

# **Gold Mine Study Guide**

## **Gold Mine by Wilbur Smith**

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# Contents

[Gold Mine Study Guide.....1](#)

[Contents.....2](#)

[Plot Summary.....3](#)

[Chapters 1 - 5.....4](#)

[Chapters 6 - 10.....6](#)

[Chapters 11 - 15.....8](#)

[Chapters 16 - 20.....10](#)

[Chapters 21 - 25.....12](#)

[Chapters 26 - 30.....14](#)

[Chapters 31 - 35.....16](#)

[Chapters 36 - 40.....18](#)

[Chapters 41 - 45.....20](#)

[Chapters 46 - 50.....22](#)

[Chapters 51 - 55.....24](#)

[Chapters 56 - 60.....26](#)

[Chapters 61 - 65.....28](#)

[Chapters 66 - 69.....30](#)

[Chapters 70 - 74.....32](#)

[Characters.....34](#)

[Objects/Places.....41](#)

[Themes.....43](#)

[Style.....46](#)

[Quotes.....48](#)

[Topics for Discussion.....50](#)



## Plot Summary

Gold Mine by Wilbur Smith is a novel that opens the door to the depths that greed can take people to and the heroic efforts that often balance the scales. In this story, Smith again visits Africa where the Kitchenerville Gold Fields are his subject. It is a story about one group of wealthy men who are attempting to gain control of the gold market by sacrificing a collection of gold mines intentionally, thereby manipulating the ongoing rise of the price of gold overall. By recognizing the weaknesses some men have for gambling or power in general, they place key people in positions of control and then orchestrate a mining disaster by manipulating them into drilling through the rock formation known as the Big Dipper. Geologists have separately confirmed that beneath this serpentine rock layer is likely to be an enormous amount of water, and one small group has access to enough reports from the five mines making up the Kitchenerville field that they see the entire picture where others are simply speculating. They rewrite the reports to make it appear as if the water is actually a strike beyond compare and give this information to the man in charge of the central mine who works for The Sonder Ditch Mining Company.

Manfred Steyner is plagued by several issues that complicate his life and owes his position of power in Hurry Hirschfeld's mine to the fact that he married Hurry's granddaughter Teresa. In a marriage that is purely token and status, Manfred uses this position to gamble (although usually with disastrous consequences and amassing a great deal of debt) and finds himself at the mercy of a group of powerful men in the process. They give him the doctored reports showing a huge strike beyond the Big Dipper and instruct him to quickly and quietly penetrate the barrier and be the first to make them all rich. Manfred ignores the advice of his new surface manager Rod Ironsides and gives him the order to secretly drill through. Rod does so, reluctantly and under duress as his job is dependent upon his compliance, but somehow senses the looming catastrophe and tries to take steps to ensure the safety of those under Manfred's employ. Falling in love with Teresa is a by product that he never expects, but cherishes, and Manfred's knowledge of their affair makes the situation all the more volatile. When the Big Dipper is penetrated, Rod finds himself going down into the shaft with one volunteer, Big King Nkulu. The shaft is now a river that wiped out the crew that drilled, through and Rod is attempting to reconnect the blast mat that he created for this eventuality. No one can foresee the chain of events that leaves Big King to save his boss and the other mines in the Kitchenerville fields. In a story that has all the elements of greed, lust, power, adultery, violence and love; the reader is never without excitement.



# Chapters 1 - 5

## Chapters 1 - 5 Summary

Gold Mine by Wilbur Smith is a novel that opens the door to the depths that greed can take people to, and the heroic efforts that often balance the scales. In this story, Smith again visits Africa where the Kitchenerville Gold Fields are his subject. It is a story about one group of wealthy men who are attempting to gain control of the gold market by sacrificing a collection of gold mines intentionally, thereby manipulating the ongoing rise of the price of gold overall. By recognizing the weaknesses some men have for gambling or power in general, they place key people in positions of control and then orchestrate a mining disaster by manipulating them into drilling through the rock formation known as the Big Dipper. Geologists have separately confirmed that beneath this serpentine rock layer is likely to be an enormous amount of water, and one small group has access to enough reports from the five mines making up the Kitchenerville field that they see the entire picture, whereas others are simply speculating. They rewrite the reports to make it appear as if the water is actually a strike beyond compare and give this information to the man in charge of the central mine who works for The Sonder Ditch Mining Company.

Rod Ironsides feels the earth shake and calls Dr. Peter Wessels to monitor the seismic activity in the area. Wessels confirms the worst time is yet to come. Rod calls for the boss; when the white phone rings, the voice on the other end is ripe with fear. He tells Rod that the whole stope fell in trapping the men beneath the rock. Section 43 has collapsed. Rod hurries to the shaft head to the Mary Anne, which is already crowded with emergency personnel. When they reach the bottom, they transfer to the sub-main Mary Anne which takes them down further still. Ninety-five-hundred feet beneath the earth is the next lobby station. Rod takes note that only two men are dead so far. Rod leads the way into the haulage where the dust is still thick, calling out instructions as he goes. He follows a map in his head unerringly until he hears the man screaming and alternately sobbing. It is a sound to which he has never become accustomed. A crawling hole is the only access to the man stuck under the rock, and two shots of morphine have not been enough to quiet him. Nine men are missing in total, and twelve have been sent in to try to save them. By the time Rod reaches him, he is moments from death. It becomes a contest of strength for Rod and Big King, moving rock and searching for survivors. At the same time, Rod knows he must keep the shareholders happy, so he instructs his men to conduct five-minute, time-delayed blasts in other shafts and pulls the rescue team back to a safe place while the blasting goes on. After the blasting is done, Rod takes them back in and they recover another four bodies. Just after midnight Rod and Big King break through to a chamber and find Frank Lemmer, the General Manager of The Sonder Ditch Mine. Miraculously, he is still alive but is caught under a slab of rock that can't be moved without blasting. Even Frank knows they will have to cut him free. Dr. Stander is called in.



## Chapters 1 - 5 Analysis

The continent of Africa goes through many changes as it evolves with a young earth. From mountains to earthquakes and lava to cooling periods, the landscape changes. It is a process that is conditionally perfect for bringing gold to the surface and ages later, it will be a place where many men will lay down their lives to retrieve the gold and make their fortunes in an area named the Witwatersrand.

Rod Ironsides is the Underground manager of The Sonder Ditch Mining Company and knows the mine like he knows his own home. Every turn and stope is mapped in his head, and when they feel the earth shake under them, Rod knows it will be bad even before it is confirmed. He calls the men out, and confirmation that a stope wall has collapsed comes moments later. He goes down with the rescue team and leads by example. They can hear the men who are trapped, screaming in fear and pain, and Rod is furious when he finds out that the section shift boss, Barnard has sent an unknown number of men in to attempt rescue. Rod knows the odds do not favor finding live victims, and, in fact, it is more likely the rescuers will be added to the list of casualties. Barnard has not even recorded who has gone in, so keeping track becomes more difficult than it already was. Rod and a Bantu named Big King work side by side to clear the rock and search for survivors. They find several bodies, but then miraculously come across the General Manager, Frank Lemmers, who had been doing an inspection of the stope when it let go. He is alive, but trapped in such a way that his arm will have to be removed to free him. It is a reality he is already aware of, and they quickly call in the doctor.



# Chapters 6 - 10

## Chapters 6 - 10 Summary

Dr. Stander removes Frank's arm in less than five minutes, but before thirty more minutes have passed, Frank dies of shock. Shortly after the funeral, Rod is summoned by Manfred Steyner to come to his house. Shortly before his meeting at eleven, Rod arrives in Johannesburg. He finds the Steyner's home and drives through the gates where he gets his first surprise. The gardens are spectacular. He rounds a corner to find Teresa Steyner in her gardening clothes cursing the stink bug that bit her. He compliments her efforts, getting a smile for his, and she takes him up to her husband. Dr. Steyner begins his meeting with Rod by recapping his career to date. Manfred acknowledges Rod's accomplishment before continuing. He exposes every secret Rod has before telling him that he will use all of his considerable influence to ensure that Rod be appointed immediately to General Manager of the Sonder Ditch Gold Mining Company Ltd. All Manfred asks in return is his loyalty and unquestioning obedience. To have that kind of power at his age is almost beyond belief, and Rod has trouble containing himself, but at the same time he knows that he would be tied to Manfred's whims. He decides to accept the offer and deal with the instruction and his obedience afterward. Manfred shakes his hand and tells him he'll hear from him.

When Rod leaves, his head is swimming. He almost runs into Teresa who has changed into much more appealing garb since he last saw her thirty minutes earlier, and he is intelligent enough to know that the change was for him. She walks him to his car, talking amiably with him along the way and announces she will be seeing him when she and Manfred come to give out the bravery awards the following week.

Manfred watches Rodney drive away and then makes a call to tell someone that everything is arranged. He listens for a couple of minutes and assures someone on the other end that everything will be done in plenty of time, before hanging up and washing his hands for the second time in less than thirty minutes.

## Chapters 6 - 10 Analysis

Rod Ironsides lives a double life of sorts. He is one person on the job, strictly business and capable of handling any crisis that arises, and when he is on his own time he enjoys fast cars like the Maserati he drives, young women to entertain, and an apartment to reflect an extravagance he can hardly afford. Like Jekyll and Hyde, he is two completely unique and different people. His invitation to Dr. Steyner's home is a first and a bit of a surprise, but he goes there with a hopeful attitude that is quickly undone by the scope and depth of the personal and professional review that Manfred does of his life. Rod is almost ready to give Manfred a piece of his mind and even comments on the prying nature of his summary, but Manfred stops him by offering to support him in the promotion to General Manager of the Sonder Ditch Gold Mining Company. There is



of course a catch, and Rod hardly hesitates when he hears it. Manfred wants Rod to be his go to guy. He wants Rod to do as he's told. Rod knows there might be problems with this kind of a deal in the future but thinks he can get himself into the job and deal with Manfred when the time comes. When Rod leaves, he sees Manfred's wife Teresa for the second time; she has used the time while he was in the meeting with her husband to clean up herself. Rod recognizes her flirtatious attitude and can't help responding to it a little bit as she tells him that she will accompany her husband to the awards being handed out at the mine the following week.

Manfred is a peculiar kind of man. Though he carries a great deal of weight in his professional standing and has more money than most dream of, he has a few hang ups that come with it. He hates anything to do with germs or dirt, washing his hands constantly and hesitant to touch any surface that hasn't been disinfected first. Manfred is not alone in his desire to control the General Manager of Sonder Ditch. As soon as Rod leaves, he makes a call and assures the person on the other end that he has Rod under his control.



# Chapters 11 - 15

## Chapters 11 - 15 Summary

Hurry Hirschfeld is one of the richest and most influential men in Africa and has his office in the Reef House next to the Schlesinger Building looking down on Johannesburg. He waits for Manfred Steyner to arrive and hates the environment designed by Manfred. The offices still remind him more of a brothel than an office, having come from fifty-five years in an office that lacked even a carpet. Manfred arrives, calling him Grandfather which is something Hurry hates as well. Hurry adjusts the air conditioning until it is humid enough to grow orchids, knowing it is one of the few things that irritates Manfred who has to excuse himself to wash before very little time passes. Manfred runs his proposal for General Manager at Sonder Ditch by Hurry who tells him he wants Fred Plummer - a man who will take his pension the following year - in the position instead.

Rod is ready to go back to work and wakes the nineteen-year-old Lucille to tell her it's time to go and drives to his office. Allen Worth, one of the finest drill operators in the mining industry, uses touch and instinct to guide the drilling foreman through his controls until the drill is grinding at four hundred revolutions a minute. Rod goes inside with his foreman, and while they peruse the latest Playboy, the drill cuts into a fissure and dries out. Rod races out to it, hoping to stave off disaster but reaches the rig seconds too late—hundreds of feet down the bit twists off leaving a broken rod in its depths. It could take up to two weeks to fish it out, and Allen is looking for someone's hide, but the crew is one jump quicker and has already cleared out of the area.

