a city in northwest India near the Sutlej River. At the time of the novel it is also the location of a garrison for British troops stationed near the border with Punjab.

Sutlej River

This is one of the five major rivers in the region where the novel takes place. It also forms the border between British controlled India and Punjab.

Shalamar

A beautiful garden constructed in the Persian style. Flashman visits this garden on his way to Lahore.

Pepperbox

A pepperbox is a multi-barreled firearm. The one Flashman carries is a pistol and has six rotating barrels.

Durbar Room

The durbar room is the room in which royal Punjabis conduct official matters. The room can be whatever room the ruler designates and can even be in a tent.

Suttee

This is a religious practice where a widow throws herself on the pyre where her recently dead husband burns. Flashman witnesses one of these occurrences, and he is disgusted.

Wazir

This title is given to the person in charge of commanding the Khalsa, the Punjabi military.

Amritsar

This is a city in what is now northwest India. During the time of the novel the royal family temporarily moves from Lahore to reside in this city.



Cryptography

This is a method by which a message can be translated into a code and then re-translated back to the original message.

Ferozeshah

This is a village in Punjab. This is also the location of the battle that Flashman says determines the fate of the British in India.

Palki

This is an enclosed chair for carrying a person. Typically the enclosed chair portion has four extended poles allowing two people to carry the device.



Themes

Reputation vs. Reality

The reputation of Flashman that seems to precede him everywhere he goes and the real man Harry Flashman that he presents to us in his memoirs are two very different individuals. The Flashman of reputation is a daring and brave, seemingly invincible character who can slay entire armies and out-think the greatest strategists. The real man Flashman is one who believes first and foremost in self-preservation and second in pleasure and leisure. These contrasting traits of the legend and the real man tell us more about ourselves than about Harry Flashman.

People like to see things in black and white. We like simple, straightforward answers. We love, even need, heroes, and we despise cowards. We need heroes so much that we have a tendency to manufacture them. Most of Flashman's reputation rests on tales others have told about him and less on the way he presents himself. Certainly Flashman is not above using his reputation when it suits him, but he does not put nearly so much effort into it as he puts into avoiding danger and finding pleasures. People need heroes, and since Flashman, often by strange coincidence, happens to be in convenient locations, people make him a hero.

Flashman is not the only character whose reputation is not always in keeping with the reality of the character. Jeendan is regarded as an empty-headed drunken harlot, and to be fair she does display those behaviors on occasion, but she is also a shrewd politician. Jassa is regarded by some such as Gardner as an incorrigible rascal because of his reputation involving one outlandish scheme after another. The real Jassa can on occasion put himself at risk to help another, as in the times he saves the life of Flashman. Just like people need heroes, apparently they also need harlots and scoundrels.

Hindsight and 20/20 Vision

Throughout the novel we see instances where if Harry Flashman could do things over again he would do so differently. The first notable example occurs with his application to the political service. He uses information gathered in a most unconventional manner to secure what he believes to be an easier, safer job during the upcoming war. Immediately after he begins, he understands he has made a mistake and wishes, desperately at times, that he could find a way out and back to his previous role as a soldier.

On a more subtle level, Flashman reminds us throughout his narrative that things are rarely what they seem. With time comes greater clarity and a more accurate picture. Flashman himself gains clarity during the action of the novel as time progresses, and the elder Flashman gains greater clarity still when he looks back a half century at the



circumstances surrounding his exploits in Punjab. Some might call this greater clarity wisdom, and that word seems applicable to the narrative of Flashman, especially when he interrupts presenting an account of the action to comment on his thoughts concerning larger social issues, such as colonialism, warfare, or the role of women in society.

This idea of wisdom looking back also adds to the humor of the novel. Flashman knows the outcome of the story so he presents it in an order that allows us to appreciate the ironies, humor, and surprises. In many ways, Flashman derives a great deal of enjoyment from making fun of himself, and he generously shares that with us.

