

Golden Fox Study Guide

Golden Fox by Wilbur Smith

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Plot Summary

Golden Fox by Wilbur Smith is a remarkable novel that depicts one family divided by political beliefs and the vision they have for their country. The division becomes so great that the family is pitted against each other in a war that can only end with one side or the other eliminated. Isabella Courtney is seduced by a Russian agent known for his ability to set and execute a "honey trap," and once she is tricked into bearing his son, her life is changed forever. Ramon de Santiago y Machado is a KGB agent who believes in the communist system with such certainty that he is willing to sacrifice his own son, and even his own life, for the cause and to further the revolution of his people.

Ramon's commitment is so strong that it overshadows even the love for his own flesh and blood. He sees his son as a tool to use against Isabella, forcing her to turn against her country and against the family she loves. Finally, after years of separation and threats against her son, Isabella is confronted by her family and forced to tell the truth about everything - including her own traitorous behavior. The family comes together in an unparalleled rescue, bringing Isabella and her son home to Capetown with help from brother Sean Courtney and his fellow Ballantyne Scouts. Despite the losses he suffers, Ramon's dedication to his cause is not derailed even after his sudden realization that he loves the son he has now lost.

Instead, Ramon works on turning two brothers against the rest, convincing them that they will save the country they love. They infiltrate a family-owned Chemical company, stealing enough nerve gas to kill thousands. Their target is the yearly Rand Easter Show which includes enough political show to damage the country for years to come. Pilot Michael Courtney and his half brother Ben Afrika rig a small plane to deliver the nerve gas, but the Courtney family is on to them. Sean Courtney, having orchestrated the release of his sister and nephew, is now secreted outside the hanger and in the next few minutes, one brother is dead and the other is in the air with Ramon and the nerve gas. It is a daring attempt that is stopped before the gas gets to its destination, and the Courtney family will be without another young man. Ramon will learn first hand how devastating the nerve gas he carries really is. Exciting, fast paced, and full of twists and turns, the plot is dynamic and the story credible. Wilbur Smith once again weaves a mystery, wrapped in a love story, wrapped in political aspirations for two countries and the men who believe the future requires revolution.



Section 1, Pages 7 - 42

Section 1, Pages 7 - 42 Summary

Golden Fox by Wilbur Smith is a remarkable novel that depicts one family divided by political beliefs and the vision they have for their country. The division becomes so great that the family is pitted against each other in a war that can only end with one side or the other eliminated. Isabella Courtney is seduced by a Russian agent known for his ability to set and execute a "honey trap," and once she is tricked into bearing the Russian agent's son, her life is changed forever. Ramon de Santiago y Machado is a KGB agent who believes in the communist system with such certainty that he is willing to sacrifice his own son, and even his own life, for the cause and to further the revolution of his people.

Bella Courtney, in London with her father Shasa, is acting as embassy hostess for him. At a concert, she meets Ramon Machado, who is her rescuer and then she vanishes. Ramon is chastised for allowing Bella to escape, but he assures Joe Cicero, the KGB Directorate, he knows what he's doing. He is well known as the "Golden Fox" for his ability to set a "honey trap." Raleigh Tabaka sits in on this meeting and waits while they work out the financial logistics of setting a honey trap for a woman of Isabella's status. She must be convinced of Ramon's status as a Spanish Marques. Once their bickering is over, Raleigh turns to matters he considers much more important. They discuss until late into the afternoon the itinerary for his African tour.

Machado leaves first, following their rule that they are never seen in public together. He goes to the flat he has rented specifically for the purpose of luring Isabella into his honey trap. Code named "Red Rose," the operation is one of importance as Bella can be manipulated to serve them on two fronts. Her father has access to information at diplomatic levels and her mother operates a secret safe house for members of the ANC. Knowing that Bella is a horsewoman, he dons his riding breeches and heads to the stable Isabella uses and sees she signed her mount out twenty minutes earlier. When he sees her ahead of him, he transfers his attention to his mount when she calls out his name and reintroduces herself. She takes him back to her group to introduce him; Machado notices her escort Roger is put out. It gives her vindictive pleasure to introduce Ramon as a Marques. Machado gives her a questioning look, but she covers quickly, explaining she gleaned the information on him from the Tattler. Soon they are all getting along well, and Isabella makes sure she wrangles an invitation for Ramon to join their group at a party that evening.

