# Flashman and the Redskins Study Guide

## Flashman and the Redskins by George MacDonald Fraser

BOOKRAGS

# Contents

# Plot Summary

Flashman and the Redskins is, the seventh installment of the "Flashman Papers" supposedly discovered late in the 20th century and published by George MacDonald Fraser, detailing Sir Harry Flashman's fantastic career. This volume continues Flashy's American adventures in two parts: the 1849/50 gold rush and an 1875/76 vacation that takes Flashy to Little Bighorn and a surprise meeting with his illegitimate son.

In Flashman and the Redskins George MacDonald Fraser purportedly edits the memoirs of Sir Harry Flashman dealing with two trips to the American frontier. In the first half, dating to 1849, Flashy finds himself in New Orleans, having lost his only hope of a voyage home to England and wanted for multiple felonies up and down the Mississippi. He flees westward, having marries a madame intent on establishing the most profitable bordello in San Francisco to serve the gold miners' needs. They get as far as Santa Fe before she puts down roots and Flashy flees, first selling his favorite girl, Cleonie, to a rich Navajo. He gets involved with white scalp hunters and then marries an Apache princess. Fleeing the Apaches, he is nearly killed but rescued by the famous Kit Carson, who provides him an escort to the coast. Flashy vows never to return to the American West.

Twenty-five years later, however, Elspeth Flashman develops wander lust and gets Flashy to show her America. He meets a series of people who put him in the center of the Indian Wars and the greatest danger of his life. He joins treaty negotiations over the Black Hills, where gold has been discovered on sacred Indian lands. Among the Indian negotiators are Spotted Tail, whom Flashy meets in 1849 and an intriguing young associate. Flashy also meets a stunningly beautiful woman, Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, who hires him to contact Otto von Bismarck about a business proposition.

Intent on bedding Candy, Flashy heads West, accompanying the fiery Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, whom he has tried to talk Grant into reinstating in his field command. Flashy has his way with Candy, only to find himself handed over to Indians to be tortured to death, as Candy turns out to be vengeful Cleonie. Flashy is imprisoned at Little Bighorn as the battle erupts, is miraculously freed, and almost escapes before being mock-killed but actually rescued by a mysterious Indian, whom Flashy has met in Chicago and who reveals himself as Flashy's illegitimate son with Cleonie. As a final surprise, Flashy meets a friend, Wild Bill Hickok on his way home.

# Part 1 The Forty-Niner, to pg. 54

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, to pg. 54 Summary

Recognizing Apache being spoken in the Travelers' Club by a bleeding-heart anthropologist extolling the "noble savages," Sir Harry ("Flashy") Flashman, who neither condones nor condemns American policy towards the Indians, refuses to let pass the pompous professor's pious hypocrisy. Showing a missing patch of scalp, Flashy argues to the point of being shown the street. This confrontation sets him to reminiscing about the lost Wild West, and he resumes his memoirs, in New Orleans, in 1849. Flashy is on the verge of sailing to England when Capt. John Charity Spring stops in a tavern at the same time as Flashy's nemesis Peter Omohundro, who, in the second unnumbered chapter, recognizes him as a slave stealer, and calls for the law. Spring disarms Omohundro and runs him through with his own sword.

Flashy leads Spring to a French Quarter brothel that sheltered him once before. It is in the process of closing, but Susie Willinck welcomes Flashy (alias Beauchamp Millward Comber), overwhelmed to see him and randier than ever. Her plans are to move the establishment to Sacramento to service the rich gold miners. It is a sure-fire business opportunity and the armed crossing is safe. After three nights of passion, Susie suggests that Flashy accompany her to California and catch a ship—or perhaps remain with her. She proposes and Flashy sees no other option. As the third chapter opens, Susie knows Flashy could break her heart, but accepts the risk. She drugs Spring's wine and ships him to South Africa get him out of the way. Two days later, having lectured the whores on behavior on the road, Susie leads the procession to the river boat. Flashy notices with particular lust the "jet-black" Aphrodite and "creamy" Cleonie. Aboard the Choctaw Queen, the couple is wed before heading upriver.

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, to pg. 54 Analysis

The opening chapter places Sir Harry ("Flashy") Flashman in London's Travelers' Club having a drink when he overhears a stuffy anthropologist speak a bit of Apache and run on about the "noble savage." Unable to restrain himself from sharing first-hand experience, Flashy evenhandedly outlines the issues involved in American policy towards the Indians, a running theme throughout this novel. Flashy's anger rises when the unnamed scholar likens the U.S. generals to Pontius Pilate washing his hands of Jesus. Escorted to the street in a froth, Flashy ruminates on hearing such smug "claptrap" around the world and, nostalgically recalling the long-vanished old Wild West, picks up writing where he leaves off the third packet, published as "Flash for Freedom!"

The opening chapter thus serves to introduce (or reintroduce) Flashy as a sophisticated, sarcastic character who around the world has survived incredible adventures, making war and love, and meeting famous and infamous people. He masterfully recaps some of these (a reiterating motif) and swiftly provides "coming attractions," few of them

nostalgic, of the principle people, places, and events of this novel. He then returns to New Orleans, looking forward to sailing home to England when the Latin-quoting slave captain John Charity Spring who is to convey him insists on stopping in a tavern. Everything changes when in walks Flashy's nemesis, Peter Omohundro.

The second unnumbered chapter sees Spring kill Omohundro in a brawl and Flashy leading him to Susie Willinck's brothel, where Flashy has hid out once before. It had been a five-day sexual spree from which he is still weary. The brothel is ominously quiet and looks deserted; in fact, when they enter, it is packed up for moving. After weighing the danger, Susie takes them in and her spy network keeps them abreast of the ominous situation on the streets. Given his misadventures in the previous novel, Flashy knows that nowhere on the Mississippi is safe for him. Flashy details his sexual romps with Susie, adding that she could wear out Goliath—another of his biblical allusions (see Pontius Pilate above), which are odd, seeing that he ascribes little use to religion. Tearfully, Susie makes her play, first offering to take him to the West Coast where he can catch a ship home, then suggesting he might want to keep her company longer, and finally proposing marriage to him. Flashy sees the problem coming, but has no alternative.

The third chapter describes Susie's exodus from New Orleans, detailing the "gels'" (girls') appearances and the strict orders she gives about propriety on the road. She threatens to beat offenders—or "sell them down the river." Two in particular are described in greater detail, Aphrodite, and Cleonie, the ones with whom Flashy is destined to have trysts. As Susie and Flashy are married aboard the steamboat that will carry them upriver, Flashy recalls his other bigamous marriage in Strackenz Cathedral (Royal Flash), his fuming father-in-law at his union with Elspeth, and virtual marriage to fearsome Queen Ranavalona on Madagascar (Flashman's Lady). Flashy regularly evaluates his situation with similar experiences in the past. The new Mrs. Comber is ecstatic. When she falls asleep, Flashy slips up on deck to watch the scenery and fellow passengers, noting that they are not aware of being in the vanguard of millions who seek their fortune in El Dorado, the legendary city of great wealth. They are alternately nervous, restless, exuberant, optimistic, and grouchy. Looking back, Flashy sees that they form the legend of the Forty-Niners. He wishes that he had known the dangers they would face. It would have made him jump overboard and take his chances on the Mississippi.

# Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 54-109

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 54-109 Summary

St. Louis is infested with cholera, as the fourth chapter opens. They board a smaller, dirtier, crowded Missouri packet for the trip to Westport / Independence. Flashy outfits himself like a "scourge of the plains." Col. Owens, the merchant who outfits them, assures them that it will be a "glorified picnic." Susie negotiates for premium drivers and guards, needed because Indian "depredations" have been on the rise, but the prairies are currently tranquil. The two best guides are unavailable, but Susie deems Flashy able to command. Flashy is happy that "Uncle Dick" Wootton agrees, after testing Flashy to lead the wagon train while letting Flashy have the official title. They set out with no idea of what "going West" 2,000 empty miles means, "gullible asses" taking all that Susie considers wise to start out properly. The girls dress modestly and chief guard Grattan Nugent-Hare threatens to shoot the first man who touches one.

Flashy and Wootton take the lead, followed by Susie's luxury carriage, eight schooners, and the heavily-ladened mule train. Flashy is exhilarated as they head for Council Grove, where they will join a larger train for the long haul. Three days out, the trails diverge to Oregon and Southern California, and the parting is emotional. The travelers keep strictly separate from "the help." Flashy takes special note that Marie and Stephanie are spies to keep the other girls out of trouble, and cultivates Wootton, who teaches him how to shoot buffalo. As they cook and eat Flashy's first kill on the spot, three painted Indians sneak up silently, frightening Flashy, who views them as fiends. Wootton introduces Spotted Tail, a Brulé Sioux, plays tug-a-war swallowing buffalo intestines, and learns that the trail's safety is uncertain.

The fifth chapter finds the travelers joining three other caravans, including clerks and laborers, half a dozen emigrant families, and a dozen middle-aged and elderly "invalids," taking the trip for their health. Flashy is acclaimed the over-all leader. Susie's chatter drives Flashy crazy, her interest in sex wanes, he longs to say good-bye, and, more immediately, to try out Susie's girls. One night he has Aphrodite behind bushes, but she is too much the whore for a second romp, turning her sullen. Flashy worries about Susie hearing about this, but definitely accepts risk of taking Cleonie. She reveals that all the girls know but consider him the master. Cleonie begins sneaking into Flashy's tent and proves to be an exhausting lover and excellent conversationalist. He grows fond of her.

Riding beside Wootton, Flashy begins learning a bit of Sioux. At Fort Mann are surrounded by natives complaining of a terrible sickness and Wootton advises at least be seen trying to help. A examination shows that it is cholera, which infects four travelers, including Wootton. The sixth chapter shows him hovering near death for three days and then too weak to go on. He tells Flashy to stay on the trail to Bent's Fort, 120 miles away, and specifically to avoid the Cimarron Road. Flashy lowers rations, which leads to a rebellion. On the fifth day after the split, Nugent-Hare and Flashy watch

Indian campfires and in the morning, tremble as a column of warriors rides by, followed by their families. When the column is out of sight, Flashy orders rapid flight. Nearing the fort, they see a single puff of smoke and four mounted Indians on the skyline. Twenty more approach fast. Flashy's horse is shot out from under him, but he clambers into a wagon full of girls and is saved when Aphrodite stabs her parasol into a menacing Indian's groin, toppling him over the side. The surviving wagons fly towards a castle flying an American flag—only to discover that it is abandoned.

Opening the seventh chapter, the party occupies the citadel and Flashy and Nugent-Hare inspect it thoroughly. It has been too hastily abandoned for the Indians to enter and loot. The company has under a third the number of rifles needed to defend it properly. The company enjoys it first hot meal in months and goes to bed with no Indians visible. By morning, they are appearing in force. As the first arrows test their defenses, Flashy limits return fire, observing, but as the first flaming arrow arrives, word comes that the north tower is filled with gunpowder and the place still stands only because a fuse burns out. Dousing the premises in water works only so long before major fires spread. Flashy orders a run for the river Covered by a small band of riflemen, two of the three coaches arrive intact and survivors of the third join them. The defenders then flee in the remaining wagons, while Flashy covers them, intending to ride out on horseback, which he considers safer. He nearly escapes when a massive explosion collapses the floor beneath him. Scorched and with one ankle useless, he crawls and rolls out, sees a pony's legs, and figures he is dead, but sees a mountaineer.

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 54-109 Analysis

The fourth chapter opens in St. Louis, where months earlier, Flashy had seen himself accurately described on wanted posters. With cholera rampant, however, masks are commonplace, so he can go ashore without fear. Flashy regularly in these early chapters displays an unusually high degree of fear. They continue on to Westport/Independence, MO. Throughout these early pages, Flashy describes what he sees as one of the elite and legendary "earlies" in 1849, what he sees a quarter-century later as a return visitor, and what the reader may know from his or her early-20th-century perspective. He passes through Denver, for instance, before there is any settlement. He describes in fair detail the crowded, bustling, and above all noisy frontier towns, but is sure that they nowhere near as densely-packed as at the peak of the Gold Rush. Westport and Independence are still two discrete settlements, later to be swallowed up by a greater Kansas City.

Flashy makes a long digression on the layout and history of the regions to which he so innocently travels in 1849, referring to the two maps that precede the text. The Eastern perception is that the Indians are a minor annoyance. Salesmen outfitting the travelers paint crossing the plains as a continuous picnic, and even Flashy gets a bit caught up in it. He describes in minute detail all that the party takes along and whom they hire to guide and guard them. Flashy is shocked to see the entire whorehouse loaded onto wagons, remarking that Caligula, the Roman Emperor noted for debauchery, would not know how to use some of the toys. When Susie remarks that none of it can be

purchased in San Francisco, Flashy says tongue-in-cheek that it could not be bought in Babylon, the ultimate biblical symbol of whoredom.

This chapter introduces two historical figures, the famed mountain man Richens Lacy ("Uncle Dick") Wootton, a Brulé Sioux brave Spotted Tail, and the fictional Grattan Nugent-Hare, an Irish veteran of the British Army. Flashy is particularly anxious not to be recognized by anyone who knows his real name. His battle experience in Afghanistan helps him pass the tests that Wootton gives before agreeing to lead the group while leaving Flashy in nominal command, as his proud bride insists. Flashy knows that while he has had some command experience, he is not up to leading a wagon train, and is pleased to have competent officers along. Again insisting that he is not competing with Parkman, Flashy expresses the exhilaration of the travelers as they set off, the process of wearying, and settling into the grind of a long trek. He quotes a version of Oh Susannah customized for the Forty-niners as the Oregon and Santa Fe trails diverge. The mood of the two groups—earnest settlers and wide-eyed gamblers—is contrasted.

Note in particular Flashy's almost instinctive fear of the Indian. Having been convinced back East that their threat is exaggerated, he sees the first ones face-to-face coming out of shadows in the middle of the prairie, wearing warpaint, eagle feathers, and little else, and sitting and eating buffalo intestines, lightly grilled, with Wootton. Flashy, of course, writes forty years later, having experienced a great deal of pain and terror at the hands of various Indian tribes. Wherever Flashy travels in the world, he finds natives for the most part filthy, stinking, fearsome, and ignorant but crafty—with a few female exceptions thrown in. He seems to fear the Indians most, particularly the Apaches, whom he has not yet met. Spotted Tail becomes a key figure in the second part of the novel.

The fifth chapter describes the other groups that unite to form a single large caravan. Flashy admits it might be an atypical collection of travelers, but from what he has heard from others, perhaps not. The "invalids" are what today would be called hypochondriacs or health freaks, carrying the latest in patent medicines and therapeutically instruments. Their importance comes at Fort Mann, when they are able to diagnose the Cheyennes' terrible disease as cholera but do nothing to cure it. It must run its course. Flashy as wagon-master oversees the powwow and when looked upon for words of wisdom can only recite a common grace before meals. Wootton renders this as commiseration with the Indians' condition, and they accept this graciously. The Cheyenne are the only known "friendlies" on the plains, so to have turned them away in their plight would have invited disaster. Disaster comes anyway, not in the form of a warriors' attack, but in Wootton's falling sick, leaving them directionless.

The sixth chapter shows Flashy assuming actual command of the wagon train, with Nugent-Hare offering bits of practical advice. In a lucid moment, Wootton gives precise orders how to proceed, but with rations running low, a majority wants to take a shortcut. Flashy summons up his officer's voice and bearing and Nugent-Hare remains loyal. They do not allow the deserters to take more than their share of supplies. The two leaders hide in some bushes, fearfully watching a column of Indians pass nearby and,

reversing the Indians' trail, find human remains to which theirs could easily have been added. Flashy captures the panic by saying the languid oxen thereafter gallop. Scouts from another war band swoop in, trying to pick off drivers and divert the oxen and mules to make looting easier. Flashy finds himself in the kind of mêlée that he normally flees but like so often in his memoirs, is forced to join in actively. He recalls some of those incidents in passing. Amazon stands out among the women fighting off the attackers, earning Flashy's approval. He captures the horror of flying arrows and bullets, menacing hatchets, a bumping road, and the great hope inspired by the fort and the flag it flies (even if it is American). Just before the tense action opens, Flashy and Nugent-Hare wonder why there are no civilians living in the environs. As they reach the safety of the walls, they see that no one lives inside them. The fort is abandoned.

The seventh chapter describes the opulent fortress, obviously abandoned in haste. The company enjoys the first good meal and comfortable sleep in months, believing themselves to be secure for the moment. Another wagon train for them to join is sure to pass by soon. Indians begin gathering in force and it is discovered that the fort is only there because a fuse has burned out. Crazy William Bent has filled two towers full of high explosives, intending to reduce the place to rubble. Predictably, the Indians begin pouring flaming arrows over the walls and organize what to Flashy's military eye are well-ordered cavalry attacks. He orders the place doused in water and prevents Nugent-Hare from having the ladies sweet away the remaining powder trail. Friction would have ignited the conflagration.

As fires spread, Flashy orders an evacuation. He notes that the mind concentrates under such pressure. The situation reminds him of the Battle of Balaclava—the legendary "Charge of the Light Brigade"—one of the hallmarks of his fame (recounted in Flashman at the Charge). He often recalls throughout the book it and the two other battles of the Crimean War in which he participates that bloody day whenever he finds himself in mortal danger. Flashy is the last man out, covering the rear guard wagons from a parapet. He remarks that if this seems out of character, he feels safer on lone horseback than in a wagon, and has observed that horses often remain loyally by the corpses of their fallen riders. He intends to sneak out and circle the long way around—out of firing range—to rejoin the others. Unfortunately, one tower explodes and he is almost incapacitated. The chapter ends dramatically, with him fearing he has fallen into Indian hands, but is instead met by a looming and bemused mountain man.

# Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 109-148

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 109-148 Summary

The eighth chapter relates how, seeing smoke, the Mountain men storm into battle. Having been lucky to lose few men and wagons, the party awaits the safety of the next caravan and learns that the dread Apaches lie ahead. Wootton rejoins them, bringing word that the deserters have perished. He leads them to Santa Fe, which Susie and Flashy scout. The U.S. Army lacks manpower to escort anyone out of the area, which is circled by hostiles. Even if they join another wagon train, it is a long brutal trip to California. The U.S. occupation, coming on top of Spanish and Mexican atrocities, has fueled Indian hatred. Many white immigrants approve of the old proyecto de guerra—a euphemism for scalp-hunting—which offers bounties to the eager hunters. Observing the vibrant nightlife, Susie decides that Santa Fe is a lucrative market for her girls. The best local brothel offers no competition.