Rod sits in his office, pondering the changes he'll make if Manfred manages to put him in control. His mine captains show up for their weekly meeting and he listens to and mostly solves their gripes for the better part of two hours before terminating the meeting and sending them back to work. While the meeting progressed, their men worked below. Kowalski inches back to his men without lamplight and catches them taking a break while they believe he is in the stopes. He grabs the senior man of the three and drags him away up the drive with the handle of a sledge hammer in one hand. The other two are too horrified to move, and soon they hear the first blow and their companion's accompanying shriek. When Kowalski returns alone, the handle is wet with blood and the remaining two are only too eager to work.

## Chapters 11 - 15 Analysis

Hirschfeld is a very rich man and enjoys a feeling of superiority over most men. Those he has no handle on, such as Manfred Steyner, irritate him no end. He is obsessed with finding a way to get under his skin. Since Manfred doesn't seem to fear him, having married his granddaughter, he can't use his money as a lever. Manfred even calls him Grandfather, which irks him more, but Hirschfeld seems unable to stop reacting to





Manfred. The only wedge Hurry Hirschfeld has over Manfred is his sensitivity to temperature and the sweat that accompanies it. As such, Hurry takes great joy, however childish, in turning the air conditioner dial until the office is almost a sauna, knowing it will irritate Manfred. He's correct, and it takes little time before Manfred is heading for the bathroom to wash. To make matters worse, Hurry wants to appoint Fred Plummer to General Manager at Sonder Ditch, but Manfred argues that Fred is only a year from retirement and is too old to do the job. To a man like Hurry who is the same general age, comments like that one from Manfred are not well received.

Rod goes to work on Monday morning believing that he has a real chance at running the mine in the near future. He goes over in his mind how easily he can make the mine produce at a lower cost and sees himself as the toast of the mining community. As young as he is, simply being promoted to General Manager is a big thing, and Rod enjoys the thought of himself in charge immensely. His mine captains show up for their weekly meeting, and he spends two hours listening to their gripes and solving what he can while soothing what he can't. He has a unique talent in this area, knowing what to say and how to get the most out of his men. Meanwhile, the work continues below. Kowalski has a different style for motivating the men under him. When he finds all three sitting and talking instead of working, he drags the senior-most member up the drive and using the handle from a fourteen-pound hammer, he privately beats the tar out of him. When he returns with the bloody handle in his hand, the remaining men are suitably motivated to work.



# Chapters 16 - 20

## Chapters 16 - 20 Summary

Joseph M'Kati is from the Shangaan tribe and has worked in this job for five happy years. He works under the conveyor, sweeping and hosing the spilling excess. When no one is looking, he climbs under the storage bin. Over many months he had finally been able to chisel away the heads of four rivets that held the seam in the bottom of the bin. Gold, heavier than other substance, works its way down until it finds its way through the holes Joseph created. He puts the black powder carefully into his tobacco pouch and smiling, goes back to work.

Johnny Delange marks the shot holes and sets the angle for the machine boy to drill. At twenty seven, he is the top rock breaker in the Sonder Ditch, and his section is so efficient that men fight to be part of it. Johnny is so good that he earns more than the General Manager of Sonder Ditch. He finishes the holes and heads out to get the explosives, but his boss boy is nowhere in sight. Johnny looks everywhere and finally finds him and his assistant having sex in the latrine. He is so disgusted, he almost loses control and hits him, but instead tells the boss boy to get dressed and bring his assistant to the station.

Rod gives Big King some time off the stopes after the accident, seeing how deeply affected the man was by the death of his white miner counterpart. Away from the stopes for a week now, King is bored and complains that being in charge of the transport team is beneath him. Rod is on his way to do his underground tour when he gets a call from Dan Stander. Dan wants him to come to the first aid station to deal with the assault of a white man on a Bantu. The assault requires forty seven stitches and the man has a fractured skull. Rod finds out who is responsible and pulls Kowalski out of the stopes. He goes down to the first aid station and takes a look at the man on the stretcher and asks Dan for a written report, angry beyond words.

Davy Delange tamps the Dynagel into the shot holes. He is two years older than his brother and earns less than Johnny but saves every penny he can. Davy plans to buy a farm one day. He did his work automatically, thinking about the fact that Johnny had recently raised his rent by a hundred rand a month. He threatens to move but won't because he likes Hettie.

## Chapters 16 - 20 Analysis

Joseph enjoys his job. He is the sweeper who works with broom and hose under the long conveyor belt, cleaning up the spillage. The part of his job he enjoys most is directly related to the fact that he is stealing from the company. Over many weeks, he managed to chisel four bolt heads from the seam at the bottom of a cocopan, and now



collects the gold that sifts its way down to the bottom, hiding it in his tobacco pouch when no one is looking.

Big King has been away from the stopes for a full week and Rod reassigns him to be in charge of the transport team. Rod knows how deeply affected King was when they retrieved the body of his white miner counterpart from the wreckage of the hanging wall collapse. King had cried without shame as he gently carried the body of the man out. Rod thought he could use a break and reassigned him. At first, King enjoys socializing and showing off his strength, but after a week he is bored and is ready to return to the stopes to do some real work.

Johnny and his brother Davy both work at the mine. Though they are both excellent miners, they are polar opposites in personality. Johnny has recently settled down with his new bride, Hettie, and Davy lives with them while he saves to buy a farm of his own. Johnny tends to work a bit recklessly, but his haulages are higher than anyone else, and he can pick and choose any crew he wants as a result. Davy has the dangerous job of tamping Dynagel into the holes his brother marks and does his work carefully and diligently. Johnny is ready to get the explosives when he notices his boss boy is nowhere to be seen. When he finally tracks him down, he is disgusted to find him engaged in sex with his assistant in the latrine. Johnny almost loses his composure, but stops short of beating the Bantu, telling him instead to report to the station with his assistant.

Dan Stander calls Rod down to the first aid station to show him the results of the beating that Kowalski laid on his Bantu for sitting around. Using the handle of a fourteen-pound hammer, Kowalski beat the Bantu until the Bantu's skull was fractured and required almost fifty stitches. The attack was gruesome and Rod is so angry by what he sees that he promises the Bantu that the man responsible will be punished, and his anger stays with him throughout his entire underground tour.



# Chapters 21 - 25

## Chapters 21 - 25 Summary

Rod's first stop on his underground tour is Joseph's station where he finds the man diligently sweeping. Rod notices the dust on Joseph's upper lip and berates him for not using enough water before sweeping and Joseph promises Rod he will do better making a show of getting the hose out. When Rod leaves, he turns it off again, because it is harder to sweep wet than dry. He chuckles to himself. Next, Rod stops to watch Big King and promises to get him back in the stopes before the end of the week. When Rod reaches Johnny's station, Johnny asks if Rod can get rid of his boss boy for him. Rod asks the boss boy if that is what he wants as well, and he admits he is happy to go if his assistant can be transferred with him. Rod immediately knows what the tension is about, and agrees, telling Johnny in a sudden inspiration that he will pair him up with Big King. Johnny is thrilled by the idea. On the way back to the surface at three o'clock, Rod is approached by Davy who tells him that his boss boy has finished his ticket and will be going home soon. He requests a replacement, and Rod asks him if he will take Johnny's boss boy and his assistant. Knowing they are hard workers, he happily agrees and Rod is grateful to have solved one more issue.

When he gets back to his office, Kowalski is waiting for him. He asks about the Bantu and Kowalski admits beating him as a lesson to other slackers. Rod fires him on the spot and tells him the police will be in touch. Kowalski's limited English still manages to grasp the gist of the conversation, but before he can get physical with Rod, the door is closed and he "slips" on the overly-polished floor, hitting his jaw on the desk.

Manfred works quietly in his office, speaking into a tape recorder to avoid the otherwise human contact. The phone rings and the voice on the other end asks if Manfred has their man in yet. Manfred tells him that he will be in by the end of the week and before the connection is broken, he asks for permission to play that evening. After a brief silence, permission is granted, and Andrew tells him that Simon will tell him his limits. He thanks Andrew, relieved.

## Chapters 21 - 25 Analysis

Rod is so angry when he sees the extent of the damages done to the Bantu that he remains angry for his entire underground tour. There are no huge or insurmountable problems, and the few that he meets with are solved before he reaches the surface. Johnny will trade his boss boy and assistant, whom he can no longer look at, let alone work with, for Big King. It is a trade with which Johnny is thrilled. Big King will also be happy as Rod had promised him a return to the stopes before the end of the week. Davy will take on his brother's boss boy and assistant and is happy to get them because he knows of the work of which they are capable. The rest doesn't matter to him. When Rod gets back to his office, he is ready to deal with Kowalski. He lets him admit to his



crime before firing him and telling him the police will be sent around as well. Kowalski is a temperamental Polish man who's English is limited, but he understands fired and understands police. He balls a fist and Rod quietly asks Dimitri to close the door. Dimitri knows what is coming and he sits outside listening. There is a brief scuffling sound before he is called back in. Rod tells Dimitri that the floors have been overly polished and as a result, Kowalski "slipped" and hit his jaw on the desk. Dimitri pretends to be sympathetic.

Manfred Steyner prefers to record his instructions and observations rather than dictate them to a person. He can't bear to be so close to someone who is wearing perfume, primping and preening. The smell alone is nauseating. The phone rings and he is asked if he has managed to put their man in place yet. Manfred admits he hasn't but add that he should have by the end of the week. He also asks permission to play, and minutes later Andrew comes back on and tells him he can. His relief is immediate.



# Chapters 26 - 30

## Chapters 26 - 30 Summary

Four men and a servant wait in a room behind one-way glass. Manfred arrives, and they watch him lose at Baccarat. The host explains the intensity and style of Manfred's play and they watch until he loses his stake, explaining the depth of the pathology that propels Manfred to lose despite knowing the odds are suicidal from a financial standpoint. He assures the men that with a gambling debt amounting to over 300,000 Rand, he is definitely their man. Manfred gets home late and goes into Teresa's room. Less than three minutes later, he excuses himself and she hears the shower running, still trembling with desire and filled with self loathing for allowing him near her. He comes back clean, chats with her idly, and as he is leaving he asks her if it is possible for her to raise three hundred thousand rand without her grandfather knowing. It is impossible and he tells her to forget he even mentioned it as he returns to his room to sleep.

Rod, as acting General Manager takes a moment to acknowledge the death of Frank Lemmer before introducing Manfred Steyner to the two hundred gathered in the mine club hall. Watching Rod, Teresa sits in the audience and is filled with feelings she hasn't felt in years. Embarrassed by their sudden onset, she watches him surreptitiously until he looks up and stares straight at her. The awards of bravery are handed out, and Teresa manages to get herself invited to see the tribal dancing on the following Saturday, knowing Manfred is slated to be in Paris.

King heads to the Recruiting Agency Office after the ceremony and sends half his reward money to his senior wife and puts the other half towards his book. He washes up and is told that the Induna wants to see him after he eats. He goes and they discuss a variety of tribal matters before the Induna tells him a parcel is ready, and Crooked Leg waits for him. Later, Big King walks down the main road until he is out of the sight of the guards. Then he makes his way with certainty to a long defunct mining tunnel. Using a torch, he goes deep into the tunnel until he sees light ahead. He calls out, identifying himself to Crooked Leg. On a table amongst other second hand laboratory equipment, a large bottle with yellow powder waits, representing a week of collection by men like Joseph M'Kati - all Shangaans. The Induna coordinates the operation and Big King negotiates its sale. He takes it to the concession store where Josè Almeida secretly weighs it and pays the various tribes their share of five Rands per ounce. Josè resells it for sixteen, justifying the extra because of the five years in prison he would do if caught with unregistered gold. He sets his scale to report twenty percent more in his favor, but no one argues with the final payout.