Section 1, Pages 7 - 42 Analysis

Isabella Courtney, daughter to the wealthy and politically influential Shasa Courtney, is a spoiled rich girl who is used to getting her own way. What her money and status can't get for her, her good looks can. She uses both to considerable advantage at every



opportunity. Those who associate with her usually end up as decorations around her, dulled by her confidence, poise and charisma. She enjoys manipulating those around her, and is surprised if she comes across anyone who doesn't fall under the Courtney spell and charm immediately.

Such is the case with Ramon Machado. An agent operating for the KGB, Ramon is setting up a honey trap with the intention of catching Isabella in it. The operation is code named Red Rose, and Ramon spends a great deal of time setting up his plan before actually arranging his introduction to her. It comes rather fortuitously at a Mick Jagger concert when Bella attempts to get into a restricted area. One of the guards for the event, and a Hell's Angel, is happy to take advantage of the beautiful girl all by herself. Ramon comes to her rescue, introducing himself when Isabella's attacker is subdued. Afterward, he escorts her to the ladies room at her request and then disappears while she is inside. It is the last thing she expects as she stands inside inspecting her appearance one more time before going back out to her handsome rescuer.

When she finds he is gone, she is more than a little put out. She investigates him quietly through diplomatic channels and discovers he is a Spanish Marques. Intrigued now, she endeavors to subtly track him down without making herself too obvious in the process. Meanwhile, Ramon is having to explain to his superiors why when he had her, he let her go. They are eager to begin using Bella on several fronts, and try to rush Ramon but he is certain that the way to spring this trap is to go slow and allow her to come to him. After his meeting with them, he goes back to the flat he has rented just for this purpose. It is set up with all of the trappings that a Marques should exhibit, though Ramon hates even the mention of his relationship to the title. He dresses himself to go riding and goes to the stable he knows Isabella frequents. Fate is working with him as he notices that she is already there. He arranges to accidentally bump into her yet again, and she is overjoyed to see him, even wrangling an invitation for him to the party she is attending that evening.



Section 2, Pages 42 - 81

Section 2, Pages 42 - 81 Summary

Ramon arrives at the party just as Bella is losing interest and seeing him changes that. She puts down her champagne and walks to him. Without a word they dance and then leave the party together. He drives Bella's car back to his flat, taking her upstairs with a need that seems to match her own. She wakes alone the next morning in love. Ramon has left a note inviting her to spend the weekend with him in Malaga. Excited, Bella gets ready to meet Shasa for lunch.

The weekend with Ramon exceeds her wildest expectations. She watches him compete in a marksmanship contest that comes down to just him and an American professional. Tied for many rounds, the judges decide two pigeons must be shot each round instead of one. The American goes first but only one bird dies. When Ramon shoots both of his birds, Isabelle breaks protocol to join him, embracing him in victory. He convinces her to join him in Granada next, although she must lie to Shasa, canceling a prior event by telling him she is still with Harriet. While in Granada, Ramon educates her in the history of bull fighting. They make love often and he sneaks into their room to replace her birth control pills with coated aspirin made to look exactly the same. When her pregnancy is confirmed by the doctor, she is almost afraid to tell Ramon, offering to handle all the arrangements to fix her "slip." He is horrified by her suggestion, saying he loves her and wants their baby. The only flaw in her life is exposed when Isabella brings marriage into conversation and discovers that Ramon is married to someone else. He assures her that he has convinced Natalie to divorce him, but it will take until Bella is at least six months pregnant. She is due to return to Weltevreden with her father before then, but Ramon counters with another plan. He asks Bella to stay with him instead.

Section 2, Pages 42 - 81 Analysis

Ramon weaves his web of seduction with perfection and practice. He has no trouble luring her from one place to another, making love to her frequently and realizing that he is actually enjoying this assignment. He separates her from her friends and family to ensure that she is not talked out of rash behavior by anyone in her life. He takes her to an event where he is able to show off his marksmanship skills, knowing that she will be enthralled, and then follows it with a lesson in bull fighting. The competition is bloody and exciting, and their holiday is filled with passion and love making. During their trip to Granada, Ramon finds time to switch her birth control pills with aspirin that have been specially coated to look and taste just like her pills. The KGB doctor who supplied them ensured Ramon that there are certain times in her cycle where stopping the pill would kick her libido and reproduction into overdrive. He is right, and two months later Bella realizes she is pregnant.