The Better Part of Valor

Another of literature's lovable rogues once said, "The better part of valor is discretion." Like Flashman has often has to do, the character that speaks the line does so to explain an act that could have been viewed as cowardice. Indeed, the quoted line could be the motto of Harry Flashman for it expresses a sentiment that Flashman believes in wholeheartedly: the most important thing is to live another day. Perhaps the goal is not necessarily to live in order to fight another day but simply to live another day.

Time and time again Flashman enacts what most would view as cowardice to save himself. Yet these moments are central to Flashman's character. They are what make him who he is, and they are what place him at the right time and place to be regarded as a hero. Many times Flashman encounters situations where a brave man would have stood, died, and been forgotten. Flashman on the hand does whatever it takes to survive, and thus finds himself in one fantastic situation after another, often hailed as the hero.

Flashman knows that except for entertaining stories told in the future a dead hero is useless. A live and thinking coward can continue to have some influence on events. After all, coward is just a name to Flashman. He puts no greater emphasis on it, holds in no higher or lower regard, than the name hero, the name often applied to him.

Style

Point of View

In *Flashman and the Mountain of Light* we receive the prized gift of a story told from three different points of view. These differing perspectives on the same story give the novel a richness and depth that a single narrator could not provide. The first narrator is, of course, the elder Flashman who composes the memoirs long after the events have passed. We can make some guesses as to when he writes the memoirs. First, the action of the novel opens during the preparations for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. So we know that he had to have composed the work around 1887. Further examination shows that Flashman mentions "the other day" almost committing a murder in Baker Street (Chapter 16, p. 294). In the Explanatory Note the editor tells us that the incident in Baker Street occurred in 1894. This means that Flashman composed this portion of the memoir almost fifty years after the events took place. More importantly, the elder narrator is wiser and more experienced than the young man who takes part in the action.

Not all of the voice comes from the elder Flashman. The voice of the young Flashman is still heard. He tells us what he thinks at the time, and when necessary the elder version of Flashman steps back into the narrative to let us know that things are often not what they seem.

The editor provides the third voice. In the Explanatory Note and the appendices and in the endnotes on subjects throughout the novel, the editor provides commentary on the "accuracy" of Flashman's narrative. Sometimes the editor's notes corroborate Flashman's account, and sometimes they contradict, but they always make the tale more interesting.

Setting

The physical setting of the story is the region called Punjab in what is now Pakistan and northwestern India. Flashman often goes into great detail describing the landscape and geographical features. Much of the action takes place in the city of Lahore, capital of all of Punjab at the time of the novel. It is in the Lahore Fort where Flashman is stationed with the British political service. Here is where he has his many fantastic adventures with women with insatiable appetites and falling ceilings meant to kill him.

Equal in importance to the physical setting is the time of the novel. *Flashman and the Mountain of Light* occurs in the mid-nineteenth century. This is a time when the British expand colonial territories and areas of control, and soon establish the British Empire as the largest in the history of the world. The year, 1845, comes just three years after a near devastating military defeat in nearby Afghanistan that endangers British control in South Asia.



The combination of time and place sets the ground for a tale of fantastic adventure. Several times Flashman remarks that at this time in history most of the rest of the "civilized" world, particularly people in Great Britain, thought of India as a magical place. Few people in England knew any more about India than Europeans did during the time of Marco Polo's travels. Perhaps the reason Flashman's story is so believable is because it is set in a time and place where anything is possible.

Language and Meaning

The language of Flashman and the Mountain of Light gives a great deal of flavor to the novel. The author, through the narrator Flashman, for the most part chronicles the adventures in a literary prose rich in visual detail. However, Flashman/Fraser is also adept at capturing the spirit of the spoken word as he recounts instances of dialogue. Whether he is retelling something he said during a moment of surprise or stress or quoting the unusual English spoken by the native residents of the novel's settings, the narrator brings to life the various scenes.