## Chapters 26 - 30 Analysis

Manfred has an intelligence quotient of 158 and though his intelligence is high, he still consistently loses at the Baccarat tables because of some deep-seated need to be humiliated. He is in every other way as clean as a man can be - plays no sports, has no hobbies, and is a gentlemen. Only this form of masochism separates him and makes him vulnerable. His only other weakness stems from a distinct dislike for any form of bodily contact or secretion. His trysts with his wife are one sided and self gratifying after which he quickly excuses himself to shower their contact from himself, leaving Teresa in a state of unrelieved passion. Even just holding her is more than he can bear, and as such he insists they sleep separately. When Teresa attends the awards ceremony, she is taken by surprise by the strength of her sexual arousal for Rod and somehow, he becomes acutely aware of the possibilities that present themselves as a result. Instinctively knowing she is vulnerable, he later extends to her the invitation to watch Big King during their weekly tribal dances, and she deftly arranges to accept the invitation without her husband. Clueless, he plays right into her plans even suggesting that she would be quite safe in Rod Ironside's hands, causing her to blush. Manfred, clueless and oblivious, doesn't notice.

Big King is summoned by the Shangaan Induna for their weekly meeting and is told that another parcel of fines is ready to be delivered for sale. The Induna controls the Shangaan tribe members who work for the mine and is on the mine's payroll and receiving a generous salary and side benefits for his ability to keep the peace among the tribe. He orchestrates their careful theft of gold which is then transported by Big King only to the man who runs the sole concession for the mine. King goes to Crooked Leg, who stays in an abandoned mine shaft and collects the fines from the rest throughout the week. The next link in the chain of theft which occurs on a weekly basis, is José Almeida who runs the only concession on mining property. He pays each tribe only a fraction of what the fines are actually worth and what he receives.



# Chapters 31 - 35

## Chapters 31 - 35 Summary

Terry meets her grandfather, Hurry, in the bar of the President Hotel. They talk like friends and Teresa casually mentions her impressions of Rod and how she believes he is a competent General Manager, not knowing that her grandfather has actually chosen Fred Plummer for the position. When she realizes Rod is not the sure replacement, she takes it upon herself to ensure he is, comparing him to her father to gain points with Hurry. It is the correct push and Hurry decides in Rod's favor. Manfred sits on the plane to Paris, and a large man beside him removes his shirt and takes out his cigarettes. The combination of odors is unbearable. Teresa convinces a friend to join her after some coaxing, and Rod manages to talk Dan Stander into joining him to amuse Teresa's friend Joy. Dan is not disappointed and neither is Joy. By the end of the performance, Dan has suddenly recalled a need to go to Johannesburg and offered to take Joy home, leaving Teresa and Rod alone. Alone in the Maserati, their eyes meet, and she asks him if he realizes how dangerous this will be for him. Then she tells him he has the job at Sonder Ditch.

Big King leads his Shangaan's back to Dump town at a trot, singing the fighting songs that are banned at the mines. He enters the Shebeen and finds it full of Basuto tribe members. King orders Eagle Brandy and throws out the first insult. When a Basuto returns with one aimed at the Shangaan's, the battle is on and rages until no one is left standing.

The host who invited others to watch Manfred gamble in Johannesburg is now a guest at the Embassy in Paris. He listens with others while another man lectures them on the geology and hydrophysics of the Big Dipper fault. Having managed to assemble the results from all five companies borehole results, he describes the lake or underground sea that exists just beyond the Big Dipper fault. He further explains the reasons they want the Sonder Ditch Mine to break through the Dipper fault and flood all five mines with the water beneath. While uneasy about the deaths this will cause, the men are willing to do so for the million dollar payment they will receive for their cooperation and silence.

## Chapters 31 - 35 Analysis

Terry goes out for lunch with her grandfather and casually mentions the acting General Manager and discovers that Hurry has no intention of making him the official General Manager of Sonder Ditch. Thinking quick, she dredges up memories of her father and compares Rod to him, and for a moment Hurry won't meet her eyes and she wonders if perhaps she's gone too far, but then he agrees with her and she realizes her intuition was perfect. It was exactly the push needed to help him make the right decision. She isn't the only one who is relieved. Hurry tells Manfred before he gets on the plane for





Paris, and he is thrilled that he'll be able to report he has been successful, although he has no idea what changed Hirschfeld's mind. Now all Teresa has to do is find someone to take to the tribal dancing with her to act as the "friend." Teresa announced she has always wanted to see tribal dancing. Finally, after being turned down by everyone else, she manages to talk Joy into going with her and unknown to her, Rod has been doing the same thing on his end. He calls in favors to bring Dan along with him who does nothing but sulk until he sees Joy. Then Rod knows immediately that the evening will go well. They watch the spectacle of Big King and his Shangaan's dancing, leaving them all in a heightened state of sexual tension, and afterward Dan makes excuses that will enable him to take Joy home himself, leaving the way clear for Rod with Teresa. As Rod is driving her home, she asks him if he is aware of the direction they are going in when their eyes meet, and he tells her he knows. Though she reminds him of the risks involved, he is still willing to take them. For Terry there is little risk because regardless of the outcome she is a Hirschfeld. Despite her seemingly-brash behavior, she doesn't want him to get the impression that she is loose or immoral, and he assures her that he never thought so. Then she tells him that he has the job, and at first he doesn't believe he heard her correctly, but she covers neatly knowing that his pride would never allow him to take it if he knew how she is largely responsible for getting it for him.

Big King and his troupe trot back quickly to Dump Town, also in a state of heightened sexual tension, and head for the nearest Shebeen. He needs an outlet for the pent-up feelings as do his men. When they find the Shebeen full of Basuto tribe members, it is not difficult to goad them into a brawl. They are also a fighting tribe, and the situation quickly degenerates from insults to injuries after which Big King takes the woman left watching off into the surrounding bush to her great pleasure and encouragement.

There is a meeting held in Paris. and this time the big man who hosted the group who watches Manfred gamble is merely a guest himself. He listens as the lecturer explains the location and position of the five major mines that make up the Kitchenerville Fields and the strategic importance of the Sonder Ditch. All their planning is now coming to bear fruit, and the man further explains the results of the combined surveys done and the fact that they are the only ones aware of the implications of all the information. A sea of water exists under the Big Dipper reef, and their government is interested in maintaining the current climate of gold and its prices. Knowing that a breach of this amount of water would fill and ruin all five mines offers the certainty that gold prices will not increase for the foreseeable future. With Manfred under their control financially, it is a simple matter to present him with falsified reports indicating a huge strike beneath the Big Dipper and encouraging him to be the first to strike it. From there, he can convince his General Manager to push forward and set the disaster in motion. The lecturer reminds all who attend the meeting that they are being handsomely paid not to reveal advance knowledge by dumping stock or selling out, and they all agree - money ensuring their silence and participation in what will certainly cost men their lives.



# Chapters 36 - 40

## Chapters 36 - 40 Summary

Manfred has timed his trip to Paris to ensure that he has two full days to gamble before the conference begins. He goes down to play after a short rest, and typical of his usual behavior, he loses big, after betting against odds that are stacked against him and impossible to beat. When he arrives at his hotel, Andrew waits to tell him that he will be summoned in the morning.

Johnny and Hettie join the rest of the gang at the Lord Kitchener Hotel on Saturday night to drink and dance. Johnny is well known for his ability to to the twist, and Hettie has no trouble keeping up. When they are spent, Johnny joins the men reluctantly until an old rival, Constantine, begins to get under his skin. Hettie has forbidden him to fight, and Johnny is trying to keep to her wishes, but Constantine finally draws him in. It ends with both unconscious - Johnny knocked out when Hettie distracts him, and Constantine put down by Hettie with a bottle before he can finish off Johnny. The men help her get Johnny to the car and Davy drives them home. On the way, he pleads Johnny's case, coming on to her strong with his hand on her upper thigh until they reach home, and she is no longer angry.

Rod and Terry celebrate his promotion privately at the Sunnyside Hotel with a few drinks and then he takes her to his hideaway in town. She lets him take complete control until some time afterward when reality slams it way back into her consciousness. By then, her clothes are half off and she has stopped him just in time, not knowing who she is more angry with - him for seducing her or herself for allowing the seduction to occur. He takes her home, and the next morning she wakes him with an apologetic phone call, asking if she can meet his daughter and suggesting he bring her to see Terry's horses on the stud farm on the Vaal River. When Rod picks Melanie up, he tells her mother of his new promotion, but she doesn't share his enthusiasm, angry that good things keep happening to him. She realizes she could have had position and money with him and now has much less. Terry meets with Melanie's almost immediate approval, sitting on her lap and finally falling asleep there hours later on the return trip having enjoyed the day as much as Terry and Rod. Later, in his apartment, Terry can hardly believe the depth of feelings and emotions running through her, having never felt them before. She is not able to sleep, unwilling to miss one moment of their time together. When Rod arrives at work on Monday morning, his letter of promotion is waiting on his desk. The rest of the day passes in a blur of congratulations and reorganization. Partway through the day, Dan Stander calls Rod to announce that he is in love and to thank Rod for the introduction to Joy. For the time being, Rod is a man with two jobs, and he takes real pleasure in supervising the first blast as General Manager, and despite how tired he is, he looks forward to meeting with Terry later that evening.



## Chapters 36 - 40 Analysis

Manfred gambles in Paris before the conference and loses heavily. He bets the table on a nothing hand, even though he knows that the man he is playing likely has at least three of a kind. It is a pathology that he doesn't even understand himself, but at the time, it all seems perfectly reasonable to him.

Johnny and Hettie go drinking and dancing on Saturday night. Johnny has promised Hettie he won't fight anymore, and when an old rival, Constantine, goads him into breaking his promise, Hettie is furious. She makes her way over to where the brawl is in progress and it takes only calling out Johnny's name to make him stop and break his concentration. Constantine uses the opportunity to sucker punch Johnny. Seeing that Constantine is about to finish him off while he is down, Hettie grabs a bottle and Constantine soon joins Johnny on the floor. Davy helps get Johnny into the car and on the way home tells Hettie that it wasn't Johnny's fault. In truth Constantine had goaded him until no man would have turned the other cheek. The whole time, his hand is sliding further and further up her leg, and she is so angry she is allowing it. By the time they reach the house, both are breathless and Hettie is no longer angry. Davy has always liked Hettie and he uses the opportunity while she is mad at Johnny to get close to her. It is something she would never consider otherwise, and he takes advantage of it without conscience or thought for his brother, still out cold in the back seat.

Rod convinces Terry to come back to his hideaway in town, and she is almost in bed with him before she comes to her senses and puts a stop to it. Feeling guilty, she takes her anger out on Rod and insists he take her home. He does and is surprised when she calls the next morning having reconsidered again. She invites him to bring his daughter to her horse stud farm to see the horses, and he happily accepts. They spend the day together, close and happy, and later she stays the night with him at his apartment. After making love, she is transported to an emotional level she had no idea even existed, and she lies next to him replaying it in her mind. She can't believe the scope of emotions he brings out in her and the tenderness in his touch compared to the cold and calculated approaches with which Manfred so seldom offers her. The differences are monumental and she is awake all night, unwilling to miss even a minute of her time with him. The next morning, Rod goes to work to find his promotion on his desk. His jobs will overlap until another Underground Manager can be found, so his day is hectic and full. Still, he takes the time out to supervise the first blast in the mine as General Manager and manages to look forward to seeing Terry afterward.



# Chapters 41 - 45

## Chapters 41 - 45 Summary

When Terry meets with Rod later, she admits she is worried that she feels no guilt whatsoever. They laugh and drink wine, both grateful they have five days before Manfred returns. Manfred enjoys a week of triumphs as General de Gaulle himself takes time out to speak with him, and even the press in France and at home give favorable reviews. He goes over the report Andrew delivered that morning, and knowing the authors of the reports are the top men in their field, he feels confident they are correct especially as all say the same thing. He knows if he purchases a large amount of Sonder Ditch shares before drilling as the report suggests, he could be a rich man. He can hardly wait to give the orders to Rod when he gets back, seeing it as the opportunity he'd been waiting for for years. When Rod goes to the Steyner home under summons, Terry greets him with cordial restraint, and they tease each other before he goes upstairs. Rod is stunned when Manfred tells him he wants him to drill through the Big Dipper and tries to explain the many reasons that shouldn't be done, but Manfred isn't listening. Instead, he shows Rod the reports and gives Rod no option. Rod asks for written authority to do so, but Manfred refuses, telling Rod that either way, he would still be responsible for wherever he decides to drill. Manfred gives Rod three months and on the way out, Terry sees the look on Rod's face. She puts her hand on his arm and asks him what's wrong. Rod warns her and though she drops her arm it is already too late. Manfred sees the gesture and can't mistake the intent or feeling behind it. He sits at his desk, telling himself he can wait for his revenge.