The ninth chapter finds Flashy happy to rest but still longing for England. Susie rents and renovates a roomy house off the plaza. Opening night is a madhouse and, as their fame spreads, men come in from all around, Susie raises prices. She hires Nugent-Hare for security, over Flashy's objections, and in two days he makes off with $2,000. Soon, as in New Orleans, customers wish to buy Susie's girls, but she points out that it is illegal in a non-slave territory. A priest who acts as intermediary for an anonymous rich client is self-righteously turned away.

Meanwhile, Cleonie enjoys sex with Flashy daily during siesta and asks to go with him when he abandons Susie. Seeing that Cleonie could earn his ticket home, Flashy makes plans. At midnight, as Flashy checks that the coast is clear, two Navajo Indians appear with the priest, who hands him the agreed $2,000, and Cleonie is hauled silently away. The priest claims that this marriage will for a season buy peace for missions and settlements. Regretting Cleonie's loss, Flashy sets off for Albuquerque. He enjoys riding alone, peacefully. At the Socorro ford a Dragoon says the way Donna Ana is flat but suicidal, and the road south, Jornada del Muerto—"Dead Man's Journey"—is worse. Flashy continues on. Seeing camp fires, he answers a challenge in Spanish, is led into camp, and offered food. John Gallantin, whose fame has not reached Flashy's ears, offers to take him to Chihuahua after hunting in the Gila forest. Nugent-Hare asks why Flashy is no longer named Comber.

In the tenth chapter Nugent-Hare recites Flashy's famous deeds, warns him not to try to get back Susie's money, considers going back to her to resume the tryst they had been having since Council Grove—to get even with Flashy. They keep an eye on one another at a distance that night. Word comes in the morning that Apaches have raided a nearly hacienda, mutilating and killing the residents. Signs are that it is recent and probably by Mimbreno Apaches. As the 40-man band prepares to seek vengeance, two balk at the idea of scalp-hunting and are summarily killed to keep them from alerting the Army. Idalgo scalps one corpse for the bounty. Disgusted, Flashy is stuck.

After an night ride to the Gila Forest, where Gallantin suspects an Apache camp, his marksmen spread out on a rise and pick targets among the 150 awakening Indians. Males are dead within minutes and the wickiups are set afire to flush out the women and children. Flashy does not take part in scalping victims but cannot avoid the gang rape. In the drawing of lots, Flashy draws third. He is disgusted when the first man assaults his woman in public. The second more modestly hauls his away. When a drunken Nugent-Hare grabs Flashy's designated girl, Flashy attacks drunkenly, and in the rolling fight impales Nugent-Hare on his own knife. Stupefied, Flashy takes the terrified, plump-cheeked girl away. She thanks him in Spanish, Flashy turns on the charm, and having gained her permission to touch her, is startled when arrows fly and bedlam erupts. Flashy is knocked unconscious.

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 109-148 Analysis

The eighth chapter describes how Mountain men come to the party's rescue and a veteran tells them about the Indians involved and warns that only Apaches lie ahead of them. Smoke rising from the explosion of Bent's Fort rising into the upper atmosphere and is seen 150 miles away. A group of Mountain men in thick dialect lament the passing of this cultural center. Flashy likens it to losing St. Paul's Cathedral or the Tower of London.

The rest of the chapter is transitional. Wootton returns, a bit weak, to report finding that those who split off from Flashy's caravan have been massacred. He leads them safely to Santa Fe, which is richly depicted, including its Spanish and Mexican heritage and vibrant culture and delicate situation, being encircled by hostile Indian tribes. He declares that the U.S. has bitten off more than it can chew in claiming this vast, inhospitable region from Mexico. Euphemistically called "proyecto de guerra" in Old Mexico, scalping for profit enjoys many takers among white immigrants approve of the old-time Mexican practice, which soon becomes a major focus of the novel. The Americans have mishandled the Apaches, who had been ready to ally against the Mexicans. Whites are now sworn enemies. Talked out of the long, arduous, and dangerous trek to California—the various routes are described in some detail—Susie decides to settle in Santa Fe. She and Flashy visit the most recommended bordello in town and find it far below the quality they have lugged across the prairies. She tells the suspicious madam that Flashy is a clergyman on holiday and not a customer.

The ninth chapter describes Susie setting up business and watching it thrive as anticipated. For lack of a bank, she hires the now-unemployed Nugent-Hare as a security guard, but he absconds with $2,000 within days. Susie is careful to avoid involving the law with her delicate enterprise and knows she can earn that back swiftly. Flashy had opposed hiring Nugent-Hare, revealing tensions that had not appeared on the trail and will further flare later. The discontinuity in character is a bit jarring. That New Mexico is a non-slave territory is emphasized. Susie uses it as an excuse for not selling individual girls to doting clients. In New Orleans she could do as she wished with slaves, but had only sold one "down the river," and has always treated her girls so well that she cannot imagine them abandoning her now. She even cares for them when their

working days are over. She is particularly annoyed when a priest tries to buy a girl for an anonymous local man.

Cleonie, meanwhile has sensed that Flashy will leave Susie and asks to go along. They can continue making love as they do every day during siesta and she can earn money for his trip home. Flashy appears to agree, packs, gives Susie a farewell romp as reward for her help, and appears to be startled when Navajo braves appear out of nowhere. The priest also appears, hands Flashy $2,000, demands a receipt, and justifies his actions as offering protection to many good Christians for a while. Flashy is skeptical about the ethics, but goes on his way alone. Within days, he meets a large band of men led by John Gallantin, who advises him to stay safe with them rather than risk a solo ride to El Paso. Flashy is surprised to meet Nugent-Hare, who asks why he is no longer known as Comber.

The 11th chapter shows the notorious scalp-hunters in action. Nugent-Hare knows of Flashy's Afghanistan fame, but is unimpressed. Flashy learns that Gallantin is famous (or infamous) in New Mexico and sees his brutality when two of his band refuse to take part in a raid. One of the killers takes a victim's scalp, not wanting to lose the $300 bounty, figuring any scalp is as good as another. The bandits joke among themselves that the hair is so fine that he will probably only get paid for a woman's scalp. As the raid is carefully prepared, Flashy evaluates it from a purely military point of view, declaring it well-planned and executed. He will view the Little Bighorn with similar dispassion. He has participated in enough massacres—on both ends of the gun—not to be bothered by the ethical considerations. He finds scalping distasteful but fascinating, and while sparing the reader too many graphic details, provides plenty. He is spared active participation because it is an art and a spoiled scalp will not be purchased. Economics are everything, as he well understands. The women are spared until they can be properly raped, a fact he again accepts as part of the spoils of war. How it is done, however, Flashy finds repugnant, and he treats his woman with dignity. She seems charmed and he is about to begin when he is knocked out. By this point, he has killed Nugent-Hare, largely because the latter boasts of having cuckolded him with Susie all across the plains. He admits that in a court of law he would be convicted of manslaughter. The Apache woman will, however, be seen interpreting him as her savior, and spare him the fate of the other marauders.

# Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 148-207

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 148-207 Summary

The 11th chapter finds Flashy stripped and hanging upside down along with a dozen scalp-hunters who fail to escape or die outright. Fires have been built beneath the others and the womenfolk are happily flaying them, while Sonsee-array, beloved daughter of the fearsome Chief Mangas Colorado, demands that Flashy be spared for having saved her and treated her well. He is more beautiful and braver than her many suitors, particularly Vasco. Still disoriented, Flashy is cut down and taken to a wickiup to recover. Memories of past horrors run through his mind until he is kicked awake by ugly, brutal Yawner (Geronimo) before the cool, provocative Sonsee-array. Flashy is led before the tribal elders. When questioned, Flashy declares he is not American but an English trader, held prisoner by the scalp-hunters. He denies taking scalps. Sonsee-array insists that Flashy is a man after her father's heart and she will marry him or no one. Flashy is careful not to overdo his enthusiasm while still pleasing her. When Sonsee-array's spurned suitor, Vasco, issues a challenge for her hand, Flashy chooses lances on horseback and demonstrates his prowess, hoping to head off a fight. Shown up, Vasco is about to kill Flashy treacherously when he is himself slain by Yawner. As Mangas declares this just, Flashy is relieved but decides Morrison had not been such a bad father-in-law by comparison.

The 12th chapter deals with Flashy's acceptance into the tribe. Yawner becomes his mentor/jailer, introducing him to the nauseating but refreshing sweatbath and instructing him in the rituals of becoming betrothed. Sonsee-array draws it out to the maximum allowed. Mangas gives a feast at which he and Flashy get drunk and intermix talk about Mexican and American law with Flashy's feelings towards Sonsee-array. Flashy considers Mangas a fine psychologist and politician as well as a cruel barbarian, and his lucid brain first shows Flashy how the Indian mind works. Apaches in particular believe "deceit is a virtue, lying a fine art, theft and murder a way of life, and torture a delightful recreation." They despise white civilization and want no part of it because they know their ways are better. The American government fails to understand this upside-down view; it expects them to be impressed by trappings of civilization. The Indians know that any lands allowed them by treaty will be stolen. It is "the reservation or the grave."

Next morning, Yawner takes Flashy to a secluded spot to prepare a honeymoon bower for Sonsee-array, complete with flower garden. The wedding is two days later. Flashy's memories of it are vague. Braves and virgins dance around a fire at dusk before the masked spirit seekers invoke blessings. Next, fearsome buffalo-dancers ritually pursue the virgins. When the drums stop, Flashy is led before the spirit-chief and Mangas escorts Sonsee-array to his side. Yawner replies as Flashy's proxy as he begins to sweat. Smug Sonsee-array is not beautiful like Elspeth or his other lovers, but he is drunk on liquor and lust and ready for action when they reach the bower. Except for white leggings with bells, Sonsee-array is naked and oiled when he enters, but Flashy is self-restrained as with Suzie. In the morning, she asks him to make her bells ring again.

The 13th chapter finds Flashy flattering himself over teaching Sonsee-array a thing or two about sex in the course of a ten-day honeymoon. Sonsee-array tells Flashy that his tribal name is "White-Rider-Goes-So-Fast-He-Destroys-the-Wind-with-His-Speed," unfortunately shortened to "Wind Breaker." They return to the tribe as it moves into winter quarters in the hills. With no idea where he is and no opportunity to escape, Flashy settles in, not growing "soft" on Apaches—indeed, the longer he lives among them, the more he finds them "monsters" who enjoy inflicting pain—but playing the model son-in-law.

Flashy's chance comes as the first spring war party forms. He is given back his gun and Sonsee-array applies war paint, telling him what booty she expects. He feels a pang, leaving her. Five groups fan out. Flashy rides with Mangas and Delgadito. They pass an enormous Stonehenge and approach a village. Delgadito leads the raid, tasking Flashy and two others to secure the corral. When Cavallo kills a woman and is about to slay her infant, Flashy shoots him and rides into the bushes, away from the terrible sounds of battle. He gallops eastward with little food or water and only the North Star to guide him. Coming upon skeletons, he realizes that he is in the dreaded Jornada del Muerto, panics, and rides all night. His horse senses fresh water and both drink, saving their lives.

Behind him, Flashy sees a column of dust, which can only be pursuing Apaches. On a superior horse, Flashy leaves them behind. When the horse again finds water, the Apaches suddenly appear, and Flashy makes a dash for the foothills, where thickets and loose rocks remove his speed advantage. An arrow paralyzes his right shoulder. Despairing, he sees a figure in buckskins ahead whose musket drops the closest Apache, but the others keep up the pursuit. A voice tells him to lie still as Iron Eyes gloats. A volley of shots rings out and a bugle sounds, the man in buckskins with blurring speed fights off one Apache and a bearded man, Maxwell, brings him down with one shot. Another volley from the dragoons and it is over. Being refreshed and bandaged, Flashy learns that the force had been lying in wait for horse thieves and set an ambush, seeing him pursued. Flashy passes out.

The 14th chapter shows Flashy's wound infected and he delirious. Fate has maltreated him in America. Something tells Flashy to be completely truthful about his adventures with Gallantin and the Apaches when talking with Maxwell and his rescuer, the famous Kit Carson. Carson advises he make his way to San Francisco and offers to take him north to join a caravan. He wants to learn details about Mangas. Carson plays host to Flashy for several weeks at his modest home in Rayado, speaking rarely, allowing Maxwell to tell stories. Carson brings out a book about himself, which tells of a woman who believes his legend and dies hoping that he will rescue her. Flashy assures Carson that it is better to die in hope than in despair.

They set off with a hunter, Goodwin, for Fort Laramie on Flashy's 28th birthday on a splendid trip with Carson sensing every detail of his surrounding. Flashy learns only a few woodcraft tricks, but masters the Sioux language, the lingua franca of the vast region. They run into Spotted Tail, who invites them to feast on buffalo meat, returning Wootton and Flashy's earlier hospitality. Spotted Tail picks up the English phrase "Joll-

ee good!" His almost fair-haired 5-6-year-old nephew catches Flashy's eye, and Flashy teaches him to wink and sets him on his horse for a ride. A mountain man takes Flashy for Carson, who accepts this with humor and recommends that the westward-bound wagon train hire Flashy at $50 a month as a hunter. Before they part, Carson tells Flashy about Wootton's suspicions that he is Comber, a bigamist with a price on his head. Carson wants no explanation. As he heads out on the long road to the coast and longer voyage home, Flashy knows that a chapter is closing and looks forward to a calm rest.

## Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 148-207 Analysis

The 11th chapter opens with Flashy extolling the value of the public school education that he has received and Nugent-Hare obviously has not. He often refers to Dr. Arnold, head master at the Rugby School, where he first gains a reputation for being a bully and from which Arnold expels him for drunkenness. At Rugby, he learns "style," which is why he treats his Apache girl with dignity. He is certain that he would have died in 1849 otherwise. Gallantin somehow escapes, but the others are strung upside down from trees and flayed alive by the furious Apache women in the fashion previous described. Flashy adds more graphic detail.

At first hanging upside down and disoriented, and later facing the tribal elders dominated by the biggest man he has ever seen, Mangas Colorado ("Red Sleeves"), Flashy listens to the bits of debate about his fate that occur in Spanish. He refers to the chief's beloved daughter, Sonsee-array as his "little Pocohontas," a reference to the legend of the young Indian woman who saves John Smith in the early-17th century Jamestown, VA, colony by declaring that her people will have to kill her to kill him. She marries John Rolfe, who takes her to England where she is favorably received at court. The legend is well-known on both sides of the Atlantic. Flashy is amused when Mangas Colorado refers to Queen Victoria as "Snow Woman."

Flashy is at the time unaware that Apaches have no "colour bar" to marriage that and girls are given free choice of husbands. Fiery Sonsee-array antagonizes a former suitor, Vasco, by calling him ugly and cowardly, forcing Flashy into a chivalrous duel for her hand. Knowing that he is no match for the wiry brave with Native weapons, Flashy chooses the weapon of a cavalry officer and, to head off an actual fight to the death, arranges a demonstration of his finesse. He admits that he is a bit rusty since the days in India when he grows quite proficient at "pegging." Flashy impresses the company. Vasco makes a fool of himself and loses his temper, and Flashy's guard and tormentor, Yawner (better known later in life as Geronimo) kills Vasco before he can murder Flashy in cold blood. As he has several times already, Flashy is headed to the altar.

The 12th chapter details Flashy's Apache betrothal, wedding, and honeymoon. He utilizes a witty verbatim text of his fearsome father-in-law's prenuptial admonitions. Both are drunk. Mangas asks only in passing if Flashy is sincere about marrying his daughter, while speaking expansively about the U.S. Government's Indian policies. Mangas provides Flashy his first glimpse into the Indian mind and he concludes that

Washington will never understand that the Apaches are not impressed by Western technology and society because they consider their own way far superior. Western and Indian virtues are polar opposites, and in the end, might will make right. Yawner (Geronimo) is tasked with preparing him for the honeymoon, showing great tenderness in helping prepare a flower garden around their new wickiup. He serves as Flashy's proxy at the wedding whenever responses in Apache are required.

For a change, Flashy is too frightened to muse about earlier weddings and loves. He finds the service rather nonreligious but colorful, and believes the spirit-chief invokes Montezuma as the God of blessings. Montezuma II is, of course, the great Aztec warrior/priest at the time of Cortes and not a God; his influence had not extended north into what is now New Mexico. Flashy is, perhaps, being facetious. The four-day wait for the wedding leave Flashy anxious to get to bed, but he plays it cool—a technique he has mastered with Suzie—and has his bride, who wears only leggings with bells attached, asking to have her bells rung again in the morning. This becomes a minor motif for the six months they spend together. From the start, he watches for an opportunity to flee, but his best man, Geronimo (Flashy takes pride in this fact) sticks close all of the time.

The 13th chapter sketches in quick strokes the boring winter that Flashy spends among the Apaches. Having recovered his usual style, he compares Sonsee-array with previous lovers, allowing fans of the series to recall some of his exploits. He also describes the Apaches' language and culture in some detail, hearkening back to the book's opening, when he tangles with the anthropologist. Flashy maintains that he is no Apache lover. All the time he is watching for a chance to escape. When it comes, he has to survive the wilderness of the Jornada del Merto, about which he has been direly warned. His horse's ability to find water saves them both. The horse shows him the kind of loyalty he had earlier said they show their slain riders. For all the hard riding, it seems that they reach the safety of the foothills a little easily, and there the novel takes a turn: Flashy is saved by a platoon of dragoons who had been lying about watching for horse thieves. He is again wounded and delirious, so the identity of his savior is kept a mystery at chapter's end.

The 14th chapter brings to a conclusion Flashy's American adventure of 1849-50. He learns that his rescuer is the famous Kit Carson, who is a thoughtful, quiet, reserved man when not swinging his axe. Flashy fills many pages with descriptions of the man and Carson's abiding guilt at not being able to rescue a particular damsel in distress. Flashy shows and unusually high level of pathos in his reaction. On the whole, however, he feels uncomfortable in Carson's presence and believes that Carson knows that he is a rogue and does not "cotton" to him.