Bella is afraid to even tell Ramon, and when she does, she assures him that her friend Harriet will help her arrange the doctors visit to fix her lapse. Ramon is horrified and tells her he loves her and the son he is sure she is carrying. His plan is working perfectly. He is so convincing that Bella relaxes and allows herself to believe the whole fairy tale that their relationship is. She begins to think about their future, but when she mentions marriage, Ramon has news she is not expecting. He tells her reluctantly that he is already married and his wife who is very Catholic refuses to give him a divorce. Devastated, Bella fears her family's response to everything, but Ramon assures her that after many phone calls he has convinced his wife to sacrifice her religious beliefs for a price. For fifty-thousand dollars, she will move to Reno to get a divorce. Unfortunately, this won't happen until Bella is about six months pregnant. Despite this wrinkle, Ramon is so convincing, even telling Bella that he can't live without her and that he doesn't want her to go back to Weltevreden with Shasa as is planned. He offers to help tame Centaine, which relaxes Bella's fears considerably. She is convinced that he loves her and that they are going to be together. Nothing else matters. It never occurs to her that he might not be entirely honest, or that he might have ulterior motives. All she wants to know is that he loves her.



Section 3, Pages 81 - 121

Section 3, Pages 81 - 121 Summary

Isabella resumes her duties as embassy hostess with all her former enthusiasm and mentions to her father that she would like to stay in London to complete her thesis instead of returning to Weltevreden with him when his term is done. He is unable to find an argument she hasn't thought through, but despite her desire to stay with Ramon, it is hard for Bella to say goodbye to the family when the ship sails. She and Ramon fall into a routine, living in his flat. As her belly grows, they go out less. Ramon goes on regular "business trips" and Bella sees his passport's most recent stamp is from Moscow not Rome. His anger is frightening when he tells her not to pry into his affairs again. In early November she gets a letter from Michael, who intends to spend three weeks in London with her, corresponding with a time when Ramon is gone. She picks him up at the airport and hugging her, he feels her larger belly. He promises not to tell the family and talks her into visiting their mother, Tara. The visit is strained and Bella feels like an outsider though Michael is accepted by all. They go to a rally Michael neglects to mention, but Bella enjoys herself even though her politics are in opposition. Ramon calls and invites her to join him in Athens. Michael drops her at the airport on his way to a meeting. Unable to get a flight, she goes back to Cadogan, and finds Michael in bed with a man from the rally.

Two days later, Ramon calls from his flat in London, asking her to come to his aid. She finds him injured and removes the bandages to discover a bullet wound. He lets her believe he is a spy for the Spanish and talks her into giving birth to their son in Spain so he can claim his title. Then he tells her that his wife is being troublesome. They will wed after the baby is born. She reluctantly agrees as he is willing to have the ceremony at Weltevreden like she wants.

Section 3, Pages 81 - 121 Analysis

Bella is willing to lie to her entire family in order to stay in London with Ramon. She convinces her father to go back to Weltevreden without her, and sets up house with Ramon in his flat. For Ramon, everything is working according to plan. She is more and more dependent on him, and more isolated from her friends and family. Her pregnancy is just one little part of the onset of her deceptions with everyone. Ramon and the KGB know all about her family. They are aware that her mother Tara runs a safe house for political dissidents called the Lord Kitchener Hotel and was herself involved with Moses Gama in a plot to blow up parliament in Africa. Now living in London with the son she and Moses conceived, she is only one of the allies to whom they would like access. Her brother, Michael, is also known for his political outspokenness in areas that aren't in line with his father; Michael writes for and edits a paper with political leanings. All these factors play into the way Bella is manipulated into her current situation. When Michael calls to tell her he is coming, she is thrilled as she trusts him completely. He is the first



one in her family to discover her pregnancy, and she swears him to secrecy. He isn't thrilled when he hears the reason why Ramon won't marry her yet, and warns her, but she is so obviously smitten that he lets it go for the time being. Instead, he manipulates her into going with him to see Tara and then attend a rally with them all. She is jealous and a bit uncomfortable with his familiarity with this side of the family, including their half brother Benjamin, but no one judges her pregnancy or comments beyond normal curiosity. She tells them nothing of Ramon, and sensing her discomfort, Michael helps her change the subject.

Later, at home, Ramon calls with an invitation for her to join him in Athens. It is time to bring her a little further into the fold, and his intention is to have her act as a courier for them. It is a small act to begin with, but Ramon knows he has enough control over her to accomplish this, the next logical step in her indoctrination. It is helpful that as a pregnant woman who is unknown to authorities in political circles as a dissident, she would have no problem in this capacity. He is naturally disappointed when she isn't able to get on a flight. Bella is, too, but for different reasons. She believes the trip is a romantic interlude arranged by Ramon for them. The disappointment continues when she gets home to discover that Michael is gay. By morning, she has had enough time to realize the sacrifices Michael has made to keep his secret and puts his mind at ease.