Rod sends for Johnny and Davy and explains that he wants them to work on a special project, and secrecy and speed is of the essence. Both brothers are eager to make the kind of money involved in working multiple blasts each day and know they can make substantial wealth with the depth of the hole for which Rod is asking. Johnny is on board right away and has no fear, but Davy has almost religious reluctance to go near the Big Dipper. Still, the idea of working ultra fast and the money involved can't be turned down. He makes the decision to work until they hit the serpentine rock of the dyke. After that, Rod is on his own. Rod selects the starting point and sets them up to begin working. Davy's gang manages to do three blasts on the first day, and Johnny passes him to take over the night shift. Davy goes back to the house and tells the Bantu maid to make him three eggs. Then he quietly makes his way down the hall and looks through the door of Johnny's room. Hettie is still asleep, and Davy stares at her naked body. By the time the maid has breakfast ready for him, he is out of breath with desire for his brother's wife.

## Chapters 41 - 45 Analysis

Terry enjoys her time with Rod while Manfred is gone. She is surprised to find she feels no guilt whatsoever. Neither of them is looking forward to the day Manfred returns. Manfred is also enjoying the time he is away, feeling like a man of some importance for



a change. He reads over the information compiled regarding the Dipper reef and the speculation of what is beyond, believing it just as they knew he would. He thinks about the prestige that would come with a major strike of that nature and realizes that if he buys shares in Sonder Ditch before they drill, he might be able to increase his wealth several fold. All of it makes him feel very good about life. When he gets back, he calls Rod and asks him to come over and lays out the whole deal for him. Rod instinctively knows this is a mistake. He tries to explain the way he thinks to Manfred, but Manfred isn't listening. He reminds Rod that the deal they made was for his obedience without question and undying loyalty. Rod tries to cover himself by asking Manfred to put his order in writing, but Manfred refuses. When Rod leaves, Manfred watches from the window and sees the intimate gesture made by his wife when Rod comes down. He thinks about it, deciding he can wait for his revenge.

When Rod gets back to work, he calls in both Davy and Johnny. He explains the situation to them and asks them to run opposite shifts and drill ultra fast through the Dipper. Both men can immediately see the money that can be made with this project and agree, though Davy isn't as comfortable about the situation as Johnny is. Johnny is fearless and only thinks about the things he can get for Hettie. Davy can't pass up the money involved either and agrees to it but has made the decision that he will quit when they hit the serpentine layer.

On the first day of drilling, Davy and his crew do very well and cleaning up afterward, he anticipates even more the following day. He gets into his car, passing Johnny on the way home, who is headed in to take over where Davy left off. Davy is anxious to get home where he knows that Hettie will still be in bed. Johnny has often remarked that she is a sound sleeper, and it would take nothing short of a blast of Dynagel to wake her. He gets in the house and tells the maid to make breakfast while he heads down the hallway to his room. When he is sure no one is looking, he chances a peek into the bedroom Johnny and Hettie occupy. He is not disappointed. In the heat of the night, she has kicked off most of her blankets and is lying naked and sound asleep. He stands there, filled with lust and longing for her, despite the fact that she is Johnny's wife. Before Johnny married her, Hettie had been a good time kind of girl, and Davy resents his brother for marrying her and taking her out of circulation to a degree, although he would never voice that opinion to either one. Still, he takes every opportunity to watch her when Johnny is not around or is otherwise occupied; this new shift where they work opposite hours could be a blessing or a curse.



# Chapters 46 - 50

## Chapters 46 - 50 Summary

Johnny doesn't wait the mandatory thirty minutes after each blast, and since he is willing to take these risks, he is drilling at least forty-five minutes sooner than Davy would have in the same situation. Davy allows Big King to charge up the blasting holes which also saves time. Johnny and his crew manage to get five blasts off the first day. Rod is getting a good grasp of the surface operations. Secretary Lily Jordan is still with him after her thirty-day probation period passes. Herby Innes, the manager of the Reduction works, wants to see him. He tells Rod they have a leak and are losing up to two hundred ounces a week. Rod promises to have a look, and they walk from one end to the other, but neither notices the four Bantu who appear to be diligent, but as soon as they are gone pull mercury coated wire from their pant legs and begin poking them through the screens to attract the gold. Later Crooked Leg boils the mercury to release the gold and gives the Bantu freshly-coated wire. They get to the end of the process, and Rod tells Herby to let him think about it for a few days. Later he decides the only option is to plant a Bantu policeman in the reduction works.

Crooked Leg tells Big King that Josè Almeida is stealing from them. Crooked Leg attains a carefully-measured eight ounce cylindrical piece of gold for Big King to take to Josè. Each time their gold is weighed in the future, the eight ounce piece is to be weighed first to ensure the scale is correct. When Big King asks Josè to weigh the cylinder, Josè is afraid and reaches for the gun he keeps in his drawer. Big King comes over to the desk and fearing for his life kills the concession owner before he regains his senses. Fighting the urge to run, he picks up the gold cylinder and sweeps up the scattered gold dust.

Rod has a nightmare about water flooding through a wall and wakes shaking. He makes a decision to have the Delange brothers drill into the hanging wall so he can drop it at any time and seal off the entire tunnel if necessary. The decision gives him relief. He misses Terry, having not dared to see her the last two weeks since Manfred returned. Terry is dreading the approach of her husband. When he approaches, she lies, telling him that her period has come early knowing he won't come near her then. He tells her he is going to Cape Town for five days, and Teresa can hardly wait.

The police go through the small office taking fingerprints and looking for clues before allowing Josè's body to be removed while his wife wails in the next room. They are confident they will identify the murderer within a month.

## Chapters 46 - 50 Analysis

Johnny takes risks that Davy doesn't. He goes into the tunnel before the dust has settled from each blast and allows Big King to charge the blasting holes along with him. Either infraction could result in serious fines or even jail time, but he risks it to increase





the money he makes. As a result, Johnny and his crew manage to complete five blasts on the first day and anticipate even more in the coming days. Rod is managing his job on the surface, dealing with each situation as it comes up. When Herby Innes comes to his office, he presents Rod with a problem that takes his mind off the issue of the Big Dipper reef for a while. There is a leak, he tells Rod, and gold is disappearing. Rod and Herby walk through the entire process together, and though Rod walks right through the room where the theft is occurring, he doesn't catch it. The Bantu that are watching the screen intently have hidden the mercury coated wire they use to fish for gold in their pant legs. After Rod and Herby leave, they relax and begin the process of fishing for gold again. Later, Crooked Leg heats the wires to make them release the gold collected. Unable to spot the thievery himself, Rod knows he will have to plant a Bantu officer.

Crooked Leg and Big King discuss another theft. Josè has been stealing from them for some time, but Crooked Leg has been unable to catch him. Now, he gives Big King a carefully-weighed cylinder of gold. The eight ounce piece is to be used to keep Josè honest with his scales, but when Big King asks him to weigh it, Josè panics. He reaches for a gun in the desk which causes Big King to panic. He knew what bullets could do to animals and in his panic, he leaps the desk and kills Josè before regaining his senses.

Rob's sleep is troubled by dreams of water flooding through a tunnel. He wakes, knowing his dream is warning him about the Big Dipper reef and knowing he has to do something. He finally decides he will have Johnny and Davy drill blast holes in the hanging wall. That way, if anything goes wrong, he can blow the hanging wall and seal off the entire tunnel, minimizing the damage. Once that decision is made, he relaxes and thinks of Terry. He has a hard time admitting that he misses her, but he does. He hasn't seen her in two weeks, and the brief conversations they've had leave him feeling worse instead of better. Terry is not doing much better herself. Every night she fears it will be the night that Manfred comes to her room again, and the thought fills her with fear and self loathing. When he does come that night, she tells him she has her period to avoid physical contact and it works. He tells her he is going away for a few days, which has her thinking that finally she and Rob will have some time together.

The police go through Josè's office and dust for fingerprints, finding over forty in total. They are confident by the time they release the body that they will know the identity of his killer within a month.



# Chapters 51 - 55

## Chapters 51 - 55 Summary

When Rod finishes designing the angle and depth of the holes he wants drilled, adding the side walls as well to ensure the hall was close enough to allow for cementers to get in and seal off the tunnel in worst case scenario, he calls the Delange brothers in to see him. Twelve hundred holes twenty-feet deep are required, and both brothers had a lot of time to think while the holes were drilled. On the fifth day of drilling, Davy goes home and Hettie flirts with him, and he takes her right there. Filled with guilt he goes to the mine and does a safety check but all on auto pilot, his mind elsewhere. The fog he is causes him to not recognize the change in the lamp's flame indicating that Johnny's last drilled hole opened a pocket of methane gas. Out of sheer habit, he mutters that all is safe and follows his gang back in, taking his cigarettes out of his pocket. Forty one men die at the same moment. Thirty minutes later, when Rod and Dan Stander go down into the drive, the smell of burned flesh is overpowering. It is the worst disaster Dan has seen and takes it toll on both he and Rod.

Hettie feels relief after a moment of shock when she hears the news. She had been worried about the consequences of her actions, but now it is all settled. The next morning Johnny brings a lawyer home with him, and the news that they are Davy's beneficiaries is announced, and Hettie is thrilled. When Rod shows up at the Delange home later to share his condolences, Johnny is angry. He throws Hettie out of the room while he and Rod drink a final toast to his brother and assures him he will be there in the morning for work.

Meanwhile, the men behind the push for the new drilling through the Dipper are concerned. They send a man who conveys the decision to the fat man that Ironsides should be well amused and a good distance away from the drilling when they get close to breaking through to ensure that all goes according to plan.

Manfred leaves town as arranged, and Rod and Terry enjoy the time they have, taking Melanie riding for the first time and boating afterward. When they return to Rod's apartment, Manfred is watching thanks to the efforts of Peterson Investigations. Telling the man to wait for him around the corner, Manfred gets takes his pen knife to Rod's car and in the process manages to injure his own hand by cutting himself.

## Chapters 51 - 55 Analysis

Rod explains what he wants the Delange brothers to do, adding that he wants to inspect the holes before they are charged, and neither are happy with the new plan. They negotiate extra money for the work, and when they don't get enough, Davy threatens to expose the work they are doing to the shop steward to gain a little more. Finally settled, they are told to start the drilling immediately. On day five Davy went home but isn't tired.





He gets up to use the bathroom, encountering Hettie who is coming out. She asks him if he likes her. It is the only opening he needs and he goes at her with pent up hunger and longing, taking her right there in the hallway despite her feeble protests that they should go to the bedroom. Afterward, he is consumed with guilt. He decides he should leave, and writing it all down in a note to his brother, he slips out of the house and drives to the mine before Johnny's shift ends. He sits in the lavatory, listening to Johnny banter with his team before he leaves, and then tearing up his note, he goes to work instead, still filled with self loathing. Going back to work, he operates on auto. After twenty minutes of instructions to his men, he finally gets around to lighting the cigarette he is holding and the resulting explosion is similar to a welder's torch in temperature. It is the worst accident Dan has encountered in his career. Dan searches through the belongings in their pockets to save the family unnecessary grief by removing dirty photos and other personal effects including the letter Davy wrote to his brother. Dan's fiancè Joy leans over his shoulder reading and in a flash of understanding knows it is the reason for the accident. She helps Dan to decide not to pass the letter on to Johnny, although it would have served Hettie right if they had, she adds.

Hettie remembers to soothe her husband after assuring Davy's death is a certainty, feeling some excitement over the fact that he had gone from her body to his death. It is all so movie like and romantically charged in her mind. In the morning, she presses Johnny for details becoming aroused by the grisly picture he paints. The fact that they inherit his estate worth fifty-thousand rand split between her and Johnny is an added bonus that gives her so much pleasure she can hardly contain herself until the man leaves. Her feelings of self importance are complete when Rod himself comes to their home that evening, and she sees it as a real feather in her cap to be so important. Hettie primps and preens and Johnny throws her out of the room, angry because he knows that underneath the condolences Rod conveys is a primary concern that he not quit the job he and his brother were hired for and he resents Rod for it.