At chapter's end, Carson reveals that Wootton has deduced that Flashy and Comber are the same person. Flashy panics, but Carson is uninterested in explanations or details. He happily augments his knowledge about the Apaches, since this applies to his trade, but cares nothing about Flashy's dubious marriages and other details. He helps Flashy grow fluent in Sioux, which proves invaluable in the second part of the novel. Note the encounter with Spotted Tail's unnamed nephew, whose light hair he finds

remarkable. He becomes a central figure at the end of the second part. Feasting on buffalo with Spotted Tail helps tie up the first part, and Flashy's insistence than he will not return to the Wild West ensures that he will be back.

# Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 211-249

## Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 211-249 Summary

The 15th chapter begins Flashy's second American adventure. Elspeth is to blame for it, having developed middle-aged wanderlust. After living high in Boston and New York, they attend Philip Sheridan's wedding in Chicago. At the reception, Flashy finds himself chatting with men high-placed men in the Grant Administration: Sherman, Pope, and Crook. He innocently asks questions about the trouble brewing in the Black Hills after gold is discovered on the sacred lands of the Sioux, ceded to them by treaty. Sherman is indignant at the idea of doing anything for the "red brothers" who continue their violence and refuse to live on reservations. Only a handful, including Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, are truly hostile. Flashy notes that if there are 46,000 armed Indians, that is double the size of the U.S. Army. Elspeth's appearance ends talk of Indians.

Hours later, during dinner at the Grand Pacific, Flashy is amazed to meet Spotted Tail, in evening dress and a single red eagle's feather in his long, braided hair, still remembering "joll-ee good!" He is returning from a White House "pow-wow on high matters." Spotted Tail invites him to dinner, Flashy wondering why he is speaking like a "romantic stage-Indian." He reveals that he has learned English in prison after the slaughter at Fort Leavenworth. He now lives at the agency. Spotted Tail is instantly taken by Elspeth, half-naked in a Parisian gown and she is as clearly enchanted. Spotted Tail orders "horse's doovers" for the entire party of Indians. Other diners gawk and whisper. While Elspeth chatters, Flashy asks about the nephew, Little Curly. He is now Crazy Horse (Tashunka), chief of the hostiles. He hates all Americans, refuses all treaties, and fights for his land and people. After four major battles against Americans and other tribes, Spotted Tail has had enough. He has seen the might of white America and wants only the best terms for his own folk. Those who fight to the death are wrong. Flashy realizes that Spotted Tail is the cleverest of the Sioux leaders. After dinner, Spotted Tail takes the Flashmans to the theater—a burlesque show—and bellows approval of the "conjurer." Later, in their room, Elspeth continues talking about distinguished Spotted Tail while they make love and asks to be taken to see the Indians in their natural surroundings.

The 16th chapter opens with Flashy trying to talk Elspeth out of sightseeing among the Indians and musing about the disappearing frontier. Fighting between Indians and the U.S. Army is scattered but fierce, with each side accusing the other of bad faith. Cheating by agents angers peaceful Indians and Washington ignores them. The buffalo are all but extinct, which dooms the Indian way of life. Sheridan is sure there will be no war. The Flashmans visit Washington in the heat of summer, meet the tired, disillusioned Pres. Grant at a dinner, and when Elspeth announces that Flashy is an expert on Indians and friends with Spotted Tail, Grant asks him to advise Sen. Allison's commission. Flashy cannot refuse, but knows that negotiations are pointless, given Allison's short-sightedness, arrogance, tactlessness, and obstinacy. It is ridiculous to think that the Sioux, who are at the point of rising, will accept money for their sacred

land. Camp Robinson is located in the "peaceful" zone south of the Black Hills, while the militants roam to the west in Powder River country. Allison dismisses their importance. A hard winter on short provisions has led to war parties. On the train, Elspeth is excited to see the various tribes camped on the outskirts of the fort. Six grim Sioux chiefs come to dinner, led by Red Cloud.

Spotted Tail is amazed to see Flashy and entranced by Elspeth. Allison is aloof and huffy, while Spotted Tail is blunt: the Sioux will not let the Black Hills be taken. When Flashy suggests privately that they are already lost, Spotted Tail claims that he has more warriors. Flashy points out that he has no stake in the conflict before declaring the negotiations a sham. If he were the whites' spokesman, he would never admit that they plan on cheating. The Sioux must get the best bargain they can—or have nothing. Flashy promises to recommend that the whites pay a good price. Spotted Tail flusters Flashy by hinting that he would like to have sex with Elspeth. Flashy reports his side of the conversation to the commission, leaving hope that a three-quarters majority is possible. Next day, Spotted Tail demands $40 million and stalks out when Allison offers $6 million. Allison is sure he can deal with the chiefs privately. While both sides talk, Flashy accompanies Elspeth sightseeing.

The final assembly takes place several miles from Camp Sheridan. Standing Bear delivers Spotted Tail's warning to remain in the fort, but offers additional escort if Flashy insists on attending to the assembly. Endless rows of Sioux squat, grim-faced in war attire, silent as death. As Allison rises to speak, mounted warriors surround the American cavalry. The Sioux translator does not take the edge off Allison's provocative message. As Red Cloud rises to respond, 200 armed Indian riders arrive, led by Crazy Horse's right-hand-man, Little Big Man. He threatens to kill the first chief who talks of selling the Black Hills. As Spotted Tail tries to regain order, Standing Bear points to Elspeth, who has ridden up to see what is going on. Flashy forces her along with the commissioners into the ambulance, to return to camp immediately. He rides with the blue coats who, fortunately, remain cool. One Sioux brave calls for slaughter, but Standing Bear distracts him. Arriving safely in the fort, Flashy realizes that Elspeth has not returned and is on the point of galloping back when she rides in on a pony. She has been safe with Spotted Tail. Thirty years of worry about Elspeth's morals overcomes Flashy, but having no proof, he says nothing.

## Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 211-249 Analysis

The 15th chapter jumps ahead a quarter century to 1875, as Elspeth insists that Flashy show her America. He is reticent but cannot dissuade her by the prospects of distance or discomfort. She exhausts the scenic places of Europe, Egypt, and Palestine. Flashy claims to have given no thought to Indians in decades and they come up only during a Chicago wedding. That event brings him in contact with the general responsible for handling Indian policy during the Grant Administration. They debate how the government should deal with whites seeking by the thousands to exploit gold in the Black Hills of the Dakotas, which are sacred lands—Valhalla—to the Sioux. Most Indians have gone peacefully to the reservations but are ill-treated by government

officials charged with caring for their welfare. Guns and ammunition are flowing into the reservations. A few renegades refuse to make peace—as rabidly as the whites refuse to honor existing treaties. The wedding reception makes for a succinct introduction to Part 2.

The chapter shifts venue to the men's room in a major hotel, where Flashy encounters Spotted Tail, the Sioux brave who had so frightened him while eating buffalo with Wootton years before. He is a shocking sight in evening clothes. Spotted Tail's use of stereotypical Indian phrases (e.g., "tipi of the Great Father" and "iron horse) seems odd to Flashy, but they quickly switch to speaking in Sioux. Flashy notices the other diners' reactions and realizes that the hotel is capitalizing on their presence, passing through Chicago from Washington, D.C. Spotted Tail has accepted that Indians must live on white terms or perish and disapproves of the few renegades, the most famous of whom is the little boy whom Flashy teaches to wink and gives his first ride on a horse long ago. Spotted Tail has had his share of battles, so his attitude cannot be mistaken for cowardice.

In terms of the later action of the book, Young Frank Standing Bear is barely mentioned as being with Spotted Tail in Chicago. Flashy instantly recalls the sonorous Sioux language, and speaking in it helps shelter Elspeth from learning about the traveling bordello. She believes that he had been attending Baptist services every evening. The Sioux had been watching to abduct a girl or two, but Wootton had been too vigilant. Flashy's suspicions that Elspeth has affairs with every good-looking man she meets comes to the surface, as she reacts warmly to Gen. Crook and Spotted Tail. Flashy will grow even more concerned in the chapters ahead.

The 16th chapter shows Flashy joining Sen. Allison's commission as a personal favor to Pres. Grant, who is pictured as worn out at the end of his second term. He particularly hates having to shake so many hands. Heading West by train, Flashy sees that there will be no real negotiations. Allison is the close-minded type who declares how things will be. Elspeth, meanwhile, is set on seeing real Indians. Flashy is sure that if she ever sees -and smells—the squalor her ardor will be cooled. He depicts the temporary villages set up around the fort and has Spotted Bear prefer living in a movable wickiup to a wooden house; the former can be abandoned when it becomes filthy. When Elspeth enjoys Indian stew for dinner, Flashy does not have the heart to tell her it is probably made from dogs.

On the level of business, Flashy advises Spotted Tail to take whatever he can get before he gets nothing. Both know that the whites will break any treaty; that Flashy admits it is proof that he is not on Washington's side. Tension builds as handful of commissioners face the vast Sioux hordes. Allison is brusque, but before an answer can be given, the militant Indians arrive, threatening to deal lethally with collaborators. The whites flee and disaster is narrowly averted. Elspeth, it turns out, had hopped out of the ambulance to watch all of the colorful action just before all goes bad. Spotted Tail takes care of her, keeping her out of sight until the braves disperse. Flashy, who already suspects Spotted Tail's intentions—and always suspects Elspeth of being loose—flashes back to his worst moment, catching Elspeth half-naked with his former

commanding officer, but has no real proof and decides, "what's an Indian, more or less?"

Note that Spotted Bear has come to center stage as Spotted Tail's representative. When he quotes Roman poet Juvenal,"Quis custodiet ipos custodes?" ("Who watches the watchmen?"), Flashy seems unsurprised to hear this coming from an Indian. Instead, he thinks of John Charity Spring. The significance comes out in the final chapters.

# Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 250-301

## Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 250-301 Summary

The 17th chapter opens with Flashy glad he is not present for Spotted Tail's formal rejection of Allison's offer, knowing he would have exploded in anger. Allison warns that the government will proceed, with or without payment. Standing Bear is sent to talk with the hostile chiefs. Flashy doubts if either side wants a treaty and the U.S. assumes that the Sioux will not fight. It orders the Sioux to the agencies before February of 1876, but word reaches them after snow makes compliance impossible. The Flashmans continue their train ride to the Rockies and return to New York. Flashy wants to sail for England, but Elspeth gets involved in the Philadelphia Exposition. One day in New York, Flashy encounters George Custer, who is frustrated at reverting to his prewar rank of lieutenant colonel and wanting to get back into action against the Indians. Grant, however, detests him. They arrange to dine that night with their wives and brother Tom, and Custer rambles on about the glories of war. He laments that he has not had Flashy's opportunities. The Flashmans and Custers see a lot of each other that winter, including going to the theater, where Custer bawls sentimentally. In the spring, Custer is out of money and determined to make one last campaign to secure his reputation. Once the Sioux are defeated there will be no more need for an army. The latest news is that Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull have defied the ultimatum and are camped in the Powder waiting to fight. Custer prays to lead that fight. When he offers Flashy to ride with him, Flashy has a hard time backing out honorably. Flashy assumes that he is through with Custer, but in April he reappears, frantic that Grant is holding against him his testimony against Secretary of War William Belknap. Flashy is unclear on details, but cannot avoid going to the White House to intercede for Custer.

In the restaurant that day, Flashy notices a tall shapely woman with a sharp Yankee voice. He takes her for an Italian. The fact that one eye is covered by a patch does not detract from her beauty. He immediately pictures her naked and laments that they are ships passing. He rides to Washington with Custer and Grant puts him immediately in his place: Custer is none of Flashy's business. When Flashy reminds him of his services to the U.S., Grant listens, although he has already been bombarded by Sherman and Sheridan and is not persuaded to give Custer a command. Flashy asks only that Grant tell Custer that personally, and suggests that Custer is not a first-rate soldier, forcing Grant to argue Custer's merits. As Flashy is about to leave, having muddied the waters, Grant asks him if he is the character in Tom Brown's Schooldays. On the street, Flashy offers Grant little hope. Back at the hotel, Flashy has a note waiting. He assumes it is a request from Grant for an autograph, but it is an invitation from the directors of the Upper Missouri Development Corporation to meet them about a proposal. He figures there is no harm in investigating. The woman with the eye patch, Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, greets Flashy and, confirming that he knows Otto von Bismarck, hires him for $15,000 get the Chancellor's endorsement for her project on the Missouri River renamed in Bismarck's honor. Flashy refuses a $5,000 retainer while contemplating how to seduce her. She allows him a long, deep kiss before declaring that "B." stands for business

during working hours. Candy will meet Flashy in ten days. Dismissed, Flashy admires her "aloofness punctuated by a brief impassioned lechery." Her proposal seems plausible and Elspeth is busy for a month. Flashy wonders if Custer has sent Candy to lure him, but doubts it.

The 18th chapter opens on a train as Flashy accompanies Custer westward, Custer having fled Washington without permission and cursing Grant the whole way. They learn that Gen. Crook recently misses a chance to capture Crazy Horse. Custer frets that Gen. Terry has never fought an Indian. In Chicago Custer learns that Grant has excluded him from the expedition, and Sheridan advises that he stop acting like a "damned opera singer" and get Terry to intercede. Continuing on to Bismarck with Grant's permission, Custer turns haughty. At Fort Lincoln, Flashy sees that Custer is unpopular but, lusting over the thought of Candy, he admires how Custer drills his troops. At a party, Custer leads the singing of Garryowen, which Flashy associates with the tragedy of the Light Brigade. Flashy continues to decline invitations to join the battle. Flashy turns out in the morning for the departure of the 7th, and finds the next ten days of waiting hellish. Candy arrives on the 27th and summons him to the steamer, Far West. She introduces Flashy to Capt. Marsh before getting down to business. Candy describes the project, ignoring Flashy's fondling her breasts before reminding him bluntly of her rules. As they steam upriver, Flashy endures two days of sexual frustration before Candy comes to his cabin, removes her clothes sensually, and outperforms Susie Willinck in bed. When Candy returns to her own cabin to sleep, Flashy hears deep sobbing through the wall.

The 19th chapter finds the Far West delivering matériel to the mouth of the Powder River. Flashy is so busy in Candy's embrace that he feels secure nearing a war zone. His only wish is that she unbend a bit. After ten days, they reach their destination and the great work of offloading the boat keeps Flashy and Candy apart. Terry picks Flashy's brains and worries about Custer's state of mind. He has become "a law unto himself." Custer's spirits rise as news comes in from scouts. Candy thinks that Custer is crazy because he likes killing Indians too much. On 21 June, Terry holds a senior staff meeting, estimating 800-1,000 braves in the Big Horn hills against the 7th cavalry's 1,000 plus 600 infantry. The scouts suggest 5,000 braves is more probable, but Custer is unimpressed. Terry and Gibbon will march to Big Horn, Crook will advance from the south, and Custer will circle to cut off anyone who escapes the trap. No one is sure where Crook is (he has been "bushwhacked" by Crazy Horse). Terry wants a concerted attack, but allows his commanders discretion. Custer gets this made explicit, turns down additional cavalry and scorns hauling Gatling guns. Flashy declines to ride along, wishes him luck, and goes to play poker.

Custer rides out at first light. The Far West spends the day ferrying infantry. That night, Flashy is surprised when Candy suggests a stroll on shore. She admits to knowing too many men who want only to get women into bed. She contemptuously includes Flashy among them and, weeping, rejects his protests. As she talks of having once been in love, Candy's nasal twang vanishes. Flashy realizes that he is in mortal danger even before he is seized, gagged, and bound. Candy reveals herself as Cleonie, bewails the slavery she has survived and the hatred that has driven her. With his eyes, Flashy begs

to speak, but she will not hear excuses. Had she not truly loved Flashy, the betrayal would not have hurt so badly. Having been sold to Indians, Cleonie is giving Flashy to her Indian friends for their slow enjoyment.

## Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 250-301 Analysis

The 17th chapter introduces two characters crucial to the end of the novel. The first is George Armstrong Custer. Flashy describes at some length how many Union Army officers who receive brevetted promotions during the Civil War are dropped back to their former ranks afterward. Most accept it as a normal postwar occurrence, but Custer is gravely insulted. At dinner, Flashy gets Custer's goat by mentioning his having received a Medal of Honor and that Custer's brother Tom won two during the war. Custer is certain that the militant Sioux will fight, and this is his last chance at regaining his generalship. Grant has it in for him over politics. Flashy admits that he knows little about the Belknap scandal and impeachment at which Custer is forced to testify. Flashy agrees to intercede with Grant, who stubbornly refuses to see Custer, and uses reverse psychology on the president in hopes of getting him to think a bit more.

The second new character is Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, introduced as a a beautiful, desirable ship passing in the night, whom Flashy meets again and from whom he receives a lucrative and intriguing job offer. Candy has read Flashy's book, Dawns and Departures, in which he alludes to meeting the Prussian Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. That portion of the "Flashman Papers" is published as Royal Flash; this novel includes many allusions to the danger that Flashy is put in pretending to be a prince. Flashy's only interest in the project is to seduce Candy, but he sees the only chance of gratifying his desires in going to Bismarck on the frontier and writing its namesake as Candy requires. She intimates that there may be time and opportunity for other activities outside of business hours when she joins him in three weeks. Until then, she is booked up with appointments. Flashy briefly considers whether Custer might have arranged this to get him handy when the fighting starts—Flashy having turned down the offer to fight at his side—but decides that Custer is too "puritan" for that. Flashy's hormones obviously have control of him, and Candy soon puts him closer to death than any other woman over whom he has lusted.

The 18th chapter returns Flashy to the frontier, riding the rails with Custer as far as Bismarck, and then waiting for Candy, whose sexual aura enchants Flashy. Much more of Custer's undesirable character traits come out during the ride, as he curses Grant for denying him his last chance at fame. At the fort, Flashy discovers that his troopers are not too fond of him—despite Custer's claims. He has to admit that he drills them well for the coming battle and hosts a fine farewell party. Flashy again mentions Garryowen, this time quoting the full text. A footnote explains the song's association with various military commands. Flashy cannot sing along because of recollections from the Crimean War. The troops ride off to war with tearful goodbyes and rousing songs. Even if the reader were unaware of what happens at Little Bighorn, the mood of the writing makes the event solemn.