When she gets a call from Ramon two days later, she is surprised he is back in London. He tells her he needs her and she goes to him, finding him on the floor in the bathroom unconscious. She helps him to bed and changes his bandages where the surprises continue. The injuries are the result of a bullet that has gone through him, and despite the pain he is in, Ramon refuses her offer to take him to hospital or get a doctor to come in. She pries gently, trying not to anger him again, but knowing now in her heart that he is not the banker he claims to be. He admits that he works for the government now and then, and allows her to draw her own conclusions as to which government. Bella believes he is working for Spain and admires and respects him even more for the dangerous and necessary work he is doing. In fact, the danger appeals to her and makes her even easier to manipulate. Ramon sends her out to meet with a doctor and pick up antibiotics and instructions for his care. Since her knowledge of Spanish is very little, his conversations in that language are safe, and she stops questioning his behavior now. Instead, she becomes the dutiful nurse, giving him shots and changing the dressings as instructed. She even agrees to have their baby in Spain. Her disappointment returns when he tells her his first wife is causing delays, but when he assures her that they will marry after the baby is born, she again believes him without question. He knows his hold over her is now complete.



Section 4, Pages 121 - 156

Section 4, Pages 121 - 156 Summary

Ramon meets Michael and offers to get him an interview with Raleigh Tabaka who agrees providing Michael come alone. Michael gets an hour with Raleigh and is introduced to Oliver Kendrick - a black ballet dancer known as the Black Swan in ballet circles. He convinces Michael to stay and has also offered his services to Tabaka, allowing him to film the interlude providing he gets a copy of the film. When Michael leaves London, he makes Bella promise she will always let him know where she is. Bella is lonely after Michael leaves but has no time to dwell on it as they move soon after to a small fishing village near Malaga, Spain. Ramon finds Bella a companion / house helper named Adra who helps Bella with housework, cooking, and tutors Bella in Spanish. Within a month Bella can read papers and haggle in the market. She slowly assembles a layette and Ramon begins using her as a courier. Bella finishes and defends her thesis earning her doctorate, and gives birth to a healthy baby boy of whom her family is still unaware. Bella loves her son, Nicky, and her life with Ramon.

Joe Cicero harangues Ramon to conclude his time playing house with Bella, accusing him of enjoying the role. Ramon calls Bella inviting her to join him in Paris for a romantic interlude. She doesn't want to leave Nicky, but Ramon convinces her using his need for her so she gets on the flight he has arranged. When she gets there, Ramon is nowhere to be seen, and no rooms are available in the hotel in which he said they would stay. Cicero is there, watching her every move, and surreptitiously ensures that she gets a room and stays the night. She tries to call Adra but no one answers and in a panic she flies back the next morning only to find the house empty of all Ramon, Nicky and Adra's things. A note from Ramon tells her to return to London and say nothing to anyone or she will never see Nicky again. She panics at first but then convinces herself that Ramon must be acting under duress. She does as she is instructed, afraid to call anyone.

Section 4, Pages 121 - 156 Analysis

Ramon and Michael meet; Ramon mentions that he might be able to get him a rare interview with Raleigh Tabaka. After he leaves, Bella lets slip that he is a homosexual. Ramon is not surprised or repelled, but Bella worries because Michael lives in South Africa and his preference is for black men. It is information Ramon already knows, and so much more. By arranging a meeting with Tabaka for Michael, he is also setting Michael up in a honey trap. The meeting is held in the home of a black ballet dancer, Oliver Kendrick; when the interview is over, Michael is invited to stay with Oliver and visit. Michael has no idea that Tabaka and Kendrick have prearranged the video taping of the entire encounter, to be used against Michael at a later date. Bella is sad when Michael leaves, but soon after she and Ramon move to Spain, and her days are filled with getting ready for the baby, learning a new language and finishing her thesis.



Happiness is a powerful motivator, and Bella is successful in securing her doctorate and mastering enough Spanish to read the newspaper and converse in the market. When Bella delivers their son, her life is complete. Ramon is quick to ensure that she signs papers allowing Ramon to legally adopt Nicky since they aren't married yet, and he wants to be sure that Nicky can claim his title. Bella does this without question. Nicky is perfect, and she is happier than she has ever been.