The accident causes the men who have pushed for this drilling to send a man in the hopes that it can be blamed on Rod, but the fault is not his. These powerful men recognize that Rod is not a pawn as first hoped, and that it is possible that he may do something in the eleventh hour that will frustrate their efforts and plans to flood all five mines.

After Manfred leaves, Rod and Terry steal some time together. They go dancing, and pick up Rod's daughter Melanie for a day of riding and boating. After dropping her off, Terry comments that she loves Melanie and speculates on how wonderful it would be to have a daughter of their own one day. Manfred is watching as they return to Rod's apartment, arm in arm and obviously romantically involved. He is so affronted and angry that he takes it out on the one possession that Rod seems to value - his car. He doesn't confront them yet, choosing to wait until later when Rod has served his purpose. As for his wife, he recognizes that now she is completely at his mercy both legally and morally and feels some relief where that is concerned. He ruins the interior of the car, but when he tries to slash the tires, the knife turns and he slashes himself instead.



# Chapters 56 - 60

## Chapters 56 - 60 Summary

Rod gets an estimate for the repair of his Maserati of twelve-hundred Rand. Detective Inspector Grobbelaar arrives asking for cooperation in their investigation of José Almeida's death, and Rod sends him to the compound manager with assurances of complete cooperation. Later, he surveys the work done at the site where Davy died, and Big King requests to be let out of his contract, but unable to give a concrete reason, he is denied. He finds Johnny who informs him that they are less than a thousand feet from the Dipper. Rod leaves for a meeting at the head office. Manfred greets him telling him he's late. The meeting goes until after dark, and Manfred asks Rod to stay afterward. He asks how far they are from the dyke and tells Rod he'll be gone over Christmas and that he wants to be informed before they break through. He alone will give the order to do so, and he doesn't expect that to happen until mid January. On the sixteenth of December, Johnny and his crew reach the serpentine rock. Rod tells Johnny he can consider himself on holiday till further notice and calls Manfred to inform him. Manfred tells Rod to do nothing until he returns from Europe. He ensures that Terry sees him off so that the deception is complete. Terry and Rod leave the airport before Manfred's plane taxis down the runway and go directly to where Terry has her own Cessna fueled and ready. She flies the two of them to her father's shooting lodge and on the way announces her intent to divorce Manfred.

Inspector Grobbelaar is almost finished interviewing when it is Crooked Leg's turn. His guilty conscience has him confessing his part in moments.

Hettie and Johnny buy a brand new Ford Mustang, and when they get home they find Manfred waiting in the driveway. Manfred tells Johnny to return to work and he agrees to be there the following morning.

## Chapters 56 - 60 Analysis

Rod still can't believe that someone would do so much damage to his car. He can't even okay the estimate without clearing it with his insurance company. To make matters worse, his best worker, Big King wants to quit. Big King hasn't been the same since he killed José Almeida. Every day he fears they will come for him and dreads it. He tries to get out of his contract but can't give Rod the real reason for his desire to leave and go home immediately, so Rod refuses him. Sick with worry and filled with thoughts of the rope that will be around his neck soon, he goes back to work. He must wait the full thirty three days for his contract to expire. Rod reminds Johnny that he wants to know the minute serpentine rock is hit. Johnny agrees. After a meeting at head office, Manfred wonders how he can engineer Rod's absence when the time comes as he has been instructed. He tells Rod he'll be gone over the holidays, ensuring that Rod and Terry will concentrate on time together instead of the mine. When he is sure Rod has taken the



bait, he dismisses him. Manfred passes the information on to the men in charge and the code name Gothic is wired unleashing the sales of all Kitchenerville stock. Manfred is told to get Rod out of the way and punch through.

Manfred does the opposite of the men directing him. He orchestrates the purchase of Sonder Ditch shares, convinced he is on the verge of a wealthy breakthrough. By purchasing through many agents, he is able to secure three quarters of a million Rand worth of shares by the end of the day. Terry goes to the airport with Manfred and both notice the cream-colored Daimler that is the official car of all Sonder Ditch managers. They fly to her father's lodge which borders on Kruger National Park and on the way, Terry announces that she plans to divorce Manfred. Rod is in total agreement.

The police are almost finished questioning people when they get to Crooked Leg. His guilty conscience is obvious, and the Inspector wastes no time pinning him down and getting a confession to the gold theft. He knows they are making progress now.

Hettie and Johnny go to the dealership where Hettie finds herself attracted to the salesman. She uses her most provocative mannerisms and talks Johnny into a new Ford Mustang. She makes sure the salesman has his card before they leave; when they get home they find Manfred waiting. Hettie introduces herself, and Manfred reels from the smell of her body odor and the sight of her unshaven armpits. He completes his business as quickly as possible, and after getting Johnny to agree to return to work in the morning, he goes gratefully back to his car. He plans to divorce Terry in a week when he becomes a rich man.



# Chapters 61 - 65

## Chapters 61 - 65 Summary

The run on Sonder Ditch begins the next morning. Manfred buys as much stock as he can get without drawing attention to himself by spreading his buying power around the various agencies. They, in turn, told their favorite clients that a run on Sonder Ditch was occurring, sparking interest from some and panic from others. The other Kitchenerville companies soon follow suit. The price goes up and then crashes. The fat man is apoplectic, but there is nothing they can do now.

Johnny and Big King have managed to drill halfway through the Big Dipper. Big King goes straight to the Induna to find out what the newest information is, and the Induna tells him that the police have taken Crooked Leg into custody. Big King leaves feeling defeated.

Manfred sits listening to the news and nursing the thumb he cut while vandalizing Rod's car. He didn't need a calculator to figure out that when the market closed, his stock had depreciated by over million dollars. He goes into the bathroom and throws up.

Rod and Terry spend the day duck hunting and after dinner turn on the radio. They are horrified to hear the news from Sonder Ditch. They decide to leave for home at first light and sleep fitfully. In the morning, Johnny has already blasted twice. He sends Big King and the crew to get more dynagel while Johnny sits and thinks about Davy. He has the creepy sensation that Davy is there and is trying to tell him something. The machine boy drilling stumbles backward and a jet of water comes out of the hole. In an instant, the drill comes out of the hole like a cannon ball, and decapitates the machine boy. A solid jet of water is shooting out of the hole as Johnny shouts a warning for the rest to leave, but it is too late. The rock face explodes, killing Johnny and every man in the gang with him sweeping their bodies down the drive shaft. Big King is at the station when he hears the water coming. They stand there, frozen in shock at first, until Big King heads up the emergency ladder. The rest are not fast enough and he is the only one who makes it up.

## Chapters 61 - 65 Analysis

Manfred buys as much Sonder Ditch stock as he can without attracting attention to himself, but the effect is felt throughout the market anyway. At first, his purchases attract the attention of other buyers, and the price goes up. The price doesn't hold however, and the crash that follows causes Manfred to lose over a million dollars. The resulting anxiety causes him to throw up.

Johnny and Big King are halfway through the Big Dipper that morning, and no night shift is being run so they will have the privilege of completing the drill. Big King finds out that Crooked Leg has been arrested. He tells the Induna that Crooked Leg will not betray him, but the Induna reminds him that Crooked Leg will not sacrifice his life for him. Big



King knows the truth of that statement and leaves, feeling lower than ever. There is no bounce in his step and no shine in his eyes. He knows his time is coming and can feel them hot on his trail.

Terry and Rod are at the lodge enjoying their private time together immensely. They go duck hunting together, and after dinner, tired and feeling good, they listen to the news before bed, and everything changes. The news about Sonder Ditch catches them both by surprise, and they know they have to return to the mine at first light. Neither one sleeps well, and their worst fears are confirmed when they return and Lily Jordan expresses her relief to hear from him, telling him something terrible has happened.

That morning, Johnny is nervous. He can't explain his feelings, but he senses Davy's presence and can't shake the feeling that Davy is trying to warn him. He sends Big King for more dynagel, which is what saves Big King's life. When the water breaks through the wall, killing Johnny and the rest of the crew still in the shaft, Big King is at the shaft station. He hears it coming and stands frozen until he sees the water and debris mixed with bodies coming towards them. He tells them to run, but it's too late, and he is the only one who makes it out.



## Chapters 66 - 69

### Chapters 66 - 69 Summary

When Rod gets to the mine, Big King tells him what happened. Rod tries to shoot the hanging wall, but the flood of water has damaged the circuitry and a red light glows on the board. Rod sends for the rubber rescue dinghy and assorted tools and asks Big King if he will go down with him to repair the circuit. Twenty minutes later they are on their way down. Just as they are ready to go, Hurry Hirschfeld arrives and he is beyond angry. While Rod and King are on their way down, Hurry sits in the back of his Rolls Royce with Terry and questions the line managers - one at a time. Terry tries to defend Rod, but Hurry doesn't believe her.

Rod and Big King lower themselves into the water and ask for the boat to be sent down. It takes all their combined strength to pull the boat towards them, and Rod wonders how they will ever get it up the drive one thousand feet. Big King goes first and hand over hand works his way along the compressed air pipe overhead. Rod's plan is to board the dinghy and allow it to carry them far enough down the drive to get them out of the range of the blast. They manage to make the connections, but as they are ready to go, the frame gives way and two large timbers scissor down catching both of Rod's arms and breaking them, and crushing the lower half of Big King's body. Rod tells King to blast the charge. King grabs the handle in one hand and in the other his machete. He cuts the dinghy free and Rod is taken away by the current. He races down the drive on the current and hears the blast before slipping into unconsciousness.

Dimitri waits at the top of the shaft. An hour and fifteen minutes pass. The phone rings and he is told the police want Big King. The blast shakes the ground around them, and the water finally stops. Dimitri climbs down and finds Rod unconscious in the dinghy. When Rod wakes, he is strapped to a mine stretcher on his way to the surface. When he reaches the top, the policeman asks for Big King, and Rod tells him he is too late, sobbing and hysterically laughing at the same time. Stander gives him a needle full of morphine.

### Chapters 66 - 69 Analysis

Rod heads straight for the blast control room as soon as he confirms that the other mines have been warned, and when the blast doesn't work Dimitri is defeated, but Rod is determined to save the mine. When Hirschfeld arrives demanding answers, Rod has little time to placate him so instead, Hurry holds court in his Rolls, interviewing all the line managers one at a time, but they say little in Rod's defense. Hurry is livid, discovering that Rod has done this on his own. In desperation, Terry tries to help by telling Hurry that Rod was forced to do this, but Terry can't prove any of it.



Rod and King go down into the shaft with a dinghy and equipment to fix the blasting line. The water is numbingly cold and running so swiftly that they have to lash themselves to the wall to keep from being swept away. It is exhausting just to get the dinghy to them and Rod's hands are bleeding before they even begin to make their way to the hanging wall. Only Big King's example ahead of him keeps him from quitting. Finally, they reach the end of the drop matte and Rod can see the spot where the blasting cable is hanging. They are almost ready to leave when the timbers let go and pin Rod's arms and Big King pelvis crushing both. Rod tells him that they will go like men and asks him to blow the charge, but King fights to stay conscious and cuts the line that tethers the dinghy to the area. As it is swept down the shaft, Rod hears Big King telling him to go in peace.

Above, the police arrive to take King into custody when he surfaces. Dimitri keeps checking for them, but it isn't until they actually hear and feel the blast that they know Rod and King have accomplished what they set out to do. Shortly after, Dimitri quiets the crowd around the hole to confirm that the sound of raging water has stopped. He lowers himself into the shaft and sees the dinghy with Rod's unconscious body. When Rod comes to, he is being hauled to the surface, and hears the policemen asking for King. His emotions are all over the map as he considers the fact that the big man saved his life and died to save the mine. He tells the policeman he is too late.