As "editor" George MacDonald Fraser does a masterful job in using the language of historical scholars. He first does this in his Explanatory Note and then does it throughout the novel in endnotes before concluding with the three appendices. The most noticeable feature concerning the language is the lack of similarity between the parts told by the narrator Flashman and the parts composed by the editor Fraser. In this way the differing styles add to the fun of pretending that Flashman and the Mountain of Light is an actual historical document.

Yet another feature of language that makes the novel so enjoyable is the use of non-English words. These words, whether describing a native military unit or a religious practice involving suicide, add to the setting by making it seem both a more real and a more magical place.

Structure

On the surface the structure of Flashman and the Mountain of Light is that of a memoir edited by a historical scholar, but by examining the novel beyond the surface, we see a variety of layers that give the story a depth and complexity beyond that of a mere adventure tale.

The most exterior layer is presented by the editor. We learn that story we are about to read is from a body of work comprising the memoirs of Sir Harry Flashman. Supposedly these memoirs were discovered in England after being long forgotten. This particular story is from the ninth volume, or "packet."

Moving inward we encounter the character Flashman telling of a meeting with Queen Victoria in 1887. This stage of the story occurs most likely six or seven years before Flashman composes this portion of the memoir. This is not the main portion of the story. This meeting with the Queen is merely one setting that sparks the remembrance of a



longer tale. Moving inward still, the narrator goes back an additional forty-two years to tell us the tale of his adventures in Punjab during the First Sikh War. It is here on this level of the narrative that the majority of the story takes place, but neither the narrator Flashman or the editor Fraser let us forget that we are reading a document that makes full use of hindsight.

From time to time in his tale, Flashman tells us that his perceptions at the moment are not accurate. Occasionally he tells us something only to follow the statement with a further statement that his first impression is a mistake. Then we re-enter the narrative stream to find how he came to see that mistake. The editor too offers running commentary that compliments and completes the larger structure.



Quotes

Elspeth, I may tell you, speaks only English—well, Scotch, if you like—and enough nursery French to get her through Customs and bullyrag waiters, but anything the Queen said, however wild, always sent her into transports of approval.
(Chapter 1, p. 11)

I'd vowed never to go near India again after the Afgan fiasco of '42, and might easily have kept my word but for Elspeth's loose conduct. In those salad days, you see, she had to be forever flirting with anything in britches—not that I blame her, for she was a rare beauty, and I was often away, or ploughing with other heifers.
(Chapter 2, p. 20)

"George, I ain't puffing myself, but I'm not unknown over there! Man alive, when we had a garrison in Lahore, in '42, I was being trumpeted all over the shop! Why, you said yourself the fewer who knew Ilassman was back, the better! They know I'm a soldier, don't they—Bloody Lance, and all that rot?"
(Chapter 3, p. 40)

"Very good, George, we both suspect that this horny bitch will corrupt my youthful innocence, but if I pleasure her groggy enough, why, I may turn her mind inside out, which is what you're after. And how d'ye want me to steer her then, George, supposing I can? What would suit Calcutta?"
(Chapter 3, p. 46)

The Chinese Summer Palace, where I walked years later, was altogether grander, I suppose, but there was a magic about that Indian garden that I can't describe—you could call it perfect peace, with its gentle airs rustling the leaves and the lights winking in the twilight; it was the kind of spot where Scheherazade might have told her unending stories; even its name sounds like a caress: Shalamar.
(Chapter 5, p. 53)

Now, I've taken note of a few heathen armies in my time. The heavenly host of Tai'ping was bigger, the black tide of Cetewayo's legions sweeping into Little Hand was surely more terrifying, and there's a special place in my nightmares for that vast forest of tipis, five miles wide, that I looked down on from the bluffs over Little Bighorn—but for pure military might I've seen nothing outside Europe (and dam' little inside) to match that great disciplined array of men and beasts and metal on Maian Mir.
(Chapter 5, p. 54)