Ramon is being hounded by Joe Cicero to bring the operation to its next level, but Ramon is stalling. He claims his reasons are that he wants to ensure that Bella and Nicky completely bonded, but Joe accuses him of enjoying himself too much and wasting time. Soon after, Ramon pulls her life out from under Bella. He lures her away from Nicky claiming he misses her and wants a romantic weekend with her, and while she is on a flight to Paris to meet him, he is in Malaga packing his and Nicky's things and with Adra's help, moving them out. Meanwhile, Bella waits for him in a Paris hotel. At first, there isn't even a room available, but Ramon needs her to be away long enough that they don't cross paths so Cicero arranges for a room to become vacant and Bella gratefully checks in. She calls home over and over, getting no answer and becoming more fearful by the minute. The next day, when she manages to get back, she finds their home empty of all but her belongings and one knitted boot of Nicky's. Ramon leaves her a note telling her that if she ever wants to see Nicky again, she is to talk to no one. Instead, she is to fly back to London and wait to hear from him. She defies the instructions to a degree, going through the market and asking about her son and Ramon, and learns that a car with two men picked them all up the previous evening. It reinforces her belief that Ramon must have done this under duress, and clinging to that hope, she returns to London without telling her family.



Section 5, Pages 156 - 189

Section 5, Pages 156 - 189 Summary

For six days Bella hears nothing and then a call instructs her to leave immediately. She is taken to a small movie theater with a screen on one wall where two women instruct her to be quiet until Cicero comes in and sits down. He shows her a video to punish her for talking to people in Malaga. The video shows her son as they hook him up to a monitor. Then Nicky is grabbed by the feet and submerged head first in a tank of water. The two women hold Bella down until the man finally pulls Nicky out. He is laid out on the table until his breathing returns to normal, and then submerged again. Bella begs them to stop, swearing she'll do anything they ask and is told to make herself indispensable. In return, they will show her videos of Nicky when he sits, stands, begins to walk, and she may even earn visits with him in time. She is told that Ramon is in the same position. They tell her to go back to Capetown and accept her doctorate in absentia. Then she is to get close to Shasa and learn all she can about the armaments corporation, and work her way into politics with him - while supplying them with any information they request.

Bella does as they ask and announces her intentions to enter the political arena. Centaine is pleased with the changes she sees in Bella and is happy Bella has shed her romantic notions of life. Centaine arranges a meeting between Isabella and Prime Minister Vorster and the introduction is a success. After Centaine's Labrador helps her to win a competition held at Weltevreden, she assembles her entire family to celebrate. Shasa speaks in her honor and during cocktails afterward, Centaine strengthens her bond with Garry's wife, Holly, by giving her the necklace she always wears which symbolizes her success at H'ani mine. It is an early birthday gift given in an effort to break down a barrier she caused when she tried to dissuade Garry from the marriage. Now, years later, she recognizes that Holly is the best thing that ever happened to Garry. The gesture reduces Holly to tears of gratitude as the necklace contains over a thousand karats of yellow diamonds hand picked over the years from the mine, set in pure platinum, and she knows how much it means to Centaine.

Section 5, Pages 156 - 189 Analysis

Isabella goes back and forth from despair to determination. The waiting is almost more than she can bear and on the sixth day, she finally hears from someone and a meeting is arranged. She is told to leave immediately and a cloak and dagger ride in a van with no windows brings her to a face to face meeting with Joe Cicero for the first time. She is chastised for her actions in Malaga, after having been told to talk to no one and doing so anyway and is then given an indication of the kinds of punishment she could expect for disobedience. She is shown a video of her son, dunked twice in water until after the second dunking the doctors struggle to properly revive him. Isabella is reduced to complete obedience, and begging that they leave her son alone she swears she'll do



anything they want. The real horror is realized when Cicero informs her she has to earn the right to see him and it may be some time before that can happen. He tells her that meanwhile she can earn up-to-date videos showing his progress which is when Bella fully understands the length of time that may pass before she sees her son again. She is told to go back to Capetown, join her father in politics and ingratiate herself in his armaments corporation.