Candy returns to the story as a powerhouse. Her curt manner of speaking is instantly identifiable. Flashy describes with evident residual frustration how she does a business roll-out while being fondled, then turns to let him have a bit more fun—coolly suggesting that he is paying too much attention to one breast but generally complementing him on his technique while blowing cigarette smoke from her nostrils—before laying down the law: she has allowed him twice to break her rules to lure him to Bismarck and participate in her project. Sex has its place, but after business hours. During the wait at the fort, Flashy has been running mentally through his lovers yet again and, while describing Candy's striptease and love-making, compares her with Susie. He clearly has no clue as to Candy's identity or from where she may have learned such professional techniques. The only thing that surprises him is that she weeps afterward in her own bed. Candy's business clout is suggested by her ability to prevent Custer's wife from accompanying them upriver to his provisional camp. The boat captain, a profession not given to taking orders, also quietly acquiesces.

The 19th chapter shows final preparations for the 7th Cavalry's assault on the hostile Sioux. Flashy is off-guard, enjoying his time with Candy, and only a bit thrown by her emotionless enjoyment of sex. Her private weeping seems out of character. Much of the chapter is given over to a detailed military briefing at which Indian Bureau figures are used to figure the size of the opposing force. Complied during the winter, they are meaningless. Scouts suggest raising the number of fighting braves from 1,000 to 5,000. At the former number, the Army is on par; at the latter, they are overwhelmed. Custer insists that the Sioux are divided into bands, so their power cannot be concentrated. Flashy recalls the bravado in camp at the ill-fated Battle of Balaclava, and sees parallels between Custer and his nemesis, Col. Cardigan. Custer's goal at the meeting is to obtain an explicit statement from the commander that field commanders enjoy individual initiative. This will cover him should the battle fail and he face court martial. Candy remarks to Flashy that Custer seems crazy. He enjoys killing Indians too much. They talk a bit about the morals of any occupation.

Flashy is anxious to get into bed with Candy, after several days and nights find the boat too busy for them to be together. Instead, she uncharacteristically suggests a stroll along the river shore. Flashy's guard is down. Tears again confound him—including some flowing from under the eye patch. Candy builds up to revealing to Flashy her true identity, talking about how males are users and females optimistic fools. She talks of having once been in love, and then mentions Santa Fe. Fear flows through Flashy even before he is seized, bound, and gagged to prevent his wheedling his way out of the predicament. Cleone knows him well. Her twangy Yankee accent gives way to the smooth Creole of her youth. She removes the eye patch and becomes recognizable; she doubts that she had needed even that much disguise, because she had known that Flashy's hormones would blind him. Cleone tells her tragic story in detail—much of it will be retold and some details added later—before turning him over to the Sioux to be tortured to death along with any survivors of the 7th Cavalry. She has often demanded to know what God has in mind for her. Playing whore to Flashy has for weeks has been horrible, because once upon a time she had loved him. She walks away, having prepared a cover story when Flashy is discovered missing. Flashy is dragged into the

woods. He recalls the various physical tortures that he has endured at the command of women.

# Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 301-353

## Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 301-353 Summary

The 20th chapter shows Flashy in hindsight admiring how smoothly Cleonie/Candy arranges his abduction, but cannot at that time figure out how she links Comber and Flashy. Only Carson and Lincoln know him as both and they are long dead. He forces himself not to panic in order to have a chance to survive. If ungagged, he could drop names in Sioux: Spotted Tail and Craze Horse. The four guards, led by Jacket, Walking Willow's brother, beat him, promise slow torture, and mock Spotted Tail as a coward. They ride toward Big Horn, hear that Crook has been defeated, but hear nothing about Custer. Finally they reach Greasy Grass, a hillside that has sprouted "a forest of lodges," the largest assembly of Indians in history, at least 10,000 braves. Jacket puts Flashy in a stinking lodge opposite the great camp, his arms locked in a wooden yoke. A pretty girl, Walking-Blanket-Woman, may feed him but listen to nothing until One-Who-Catches arrives. She has heard about Wind Breaker's crimes and has lost a brother in battle. Flashy's hopes are dim.

Looking out over the sprawling Indian encampment and hearing how he will be burnt to death along with any "white snakes" that come closer, Flashy notes that the village and woods grow quiet—as before a storm. Shouts and drums then begin, armed braves race toward the invaders and, chaotically, women and children run away. Flashy figures Custer is coming (it is Reno). As Flashy contemplates what to do about the yoke, Walking-Blanket-Woman appears. Instead of hacking him to death, as a whistle plays Garryowen and Custer comes into view, she cuts him free and runs. Flashy steals a pony and races to warn the 7th away, yelling for the troopers to hold their fire.

Seeing Flashy, Custer cannot get beyond the fact that he is dressed in evening clothes, cannot hear frantic calls to retreat immediately or die. Instead, Custer orders an advance, citing the Light Brigade. A bullet hits Custer but he stays mounted, while others fall to precision fusillades. Custer orders a retreat, too late across the open Greasy Grass slope where, with the battlefield eye of a Wellington, Chief Gall turns the 7th Cavalry's flank. In the next 15 minutes, the dismounted troopers are slaughtered. Firing a borrowed pistol, Flashy flees, sobbing as he sees friends dying. Everything seems in slow motion as at Balaclava. Indians are scalping the dead as Flashy nearly clears the last stand, but his horse is killed and he falls. A brave wearing a buffalo cap jumps on Flashy and pretends to kill him, warning him to lie still. He rubs his face with the guts of another victim, robs him, and takes a small patch of scalp. His boasting drives other braves away from the supposed corpse. In good American English he tells Flashy to "play possum" for a few hours. Flashy is awakened at dusk by water in the face. The mystery man dresses him in buckskins, disguises him with the buffalo-cap, puts him on a pony, and guides the way. Flashy is swooning when One-Who-Catches gives orders in Sioux on how to care for him.

The 21st and final chapter opens with Flashy remaking on how slowly one recovers from wounds after age fifty. Joe Bright Dear nurses him back to help, refuses to talk about One-Who-Catches, and confirms that Custer is dead because he risks splitting his force against supposed small enemy numbers. He had been a "fool optimist," obsessed with victory, who had neglected to test the troopers' rifles—and their jamming in battle is a major key to his own defeat. All commanders make mistakes but no one hears about them. America will never forget Custer's.

After a month of healing, Flashy is restless in the cave with Joe. When One-Who-Catches arrives, Flashy recognizes Young Frank Standing Bear from Chicago. The man tells his story to Flashy in Sioux, ending with the revelation that he is the son of Cleonie/Candy. He details the sale to the Navajo, years of prostitution, and fanatic desire that Flashy die horribly in retribution after in Chicago, he puts Comber/Flashman together and informs her. It had been a chance in a million the Standing Bear would be there. Flashy begins recognizing his own features in Standing Bear as he talks about his upbringing in two cultures. Standing Bear has confirmed details with the Santa Fe priest and Susie Willinck, who is the only person who has ever shown him care. Flashy cannot lie his way out. Having heard that Jacket is holding Flashy in the village to be tortured after the battle, Standing Bear is amaze to find him on the battlefield and deceives his brothers to save him.

Standing Bear speaks without emotion, leaving Flashy to dread what might be coming. The fear lessens when he begins speaking and gesturing like an American, revealing that he has studied at Harvard. Flashy deserves to be cut to ribbons but he has decided to spare his father. In the white world, Standing Bear goes by Frank Grouard, but it should be Frank Flashman. Flashy admires the drama with which his son reveals the truth, but there is no touching reunion; neither is cut out for affection. Over the next few days, however, they compare notes out of curiosity. Frank's story is remarkable although not unique, told bluntly. He is two people. He had tired of the white world several months before he and Flashy meet in Chicago, and had been recruited by Spotted Tail, who believes that he is a full-blooded Sioux and does not know that he speaks English. Life on the agency has also grown boring, so he becomes Crook's scout, which keeps him away from camp when Flashy is brought in—which spares Flashy's life. He gets free, changes into Standing Bear, and arrives at Greasy Grass—in time to save Flashy again. Having been in similar, complex situations, Flashy understands. Frank does not want revenge on Flashy as his crazy, cruel mother does. He will let his mother believe that Flashy dies in the battle.

Flashy finds it strange talking to someone who walks, talks, and acts like himself. He thinks that Frank is a happy person (from Cleonie's side) and he is able to conceal his character (like his father). Frank rides with Flashy through the foothills for a week. The Indians fear reprisals over Custer and Crazy Horse is likely to fight it out. Father and son get along well, still taking stock of one another. Flashy tells him of his half-brother and half-sister. Frank tells about how he adapts in Boston, claiming to be French-American, born the in South Seas and bought to the U.S. by Mormons. Having learned Flashy's identity, Frank has read up on him and asks many questions, which Flashy answers for the most part. Frank whistles Garryowen before announcing it is time to

part. He resists Flashy's attempts at getting him to come East with him and to England, where Flashy can set him up for a good life. Frank, however, as a Sioux belongs to the Plains, even if that way of life is doomed. Flashy is depressed, losing his son after just a week, but then is relieved not to have to explain him to Elspeth and others.

Flashy arrives in Deadwood, a mining town just four months old and growing fast. In the hotel, Flashy pawns his watch, rents a room, and falls asleep in the bath. At dinner he is approached by Wild Bill Hickok, an old friend, who has bought back the watch. They eat, drink, and talk about adventures—and Flashy's desire to go home to peace. Hickok declines to ride with him to Cheyenne. He is in a poker game in the Number Ten Saloon. The editor notes that Flashy stops writing his memoir that day, noting that after he heads out, Hickok is shot dead.

## Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 301-353 Analysis

The 20th chapter shows Flashy in what he describes as the most dangerous situation in his danger-filled life: bound and gagged so he cannot work his enchantment on the young Sioux woman, Walking-Blanket-Woman, who is his de facto jailer in the huge multi-tribal village on the Little Bighorn stream. He sees clearly the futility of the U.S. Army's planning. The Sioux are reinforced and far from slinking away quietly. The recent clash with Crook kills Walking-Blanket-Woman's brother, so she is looking for vengeance. She knows the evils that Flashy as Wind Breaker is said to have committed; anything he says to the contrary while ungagged to drink or eat is "two-tongued." Flashy still lives only because the ultimate decider, One-Who-Catches, is not in camp. Flashy notes the irony of twice in a few days being prevented from talking his way out of a deadly predicament and, probably, into a desirable woman's pants.

When the cavalry arrives, Flashy expects Walking-Blanket-Woman, to kill him in vengeance but does his best soundlessly, with facial expressions alone, to win her over. Amazingly, she cuts him loose and runs off to battle. He knows that the 7th Cavalry is doomed if it does not immediately flee. He steals an Indian pony and rides in tandem with a trio of braves whose approach halts the troopers' advance. Flashy declares that if Indians erected statues to heroes, they deserve one. As a professional soldier, he also remarks a number of tactical maneuvers not typical of Indian warfare: firing in salvos and turning a flank. Flashy does not write dispassionately, however, for even freed from imprisonment his life is in danger. Comically, Custer fixates on Flashy's evening clothes as the soldier whom he has idolized, primarily because of the Battle of Balaclava (Charge of the Light Brigade), urges him to retreat instantly. As at Balaclava, time slows for Flashy, as he watches Custer hit in the arm but calmly continuing to command. He watches men he has come to know fall wounded or dead. Indians continue to pour in, whooping. As hand-to-hand combat begins, he hears them shout the dreaded word that means a brave is plunging metal into flesh. Time unfreezes and Flashy, tears in his eyes nearly effects an escape (as at Balaclava) but has his horse shot out from under him. He figures he will soon add to the gore.

Instead, a mysterious brave in a buffalo cap, whom he has noticed several times on the battlefield, rescues him by pretending to kill, scalp, and rob him. The novel opens with Flashy showing off the scar from the rather small scalping in London's Travellers' Club. He describes the physical and mental agony of holding perfectly still during his ordeal and for many hours until dusk. He realizes that the brave, who addresses other braves in Sioux, talks to him in perfect American English. Flashy is ridden off, swooning, to somewhere safe and is entrusted to someone by the dreaded One-Who-Catches.

The 21st chapter and final chapter is the denouement, with Flashy recovering from his injuries, learning that One-Who-Catches, the man who holds his fate in his hands, is actually Young Frank Standing Bear whom he meets in Chicago, brown into Standing Bear, but who also goes by Frank Grouard when he lives in white society. The climax of Frank's story, whose innate drama Frank enjoys, is that his surname should be Flashman. As soon as the young man identifies his mother as the woman whom Flashy sells into slavery and who has now paid to have him tortured to death, Flashy sees the resemblance in how they walks, talks, and acts. He tries to entice Frank back East or even to England with him, but Frank poignantly identifies with the Sioux of the Plains (although he lacks a drop of Sioux blood), even realizing that that way of life is doomed. Flashy is depressed, losing his son after just a week, but is soon relieved not to have to explain him to Elspeth and others. As always, he handles the ignoble truth forthrightly.

Before Frank's self-revelation, Flashy at age 90 contemplate how hard it is to recover from wounds at 50 than at 25. It seems odd that he would not put in a word or two about his current age's difficulties. He also offers a critique of prideful Custer. Much detail is offered by Frank about his growing up in two cultures, about his relationship with his mother, and his love for Susie, who seems to have loved Flashy until she dies. The reader wants to know more about Frank as a Flashman and Flashy's legitimate children with Elspeth: one a bishop (to Flashy's consternation) and the other a great beauty (also to Flashy's consternation, for entirely different reasons).

The final scene of the novel takes Flashy to Deadwood, a mining town just weeks old and already flourishing. By this point, Flashy has run into so many famous people that is comes as no surprise Wild Bill Hickok is there. Flashy deputies for him before the Civil War. Hickok is thinking of going back into law enforcement, but Flashy is intent on going home. As he fails to talk Custer into retreating immediately from Greasy Grass, so he too fails to talk Hickok into riding with him to the train station. If he had, Hickok would not have been shot dead that very day. The editor notes that Flashy's memoir ends that day, with no indication of how or when Flashy hears about his friend's death and whether it is related. His trip to New York and reunion with Elspeth are left hanging.

# Characters

## Sir Harry Paget Flashman / Beauchamp Millward Comber

The 89-year-old narrator and chief character in the novel, "Flashy" resumes his memoirs where Flash for Freedom! leaves off. He is going on 28, posing as the late Lt. Beauchamp Millward Comber, R.N., having by vague testimony exonerated the Balliol College's master, John Charity Spring, in a New Orleans naval court, and received Spring's promise of safe passage home to England in exchange for the written evidence of slave-running that Flashy/Comber has preserved. Under a variety of pseudonyms—Starnberg, Prescott, Arnold, and Howard—Flashy is wanted by the law up and down the Mississippi River. He must leave America and the furor in London over a gambling brawl has died down to where he may return. Unfortunately Spring steps into a nasty situation where an old acquaintance recognizes Flashy and calls for the police, and Spring accidentally knifes him to death. With yet another capital offense on his head, Flashy has to think fast.

He thinks of Susie Willick, the good-hearted madame of an upscale bordello, who in the earlier novel hides him from U.S. Naval authorities and wears him out sexually. Susie is overwhelmed to see Flashy again and randier than ever, wearing him out, and shyly admitting to loving him, Flashy reciprocates with some degree of sincerity, but also seeing her as his only chance to flee American justice. Flashy finds himself leader of a wagon train that runs into trouble from Indians and cholera. Uncharacteristically, he is the last man to escape a fort before it blows up, but only, he insists, because he feels safer riding alone on horseback to bouncing in a wagon.

Susie decides to settle in Santa Fe, but Flashy still wants to get back to England. He first plots with his favorite prostitute, Cleonie, to go to Mexico together, where she will ply her trade; instead, Flashy takes fast money, $2,000, by selling Cleonie into slavery to a Navajo chief. He joins briefly with a band of bloodthirsty scalp hunters, who attack once too often and are killed or captured. Flashy is saved when the comely daughter of the chief demands him as her husband. He remains six months, over the winter. Flashy's Apache tribal name is "White-Rider-Goes-So-Fast-He-Destroys-the-Wind-with-His-Speed," unfortunately shortened to "Wind Breaker." His wife, Sonsee-Array calls him " Man-Who-Rings-Her-Bells-Makes-Her-Heart-Melt." When Flashy makes his break for freedom, he nearly fails, but is saved by the legendary Kit Carson, who takes him in, picks his brains, and gets him safely to San Francisco and thence home.

Having sworn never to return to America, Flashy does in 1876, pestered by Elspeth into showing her the places of h is exploits. He gets drawn into the struggles for the Black Hills, holy lands to the Sioux and gold fields to the whites. Flashy sees Washington's greed and bad will, but knows the Indians cannot preserve their way of life. In New York, he meets to characters who become crucial in his life: George A. Custer, who is convinced that only Flashy can restore his rank and honor in a last fight against the

Indians, and a beautiful businesswoman, Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, who hires him to visit the town of Bismarck and get its namesake, the German chancellor, to endorse it. Candy turns out to be Cleonie. She pays to have him kidnapped and tortured to death. Thus, Flashy is at Little Bighorn when the cavalry makes its ill-fated attack. Flashy fails to get Custer to withdraw early enough to avoid massacre and nearly clears the battlefield himself before being taken to ground. A fearful Indian in a buffalo-head orders him to be still while he pretends to kill him and actually takes a modest-sized piece of scalp.

After he recovers from his wounds, Flashy discovers that the savior is his son by Cleonie, educated at Harvard, and competent to live in both cultures. They spend a week together, comparing stories, but Frank refuses to go to England with his father, despite the benefits that Flashy could provide. After Frank rides away to the world he knows and loves, Flashy realizes that having Frank around would be uncomfortable.

## Susie Willinck

The painted, bejeweled, and and good-hearted common Cockney woman who in New Orleans is the owner and madame of an upscale whorehouse, Susie in Flash for Freedom! hides narrator Sir Harry Flashman (in the guise of Lt. Beauchamp Millward Comber, R.N.) from U.S. Naval authorities, and does so again as this novel opens and her bordello is about to close. Clad in an embroidered silk dressing gown, with hennaed hair piled high, face still quite handsome, and bosom still enticing, Susie is overwhelmed to see Flashy again and randier than ever, wearing Flashy out sexually as during his earlier week-long stay. When she shyly admits to loving him, Flashy reciprocates with some degree of sincerity, but also seeing her as his only chance to flee American justice. Flashy arrives at the whorehouse with Capt. John Charity Spring, who has just murdered a man while defending Flashy, thus cutting off both their ways home to England. As Flashy and Susie decide to marry and together move the bawdy establishment to San Francisco, Susie drugs Spring and plants him as a crewman on a ship bound for Africa.