# Chapters 70 - 74

## Chapters 70 - 74 Summary

Terry goes with Stander in the ambulance and Dan calls Joy to sit with her. Terry realizes that the proof she needs is in her husband's safe and heads home. She opens the safe and finds the documents just as Manfred comes up behind her. He calls her names and demands the file, but she runs and he gives chase, hitting her and threatening to kill her. She gets outside, and races across the lawn. Manfred tries to run her down, laughing like a crazy man. Catching her by the pool, he gets out and pushes her under, trying to drown her. When Dan hears that Terry left, he and Joy follow to ensure she is alright, arriving at the Steyner residence in time to see Manfred holding her underwater. Dan rescues and resuscitates her and goes after Manfred with a vengeance. Manfred runs, getting back into Joy's car and Dan chases him for several miles, closing in just as Manfred tries to pass two slow vehicles. He is well out in the wrong lane when a cement truck comes over the hill. Manfred swerves to miss but loses control and hits a blue gum tree head on. There is no need for an ambulance. Dan takes the sodden document from the front seat, and heads back.

The fat man sits on his yacht and awaits his female companion, thinking about the events of late. He has not made the profit he had hoped because of Rod's heroic efforts in saving the mine, but he manages to ensure that it isn't he who loses large amounts either. Claiming patriotism, he says he is relieved not to have had to disrupt the economy of the country in order to ensure his profit.

Hurry Hirschfeld travels to the Zambezi Valley to personally take the news of King Nkulu's death and heroism to his wives and children. He tells them of King's brave act and assures them that they will receive generous compensation for the rest of their lives, and that each first born son will be entitled to an education in University. He also tells them of the monument that is being created in King's honor and his intention to fly the wives and sons to witness its unveiling with their own eyes.

Hettie continues to find comfort in the arms of many men, this time the sales Manager Dennis from the Ford dealer where she and Johnny bought their car with the inheritance from Davy's death. The doorbell brings an agent from Sanlam Insurance Company who informs her that her husband's policy, taken out two months previously, will net her almost fifty-thousand Rand. Her delight is unmistakable.

Hurry sits on the lawns of the Sonder Ditch Mining Company for the unveiling ceremony of the black marble statue of Big King. The inscription is merely his name and dates of birth and death. He watches his granddaughter's reaction to Rod as he stands to introduce him and realizes that he will have to groom Rod to a station more befitting his coming station in life.





## Chapters 70 - 74 Analysis

Terry is trying to clean the dried blood off Rod's face on the way to the hospital, and Dan, seeing how upset she is, calls in Joy, Terry's friend who is his girlfriend to sit with her. The report will clear Rod with her grandfather and save him from wrongful persecution, and Terry is determined to make that happen. She borrows Joy's Alfa Romeo and drives home, but before she can get the report out of the house, Manfred confronts her. He knows he has lost everything and is in financial ruin. To add injury to insult, his knowledge that his wife is having an affair with Rod Ironsides is the crowning defeat. He comes at her with vengeance on his mind, hitting her and likely to kill her, but she escapes him and runs for her life, clutching the document. She knows it is the only proof of Rod's innocence that exists and is determined to clear him with her grandfather. She races across the lawn and in his madness, Manfred chases her in Joy's car, attempting to run her down. When that doesn't work and she heads for the pool, he gets out and throwing her in the water, he tries to drown her. Better that she die before she leaves him for someone else. It is fortunate for Terry that Dan and Joy follow her back to her residence, fearing her mental state, and seeing what Manfred is doing, manage to save her. Dan then chases Manfred, and in the car chase that follows, Manfred loses control of Joy's car and kills himself. Dan retrieves the sodden document, somehow understanding its importance and goes back.

The fat man is the only one who comes out on top financially, having covered himself in any eventuality. He professes relief that the economy of his country hadn't been disrupted for his own gain. He feels no responsibility or regret for the others in his group that lost everything because of Rod's success in saving the mines.

Hurry travels to Zambezi to honor Big King Nkulu's death and to personally present his wives with the news of his passing. He is well respected and understands their customs. He presents them with university funds for the first born sons of each of his wives, and promises ongoing income as death benefit to them. He also tells them of the monument being constructed to honor Big King and his intention to fly them all there to see it and attend the ceremony.

Hettie's grief over Johnny's death lasts only until she can get the sales manager from the Ford dealership into bed despite the fact that he is married. She is concerned only with what she can get and has no allegiances. This is only exemplified when the representative from the insurance company arrives to present her with the death benefit that Johnny had taken out in her name just after Davy died. Her immediate pleasure at the news belies her attempt to play the grieving widow.

The ceremony to unveil the bronze statue is attended by many, and Hurry Hirschfeld sits with Terry, noticing her interest in Rod as he introduces the chairman. He realizes that he will be welcoming Rod to the inner circle of his family and already begins planning Rod's career advancement through head office.



# Characters

## Rod Ironsides

Underground manager for The Sonder Ditch Mine, Rod is a capable and intelligent man. He is competent and dedicated man who lives a split life. He is divorced and enjoys golfing and flowers. Rodney Ironsides was born on October the 16th, 1931 in the Transkei where his father made his living as a native trader. His mother died in 1939, and his father died of wounds he received as a commissioned Captain in the Durban Light Infantry on the Po River in Italy in 1944. Raised by his maternal uncle, he matriculated from Queen's College in 1947, in Grahamstown. He obtained his blasting ticket in 1949, after enrolling in the Government Mining Training School. Rod's first job as a learner miner was with the Blyvooruitzicht Gold Mining Company Ltd., and in the same year he received a promotion to miner. In 1952, he became shift boss and graduated to mine captain in 1954. He manages to attain his Mine Manager's ticket in 1959, and joins The Sonder Ditch Mining Company to work as Assistant Section Manager in 1962. Six years later, he attains his current position as the Underground Manager. He has the distinction of being the youngest Underground Manager by several years in the Group.

Rod has been divorced from his wife Patti for four years and has a nine-year-old daughter named Melanie. Patti and Rod were married in 1959, and Melanie was born just seven and a half months later. In 1964, Patti sued him for adultery and divorced him. Patti is resentful of the continuing success Rod seems to have without her, including the news that he has been promoted to General Manager of the Sonder Ditch Mine. Most of that stems from her feeling that he doesn't deserve the good things that keep happening to him, but the truth is that she is angry with herself for divorcing him when she now could have had the prestigious position of GM's wife. Now she is stuck with the four-hundred and fifty dollars a month that Rod is required to pay, knowing that his salary is about to double, and it irks her. Melanie loves her father without reservation, and he looks forward to his weekend visits with her. He drives a distinctive 1967 Maserati of which he is very proud.

Rod is a strong and honorable man, despite his love nest in town where he is known to have entertained regularly. He may drink more than he should but never mixes his pleasures with work and is responsible. He cares about his employees and is genuinely interested in making the mine work and be as productive as possible. Overall, the men who are responsible for his promotion are surprised by his instant improvements and even worry he might be the wrong man to have promoted as a result. It turns out that from their standpoint alone, he was, but his diligence and feelings of duty to the mine and those mines around it are what save all of the mines and likely many lives as well.

Rod's true character is revealed over and over again throughout the story but never as much as from the time he meets Terry forward. What begins as something simple quickly develops into a lasting and deep relationship, and his commitment and honesty



with her is obvious. Also worthy of note is his determination to ensure that the safety measures are put in place before the drilling on the Big Dipper continues and his immediate and unfailing courage when he lowers himself into the mine to fix the charge circuit - even willing to sacrifice his own life to save the mines and workers.

## Manfred Steyner

Manfred has a degree from Berlin University in Economics and a degree from Cornell in Business Administration. At the age of thirty, he joins Central Rand Consolidated Group and now a short twelve years later, he is a front runner in the conglomeration. The rumors are that when Hurry Hirschfeld left this world, Manfred would succeed him as Chairman of C.R.C. which was a position to be envied. As Chairman, Manfred would be one of five of Africa's most powerful men. Dr. Steyner is intelligent with a mind that earns him the nickname "The Computer" and has seemingly no human weaknesses. He is married to Hurry Hirschfeld's granddaughter, which only increases the strength of his position.

Manfred appears younger than he is and wears his light brown, almost blond, hair brushed back straight. He has glasses which are framed heavily in black, and his face is soft and smooth without beard or mustache. His hands are smooth and soft looking and he has a habit of only wearing each handmade shirt he owns only once. He has a slight Teutonic accent which causes him to slur his vowels just a little. Manfred is five-foot-six inches tall, which is about the same height as his wife.

Manfred has a genius rating of 158, plays no sports, doesn't drink and has no hobbies. His only passion is gambling. He finds bodily contact or secretions of any kind so distasteful that he must immediately wash. He is a picky and greedy man who cares little for anyone beyond himself. When he discovers his wife is having an affair, his first reaction is not distress that he is losing his wife. Instead, revenge and vengeance is uppermost in his thinking, and he consoles himself by thinking about how he will get even with them both. He confirms their affair, and then in an act of childish tantrum, he destroys the car that Rod so loves, slashing it with a knife until it is beyond Rod's financial ability to repair. Insurance covers vandalism of course so Manfred really gains nothing.

When Manfred is given the phony report telling him that the Big Dipper reef conceals a massive gold strike beyond, he is too self involved again to listen to reason when Rod tries to tell him that they shouldn't rush forward. His greed has him buying up Sonder Ditch shares the day before and the morning of the final drilling through the Dipper, but his greed backfires when the shares nosedive as smarter investors recognize the run on the stock is not legitimate and sell off their stock. When the water is revealed beyond the Dipper, Manfred is bankrupt, and his plans of being rich and throwing Terry out are no longer options. Now, in anger, he instead wants her dead, rationalizing that if he can't have her, neither can Rod. His lust for revenge and his monumental greed lead to the car chase that finally ends his miserable life.



## Big King Nkulu

Big King is well known to all on the Sonder Ditch. All who know him boast about his abilities to lash rock single handed in a shift, or how he could dance better than any man, or even how much beer in one sitting he could down. Big King sets the pace in all things including the collection of bravery awards he has for his unstoppable efforts in crisis. He is the man who set the pace that all others tried to match.

He is from the Shangaan tribe. As senior boss boy, he is entitled to a room of his own where others must share with up to five men. Big King made an entrance simply by arriving, no matter where he went, and all others deferred to his status. Big King is an honorable man at heart, who makes a few mistakes that change his life. When he begins the process of carting stolen gold to the concession owner for conversion to cash, he sells out his loyalty to the mine but rationalizes that he is helping his tribe and his family. This money goes back to his homeland and helps to better the lives of his people, so he yields to the greater good overall. This has consequences, however. When the concession owner cheats the scales and shortchanges them in the exchange, Crooked Leg figures out a way to keep the concession owner honest, telling Big King that the next time Big King goes - and every other time from then on - he is to weigh the carefully-produced weight provided by Crooked Leg first to ensure the scale's accuracy.

Big King takes the weight to his next exchange, but the concession owner panics when he realizes the consequences of the discovery that he has been stealing from them. In this panic, he pulls a gun on Big King. Big King has seen how these weapons can subdue and permanently end the lives of large game animals and will not be one of them. In fear for his life, he kills the concession owner. This act changes everything. He goes forward in constant fear of discovery, knowing the penalty for this crime is the loss of his own life. He stops eating properly, sleeps little and even tries to break his mine contract, but unable to give a good reason for wanting to leave, he is turned down. His final act of bravery in the shaft when he sets Rod adrift and manages to charge the blast and save the mine, redeems himself in the process. He begins as the miner most often cited for bravery and finishes exhibiting the same bravery. In fitting tribute, a bronze statue is created in his likeness, and his family of wives and children are financially fixed for life.

## Teresa Steyner

Wife to Manfred, Teresa is warm and friendly. She is the picture of grace and dignity whether she is dressed in her evening wear or gardening garb. Teresa looks after the gardens around their home, creating a stunning example of what hard work and an eye for color can accomplish. Teresa is about five-foot six inches tall and can easily be considered beautiful. Her marriage to Manfred is little more than convenience for him and disappointment for her. He seldom touches her, and when he does, the exchange is brief, unsatisfying and Manfred can hardly wait to wash off the experience.