Bella is a different woman when she returns home, and Centaine sees it immediately. Centaine notices her emotional growth and sees her potential to become as much a Courtney influence in the political arena as any of them. Bella seems to have shed her romantic illusions and become hardened and tough with the kind of grit Centaine appreciates. Centaine sets herself to ensuring that Bella get the opportunities she needs to progress. Centaine is a matriarch and makes few mistakes. When she speaks or issues a summons, it is responded to with speed and respect. Centaine is a force to be reckoned with. She may be seventy, but her strength and control over her family and the many Courtney enterprises is second to none. As such, when she invites the Prime Minister to award the trophy to the winner of the dog competition, he attends despite his busy schedule. Centaine ensures that Bella is introduced to him in a carefully-choreographed encounter where Bella definitely makes an impression. Later, a dinner in Centaine's honor is attended by all the family but for Sean, and Centaine has the chance to truly look them over while their attentions are diverted by the speech Shasa is making in her honor. She analyzes one after the other, acknowledging both her successes and her failures. She sees the man Garry has become and has to credit his wife Holly with a great deal of his transformation despite her original misgivings. Her original interference with Holly created a chasm in their relationship, however, that despite time and effort, Centaine seems unable to breach. She notes the successes of each, and stopping at Michael, she has to reluctantly admit that he takes after Tara more than anyone in the Courtney family. He puts the poor and disenfranchised ahead of his family which to Centaine is the ultimate betrayal. After dinner, Centaine and her family retire for drinks for which she sits Holly on one side of her and Bella on the other. Michael tries to talk to Bella for the first time in a month, and Bella tells him not to pry and that she will talk to him later. Centaine tells Holly that in honor of her upcoming birthday, she was beginning a new tradition. She takes off the necklace she is wearing and puts it around Holly's neck. Holly is stunned and speechless. The necklace is over a thousand karats of yellow diamonds set in platinum. Each stone was hand picked over ten years from H'ani mine and it was Centaine's pride and joy, but passing it to Holly accomplished what she desired. It broke down the remaining wall between them and as Holly hugs her, thanking her and calling her Nana for the first time, Centaine smiles in victory and triumph.



Section 6, Pages 189 - 231

Section 6, Pages 189 - 231 Summary

Bella was going to tell Michael everything, but the post office box she set up yields a letter from Adra who sent a photo of Nicky sitting up and medical and progress reports; the last line of the letter reminds Bella of the dire consequences for Nicky if she talks to anyone. Instead, Bella tells him crib death took Nicky, and Ramon blames her. Michael is meeting with Tabaka again and waits at a rendezvous point; when the van arrives he gets in. He is introduced to Victoria Gama and Tabaka asks Vicky to keep Michael there for the night. Michael writes an article about the children of the revolution, finishing just before midnight. A teenage boy Michael had seen earlier brings him tea and stays with him the night. When Raleigh takes Michael back to his car, he asks if he will fly to Botswana and back for him, and Michael readily agrees. He flies to the Gay Goose Lodge, appropriately named, and is greeted with much enthusiasm. While he is entertained, his plane is discreetly loaded, and he is told not to examine anything. The box arrives unchanged and Raleigh is satisfied - Michael passes the test. His cargo is seventy copies of the bible this time. He makes the same trip nine times in two years; five years after meeting Raleigh, Michael is invited to join the African National Congress in the military wing known as Umkhonto we Sizwe or Spear of the Nation. He agrees.

Bella canvasses for the National Party in the upcoming by-election. Despite initial reservations, she enjoys it. Shasa gives her an office in Centaine House that looks out onto St. George's Cathedral and Table Mountain. She works until well after five, stopping at the post box on her way home as usual. She finds a note and memorizes it, then burns it as always. The instructions lead her to town where she leaves her passenger window open and goes to the phone booth. A caller tells her to return to her car and she finds more instructions. This time, they want the full technical specifications for the computer linked radar network being installed by Armscor at the naval headquarters on the Cape. After, the letter promises her a first meeting with her son as reward. A photo of Nicky is enclosed.

Section 6, Pages 189 - 231 Analysis

Bella hides her body from her family and Nanny so no one recognizes the changes from childbirth. She is at first eager to talk to Michael as he is the only one who knows about Ramon and Nicky, but then the communication from Adra comes warning her again of the consequences and she realizes she can't confide in him no matter how badly she wants to. She tells Michael instead that Nicky is dead, and blaming her, Ramon left. Michael shares her sorrow and Bella takes comfort from his presence and sympathy. Michael is going to meet with Tabaka again, and Bella warns him that Raleigh is a dangerous man, but he promises he'll take care. He meets with the van as planned and is taken to Drake's Farm township. He identifies with everything he sees there, knowing that the laughter and music he hears despite their obvious poverty is representative of

the unquenchable spirit of the black Africans regardless of the hardships they face. He longs to do something to help them, knowing that he is but one small voice, censored at every turn.

Michael gets his chance to participate when Tabaka asks him to go to Botswana for him. He is to fly there, spend a few days and fly back. He readily agrees and returns with a cargo he is told to ignore, which he also does. Another test is passed, and Michael is used to ferry things in by plane for the next two years, making nine trips to Gay Goose Camp and back. After five years of association with Tabaka, Michael is invited to join the military wing of the African National Congress and he agrees.