On the trip across the prairies, Susie orders her girls to behave themselves, abstaining from sex professionally and casually. It is revealed, late in the novel that she knows of Flashy's secret trysts with at least two of the girls and herself takes on one of the guides to get even with her erring husband. Seeing profit to be made in Santa Fe, she abandons the trip and sets up shop. It succeeds instantly, thanks to the elegant décor she has brought along at great expense and the quality of her girls. Flashy considerately gives her one more good romp "for the road" and makes off with Cleonie, only to sell her to a rich local Navajo to fund his further travels.

When Cleonie gives birth, Susie largely raises the boy, giving him all the motherly love he is to experience in life. As he matures, Susie tells him stories about his white father—Flashy—that counteract the bitter acid that Cleonie pours into him, and when he meets Flashy, he becomes his father's savior. Flashy is sorry to hear that Susie dies a few years earlier.

# Cleonie / Mrs. Arthur B. Candy

Cleonie is the most valuable (at $15,000 a year) of the prostitutes owned in 1849 by Susie Willinck in the upscale New Orleans bordello that she packs onto covered wagons for the trek across the plains and desert to San Francisco. A "creamy high-yaller," well-spoken with a soft Creole accent, Cleonie becomes the favorite of Susie's new husband, narrator Sir Harry Flashman (under the guise of Beauchamp Millward Comber), and they arrange regular secret liaisons. Flashy first notices her because of the concern she takes over her parrot as they leave New Orleans, and her face "like a wayward saint." When Susie ends their trek in Santa Fe and sets up a flourishing business, Flashy promises Cleonie that they will run away together to Mexico, where she will ply her trade to take care of them both. Flashy, however, betrays her, selling her to a local Navajo chief for $2,000. Flashy feels bad about it, because he had come to care for her greatly and she had seemed to love him.

Only later does Flashy learn that Cleonie is treated brutally by the Navajo who buys her. For two years her training as a prostitute keeps her alive. When he dies, she is sold to Ute slavers, who take her north and sell her to the Blackfeet, who eventually hand her over to Sioux in the Black Hills. There she finds kindness and is treated honorably by Broken-Moon-Goes-Alone. She does not love him but spends two years as his wife before asking to return to her own people. He calls her "Walking Willow." She whores and builds up a successful business in Denver and has a stake in several other houses. She has a son who is largely cared for by Susie.

In 1876, Flashy in a New York restaurant sees a tall, shapely, elegantly dressed woman wearing an eye patch and instantly wants to have sex with her. She speaks with a high, sharp, Yankee voice, often declaring "Yep" and "Oh-kay." On a trip to Washington, DC, he receives an invitation to a business meeting and meets this same woman: Mrs. Arthur B. Candy. She repeatedly emphasizes that "B" stands for business during business hours. Allowing Flashy enough foreplay to keep him interested, Candy tells him to go to Bismarck, ND, to await her. There she will lay out in full the deal proposed by the Upper Missouri Development Corporation, of which she is President and principal shareholder. Aboard the paddle boat Far West, Flashy and the austere Candy have sex most nights, and the first night he hears her weeping privately in her cabin.

Taking Flashy for a stroll on the shoreline, Candy has him seized, bound, and gagged by Sioux Indians, her friends, and reveals that she had been Cleonie. For all the suffering she has suffered under three masters and years of prostitution to support herself after gaining freedom, Cleonie / Candy intends Flashy, the man she hates most in life, to be hideously tortured to death. Gagged, he is unable to work his magic on her —as she knows he would try. Flashy is whisked away to Greasy Grass while Candy rejoins the Far West.

Flashy is not put to the terrible death by torture for which Cleonie/Candy has paid $2,000, thanks to Standing Bear, who reveals himself as her and Flashy's son, born in Santa Fe, brought up in both the white and Indian worlds, and educated at Harvard.

Cleonie/Candy hates Flashy for the years of abuse that she suffers, including having to become a madame in Denver, and, hearing that Standing Bear sees Flashy in Chicago, sets in motion the plan that leads to his being seized. Standing Bear has no particular love for his birth mother or for the terrible revenge for which she longs.

## William B. Allison

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Allison is a U.S. Senator from Iowa, charged with negotiating a new settlement with the Sioux Indians after gold is found in the Black Hills. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman, who is sent along on the mission to Fort Robinson by Pres. Ulysses S. Grant personally, summarizes Allison as "a Senator of unusual stupidity and flatulence." Allison's attitude assures that the Sioux reject the paltry offer of $6 million, but still no one thinks that they will resort to violence. Flashy suspects this may have been Grant's intention in sending Allison in the first place. Flashy calls him an "obstinate, short-sighted, arrogant, tactless clown," and likens him to McNaghten at Kabul—one of the most despised characters in the Flashman Papers.

## Aphrodite

One of Susie Willinck's prime prostitutes, Aphrodite is stately, "a jet-black houri with sinful eyes. She is the first with whom narrator Sir Harry Flashman has secretive sex on the road westward, but only once. She tells all the other girls about it, getting them jealous, but she is not Flashy's type. He worries about her telling Susie as his interest shifts to Cleonie.

## Christopher (Kit) Carson

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Carson appears out of nowhere to rescue from pursuing Apaches narrator Sir Harry Flashman, who is curiously wearing war paint. Flashy is amazed to find this short, soft-spoken man is a legend, perhaps the most famous man in America, "the Napoleon of the Plains." Carson has spent most of his life in the Southwest. Said by many to be illiterate, Carson shows Flashy that he can read by producing a copy of Charles Averill's Kit Carson: The Prince of the Gold Hunters, which includes a story of a kidnapped girl whom Carson saves. For many years Carson is troubled by fears that when another reader, Mrs. Ann White and her daughter are captured by Apaches, she dies hoping that Carson will rescue her. His mighty myth has failed. Flashy from experience assures Carson that it is better to die in hope than despair.

Carson takes Flashy to his modest home in Rayado, where he lives with wife Josefa, a "handsome Mexican lady," and their baby son, Charlie. Carson intends some day to retire there. After several weeks, Carson, "a gentle whirlwind whose eyes were forever straying to the crest of the next hill" and "loved the wild like a poet," takes Flashy as far as Laramie before turning him over to others who see him to San Francisco for the voyage home to England. During that brief period, Flashy sees how completely attuned

to nature Carson is and polishes up his rudimentary Sioux language skills—which serve him well in the second half of the novel. Although Flashy is put off by Carson's fame and believes that Carson intuits that he is a rogue, he is a strong partisan of Carson, who dies before Flashy's return to America in 1875/76, with some of his luster having been rubbed off, in ways that Flashy chooses not to discuss.

## Crazy Horse

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Crazy Horse is a young child in 1849, accompanying his uncle, Spotted Tail, when narrator Sir Harry Flashman teaches him to wink and puts him atop a horse for the first time in his life. In 1876, Crazy Horse is an established Sioux leader and Flashy is a captive, destined to be tortured to death at Little Bighorn / Greasy Grass. Flashy describes Crazy Horse as "young and wiry, lean-faced and lank-haired and without paint—but with those eyes he didn't need any." Crazy Horse has already "bushwhacked" Crook's forces, eliminating their threat to the Sioux. Flashy is convinced that Crazy Horse will fight to the end when retribution begins for "Custer's Last Stand."

## Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Custer first appears in New York, a man of frustration who seeks help from protagonist Sir Harry Flashman in getting his military career back on track. Custer continually rails against the "stuffed Gods of Washington." Flashy describes him as "a tall, lean cove with a mustache and goatee and a rakish air that I didn't fancy above half." His voice is "full of sharp conceit." Custer's wife Libby is a prim woman who worships him. His brother Tom is with him in New York as Custer arranges to have a book published. Custer and Flashy had briefly "crossed sabres at Audie" during the Civil War, when Flashy had fought on the Confederate side. Flashy recalls slashing at him while retreating, while Custer remembers it more heroically.

Custer graduates at the bottom of his class at West Point, but serves with some distinction in the Civil War, being brevetted to the rank of major general. Like his wartime colleagues, he is returned to his previous rank after the war, but unlike many is unable to accept the humiliation of being a lieutenant-colonel. Pres. Ulysses S. Grant has removed him from command of the 7th Cavalry on the frontier, just as a major battle appears to be brewing. When Flashman fails to get Grant to talk to Custer, Custer defiantly heads West. Eventually Gen. Alfred Terry obtains permission to reinstate Custer, but has reservations about his common sense.

Custer gets his troopers surrounded atop Little Bighorn by combined forces of Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians led by Sitting Bull. The "Last Stand" becomes legendary and Custer a popular hero and instant martyr. Flashman ostensibly writes his memoir at the turn of the 20th century, before Custer's reputation is reconsidered and degraded. Flashman depicts him as "a reckless firebrand who absolutely enjoyed

warfare, and would have been better suited to the Age of Chivalry, when he'd have broken the Holy Grail in his hurry to get at it."

Custer is married to the adoring Elizabeth Bacon Custer, who is greatly annoyed that the supply paddle boat denies her passage to her husband's final encampment. Custer's brothers, Thomas and Boston, serve in and with the 7th Cavalry, which Flashy finds a bit inbred. Thomas is one of a handful of Americans two win two Medals of Honor. Flashy, who also receives the honor during the Civil War, chides George Custer with their achievement, knowing how he longs for honors.

## Lady Elspeth Morrison Flashman

Narrator Harry Flashman's beautiful but brainless wife, Elspeth is for nearly 18 months separated from her husband after her father arranges his escape from England under scandalous conditions. Flashy worries the whole time about the men she is likely bedding. Elspeth plays a large role in the second half of the novel, set in 1875/76, when she badgers Flashy into taking her on a tour of America. At Gen. Sheridan's wedding, Elspeth flirts with Gen. Crook, again raising Flashy's speculations about her fidelity. She becomes deeply involved in preparations for the American Centennial, and continually turns heads among the menfolk they encounter, including the Lakota chief, Spotted Tail in a sheltered area near Fort Robinson.

## Chief Gall

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Gall is a massive Hunkpapa Lakota Indian, dressed in red, who at the the Battle of Little Bighorn / Greasy Grass instantly assesses the U.S. Army's tactics and turns their flank. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman lauds Gall's ability to use white men's tactics to defeat them and says that it is a rare talent among Indians.

## John Joel Gallantin

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Gallantin (real name: Glanton) is a notorious scalp hunter in New Mexico, said to collect and sell scalps from other than the Apache raiders on whom there is a bounty. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman knows nothing of Gallantin when he meets up with him in the desert after fleeing his bigamous marriage in Santa Fe. Flashy describes him as burly, with feathers in his hat, armed with two pistols, and a truly devilish face: forked beard and a red birthmark covering half his face.

## Geronimo / Yawner

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Geronimo is still a rather minor Apache in 1849, known as Yawner, when for six months he serves as narrator Sir Harry Flashman's "bear-leader" (mentor/jailer) and closest Indian friend. They start off badly, with

Geronimo wanting the white-eyes tortured to death like the others, but the chief's daughter Sonsee-array, insist on marrying him. At first glance, Flashy sees Geronimo as "a face from the Chamber of Horrors," with coal-black, vicious eyes, a hook nose, cruel mouth, ugly teeth, lank hair, and filthy clothing. He stinks "like a goat in an organ-loft" and is angry as a dog. Yawner is married to buxom, handsome, kindly Alopay. Writing early in the 20th century, Flashy recalls meeting a very old Geronimo in his final years on an Oklahoma reservation.

## Pres. Ulysses S. Grant

The 16th President of the United States, ending his second term in which political corruption reaches its apex, Grant knows narrator Sir Harry Flashman from Civil War days. Flashy sums up Grant (whom he calls Sam, but not to his face) as "the same burly, surly bargee I remembered, more like a city storekeeper than the first-rate soldier he'd been and the disillusioned President he was." Grant is, above all, worn out from all of the handshaking that is required by his office. Grant resolutely resists appeals to reinstate George Armstrong Custer to the command of the 7th Cavalry—and especially refuses to meet him. Flashy uses reverse psychology on Grant to open his mid at least for a later appeal by Gen. Alfred Terry.

## James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickok

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Hickok appears in the final scene of the novel, amazed to find his former deputy, narrator Sir Harry Flashman, in Deadwood. They drink and talk all night and Hickok tries to talk Flashy into staying longer, but Flashy is anxious to get back to Elspeth and to England. Flashy also tries to talk Hickok into going as far as Cheyenne with him, but Hickok is set on playing out a good hand of poker. The editor notes that this installment of the "Flashman Papers" ends abruptly on 2 Aug. 1876, the day Hickok is gunned down in the Number Ten Saloon.

## Mangas Coloradas

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Mangas Coloradas (meaning "Red Sleeves") is a Mimbreno Apache chief of terrifyingly huge physical size and strength—able to carry a drunken narrator Sir Harry Flashman back to camp in one hand and drop him through the top of the tepee—and a commanding basso profundo voice. He is a widower and his fourth daughter, the only one unmarried, is his favorite. Mangas is also, says Flashy, a fine psychologist and politician. He knows about North American history and Queen Victoria, but perceives everything in terms of Apache culture. He realizes that the white man's spirit tells him to spread white law, which they believe is better than Indian law. Mangas is lord of the Gila Forest, and bloody scourge of the region. He makes Flashy's hated father-in-law John Morrison look good by comparison. When Flashy flees the Apache camp and narrowly escapes recapture, his deliverer, Kit Carson, wants to learn everything he can about this famous warrior.

## John Morrison (Lord Paisley)

Narrator Sir Harry Flashman's Scottish father-in-law, Morrison is described as an abominable miser but astute businessman who, having been named Lord Paisley, dies suddenly, leaving his fortune to his favorite daughter Elspeth. Having been sent into exile by Morrison over a scandal and endured the Middle Passage on one of his slave ships, Flashy learns about the death in New Orleans in 1849, from Capt. John Charity Spring, who is surprised at Flashy's lack of emotion. Flashy, deprived of a target for his spite, schemes at least how to use the money—if he can ever get home from America. When Flashy marries the daughter of an Apache .chief, Mangas Coloradas, he reconsiders: Morrison might not have been so bad a father-in-law after all.

## Grattan Nugent-Hare

An former sergeant in the British 10th Hussars and U.S. Dragoons, Nugent-Hare is an amiable, soft-spokesman Ulsterman (Northern Irishman) who hires on as a chief guard on the wagon train taking narrator Sir Harry Flashman, his bride, Susie Willinck, and her 20 prostitutes across the continent to California. Flashy is worried being recognized as British military but has had nothing to do with the 10th Hussars. It seems a good start when Nugent-Hare threatens to shoot the first man who touches any of the prostitutes. When Uncle Dick Wootton falls sick with cholera and drops out, Nugent-Hare becomes Flashy's right-hand-man, standing beside him at Bent's Fort.

Paid off when Susie decides to settle in Santa Fe, Nugent-Hare is hired as guard for her new bordello, over Flashy's objections. Flashy dislikes Nugent-Hare's long Irish nose and the way he pulls at it. In short order, Nugent-Hare makes off with $2,000. He and Flashy soon meet up again, in the camp of scalp-hunter John Gallantin. After the massacre in the Gila Forest, a drunken Nugent-Hare tries to claim the Apache woman for whom Flashy has drawn the lot to rape, but Flashy attacks him, as drunkenly, to gain revenge for Susie, whom Nugent-Hare claims to have been bedding for most of the wagon ride. In the rolling fight that follows, Nugent-Hare is impaled on his own Bowie knife. The Apache woman, a princess as it turns out, believes that Flash has fought for her honor and demands that her father allow him to live—and to marry her.

## Peter Omohundro

Introduced in Flash for Freedom!, Omohundro is a big, scar-faced, heavily whiskered slave dealer from Savannah, GA, who recognizes the runaway slave, George Randolph, whom narrator Sir Harry Flashman is leading to freedom. Flashman and Randolph both end up in the Mississippi River, presumed dead, but both survive. In Flashman and the Redskins, Omohundro happens to be in a New Orleans tavern that Flashy visits en route to Capt. John Charity Spring's slave ship, the Balliol College, and a safe voyage home to England. Omohundro screams for the police and in a scuffle with Spring is accidentally stabbed to death with his own sword. With a fresh legal charge hanging over him, Flashy heads westward.

## Gen. John Pope

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Pope is first encountered at Philip Sheridan's wedding in Chicago in 1875. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman, who also attends the reception, describes Pope as a buffoon "whose career had consisted of losing battles and claiming he'd won."

## Gen. Philip Sheridan

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Sheridan is a small-statured man who attains some success in the Civil War career under Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, during whose presidency he commands the Missouri Division of the U.S. Army, which means the plains up to the Rockies. Sheridan's wedding in Chicago in 1875 brings together the major figures in the the question of how to deal with the discovery of gold in the Black Hills, which has been ceded by treaty to the Sioux. Sheridan sets up narrator Sir Harry Flashman with fellow reception guests Sherman, Pope, and Crook.

## Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Sherman is first encountered at Philip Sheridan's wedding in Chicago in 1875. Sherman has a moderately successful Civil War career as a cavalry general and under his friend, Pres. Ulysses S. Grant, is Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army. Flashy quotes Sherman's famous aphorism "war is all hell," saying that Sherman demonstrates it personally. Flashy terms Sherman "a competent savage" and describes him as an "ugly black-visaged bargee," who hates the "soapy politicians and Bible-punching hypocrites" who support the Indians' rights in the Black Hills. The Indian Office is not attracting Indians to reservations, and the tribes are arming themselves rapidly and heavily.

## Sonsee-array

The beautiful daughter of the powerful Apache chief, Mangas Coloradas, Sonsee-array (meaning: "Morning-Star-Takes-Away-Clouds-Woman"; she is also known as "Child of the Red Sleeves"; she believes that "Morning Star" is more proper for an Apache princess) is captured among other women and children by the gang of white scalp-hunters with whom protagonist Sir Harry Flashman (under the guise of Beauchamp Millward Comber) joins after fleeing Santa Fe. Flashy realizes what they are doing only after witnessing two rebel against collecting scalps killed in cold blood—and scalped. After the braves have been killed and scalped, the drunkards prepare to rape the women before killing them in turn. Flashy draws Sonsee-array's lot but is challenged by his own nemesis, Grattan Nugent-Hare. Killing Nugent-Hare in a brawl, Flashy treats Sonsee-array gently and politely, while his sexual appetite builds.