This loveless relationship is what inspires the affair between her and Rod Ironsides, and though it starts as a rather convoluted set up involving her friend Joy and a white lie about tribal dancing, Rod who comes to love her in a genuine and honest way. She is a caring and forthright individual, who takes to Rod's daughter Melanie immediately. She loves to ride and teaches Melanie about horses, sharing that gift with her. It takes very little time with Rod for Terry to realize what a terrible mistake her marriage to Manfred really is. Her plan to divorce Manfred is made almost immediately, and she makes no secret of the feelings she has for Rod.

She takes Rod to her father's lodge for some private time with him, having already decided to divorce Manfred and sharing her thoughts about that with Rod on the way. She is a competent pilot, flying her own Cessna, which was a gift from her grandfather Hurry Hirschfeld. While coming from a background of wealth and privilege, she does little to flaunt it. Her heart is in the right place even when she shamelessly promotes Rod to her grandfather for the position of General Manager. She loves animals and the wilderness that makes up the land around the lodge her grandfather owns preferring to watch rather than hunt.

## Johnny Delange

At only twenty-seven years of age, Johnny is the best rock breaker Sonder Ditch Mining Company has. He wears his long black hair tied with a leather thong and swept back to the back of his head in a curl. He has the features of an American Indian, bony and gaunt, and his arms are muscled and powerful. He has tattoos below the elbows and wears a total of eight rings on his right hand - two on each finger. Each ring has meaning, from the skull and crossbones with rubies for eyes to the wolves' heads. His body is powerful as his arms, sinuous and supple.

Johnny was a wild youngster until he married Hettie and settled down. The courtship and marriage took place in the space of one week and Johnny was settling into married life nicely. Johnny is not the best at expressing himself, so instead of conveying his love for Hettie in words, he buys her things. Johnny honestly loves Hettie, although he has no idea how to show her beyond buying her things and seems clueless to the fact that all she wants is what she can get from the relationship or anyone else around her.

Johnny's relationship with Hettie is ultimately his undoing. It is what motivates his desire to do the work on the Big Dipper and to continue even after his brother is killed. The things he can buy for her outweighs the loss with which he is coping. Sadly, she is dishonest and disloyal and undeserving of his diligence.

## Davy Delange

Davy is two years older than Johnny, and there is little that is similar in them. Where Johnny is impatient and brash, Davy is careful, quiet and reserved in his mannerisms. He is muscled and squat, and his hair is sandy in color and cropped short on the back and the sides. He wears no jewelry and lives without extravagance. In fact, the only



similarity between Davy and his brother Johnny is their first class mining ability. Davy is inclined to be more careful in his job, which is the only reason that his rock breakage might be a bit less than his brother's.

Davy has a plan. He wants to buy a farm one day and then find a nice wife to help him run it. He saves as much as he can out of every payday toward that end. Davy lusts after his brother's wife, Hettie, and makes the mistake of taking that lust one step forward. With a little encouragement from Hettie, he has a sexual encounter with her that so fills him with guilt and self loathing that he is on the verge of coming clean with Johnny and moving out, but he loses his courage and fails to execute this plan. Instead, he goes to work, going through the motions but paying no attention to the job he is doing. He fails to notice the presence of methane gas, and the resulting explosion kills him and most of his crew.

## Hurry Hirschfeld

Hurry first came upon the gold fields sixty years ago. Now, his hair is white and at seventy-eight years old he is looking more and more his age. His body is gaunt and stooped, and he has pouches under his eyes and chin. He outright owns slightly more than a quarter of the share capital of Central Rand Consolidated and twenty percent of its voting rights.

## Hettie Delange

Hettie is Johnny's wife. She is a tall girl but still light on her feet and enjoys dancing. She has creamy skin and copper-colored hair with a small waistline. She laughs easily when things are going her way and loves to twist with Johnny. She also loves to entice men, enjoying it most when they are captivated by her. Davy often watches her from the sidelines and remembers the type of girl she was before she married his brother and misses that party girl. Hettie Delange is the town whore, willing to sleep with any man who shows her the slightest bit of attention. She has the loyalty of a snake and values money and what gifts she can get above all else. She is directly responsible for the death of Davy Delange, and at least partially responsible for Johnny's death as well. Despite that, she feels no guilt, climbing into bed with the sales manager from the local Ford dealership before her husband's body is barely cold. A colder woman would be hard to find.

## Joseph M'Kati

Joseph is getting close to sixty years old and has worked the mine in this job for almost five years. His hair is just beginning to advertise his age with a frosting of color, and his eyes and mouth have laughter lines around them. He likes to wear his helmet pushed back on his head. He wears hand-embroidered coveralls.





## **The Fat Man**

The fat man is described as rich and powerful with a great deal of pull in certain circles, but little else is known about him. He has his own yacht and enjoys the privilege of wealth. Because of his shrewd and calculating manner, he is the only one who comes out of the Big Dipper fiasco ahead financially. He claims to have loyalty to his country of Africa, and is in hindsight grateful that the economy of the country wasn't sacrificed for his financial gain. Manipulative and self involved seems to best describe this character.

## **Allen**

Allen is an atypical Texan. He is five-foot four inches tall and as tough as they come. He learned his trade on the oilfields in Odessa and is now so good at his job that he can command almost any wage. He behaves like a spoiled Prima Donna and still have employers jumping to his will happily because he is that good. Allen can drill a four-inch hole thirteen-thousand feet down in a straight line, and if the steel snapped, he would fit a fishing tool on the end of his rig, and grapple the stump back out of the hole. His skill at deflecting, which is the art of kicking a drill off the line again and again to take multiple samples, is also second to none. He is worth his weight in gold to any employer.

He smokes a corncob pipe and is a dead ringer for the character Popeye. He has button-shaped eyes and wears a battered maritime cap.

## **Shangaan Induna (The Old One)**

The Shangaan Induna lives in a company house, is paid well and provided with everything from servants to food and furniture that a man of his stature should have. He is the paternal figurehead of the Shangaan Undula. Deferred to by all in his tribe, the Old One is responsible for maintaining the framework of custom and law within his tribe.

## **Philemon N'gabai (Crooked Leg)**

Crooked Leg got his name and his limp from a rock fall twelve years previously. Now he operates a concession and photographic studio on the mine property. He also is the go between for the Shangaan tribe's gold pilfering operation. He supplies the Bantu with materials to aid their theft and collects the gold fines they steal each day to be given to Big King for delivery to a local mine concession owner who pays them a portion of its value each week.

He is approximately forty years old and is from Mozambique. He is five-foot seven and a half, and weighs about one hundred and forty six pounds. He has been convicted twice - once for theft of a bicycle and once for theft from a car.



## **Josè Almeida**

Josè is a Portuguese owner of the only mine concession store and local roadhouse. He has his living quarters behind the store and there he purchases the gold that the various tribes pilfer each week. In his mid thirties, he has black hair that he wears pushed back from his forehead. He has inquisitive eyes that are bright brown, and his fingernails are dirty. Despite his appearance, he is a man of some substance, having paid the forty-thousand rand in cash for the concession at the mine.

## **Frank Lemmer**

General Manager for The Sonder Ditch Mine, Frank is caught in the quake that brings down the stope in Section 43 of the mine, 9500 feet below the surface. His arm is trapped beneath the rock, and to free him it is necessary to remove his arm. The doctor manages to complete the amputation in under five minutes, but Frank dies of shock before thirty minutes more have passed.

## **Dr. Peter Wessels**

Peter is the only man Rod Ironsides trusts to read and comprehend the electronic equipment that fills the laboratory of a joint research project being conducted by a conglomeration of four of the major gold mining operations. He reads the seismic activity, and determines the likelihood of underground disturbances. It is his responsibility to make the call as to whether or not miners are pulled out of the mine for safety sake.

## **Melanie Ironsides**

With long blonde hair and green eyes, she is the apple of her father's eye. She is nine years old, precocious, and knows how to manipulate her father. She enjoys her weekends with him, and likes Teresa Steyner on their first meeting, asking her bluntly if she is her Daddy's girlfriend.





## Objects/Places

### The Mary Anne

A small cage which is used to hoist and lower personnel, handling only forty men at a time.

### Witwatersrand

Location of the gold mines in Africa.

### Squealers

Name given by miners to the men caught under tons of rock but still alive and conscious.

### The Sonder Ditch Mine

Located an hour from the city of Johannesburg, it is one of the fifty or sixty companies that makes up the Central Rand Consolidate Group.

### Central Rand Consolidated Group

A selection of fifty to sixty companies under the control of Manfred Steyner.

### The Big Dipper

A geological oddity, the big dipper is a wall of hard serpentine rock that runs under a grassy field where a large portion of the Sonder Ditch lease area is.

### Dump City

Shanty town made of discarded galvanized iron sheets and flattened oil drums located between the waste dump hills of the Blaauberg Mine. Dump City houses three-hundred permanent inhabitants.

### Shebeen

Clip joint where watered-down liquor can be bought at hugely-inflated prices.



## **Dagga**

Marijuana usually available at Shebeen's for sale to men from surrounding mines.

## **Shangaan**

Tribe to which Big King belongs.

## **Basuto**

Wiry mountaineer fighting tribe of the N'guni group.

## **Kitchenerville Fields**

Five producing gold mines including Thornfontein, Blaauberg, Tweefontein, Deep Gold Levels and Sonder Ditch Mines.

## **Maserati**

Rod's pride and joy and the object of Manfred's anger when Manfred confirms his wife's betrayal with Ironsides.

## **Zambezi Valley**

Home of Big King N'kulu.

## **I'Goldi**

Name given to the Kitchenerville Gold Fields by the natives who are recruited from the Zambezi Valley.

## **Cheesa**

Bantu word for burn.



# Themes

## Greed vs Prosperity

In Gold Mine, greed gets in the way of prosperity in more than one instance. For example, the group of men who are behind the push to drill through the Dipper are motivated by greed. They want the price of gold to stabilize so that they can line their own pockets more effectively. They reason the French and South Africans are poised to launch an all-out attack on France's currency by increasing the price of gold. If instead, all the Kitchenerville gold fields are flooded and these greedy men are responsible for the timing of that flooding, they could quietly sell off all their collective stocks ahead of time and make a small fortune in the process. Meanwhile, they tell Manfred that beneath the Dipper is a wealth of untapped gold and by manipulating the evidence they've gathered, they convince him to be the first to expose the wealth below. Manfred's greed is every bit as active as the group behind this idea. He believes the reports and plans to wait until they are just about ready to drill through the Dipper before he buys as much Sonder Ditch stock as he can. He believes he will be a wealthy man, and when that happens, he can leave Terry penniless.

Another example of greed is the behavior of Hettie Delange, whose sole concern begins with what gifts she is given by her husband Johnny on a daily basis and what the value of those gifts are. His final gift to her is his double indemnity life insurance policy, which gives her more joy than the marriage ever did, and she shows more enthusiasm for the policy than she ever did her husband while he lived.

The greed continues in the many employees of the mines who find ways to exploit and remove gold from the mines, stealing it from their employers, despite reasonable working conditions, good financial remuneration and employers who work with them. Still, the gold is funneled out and sold to yet another example of ongoing greed, the single concession owner on mine property.

## Appearances vs Reality

In several cases throughout this novel, Wilbur Smith uses his considerable talent to showcase how in life appearances are often much different from reality. Beginning with the gold mine itself, the Sonder Ditch mine is bringing up an enormous amount of rock and gold fines, and it would appear that there is little way that any of this could be kept track of. Despite this appearance, when workers smuggle out fines to be traded at the concession for cash by the crooked concession owner, the mine managers are very aware that they are losing gold - although they are unable at first to establish how this is happening.