Bella is doing her best to ingratiate herself with her father and in politics as she was instructed. She has an office in Centaine House with her father, and is the only one, as his assistant, that is trusted with the combination to his safe. She looks over all his speeches before he makes them and on occasion recommends small changes. She goes home by way of the post office as always, and this time a one page letter awaits her. Nervously she reads the four lines of instructions and burns the letter as always. It is the first time they have instructed her to do anything.

Nicky is now almost three years old. Her recent letter lead her to a dead letter drop where she receives instructions to obtain the technical specifications for a new computer linked radar system being installed. The carrot they use is that when she has accomplished her task, she will have her first meeting with Nicky. She is forced to make a choice now. Treason or abandon her son forever. This is the point of no return. She knew that this weekend she would have access to the safe and the plans, and with dread and guilt, she knows that she will do as they ask.



Section 7, Pages 231 - 271

Section 7, Pages 231 - 271 Summary

Joe Cicero succumbs to lung cancer and Ramon is the last one at his graveside. Though officially running the unit for some time, now he feels complete control. He instructs secretary Katrina to take Cicero's belongings to the archives. He has not seen Nicholas in two months. He opens a package of information from Red Rose (Bella) and lays it beside information gleaned from another agent, Dieter Reinhardt to check the integrity of the files. Red Rose officially earns a Class III rating. Katrina witnesses the destruction of the documents and Ramon goes upstairs to report. General Yuri Borodin, head of the fourth directorate and Aleksei Yudenich ask Ramon to defend his thesis. Ramon tells them they should make South Africa a political issue in the domestic United States. He explains his reasoning and they agree with him. Later, Ramon has dinner with Katrina and her parents and then flies to the Bay of Pigs to be greeted by Adra. Nicholas is three now, and Ramon is just beginning to take an interest in him. He shakes his father's hand, his conversation and mannerisms far beyond that of a normal three year old. Ramon gives him a replica AK 47 assault rifle loaded with painted metallic bullets and for the first time sees joy on Niky's face. Adra puts Nicky to bed and asks Ramon if he will want her. Though she is over forty, Ramon nods. Her fear of him enhances his pleasure and hers. The next morning Ramon meets with Castro and gives him a detailed report. Cuba's newest export is fighting men and women. Ramon convinces Castro he should claim his forefathers were sold on the slave blocks in Havana and that he could further his interests by claiming commitment to the African people. Then Ramon meets with the next Ethiopian leader, Captain Getachew Abebe, and tells him that the time is ripe for a revolution, after which Abebe will be declared president.

Ramon decides it's time to give Bella access to her son, sensing the bond is weakening after three years of separation. He chooses Spain, where he has control of the area and equips a remote hacienda with concealed cameras and microphones. Inside, her escort searches her suitcase thoroughly and strip searches her. Ramon watches it all via camera. Nicky is instructed to be nice to the kind lady, call her Mamma, and be good. Bella restrains herself from becoming emotional or reaching out to her self possessed son. She gives him a soccer ball and they play together and go for a swim before Adra gives them a lunch Ramon has drugged. When Bella is asleep, she is taken to another room.

Section 7, Pages 231 - 271 Analysis

When Cicero dies, Ramon finally feels like he is in charge for the first time. Though he has been running the the unit for some time, Cicero was always there, always looking over his shoulder and making him feel as though his every move was under scrutiny, which of course it was. Cicero had no life other than the KGB, and this fact was



reflected in the amount and type of mourners that were at his funeral. Even the word mourners didn't apply as the attendees were all other agents or brass from the KGB, none of whom were overly fond of Cicero and attend the function more from propriety than any wish to pay final respects.

Ramon goes back to his office and reviews his upcoming meeting in his mind. Katrina, his secretary and part time mistress invites him for dinner and he accepts. He doesn't spend much time in his office and therefore hasn't become bored with her yet. There is no great love there either. He sleeps with her out of some enjoyment for certain but more out of his desire to have control over her as is the case with all the women with whom he becomes involved. He uses women as a means to an end and nothing more. He looks over the documents that he asked for from Bella and compares them to the same documents from another agent. They are identical, and he finally believes it is time to allow her to see her son. He is worried that if he waits much longer, he will lose the control he has over her. It is not enough to send occasional pictures and reports when what you ask for in return amounts to treason. After dinner and taking a bit of time to satisfy his secretary who is in love with him, he gets on a plane to see Adra and his son. He has only just begun to think of Nicky that way, not wanting to emotionally involve himself. The boy is three now, and for the first two years, he had no contact at all other than the episode during which he half drowned him in order to fully cement the position in which he put "Red Rose." After two years, the first visit had been stilted and the boy fearful, almost as though he knew and remembered the incident. Now, though the boy still reflects fear at first, he quickly conceals it again, and formally greets his father, shaking his hand like a little man. He is well beyond his years intellectually and often displays an intelligence that gives Ramon pride, although he would never admit to such a bourgeois feeling or connection to anyone. Nicky is already schooled to believe he is a child of the revolution and takes great pride in the plastic AK 47 that Ramon gives him.