Aye, thinks I, let there be war (but keep me out of it) so that we can stamp these foul woman-butchers flat, and put an end to their abominations. I guess I'm like Alick Gardner: I can't abide wanton cruelty to good-looking women. Not by other folk, anyway.
(Chapter 8, p. 123)



The trouble with the political service, you know, is that they can't tell the truth from falsehood. Even members of Parliament know when they're lying, which is most of the time, but folk like Broadfoot simply ain't aware of their own prevarications. It's all for the good of the service, you see, so it must be true—and that makes it uncommon hard for straight-forward rascals like me to know when they're being done browner than an ape's behind.

(Chapter 9, p. 154)

I ain't one of your by jingoes, and I won't swear that the British soldier is braver than any other—or even, as Charley Gordon said, that he is brave for a little while longer. But I will swear that there's no soldier on earth who believes so strongly in the courage of the men alongside him—and that's worth an extra division any day. Provided you're not standing alongside me, that is.

(Chapter 14, p. 236)

In an instant the whole breadth of the river beneath me was alive with men and beasts and wreckage, sweeping past. It was like a lumber-jam when great areas of the water cannot be seen for the whirling mass of logs, but here the logs were men and horses and a great tangle of gear bound together by the force of the current.

(Chapter 17, p. 315)

"For every drop of this blood, you will give a million. You, the Khalsa, the pure ones. Pure as pig dung, brave as mice, honoured as the panderers of the bazaar, fit only for —" I shan't tell you what they were fit for, but it sounded all the more obscene for being spoken without a trace of anger.

(Chapter 7, p. 119)

"Mr. Flashman!" squeaks he, and as he spoke the chatter died away altogether. "Sir Henry Hardinge understands that you are leaving the Army of the Sutlej tomorrow. He instructs me to tell you that your services are not longer required on his personal staff, and that you are to consider yourself withdrawn from all military and political duties forthwith. I am also to remind you that smoking in the durbar tent is strictly prohibited."

(Chapter 18 p. 333)



Topics for Discussion

Some works of historical fiction are more "accurate" than others. Some bend and rewrite history to suit their stories, and some try to stay true to historical detail by only inserting fictional characters. George Macdonald Fraser even goes so far as to include endnotes with references to actual books of history. How does knowing that much of the story, besides the outlandish character Flashman, is actual history affect your enjoyment of the book? If you were to pick one or two real historical characters to read about more, which ones would they be?

Flashman often does cowardly and despicable things more fitting a villain than a hero. Why would we condemn this behavior in a villain but excuse, even applaud, it in Flashman?

Do the frequent intrusions by the "editor" in the form of endnotes help you to pretend that Flashman and the Mountain of Light is an actual memoir, or do they serve as a reminder that it is a work of fiction? Have there been times you assumed that a character was fictional and learned by reading the endnotes that the character was an actual historical figure?

Flashman and the Mountain of Light is part of a series of books about the character Harry Flashman. If you have read other books in the series, describe how Flashman and the Mountain of Light compares to the other work. If you have not read other works in the series, based on your enjoyment of Flashman and the Mountain of Light, explain why you are or are not likely to read another work in the series.

Time and time again Flashman refers to himself as a coward, however it is his willingness to flee from any fight and his seeming immunity to feeling guilty that land him in the strangest situations. Describe one or more times that Flashman's success in his various assignments can be attributed to what he calls cowardice and had he stood brave and valorous, he would have failed and perhaps been killed.

Describe why it is funny and perhaps ironic that Broadfoot worries about sending a young Flashman to a court known for its depravity and debauchery.

Describe how at times it seems like the novel has two narrators named Flashman. Is the older and wiser Flashman who composes the memoirs the same man as the dashing youth who takes part in the action? Name at least one instance where the older Flashman as narrator differs in opinion from the younger Flashman "in the moment."