When Apaches attack the camp, Sonsee-array knocks Flashy out to prevent his being killed. He comes to, hanging upside down but not yet tortured, with Sonsee-array demanding that her father give him to her as a slave or husband. Flashy's fate is touch-and-go for a long time (as he hears his colleagues being flailed and burnt alive) before Mangas gives in. Flashy describes Soness-array as not unattractive, with a chubby face, sulky, provocative lips, and the "puppy-fat" appropriate on a 16 year old. By Apache standards, she dresses royally in a beaded doeskin tunic. She shows clearly her lineage as daughter of the undisputed chief and a Mexican hidalga (noble woman), from whom she has learned to put on airs and prefer Spanish over the tribal language.

A rejected suitor challenges Flashy for her hand, but when he attempts a sneak attack, is killed. Flashy lives happily with the sexually insatiable Sonsee-array for six months over a boring winter before fleeing at his first opportunity. Flashy describes her as a "spanking little wild beast" with "peach-brown satin skin and hot little eyes." She often teases him to "make my bells ring again, pinda-lickoyee [white eyes]." Flashy is sorry to leave her without saying goodbye when time comes for him to flee the Apaches.

## Spotted Tail / Sintay Galeska

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Spotted Tail is a Brulé Lakota Indian whom narrator Sir Harry Flashman (under the guise of Beauchamp Millward Comber) first meets on the prairie, as he and Uncle Dick Wootton are feasting on the first buffalo that Flashy ever kills. Spotted Tail learns the English phrase "Jolly Good." Flashy recognizes him by the phrase when the meet again, in 1875 in the men's room at a wedding reception in Chicago. Spotted Tail wears formal clothing and invites Flashy and wife Elspeth, for whom he openly lusts, to dinner. He is returning home from Washington, D.C., where he takes part in treaty negotiations. He reveals that he has learned English in prison after the slaughter at Fort Leavenworth. He lives at the agency. Spotted Tail may or may not sleep with Elspeth when he rescues her from abandonment during the great powwow near Fort Robinson. After four major battles against Americans and other tribes, Spotted Tail has had enough. He has seen the might of white America and wants only the best terms for his own folk. Those who fight to the death are wrong. Flashy realizes that Spotted Tail is the cleverest of the Sioux leaders.

## Capt. John Charity Spring

Introduced in Flash for Freedom!, Spring is the master of a slave ship, the Balliol College, owned in part by narrator Sir Harry Flashman's father-in-law John Morrison. Spring is a large, cold man, with a scar across his forehead that reddens when he is angry, who has studied the classics at Oriel College, Oxford, before being expelled. Latin epigrams are constantly on his tongue. A true cutthroat, he nevertheless insists on holding divine services on Sundays. Flashy, pretending to be the late Lt. Comber, testifies with enough flexibility to win Spring an acquittal at his smuggling trial, and when Flashy promises to turn over Comber's stolen evidence, grants him a ride home to England. Spring, however, gets into a brawl in a New Orleans bar, kills Peter

Omohundro, and flees with Flashy to the bordello owned by Flashy's old friend Susie Willinck. Susie instantly distrusts Spring and, as she and Flashy plan to marry and head West, administers knock-out drops and signs him aboard a commercial boat bound for Africa.

## Standing Bear / One-Who-Catches / Frank Grouard

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Standing Bear is the Sioux Indian who saves narrator Sir Harry Flashman's life at the Battle of Little Bighorn / Greasy Grass and has him nursed back to health in a secluded cave. When Flashy is on his feet again, Standing Bear appears, reveals that they have met earlier in Chicago, when he is called One-Who-Catches, an assistant to Spotted Tail and at Fort Robinson in peace talks with the U.S. Government. Flashy recalls finding something odd and compelling about him. Standing Bear then reveals that his mother is Cleonie / Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, the slave prostitute whom Flashy sells to a Navajo for $2,000 when fleeing Santa Fe—and the austere woman who has paid $2,000 the Sioux to torture him to death. Standing Bear does not share his mother's hatred and will claim that Flashy dies in the battle.

Standing Bear next reveals that he also goes by the name Frank Grouard (Grouard is Cleonie's Creole maiden name) but should call himself Frank Flashman. He is born in Santa Fe after Flashy runs away, is for the most part raised by Susie Willinck, and has graduated Harvard. He speaks English with a Boston accent and has a New Englander's attitude. He divides his time between the white and Indian worlds. As a white man, he claims to be a Polynesian orphan brought the the U.S. by Mormons; it lessens the racial discrimination. He has recently scouted for the Army. Flashy sees himself in Standing Bear, details his life to him, and begs him to return with him to England, where he can set him up for the best of lives. Standing Bear insists that although he has no Sioux blood, he is a Sioux. He understands that the traditional life on the plains is doomed, but rides away to his home. On reflection, Flashy realizes that Standing Bear could only have complicated his life, particularly with Elspeth.

Appendix A is dedicated to "The Mysterious Lives of Frank Grouard (1850-1905).

## Gen. Alfred Terry

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Terry commands U.S. Army forces in the northern plains in 1876. Gen. Sheridan recommends that Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer ask Terry to intercede with Pres. Ulysses S. Grant when he orders Custer excluded from the Sioux expedition. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman describes Terry as "mild and courtly" and recommends that Custer approach him as "a good man wronged." Instead, Custer makes a fool of himself, leaving Terry worried that Custer will kill himself. Flashy thinks not but advises that Terry is the only man to whom Grant might listen on this topic. It will look badly for Grant to have excluded a good cavalry leader if the battle is lost. Flashy helps compose a letter for Terry and Custer's signatures. Grant telegraphs permission for Custer to rejoin the 7th.

## Vasco

The hot-headed Mimbreno Apache brave whose affections Sonsee-array spurns, Vasco does not accept her marrying narrator Sir Harry Flashman and challenges him to fight to the death for her hand. Hoping to avoid a fight, Flashy demonstrates his abilities at "tent-pegging," which he masters years before in India. When Vasco makes a fool of himself trying his hand at it, he is on the verge of killing Flashy treacherously when Yawner (Geronimo) kills him with a shot from his sling. Chief Mangas Coloradas allows Vasco not a warrior's funeral, but a fool's.

## Richens Lacy (Uncle Dick) Wootton

A historical figure depicted in the novel, Wootton is an experienced frontiersman, mountain man, trapper, and hunter mainly in the vicinity of Bent's Fort. He is in Westport-Independence, MO, when narrator Sir Harry Flashman (under the guise of Beauchamp Millward Comber) hires him as a guide to San Francisco, where his bride Susie Willinck aims to reestablish her New Orleans bordello. Wootton is a grubby and diffident "clodpole" on first glance, burly and dressed in filthy buckskins, raising Flashy's temper, when he challenges his experience. His eyes, however, are "like clear blue lights, straight and steady," convincing Flashy that crossing the prairies will not be a picnic. He offers Wootton $100 a month extra to do the work of wagon-captain but giving himself the title and passing orders through him. After testing Flashy a bit, Wootton agrees.

Early in the trek, Flashy gets to know the shy young Wootton as he rides in the lead beside him. Wootton often rides off alone for most the day, scouting. Disaster strikes when Wootton falls deathly ill with cholera. He warns Flashy not to turn off before Bent's Fort, where he promises to catch up, if he survives. Wootton meets up with Flashy after the destruction of the fort and confirms that those who leave the wagon train against his and Flashy's orders have been massacred. Wootton takes them the rest of the way to Santa Fe, where Susie decides to settle. He is paid off and disappears from the story.

# Objects/Places

## Bent's Fort

A trading post on the Arkansas River and Santa Fe Trail, in the southeast corner of Colorado, Bent's Fort (to the local Mountain men "Big Lodge") deals with the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, chiefly in buffalo robes. Richens Lacy (Uncle Dick) Wootton is guiding the wagon train ostensibly led by protagonist Sir Harry Flashman to Bent's Fort when he contracts cholera and has to be left behind. After part of the train disregards Wootton's advice and Flashy's orders, the rest get within sight of the fort before being attacked by Indians. Most of the train makes it into the gates—only to find the fort deserted. When fire arrows begin to be fired over the ramparts, Flashy discovers that the massive towers have been mined with gunpowder and only a failed fuse had prevented the place from being blow to bits. Fearing a conflagration, Flashy sends everyone to the river while he covers their escape. As he is about to leave, the powder explodes, and Flashy, badly injured, crawls out to make his escape—only to be rescue by Mountain men.

## Bismarck, ND

The capital of present-day North Dakota, Bismarck is located on the hills above the Missouri River. It begins as a laborers' camp during construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1873 it was renamed in honor of the great Prussian statesman Otto von Bismarck, in hopes of attracting German investment and/or immigration. Protagonist Sir Harry Flashman, who has a colorful history with Baron von Bismarck, depicted in Royal Flash, is retained by Mrs. Arthur B. Candy to write and/or visit the chancellor to pitch her company. Flashy meets Candy in the town of Bismarck on the eve of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, fought over the the discovery of gold in the Black Hills nearby. The gold rush turns the town into a major center.

## Chicago, IL

Chicago is depicted briefly in conjunction with the wedding of Gen. Philip Sheridan. During the reception, narrator Sir Harry Flashman learns details of the government's Indian policy from Sheridan and Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, and is dragged further into Lt. Col. George A. Custer's campaign to regain command of the 7th Cavalry. He also meets, unknowingly, his biological son, who informs his mother, the slave Cleonie, whom Flashy sells 25 years earlier. Hearing that Flashy is back in America, she puts together an intricate plot to lure him to Bismarck and sell him to Indians to be tortured to death.

## Deadwood, SD

A town in the Black Hills that grows up over night when gold is discovered, Deadwood is home to Wild Bill Hickok, under whom narrator Harry Flashman serves as deputy long before this novel. When Flashy recovers from his ordeal before and at the Battle of Little Bighorn / Greasy Grass, he wanders into Deadwood, pawns his inscribed watch, and begins recuperating. Hickok buys the watch and initiates a long night of drinking and sharing tales. On the day Flashy heads back East, Hickok is gunned down in the Number Ten Saloon on 2 Aug. 1876.

## Indian Tribes

Narrator Sir Harry Flashman meets a variety of Indians in the course of Flashman and the Redskins. The title is indicative of his acceptance of white stereotypes, although at points he does admit that white and Indian world views are simply polar opposites and the Indian one is in no way inferior, merely different. They are, he believes, irreconcilable, and the Indians can either conform to white ways or perish.

In the first part of the novel, set in 1849, the year that gold is found in San Francisco, CA, the Indians have been ignoring a trickle of white folk across the plains, but grow alarmed when the Gold Rush turns it into a flood. Flashy understands: folks in Leichestershire or New England would react in the same way to protect their lands. When Flashy crosses as one of the "Earlies," the Indians are only beginning to fret and raids are more for fun than policy. By 1876, when he returns, most are ready to live on reservations but a few militants refuse to give up their sacred lands in the Black Hills to miners who have spread there. They realize that any treaty with the whites will be breached. The highlight of the novel is the Battle of Little Bighorn, where the slaughter of Lt. Col. George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry raises Americans' anger against the "savages," and the Indians realize that retribution will be harsh. What little the whites have allowed them is threatened.

Flashy deals most intimately with the Apaches of the Southwest. The Mimbreno tribe is from the Santa Rita Copper Mines south of the Gila forest. After Bent's Fort, they are the only Indians along the lower Santa Fe trail and dominate the desert to its south. Flashy, a noted linguist, finds the Apaches' language difficult, intricate, with unique vowel pronunciations. The Apaches are entirely nomadic. They are also known as "Sheeshinday" (Men of the Woods). To most Indians and whites—even Mountain Men—they are simply "the enemy." Flashy finds them sturdy, well-made, ugly as sin, lithe. The women are "buxom peasants" with sharp, shrill voices. Flashy says that he has seen some ugly people around the world, but the Apaches' ugliness comes from their hearts of hatred. Mimbrenos have no great taste for collecting scalps. The males loaf, eat, and sleep during the winter. Flashy learns little Apache because it is a difficult language, most of the tribe speak Spanish, and he hates everything about their culture too much to try. They are inveterate gamblers and highly superstitious. Adultery is savagely punished.

Flashy also deals with the Sioux - a multitude of clans, of whom the most important are the Brulé or Sichangu ("Burned Thighs"), the tribe of Spotted Feather. The Oglala clan is the most fearsome. At the Camp Robinson treaty negotiations there are also gathered Sans Arc, Minneconju, Hunkpapa, and others. Their democracy requires a three-quarter majority to sign a treaty. In distinction from the Apaches' tongue, Flashy finds Sioux a lovely, liquid language. He speaks it well, thanks to tutoring from Kit Carson.

Cheyenne and Arapaho near Great Bend are reportedly "friendlies." Flashy describes them as poor, ugly-looking, and rank. Near Fort Mann, a major village comes down with a "terrible sickness" and demand doctoring by the whites. The cholera plague is later used to date events in local history. Cheyenne are the biggest Indians that Flashy ever sees, enough to "put the fear of God up Wellington."

Comanches, reportedly cannibals, pass dangerously nearby as Flashy's caravan approaches Bent's Fort. They are colorful in blankets and buffalo-skin caps, are known for their medical skills, and are enemies of the Cheyenne. They fill the area east of Santa Fe along with the Kiowas.

Flashy describes the Crows as "gaudy shirts with war-bonnets so long they trailed to their ponies' flanks," the Foxes as wearing huge beaded earrings with weird designs painted on their chests and backs; the Kiowas - especially Chief Dog Kiowas - as friendlies but liable to attack small caravans; they are present at Bent's Fort and east of Santa Fe. The Navahos are hostiles who range West of Santa Fe. One of their chiefs deals through a Catholic priest to buy prostitutes, including, fatefully for Flashy, the lovely Cleonie.

Pawnees Flashy describes briefly as "bare-chested and with long trouser-like leggings of blue or red, their skulls shaved bald save for the bristling fringe of scalp-lock like a cock's comb." The Shoshoni are ugly in bearskin robes with the heads still attached. Utes, who are universally hated, are present at Bent's Fort.

## Jornada del Muerto

The Jornada del Muerto ("Journey of the Dead Man") is a vast, flat, waterless area running about 100 miles north-to-south in New Mexico. Thinking about fleeing his bigamous marriage in Santa Fe, protagonist Sir Harry Flashman mentions to an old hand heading due south to Mexico. The man warns him against it, saying that the only way to survive the crossing is by having one's horse drink until it is ready to explode, carry a great deal of water besides, and leave at 3 a.m. in a race against time. Even if one does, wandering Apache war parties may be lurking. Flashy takes a safer course, which results in his capture by Apaches and marriage to the chief's daughter. His only escape, in the spring, is across the Jornada del Muerto, with one canteen of water. His horse twice sniffs out fresh water towards the northern border, saving their lives..

## Little Bighorn / Greasy Grass

The Dakota Territory battlefield where Sioux and Cheyenne Indians massacre the U.S. 7th Cavalry led by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, Little Bighorn instantly becomes American legend. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman, on an American vacation with his wife Elspeth, becomes entangled in the events leading up to the battle. He observes that when the Sioux refer to the hillside as "Greasy Grass," it has connotations of "Waterloo or Hastings or Bannockburn."

Flashy is first an observer and translator during negotiations required to modify the Treaty of 1868, when gold is discovered in the Black Hills, where the Sioux have been earlier placed. Flashy is appalled that Washington tries to cheat the Sioux and believes that they will not rise up in violence. Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and others reject the earlier treaty and an offer of $6 million. Flashy is next begged by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer to intercede with Pres. Ulysses S. Grant to restore him to command of the 7th Cavalry, which will conquer the lands that negotiations fail to secure. Custer sees this as his only chance of regaining the rank of general which he had enjoyed during the Civil War. Reluctantly, Grant allows it, putting him under Gen. Alfred H. Terry. Custer maintains autonomy and all fear that he will precipitate disaster. Flashy worries superstitiously when the 7th Cavalry sings Garryowen, the song of the ill-fated light brigade.

Invited by Custer to come along to the battle, which he assumes will be a minor mop-up operation, Flashy declines but describes the massive build-up to the campaign at the mouth of the Rosebud Creek, and attends the final planning meeting. He is abducted by Sioux warriors hired by Cleonie / Mrs. Arthur B. Candy as Custer is approaching his destiny. Flashy is imprisoned in the vast village that Custer is supposed to hit from the south, while Generals Terry and Gibbon head off anyone that he flushes. Custer attacks the massive multi-tribal village at Little Bighorn, the Indians scatter—braves to the battle and women and children into hiding. Custer has far too few troops and no Gatling guns. Freed, almost miraculously, Flashy tries to warn Custer to retreat up the slope, but Custer is determined to stand and fight. He divides his force of 600 into three battalions, commanding one personally, and assigning the others to Maj. Marcus A. Reno and Capt. Frederick W. Benteen. The latter is sent scouting while Custer and Reno advance. The Indians, although surprised, fight well. Reno falls back, badly hit, leaving Custer and his 210 men, to become popular martyrs. Flashy nearly escapes before an arrow brings his horse down. He is told to pretend to be dead, is partially scalped, and after dark rescued—by his illegitimate son.

## New Orleans, LA

The bustling port city serving as seaport linking the Mississippi River with the Caribbean, New Orleans provides the opening to Flashman and the Redskins, picking up where Flash for Freedom! leaves off. The captured slave ship Balliol College is free to leave New Orleans after narrator Sir Harry Flashman's testimony exonerates Capt.

John Charity Spring of smuggling. They are about to leave for England when, in a bar fight, Spring kills a man with whom Flashy in the earlier novel has tangled, and the pair flee to the French Quarter (Vieux Carré) to seek refuge with Susie Willinck, proprietor of an upscale whorehouse. The house is shutting down, to be transported to San Francisco, to service the hordes of men seeking their fortunes in the Gold Rush. Susie packs up her entire establishment in order to begin from the start as the poshest whorehouse in the city by the bay.