In another case of appearances being different from reality, Manfred Steyner is given a series of reports from separate mine consultants throughout the five mines that make up



the Kitchenerville gold fields. These reports assert that beyond the reef known as the Big Dipper is a gold find richer than all previous strikes. He is told to drill in secrecy in the Sonder Ditch Mine and break through the Big Dipper. Manfred, seeing dollar signs and believing that he is about to become a very wealthy man, does exactly as he is told, despite the advice from his manager to the contrary. Also part of this deception includes Manfred's greed in that he waits until the miners are just about to break through the Dipper before anonymously buying as much Sonder Ditch stock as possible, believing it will skyrocket directly. He uses all his available credit to do so, and the stock does increase as a result temporarily, but seasoned stock holders see a false run and begin to sell their stocks. The price plummets and Manfred loses everything.

When Rod is promoted from Underground Manager to Surface Manager, Manfred tells him that it is on the understanding that he comply with Manfred's wishes. Rod agrees, knowing that to make changes, it has to be from inside. He defies all expectations by throwing himself into the job, saving the company considerable costs right from the start. He complies with Manfred's insistence that he drill through the Dipper, but only after creating a safety plan that will ensure the entire mine is not lost in a worst case scenario. The men behind the scenes, who know that behind the Dipper is a vast amount of water, are stymied in their attempt to control the market by flooding Kitchenerville fields.

## Love vs Status

Rod's first marriage is one that doesn't last. His wife Patti is interested in status and appearances, and Rod soon finds her attitude more than unappealing. Patti sues him for divorce, after which his life is a series of one night stands in a small suite he keeps in town. While it appears he is a playboy of sorts, behind it all, Rod knows he is getting to an age where he has to take life more seriously, and he knows that the lifestyle he is indulging in has to come to an end. Teresa puts an end to that lifestyle immediately.

Teresa is married to Manfred Steyner, who marries her for appearance and status rather than love. Her grandfather is the money behind Sonder Ditch Mining Company and because Manfred marries his granddaughter, he puts Manfred in the position of "God" where the mine is concerned. It is a position that comes with a large amount of prestige and power, but Manfred handles it badly. He has a gambling compulsion that makes him play until he loses, betting more than he should on hands he knows can't win. This, combined with his inability to deal with bodily fluids, whether they belong to him or anyone else, makes his marriage a loveless and unhappy one for Teresa. When she meets Rod, she discovers she can be desirable and that life can contain the kind of love for which she is looking. Rod is attentive and puts her desires ahead of his own. It is the kind of love she has always wanted.

Teresa needs a blind in order to begin seeing Rod, and she uses the excuse that her friend has always wanted to see the dancing put on by Big King and his tribe. She wrangles an invitation for her friend and herself and later convinces Joy that she should accompany her and act as her chaperon. While Joy is less than enthusiastic to begin



with, she is introduced to Dan (whom Rod has to convince to attend) and they hit it off immediately. They find in each other what they are looking for, and before too much time passes, they marry.

Hettie is married to Johnny Delange. She marries him because he is the top driller in the mine and known for his ability to make money. Men strive to be part of his team. Hettie is addicted to money. Love, to her, is expressed in the value of the gifts she is given, and Hettie never stops looking for the next lift to her ego. She has no idea how to love and takes advantage of Johnny, who would do anything to please her. In order to maintain her feeling that she is still desirable, she sleeps with his brother Davy who is so racked with guilt afterward that he neglects the safety aspect in his work and dies as a result. Johnny dies when the Big Dipper lets go, drowning him and his drilling team, and Hettie is in bed with an auto sales manager before Johnny's body is buried. Her joy is directly related to the desire she sees in the eyes of men and her ability to get money. Love is not part of her picture, and she finds herself alone in the end, sleeping with a married man.

# Style

## Point of View

Gold Mine, by Wilbur Smith is written for the most part in the first person perspective, shifting between the main characters Rod Ironsides, Manfred Steyner, Teresa Steyner and Big King. While the story is told from several perspectives, it is necessary in order to build the readers' understanding of the mine from several perspectives: Rod's perspective; Manfred's perspective of his financial responsibilities and gambling debt and his obligations as a result; Teresa Steyner's perspective of a loveless relationship with Manfred and the joy she finds when she and Rod begin to get involved; and finally Big King's perspective in his position at the mine and his involvement in the ongoing theft of gold combined with his loyalty to the mining company and his fellow employees.

While there are brief first-person perspectives included by Johnny and Davy Delange, and Johnny's wife Hettie, they are merely to help establish the relationship between Hettie and the men in her life, and the Delange brothers and the lives they lose to the mine and the Big Dipper excavation. The story is cohesive and flows with easy-to-follow progression. Throughout the novel, most of the story is told through Rod Ironside's eyes, and the rest is more for color and understanding of the reasons for the plot lines.

## Setting

Gold Mine is aptly named in that the novel takes place almost entirely in the Sonder Ditch Mining Company in the Kitchenerville Gold Fields. While there is a brief section that takes place in Paris where Manfred receives his instructions to drill through the Big Dipper and brief chapters that take place in Johannesburg where Rod maintains a residence, the mine is the focus of activity. The entire story's focus is around the drilling through the Big Dipper reef. It is the intention of those who call the shots that the mine be flooded as a result of their instructions, thereby freezing the rising cost of gold by destroying the Sonder Ditch Mining Company and the other four mines that make up the Kitchenerville Gold Fields.

There is one brief section that takes place at the lodge near Kruger National Park. Terry flies Rod to the lodge for a getaway while she believes Manfred is in Europe, but the trip is orchestrated by Manfred to get rid of Rod so the drilling of the final section of the Big Dipper can be done without his interference. Despite his attempts to comply with the group of men who pull his strings, Rod manages to return and save the mine from total disaster, saving all four surrounding mines in the process.

The end has Hurry Hirschfeld, the owner of Sonder Ditch Mining Company, traveling to Zambezi Valley to inform Big King's wives and families of his death and inviting them to attend the ceremony honoring him.



## Language and Meaning

The language in *Gold Mine* is mostly relaxed and informal. The sentences are constructed in an easy-to-read manner using mostly common English terms and expressions. There are occasional native expressions lending to the realism of the time and place. The customs of certain tribes are also briefly touched upon. There is just realism in the language that the reader is able to identify with the period during which the novel takes place and the manner in which the characters lived and worked.

There is not a great deal of dialogue, as the novel is told more in the style of exposition and description. The time line is mostly chronological. There are no great passages of time or time lost in the story making it easy to follow and become part of. Simple and straightforward writing enables the readers to immerse themselves in the workings of the mine, the intricacies and risks of drilling and the scope of problems that can be associated with it.

## Structure

This novel is divided into seventy-four chapters which vary from one to fifteen pages or more in length. The longer chapters are divided into sub chapters that while are untitled are obviously designed to take the reader from one subject matter to another. The plot is well laid out, despite a number of twists that include the treachery of a group of wealthy observers who would like the Kitchenerville Gold Field to fail; Manfred Steyner's gambling problem and his resulting obligation to do as they instruct; Rod Ironside's desire to make the most of his promotion; and the overall desire by so many to make more money whether honestly or as a result of theft.

The pace of this novel is quick, although it never leaves the reader behind or in a state of confusion as it progresses. The time line is linear and well developed. The conflicting loyalties are well defined and described as is the mine and the atmosphere there. The plot is riddled with greed and guilt-based behavior by those in a position of power. The human condition is well described and developed. Wilbur Smith is adept at weaving his story in such a way that the reader is drawn in immediately and reluctant to stop reading before figuring out what is going to happen.





## Quotes

"You've put men in there without recording their numbers?" (Chap. 4, Pg 15)  
Rod Ironsides to Barnard after the whole hanging wall of the stope fell down.

"I got you up here to tell you that I will use all my influence, which I flatter myself in considerable, to secure your appointment - and I mean immediate appointment - to the position of General Manager of the Sonder Ditch Gold Mining Company Ltd." (Chap. 8, Pg 34)

Manfred Steyner to Rod Ironsides after he reviews Rod's life and work history to date.

"Mining is a hard game, and it attracts a hard breed of men." (Chap. 14, Pg 58)  
Comment made by Herman Koch from Anglo American made to Rod Ironsides at one time, and now recalled by Rod as he calls the meeting of his captains to order.

"Hamba gahle, madoda." (Chap. 18, Pg 69)

Big King to the corpse of the white miner he had worked with and laughed with until the stope fell and killed him. Translated, it means "Go in peace, man."

"This is one way glass, gentlemen,... so you need not worry about being seen in such a den of iniquity." (Chap. 26, Pg 84)

Host to guests who watch as Manfred Steyner plays Baccarat, and then explains the hold they have over him both financially and emotionally.

"He believes he is trying to win, but he lays bets against odds that, with his magnificent brain, he must realize are suicidal." (Chap. 26, Pg 87)

Host to guests explaining his interpretation of Manfred Steyner's behavior at the Baccarat table.

"How many women have you seduced on that couch, Rodney Ironsides?" (Chap. 38, Pg 146)

Teresa to Rod the first time that he takes her to his apartment in town.

"If I tear you down again, and tell the world you were not man enough for the job, then, Rodney Ironsides, you are finished." (Chap. 43, Pg 167)

Manfred to Rod as he uses his promotion to force him into drilling through the Big Dipper despite his considerable experience and feelings to the contrary.

"Between the wash and the pour, we are losing a couple hundred ounce a week." (Chap. 47, Pg 184)

Herby Innes to Rod Ironsides explaining the amount he believes is being stolen from the mine.

"Gwenyama! The man is a lion." (Chap. 46, Pg 181)

Big King's comment after Johnny uses a sliver of Dynagel and a fourteen-pound hammer to break open a rock into manageable pieces for the bar boys to remove.



"It is just possible that he could upset the entire operation, not, as you put it, by sheer force of personality, but by suddenly doing the unexpected, by behaving in a manner for which we have not allowed." (Chap. 54, Pg 226)

Messenger sent by the men who arranged to have the Dipper drilled through to fat man, expressing his and their concerns that Rod may be an unexpected problem or cause a wrinkle in their plans to flood the mines.

"Then our fat friend pulls the big double-cross and starts selling the Kitchenerville shares short." (Chap. 61, Pg 263)

The bald headed man to one of his partners when he realizes they've been double crossed.

"A river leaped from the mouth of the drive, a great river of water running faster than the Zambesi in flood; roaring like a lion the water ate all the men with me." (Chap. 66, Pg 272)

Big King to Rod Ironsides as he describes the scene below when they first get through the Big Dipper.

"You bastard, you've drowned the Sonder Ditch." (Chap. 67, Pg 276)

Hurry Hirschfeld to Rod when he finds out the Sonder Ditch is flooded.

"They say your grandfather is threatening to fire him so high he'll be the first man on the moon." (Chap. 70, Pg 293)

Dan Stander to Terry as they are escorting Rod to the hospital after the flood is contained.

"I'm going to kill you, you whore." (Chap. 70 Pg 297)

Manfred to Teresa when he sees her at the house attempting to clear Rod's name by getting the phony records of the Big Dipper.

"The wives of Big King and his sons will travel in a flying machine to I'Goldi, that their eyes also may look upon the stone image of the man who was their husband and their father." (Chap. 72, Pg 311)

Hurry Hirschfeld to the wives and sons of Big King Nkulu after his death.



## Topics for Discussion

Why does Manfred Steyner want Rodney Ironsides to be the new General Manager of The Sonder Ditch Gold Mining Company?

What forms of theft exist in the Sonder Ditch Gold Mine operation?

What are the five mines that make up the Kitchenerville fields? Which one is in the center and what intersects it? Why is this significant?

What plan involving the Sonder Ditch Mines directly will cut the production of gold in half? Why is the plan concocted, and what are the consequences?

How do the conspirators plan to convince Manfred and through him, Rod, to carry through this plan?

What is it about Rod that worries the conspirators, and what do they plan to do about it?

How does Manfred respond when he discovers his wife and Rod are involved? Why?

What does Rod do to avert the looming possibility of disaster he foresees by drilling through the Dipper?

What are the consequences and outcomes of the brief tryst between Hettie and Davy for Davy? For Hettie? Explain her reaction.

What is the outcome of the efforts by Rod and Big King to fix the charge on the blast matte?

How is the memory of Big King celebrated?

What is the outcome for Manfred? What events are directly related to his behavior?

Where does Hurry Hirschfeld go, and why does he go there?