## New York, NY

New York is the center of American social life in 1876, when narrator Sir Harry Flashman escorts his wife, Lady Elspeth, to see the places where he has had great adventures a quarter-century earlier. At their hotel, Flashy runs into George A. Custer. They fight for an instant on opposite sides during the Civil War battle, but Custer cherishes his reputation as a British fighting man—particularly at Balaclava. Custer, as a brevetted general, has been reduced to postwar lieutenant colonel, is publishing a book in New York, and is anxious to get back his field command with the 7th Cavalry in the Dakotas. The Flashmans and Custers (including George's brother Thomas) become frequent dinner and theater companions during the winter, before returning to the West (minus Elspeth, who commutes regularly to Philadelphia to participate in readying the gala Centennial Exposition. Flashy first sees Mrs. Arthur B. Candy while he is lunching with Custer, being implored to talk with Pres. Ulysses S. Grant about restoring Custer to field command of the 7th Cavalry. Flashy and Candy soon meet face-to-face in Washington.

## Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia is depicted preparing for the gala Centennial of American Independence in 1876, erecting the kind of World Exposition that has become fashionable in England and on the continent. Lady Elspeth Flashman becomes deeply involved in the planning, freeing her husband, narrator Sir Harry Flashman, to enjoy himself in New York and undertake a trip West—that ultimately puts him in mortal danger at the Little Bighorn. Pres. Ulysses S. Grant is shows as ruing having to open the Exposition.

## Camp Robinson

A new military post built just south of the Black Hills, Camp Robinson is near the Red Cloud Agency where the "peaceful" Sioux live and a day's march from Camp Sheridan. The hostile Sioux roam Powder River country to the West. Camp Robinson is where Sen. William B. Allison mishandles negotiations over the sacred Black Hills and narrator Sir Harry Flashman has anxious moments as wife Elspeth goes missing for an hour and returns in the company of Spotted Tail, the Sioux chief who makes no secret of his desire for her. Camp Robinson is a spartan wooden affair.

## Santa Fe, NM

An ancient center of Navajo Indian culture and Spain's colonial capital for centuries, Santa Fe remains New Mexico's territorial capital after the U.S. wins the Mexican War of 1846. The U.S. has bit off more than it can chew in annexing this vast territory. Santa Fe is located at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, at the Western end of the Santa Fe Trail. Flashy describes it as "Calcutta in a fair week," small but decently built, but overflowing with the wagons, shanties, and huts of worn out and dispirited Forty-niners. They sell their belongings for a pittance and pay top dollar for every commodity they need to start over. The U.S. Army cannot provide adequate protection for anyone heading on to California.

Susie Willinck decides that there is enough money available to establish her upscale bordello in Santa Fe rather than continuing to San Francisco and Sacramento. It does well in its first weeks in operation. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman (under the guise of Beauchamp Millward Comber) plans to escape his bigamous marriage to Susie by running away to Mexico with his favorite prostitute, Cleonie. Instead, Flashy makes a quick $2,000 selling her to a Navajo Indian and rides south to further adventures. Late in the novel, Cleonie reveals herself as the beautiful Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, intent on killing Flashy for the horrors she endures as a slave near Santa Fe.

## Washington, DC

Washington, DC, which narrator Sir Harry Flashman visits in Flash for Freedom! under the guise of Lt. Beauchamp Millward Comber, R.N., remains in 1876 a miserable swamp as Flashy escorts wife Elspeth around. They meet Pres. Ulysses S. Grant, with whom Flashy has served during the Civil War at a party, and Flashy is sent West for negotiations with the Sioux. Flashy returns to the White House to plead that Lt. Col. George Custer be allowed to resume command of the 7th Cavalry.

# Themes

## Sex

Narrator Harry Flashman, looking back over his eighty-some years, never hides from his readers the fact that he is a sexual being to the core. Frequently in Flashman and the Redskins he runs through memories of past lovers, fondly and with no apology. He readily admits enjoying sex whenever possible, even when it entails physical risk and caring little about the woman's willingness, although he is vainly pleased to please. He believes himself (particularly his whiskers) irresistible and expects to be propositioned. Flashy assumes that his beautiful, lusty wife Elspeth is as unfaithful as he during their years apart, and in particular suspects she has a sexual encounter with Spotted Tail, who openly lusts for her.

The novel opens where Flash for Freedom! ends, in New Orleans, LA, where he had previously hidden from U.S. Navy officials with Susie Willinck, madame of an upscale whorehouse on the verge of closing. Susie is randier than ever. When she shyly admits to loving him, Flashy reciprocates, seeing her as his only chance to flee American justice. Susie gets rid of Flashy's companion, Capt. John Charity Spring (who, knowing Flashy is married, righteously disapproves but does not betray his secret). They marry and together move the bawdy by river boat and wagon train to San Francisco. Loading the rich contents of the whorehouse, Flashy is flabbergasted, saying that Caligula would not know what to do with most of the equipment. Although he and the prostitutes have been heartily warned against recreational sex, Flashy beds several, forming an attachment with beautiful Cleonie. Reaching Santa Fe with great difficulty, Susie sets up a profitable business among others who give up on reaching the gold fields and sell their belongings. Susie grows wealthy as a madam, as do several of her girls.

Flashy needs to move on and suggests that Cleonie accompany him to Mexico, earning their way by selling herself. Having fallen in love with Flashy, she agrees. He, however, sells her to a rich Navajo for $2,000 to fund his return to England. Captured by bloodthirsty Apaches, Flashy is nearly tortured to death but the chief's comely daughter, Sonsee-array, takes a liking to him, and he incurs a third marriage, according to the Native rite. Flashy teaches her all about sexual positions before he sees his chance to escape and grabs it.

Returning to America twenty-five years later with Elspeth, who wants to see the lands he has traveled, Flashy falls for another beautiful woman, Flashy has his way with Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, President of the Upper Missouri Development Corporation. They enjoy torrid nights aboard a paddle boat headed upriver into the Black Hills until suddenly she reveals herself as the abandoned Cleonie. She arranges for him to be tortured to death in revenge. In the end, he is rescued by a mysterious Indian, who turns out to be his and Cleonie's illegitimate son, who does not share his mother's hatred. Flashy realizes that with the life he has lived, meeting one of his bastards is inevitable, but he is still surprised.

# Prejudice

The very title, Flashman and the Redskins, is indicative of the stereotypes and prejudices that fill this novel. Narrator Sir Harry Flashman meets a variety of Indians and applies to them the British upper-class attitude towards all natives (summed up on all continents in the term "nigger"). On top of this, it seems to Flashy when the novel opens in 1849 that East coast America is naïve about the danger of native tribes who cannot be expected to be happier to see their lands threatened than folks in Leichestershire or New England.

During is first crossing of America, Flashy personally finds the Indians fearsome, particularly because they are able to silently to sneak up. He has fought in many parts of the world by this point, but finds this particularly unnerving. Nowhere in his travels has Flashy found lack of sanitation and he describes the Indians as universally smelly. The Apache sweat lodge is the epitome of disgust for him, although he says he feels wonderful after emerging, and it is little different—except the smell and crowding—from the Russian banya which he has enjoyed. Flashy actively accepts white stereotypes.

Primarily from talking with his Apache father-in-law, Flashy realizes that white and Indian world views are simply polar opposites of one another, and the Indian one is in no way inferior, merely different. The views are, he believes, irreconcilable, and the Indians can either conform to white ways or perish. The novel opens with Flashy in an English tavern fighting with a mawkish anthropologist about the "noble savage" concept. Flashy has experienced too much horror at Indian hands to accept the idea. In 1849, Flashy experiences Indian raids that are more for fun than policy. By 1876, however, most have been convinced to live on reservations, while a few militants refuse to give up their sacred lands in the Black Hills to miners who have spread there. They realize that any treaty with the whites will be breached. The highlight of the novel is the Battle of Little Bighorn, where the slaughter of Lt. Col. George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry raises Americans' anger against the "savages," and the Indians realize that retribution will be harsh.

Flashy has seen white commercial scalp hunters, killing indiscriminately to collect their bounties, but in his mind it pales before the Apache's atrocities—hanging victims upside down over a slow fire while flailing them alive. Flashy narrowly escapes this fate. For his own survival, Flashy rides with John Gallantin and helps shoot150 awakening male Indians assumed to be guilty of a recent atrocity. The whites then set the wickiups afire to flush out the women and children. Flashy does not take part in sickening business of scalping victims but cannot avoid the evening's gang rape, which is standard practice before killing the women.

Spared a terrible death, Flashy learns how the Indian mind works. Apaches in particular consider "deceit is a virtue, lying a fine art, theft and murder a way of life, and torture a delightful recreation." They despise white civilization and want no part in it because they know that their ways are better. The American government fails to understand this upside-down view; it expects them to be impressed by trappings of civilization. The

Indians know that any lands allowed them by treaty will be stolen. It is "the reservation or the grave." Note that Apaches accept interracial marriage, as seen in their acceptance of Flashy into the tribe to the extent he is willing to integrate.

Over the next 25 years, however, the U.S. government does a terrible job of providing for the "red brothers" who accept to live on reservations. This is epitomized by Sen. Allison's short-sightedness, arrogance, tactlessness, and obstinacy. Their failures inspire Indians to follow Crazy Horse (Tashunka) into hatred of all Americans. He refuses treaties and fights for his land and people. At the other extreme stands Spotted Tail, who after four major battles against Americans and other tribes, has had enough. He has seen the might of white America and wants only the best terms for his own folk. Those who fight to the death are wrong. Flashy believes that Spotted Tail is the cleverest of the Sioux leaders, but is still put off by his personal habits.

## Wealth

Sir Harry Flashman, the narrator of this memoir, comes from a family of modest means but marries well to the daughter of a Scottish industrialist. John Morrison, named Lord Paisley just before his death, funnels his financial support through his daughter Elspeth, giving Flashy no direct access to money. Among his diversified holdings is a share in slave-running from West Africa to the American South. When Flashy gets into trouble, Morrison signs him onto a slaver and during the voyage, Flashy obtains evidence of this activity, by which he can blackmail his father-in-law. Morrison dies, however, and Flashy's ride home also vanishes.

This brings nearly penniless Flashy to the door of Susie Willick, owner of an upscale brothel in New Orleans. He has sought refuge with Susie in the previous novel and is shocked to see the establishment prepared for a move. Susie, an expert businesswoman, has determined that San Francisco or Sacramento, CA, will prove more lucrative than New Orleans, where her business has competition and the authorities are not favorable. She has banked her wealth well and can afford to take everything, furniture, clothing, a rich wine cellar, and sexual toys across the continent, knowing that such luxury cannot be purchased on the West Coast and that opulence will quickly build a clientèle. The Gold Rush in 1849 is shifting all strata of Americans westward, and Susie intends to be placed to take advantage. Susie realizes that one must spend money to make money and does not spare on buying the best wagons, guides, and guards.

Although her "girls" are all slaves in Louisiana, she pays and treats them decently. This, she is sure, will prevent their running away. When girls grow too old, she still provides for their welfare, and a doctor is always on call at her house to ensure that no client carries infection. This becomes all the more important when Susie decides that the earning potential is as great in Santa Fe as in Northern California and continuing the trip is too risky. The new territories won from Mexico are slave-free, so there is a greater potential of prostitutes escaping. Susie believes that her benevolence will prevent this.

Cleonie, however, plans to escape with Flashy, only to be sold by him to a Navaho chief for $2,000 to finance his return to England.

Twenty-five years later, Flashy learns that Susie cares for Cleonie after she is freed, and helps raise the son that she bears from Flashy. Susie helps Cleonie set up her own highly profitable brothel. Cleonie, by contrast with benevolent Susie, lives her life resenting and hating the man who sells her into slavery and, when she discovers that Flashy (whom she and Susie had both known as Beauchamp Millward Comber) has returned to the U.S., uses her wealth and connections to construct a trap for him. She establishes a company and effectively portrays an affluent businesswoman, Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, who entices him into a plausible, lucrative business proposition. She pays their son the same $2,000 to torture Flashy to death, but he is not sufficiently infused with hatred to carry it out. Wealth cannot buy everything.

# Style

## Point of View

Author George MacDonald Fraser uses the octogenarian Sir Harry Flashman, retired as a Brigadier-General from the British Army early in the 20th century, as a memorialist reviewing a long and seemingly illustrious career. Fraser claims to be just a technical editor who also adds historical and cultural endnotes to help the reader. The present novel is the seventh part of the cache of "Flashman Papers," discovered late in the 20th century by Fraser. It follows chronologically the third and portrays Flashy's adventures in the American Wild West, first during the Gold Rush of 1849, and then a quarter-century later, in 1875/76.

Flashy assumes that readers are familiar with his exploits, ranging over his entire career and reminding them continually of how his reputation as an intrepid hero is at odds with reality. Somehow something always seems to come along to put him in harm's way. Flashy readily admits to crippling fear and following the impulse to flee danger.

Because the novel is told as a written memorial, there is no need for changes of perspective between the third person and the first person omniscient, although occasionally for rhetorical purposes, Flashy refers to himself in the third person. Once the dramatic moment passes, he reverts to the first person. Sometimes he slips from past tense narrative to present tense, briefly, for the same reason. Everything is put forth through Flashy's eyes after fermenting in his memory for half a century.

## Setting

Flashman and the Redskins takes place in two parts: the Gold Rush year of 1849, and a quarter-century later, in 1876. The action opens in New Orleans, as narrator Harry Flashman prepares to return to England aboard the Balliol College, having saved the ship and its skipper, Capt. Spring, from piracy charges. Flashman, who is incognito as Beauchamp Millward Comber, gets caught in a bar fight in which Spring murders a man. They hide in Susie Willinck's upscale whorehouse, which the authorities have shut down, and, losing Spring, Flashy marries Susie and accompanies her by wagon train to San Francisco. After much description of the prairies and promises not to deliver another Francis Parkman chronicle of the wagon trains, Susie decides to set up shop in Santa Fe, and Flashy heads off on his own. He joins a band of white scalp-hunters and then a band of Apaches before being rescued by Kit Carson and making his way, escorted to San Francisco to sail home.

Part 2 jumps 25 years and shows Elspeth Flashman struck with middle-aged wander lust and Flashy traveling at her side. She wants to see America. They do the social scene in New York, attend a wedding in Chicago, and Flashy meets a series of people who put him in the center of the Indian Wars in the Black Hills. Flashy comes closer to

death than ever before at Little Bighorn, where he watches George Armstrong Custer and all of his men perish, but is rescued by a mysterious English-speaking Indian. When he has recuperated in a hidden cave, Flashy learns that his savior is his illegitimate son, conceived in Santa Fe during his previous trip. The bitter mother wants him to torture Flashy to death, but the son relents. The novel ends with Flashy stopping in Deadwood, SD, en route East to rejoin Elspeth, meeting another old friend, Wild Bill Hickok, who is killed on the day that Flashy ends writing this seventh installment of his papers.

## Language and Meaning

Flashman and the Redskins is told in British English. The narrator is an octogenarian writing about his life and career early in the 20th century, but the events described fall in 1849/50 and 1876. The novel is rich in the dialect of British soldiers, American woodsmen, Caribbean slaves, Mexicans, and various Native American tongues. Flashy claims to achieve fluency in Sioux, the lingua franca of the American West, which he finds lovely, but so hates the Apaches that he cannot bring himself to learn their difficulty and ugly language. The cruel and crazy master of Balliol College is briefly reprised from Flash for Freedom! and demeans Flashy with snippets classical Latin authors. Particularly interesting is when Flashy meets his illegitimate son, raised as a Sioux but Harvard-educated. The young man slips between cultures effortlessly and to his own bemusement. Fraser as "editor" is generally careful to translate foreign words and phrases in footnotes on first occurrence. The reader needs to memorize them, as this book lacks the alphabetical vocabulary list that some Flashman novels include.

Flashy claims not to be writing another Francis Parkman story of the Westward movement, but often writes with appreciation of the beauty of the plains, deserts, and mountains. He writes with equal vividness about massacres and scalpings, although he does demure from giving full grizzly detail. In discussing sexual matters—every few pages in general—Flashy is staid by twenty-first-century standards of explicitness, uses a vast array of British euphemisms, and at the crucial moment reverts to ellipses... but he exults in his sexual nature, prowess, and history. Flashy is fast with the metaphor and simile, but often to peculiarly 19th-century British culture and to Greco-Roman antiquity, which may be too obscure for some modern readers. Writing as an old man, he inevitably dredges up memories of people and events analogous to what he is currently experiencing. For readers new to the Flashman series, this may be confusing and for veterans it sometimes approaches overload.

Finally, it should be noted that the novel is filled with racially-charged words. Flashy is more class-conscious than race-conscious, although he subscribes to stereotypes, and is downright sexist. All of this is to be expected in an upper class Englishman who as an officer has been less than pleased with non-white troops under his command, and pursues every woman of at least marginal attractiveness. Often it seems that Fraser relishes in using Flashy to be politically incorrect, but catering to modern sensibilities would be highly anachronistic.

## Structure

Flashman and the Redskins opens with the usual "Explanatory Note" by George MacDonald Fraser, who describes how he comes to be editing the "Flashman Papers," which come recently to light a half-century after being written early in the 20th century. Fraser then adds a short Introduction, wonderfully summarizing Flash for Freedom!, the third packet of manuscripts, whose continuation the present work represents. This memoir covers the Gold Rush year of 1849 and a second visit to North America a quarter-century later in 1876.

The body of the novel consists of 21 unnumbered and untitled chapters, running in chronological order. The chapters are of widely varying lengths. Eighty-one end notes explain obscure references in the text and provide detailed background information on major historical characters, maintaining the fiction that this is a historical memoir rather than a work of historical fiction. Some of these are exceptionally useful to the reader. Two maps help picture where Flashy is in the great American West. The volume is completed by two appendices: "The Mysterious Lives of Frank Grouard (1850-1905) and "The Battle of the Little Bighorn."

The book has two major divisions, "The Forty-Niner," consisting of fourteen sections, and "The Seventy-Sixer," consisting of seven (15-21). In the former, Flashy finds himself in 1849 in New Orleans, losing his only hope of a voyage home and wanted for multiple felonies up and down the Mississippi. He flees, therefore, Westward, having marries an upscale madame whose intent is to establish the most profitable whorehouse in San Francisco to serve the gold miners' needs. They get as far as Santa Fe before she puts down roots and Flashy flees, first selling his favorite prostitute, Cleonie, to a rich Navajo. He gets involved with white scalp hunters and then marries an Apache princess. Fleeing the Apaches, he is nearly killed but rescued by the famous Kit Carson, who provides him an escort to San Francisco. Flashy vows never to return to the American West.

"The Seventy-Sixer" picks up 25 years later, as Elspeth Flashman develops wander lust and wants Flashy to show her America. In Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC, however, Flashy meets a series of people who put him in the center of the Indian Wars and the greatest danger of his life. Pres. Ulysses S. Grant sends him to join treaty negotiations over the Black Hills, where gold has been discovered on sacred Indian lands. Among the Indian negotiators are Spotted Tail, whom he had met in his earlier travels across the plains and an intriguing younger associate. Flashy also meets a stunningly beautiful woman, Mrs. Arthur B. Candy, ho hires him to contact Baron Otto von Bismarck to obtain a recommendation, funding, and immigrants.

Intent on bedding the woman, Flashy heads West, accompanying the fiery Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, whom he has tried to talk Grant into reinstating in his field command. The negotiations go nowhere, thanks to a hapless Senator, Flashy has his way with Candy, and suddenly finds himself kidnapped by Indians who promise to torture him to death to avenge his having abandoned her while fleeing Santa Fe. Flashy is imprisoned at Little Bighorn as the battle erupts, is miraculously freed, and almost

escapes before being captured, lightly scalped, but rescued by a mysterious Indian. Standing Bear turns out to be One-Who-Catches, the intriguing Indian he meets in Chicago, who among whites calls himself Frank Grouard. He is Flashy's illegitimate son with Cleonie. As a final surprise, Flashy on his way East to Elspeth and England meets an old friend, Wild Bill Hickok, who is killed the day that Flashy ends writing this seventh installment of his papers.

As in all of the Flashman novels, the elderly narrator looks back at the whole sweep of his lifetime and frequently lists battles and love affairs of which current events remind him. It is a trait of age and flashbacks are frequent, often as catalogs with scarcely any context provided. This is common to the entire series but in Flashman and the Redskins it perhaps reaches a level that novice readers will grow confused and veteran fans may even grow irritated.

# Quotes

"Spring grabbed it and jerked—and the cane came away in his hand, leaving the Frog holding two feet of naked, glittering steel, which he flourished feebly with Gallic squeals. Poor fool, there was a sudden flurry, the snap of a breaking bone, the Frog was screaming on the floor, and Spring had the sword-stick in his hand. I heard Omohundro's shout as he flung himself at Spring, hauling a pistol from beneath his coat; Spring leaped to meet him, bawling 'Habet!'—and, by God, he had. Before my horrified gaze Omohundro was swaying on tiptoe, staring down at that awful steel that transfixed him; he flopped to his knees, the pistol clattering to the floor, and fell forward on his face with a dreadful groan.
"There was a dead silence, broken only by the scraping of Omohundro's nails at the boards—and presently by a wild scramble of feet as one of the principal parties withdrew from the scene. If there's one thing I know, it's when to leave; I was over the counter and through the door behind it like a shot, into a store-room with an open window, and then tearing pell-mell up an ally, blind to all but the need to escape." Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pg. 30.

"For one thing, the sluts all had their dressing-tables and mirrors and wardrobes, stuffed with silks and satins and gowns and underclothes and hats and stockings and shoes and garters and ribbons and jewelery and cosmetics and wigs and masks and gloves and God knows what beside—there were several enormous chests which Susie called 'equipment', and which, if they'd burst open in public, would have led to the intervention of the police. Gauzy trousers and silk whips were the least of it; there was even a red plush swing and an 'electrical mattress', so help me.
" 'Susie,' says I, 'I ain't old enough to take responsibility for this cargo. Dear God, Caligula wouldn't know what to do with it! You've had some damned odd customers in Orleans, haven't you?'
" 'We won't be able to buy it in Sacrament,' says she.
" 'You couldn't buy it in Babylon!' says I. 'See here; two of the wagons must be given over to food—we need enough flour, tea, dried fruit, beans, corn, sugar, and all the rest of it to feed forty folk for three months—at this rate we'll finish up eating lace drawers and frilly corsets!' She told me not to be indelicate." Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pg. 65.

"It seemed to be the right thing. Their chief, a splendid old file with silver dollars in his braids, and a war-bonnet of feathers trailing to his heels, raised his head to me; he had a chin and nose like the prow of a cruiser, and furrows in his cheeks you could have planted crops in. Two great tears rolled down his cheeks, and then he lifted ha hand in salute and turned away in silence, and the others with him. I heaved a great sigh pf relief, and Wootton scratched his head and said:
" 'They satisfied, I reckon. We done the best thing.'
"We hadn't. Two days later, as we were rolling up to the crossing at Chouteau's Island, four people in the caravan came down with cholera. Two of them were young men in the Pittsburgh Pirates company; a third was a woman among the emigrant families. The fourth was Wootton." Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pg. 84.

"Perhaps I fainted, more than once; I can't tell. I thought I heard a muffled crash from behind, but I didn't mind it. I dug in my fingernails and pulled, and pulled, until I could no more. I rested my face on one side, and above the scrubby grass in my line of sight there were the legs of a pony, and I hardly had time to thin oh, dear Jesus, the Indians! when a hand took me by the shoulder and rolled me over, and I was blinking up into a monstrously-bearded face under a fur cap, and I pawed feebly at a fringed buckskin shirt that was slick with wear, and then the beard split into a huge grin of white teeth, and a voice said:
" 'Waal, ole hoss, what fettle? How your symptoms segashooatin'? Say, ifn that wuz jest a spoonful o' gravy to go with ye, I rackon yore baked jest 'bout good enough to eat!'" Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pg. 84.

" 'Dead less than an hour,' says he. 'A few minutes earlier, by the guts of God, and we would have had them!' He grimaced. 'See there.'
"I looked, and stood horrified. Only a few yards away, by a high adobe wall, was a row of trees, and from their branches hung at least a dozen bodies, naked, and so hideously mutilated that your first thought was of carcasses slung in a butcher's shop, streaked with blood. They were all hung by the heels about a foot above the ground, and beneath each one a fire was still smoldering, directly under the heads—if you can call 'em heads after they've burst open.
" 'They stayed long enough fer fun, anyway,' says one of the buckskin men, and spat. Then he turned away with a shrug, and said something to his partner, and they both laughed.
"That was the most horrible thing of all—not the hanging bodies, or the scalped corpses, or the vile stench, but the fact that none of Gallantin's followers paid the slightest heed." Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 135-136.

"She started at that, quite bewildered for a moment; then her eyes lowered, and I'll swear she stifled a smile, for she glanced at me sidelong and gave that little lift of the chin that's the coquette's salute from Tunbridge Wells to Pago Pago, as she murmured: 'Como quiera usted.'
"I pulled her on to my knee, and kissed her properly—and if you've been told that Indians don't know how, it's a lie. And I was just slipping her tunic from her shoulders when an odd movement in the distant firelight caught my eye through the thin branches which partly shielded us.
"A man appeared to be dancing beside the fire—and then I saw it was not a dance but an agonised stagger, as he clutched at something protruding from his neck. His scream echoed through the trees, to be drowned in a crash of gunfire and whistle of shafts, figures leaped up around the fire, men shouted and ran and fell in confusion, and my pearl of the forest was hurled aside as I sprang to my feet. From the woods all around sounded blood-freezing whoops, shots boomed and echoed along the valley, bodies were rushing through the thickets. All this in a second; I could see Gallantin by the fire, rifle raised, and then he and the whole scene before me slowly turned upside down and slid from view; my body shook and a numbness in my head turned to a blinding pain as I fell forward into darkness." Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pg. 148.

" 'But it suits you,' says I, stroking away at her leggings. 'You take away my clouds, I can tell you. Besides, I like your fanciful Indian names—what's mine, by the way, apart from white-eye?'
" 'Don't you know? Why, ever since you rode with your lance at the pegs, everyone calls you by a fine name: White-Rider-Goes-So-Fast-He-Destroys-the-Wind-with-His-Speed.'
"It sounded not bad, if a bit of a mouthful. 'They can't call me all that every time,' says I.
" 'Of course not, foolish one—they shorten it. He-Who-Breaks-the-Wind, or just Wind Breaker.' She was in dead earnest, too. 'Why, don't you like it?'
" 'Couldn't be better,' says I. Just my luck to get one of their names that contracts to something frightful when translated. I knew an Oglala once whose full name was Brave-Pursues-Enemies-So-Fiercely-He-Has-No-Time-to-Change-His-Clothes—that came out as Stinking Drawers, and I can give you chapter and verse if you doubt it. I said I'd rather she chose me a pet name.
" 'Let me think' says she, nestling. 'A name ... you should win it by some great and wonderful deed.' She giggled, and her hand strayed mischievously. 'I know ... it should be Man-Who-Rings-Her-Bells-Makes-Her-Heart-Melt.' Her mouth trembled and her lids narrowed. 'Ah, yes...! Win your new name ... please ... now, Wind Breaker!' I reckon I did, too, so far as she was concerned—but the Yawner was still calling me Wind Breaker, last year, damn him." Part 1 The Forty-Niner, pgs. 175-176.

"It came back a few hours later, though, when the coincidence happened. Until Sheridan's wedding I hadn't thought about redskins for years, and now, the very same day, the old West laid its horny hand softly on my shoulder for the second time.
"Elspeth and I were going in to dinner at the Grand Pacific, and I had turned into their big public lavatory to comb my whiskers or adjust my galluses; I was barely aware of a largish man who was examining his chin closely in a mirror and grunting to himself, and I was just buttoning up and preparing to leave when the humming ended in a rasping growl of surprise.
" 'Inyun! Joll-ee good! Washechuska Wind Breaker! Hoecah!'
"I bore up sharp, for I don't suppose I'd heard Siouxan spoken in more than twenty-years—and then I stood amazed. My companion had turned from the mirror, tweezers in hand, and was regarding me in delighted surprise. I gaped, for I couldn't credit it; there stood a figure in evening trousers and coat, starched front and all—and above it the bronzed hawk face of a full-blooded Plains Indian brave, with a streak of paint just below the parting of his glossy black hair, which hung to his waist in long braided tails, one adorned with a red eagle's feather. Well, I'd known American hotels were odd, but this beat all. The apparition advanced, beaming.
" 'You remember? At Fort Laramie, the year after the Great Sickness? You, me Carson the Thrower-of-Ropes? Han?'
"Suddenly the years fell away, and I was back in the hollow where Wootton and I skinned the buffalo, and that awful visitation ... the painted face with the coonskin hanging from its cap ... and the feast with the Brulé at Laramie ... 'joll-ee good! Joll-ee good!' ... and the same black devil's eyes glinting at me. By some freak of memory it was his Indian name that I remembered first." Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 216-217.

" 'Look,' says I, 'if I was speaking for them, would I have admitted that they won't pay what the hills are worth? No; I'd have told you the price they'll offer is a fair one. I'm

telling you the truth because I know you see it as clear as I do. Of course they'll cheat you; they always have. don't you see—the Sioux aren't going to win, either in a bargain or in a fight? So you must just get as much as you can, while you can. Don't let these talks fail; get the best price you can squeeze out of them, and try to get Sitting Bull and the other hostiles to like it. If you don't, you'll wind up poor or dead.
"He studied me poker-faced, stroking one of his long braids, and I wondered if he was hating me and all that he thought I stood for—hating me all the more, perhaps, because I knew as well as he did the bitter truth he was facing, that he must twist the Yankee purse to the last dollar for his people's sake, and that at the same time he would be betraying them and the ideals they held sacred. it's a damnable thing, the pride of a nation, especially when it's coupled with the kind of mystic frenzy that they had about their precious Black Hills. Or pretended they had." Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 237-238.

"The hairs prickled on my neck suddenly. This wasn't Mrs Candy talking; the voice, as well as the words, were different. The nasal Yankee twang had disappeared.
" '... a night when I was happier than I had ever been, because the man I loved had promised to take me out of slavery, and I was hastening to him, with joy in my heart, in a garden in Santa Fe...'
"For several heart-beats it meant nothing, and then it hit me like a blow. But whereas I'd have acted instantly at a physical assault (probably by flight), the implication of what she said, when I grasped it, so shocked my mind that I stood numb, incapable of movement even when she lifted the scarf abruptly and I saw that she was looking beyond me, and heard the rush of running feet suddenly upon me, and I knew that here was terrible, deadly danger. By then it was too late." Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pg. 297.

"The girl gasped beside me, and I turned to look at her, and she at me. And what I tell you is strictest true: I looked at her, with a question in my eyes—Flashy's eyes, you know, and I put every ounce of noble mute appeal into 'em that I knew how, and that's considerable. God knows I'd been looking at women all my life, ardent, loving, lustful, worshipful, respectful, mocking, charming, and gallant as gadfrey, and while I've had a few clips on the ear and knees in the crotch, more often than not it has worked. I looked at her now, giving her the full benefit, the sweet little soul—and like all the rest, she succumbed. As I say, it's true, and her I am, and I can't explain it—perhaps it's the whiskers, or the six feet two and broad shoulders, or just my style. But she looked at me, and her lids lowered, and she glanced across the river where the troopers were riding down the coulee, and then back at me—this girl whose brother had been killed by my people only a few days back. I can't describe the look in her eyes—frowning, reluctant, hesitant, almost resigned; she couldn't help herself, you see, the dear child. Then she sighed, lifted the knife—and cut the thongs securing my hands to the yoke.
" 'Go on, then,' says she. 'You poor old man.'" Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 316-317.

"I was through the press, only a few Indians running across my front, when an arrow struck with a sickening thud into the pony's neck. As it reared I went headlong, rolling down a little gully side and fetching up against a dead cavalryman with his body torn open, half-disembowelled.
"I lay sprawled on my back as two of those screaming brutes came leaping over the

bank. They collided with each other and went down, and behind them the buffalo-cap lancer was sliding from his saddle, jumping over the other two, swinging up his hatchet. His left hand was at my throat, the frightful painted face was screaming a foot from mine. 'Hoon!' he yelled, and his hatchet flashed down—into the ground beside my head. His breath was stinking against my face as he snarled:
" 'Lie still! Lie still! Don't move, whatever happens!'
"Up went his hatched—and again it missed my face by a whisker, and his left hand must have been busy with the dead trooper's innards, for a bloody mess was thrust into my face, and then he had a knife in his hand; it flashed before my eyes, there was a blinding pain on top of my skull, but I was too choked with horror, physical horror, to scream, and then he was on his feet, yelling exultantly:
" 'Another of them! Kye-ee! Go find your own, Lacotahs!'
"I didn't seen this, blinded with pain and human offal as I was, but I heard it. I lay frozen while they snarled at each other. There was blood running into my eyes, my scalp was a fire of agony—oh, I knew what had been done to me, all right. But why hadn't he killed me?" Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 327-328.

"He was still squatting on his heels before me, watching me with that odd calculating grin, waiting. I don't know what I felt at all, but I know what I did.
" 'Well,' says I, and put out my right hand warily. 'How d'ye do ... son?'
"I don't know what he made of it, either. He took my hand, firm enough for a moment, but the shine in his eyes could have been anything—surprise, pleasure, emotion, amusement, anger, hatred even, but my guess is it was pure devilment. The young bastard (and I use the term with feeling) had had me on toast, sitting there solemnly playing his noble savage, keeping the old man agog, enjoying watching me squirm while he scared the hell out of me, turning the knife of fear and bewilderment in my innards, and keeping the really juicy surprise to the end. Oh, he'd had the time of his life. Good actor, too—aye, it all fitted, the skill in histrionics and dissimulation, the delight in twisting the victim's tail, the mockery, the cool damn-you cut of his jib, the callous way he talked of things other youngsters would have been ashamed of. Oh, he was Flashy's boy, no error—even if I hadn't sold his mama down the river, there'd have been no touching reunion between father and son. We ain't cut out for affection, much, our lot." Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pg. 338.

" 'Frank!' I roared.
"He checked at the crest and looked back. I felt such a desolation, then, but I couldn't move after him, or say what I wanted to say, with all the sudden pain and regret for lost years, and what had come of them. I called up to him.
" 'I'm sorry, son, about it all.'
" 'Well, I'm not!' he called back, and laughed, and suddenly lifted his arms wide, either side. 'Look, Papa!' He laughed again, and then he had ridden over the skyline and was gone.
"I sat and looked at the empty ridge for a while, and then rode on, feeling pretty blue. I'd only known him a week, and he was a Sioux Indian to all intents, and when you thought of all the bother there had been about him, with every Deadly Sin, I suppose, for his godparents... but if you could have seen him! By jove, he looked well.
"Still, it was quite a relief. Paternal piety's all very well, but it would have been a damned

nuisance if he'd taken me up. I'd meant what I'd said, mind you, about starting him right and seeing him get on, but now he was gone and I could look at the thing cold, it was just as well. He'd probably have been a tricky, troublesome beggar, and Elspeth would have asked the most awkward questions, and once he'd cut his braids and put on a decent suit, the likeness would have been there for all the world ... quite. I came all over of a sweat at the thought. Yes, undoubtedly it was just as well. Yet sometimes I hear that laugh still, and see that splendid figure on the ridge, arms raised, and I can feel such a pang for that son.
"But life ain't a bed of roses, and you must just pluck the thorns out of your rump and get on." Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pg. 338 Part 2 The Seventy-Sixer, pgs. 347-348

# Topics for Discussion

What is the song Gerryowen and how does it bind together various aspects of the story?

How is Philip Sheridan's wedding in Chicago prove a turning point in the novel?

How does Flashy relate to "the Firsts"—the pioneers who head West when virtually nothing man made stands between St. Louis and San Francisco? How does he regard the passing of the frontier?

Is Susie Willinck a noble person? If so, what constitutes her nobility? If not, what makes her ignoble?

Would Flashy agree with Sheridan's saying, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian?" What (if any) good does he see in the Indian view and practice of life?

What role does Kit Carson play in the novel?

What role does Ulysses S. Grant play in the novel?

If the way he comes upon his biological father had been otherwise—had he found him a prisoner in stocks, for instance—would One-Who-Catches, a.k.a. Standing Bear, a.k.a. Frank Grouard have spared Flashy?