When Bella manages to clear all of the security checks and balances she is put through to see Nicky, she also has a gift for him, but her gift is more in keeping with the kind of gift a mother would give a son. She presents him with a soccer ball and has him teach her how to play in order to break the ice with him somewhat. He has been told to call her Mamma and treat her with respect, and though nervous at first, he finds he likes this lady very much. Bella has a hard time not rushing to him and throwing her arms around him. He is such a serious young man and calling her Mamma has just the effect for which Ramon hoped. Now, she will be easy to control again. His layers of deception include making her believe he is in the same position she is, and he ensures her lunch is drugged so that he can remove Nicky from the situation and continue the charade.



Section 8, Pages 271 - 299

Section 8, Pages 271 - 299 Summary

When Isabella wakes, it takes her a moment to orient herself before she realizes Ramon is in the room with her. He signals her to be quiet, pointing to a microphone behind the painting, and another in the lamp. He takes her into the bathroom, opens all the taps, flushes the toilet and tells her he is in the same position as she is. He proclaims undying love, promising soon they will all be together again, kisses her and leaves her believing he is still the man she married. She pulls herself together, showers, and her escort from the airport tells her they must leave. She is told Nicky is already gone. At the terminal, she is given an envelope and is dumped at the entrance with her suitcase. Inside, she finds instructions asking her to report the stage of development the nuclear device at Armscor is at and the test site selected.

Isabella does not win the by election but reduces the Progressive Party's majority to only twelve hundred votes. It is considered a victory. Prime Minister Vorster offers to nominate her for a seat in the Senate. Her guilt surfaces and she fights it back while accepting the honor. She joins the family at Dragon's Fountain in Karoo after the Senate goes into recess. The sheep ranch is originally purchased by Shasa and the family gathers there yearly. This time she is paired with the only single man there who happens to be a nuclear physicist at Pelindaba. She ingratiates herself with him, makes plans to go riding and expresses great interest in his work, working a honey trap of her own and making the next three days a sexual torment for Aaron Friedman. Filled with lust he invites her to Johannesburg, and she goes the following month. After a romantic sexual interlude with him, he invites her for a tour of Pelindaba. She uses his birth date to fumble her way into his safe after he is gone and discovers that the first South African test of the atomic bomb will be done in less than two months. In the next file, she finds the location. She returns everything exactly as she found it. The test will be underground on the fringe of the Kalahari desert. Shasa's mining company owns the concessions on the land and does the drilling of the hole for the test, but before they can finish, Vorster calls Shasa in a panic and tells him they have been discovered. Several countries demand explanations for the project they refer to as Skylight. Shasa realizes they have a spy. He meets with the British government, allows them to inspect the site and insists it is oil prospecting being done. Things blow over and the South African government spends months trying to identify the traitor without success.

Section 8, Pages 271 - 299 Analysis

Isabella is once again completely fooled by Ramon. He uses her feelings for him to convince her that he is as desperate as she is to end the horrible situation they are facing. He makes her believe that he is as much a victim as she is and is being used to supply information as well, with Nicky as "their" security and leverage. He commiserates with her and professes his undying love for her, and then slips out again, claiming it is



too dangerous for him to stay any longer. It is a performance worthy of an Oscar, and Bella is left with renewed love for him and the courage and belief that they will one day be free of their captors. It is a cruel game that Ramon thoroughly enjoys.

Bella loses the by election, but her presence and intelligence wins her a senate position which she accepts gracefully, despite the guilt that she has a hard time swallowing. She is managing to accomplish the political success the KGB hoped she would and is in a position to gain even more information. Now she is asked to provide details regarding a nuclear project and luckily happens to meet a nuclear physicist at the yearly family gathering at Karoo. As soon as she realizes who he is, she turns on the charm, setting a honey trap of her own to lure him. She is successful, and at the end of three days, Aaron Friedman is completely ensnared, and Bella has an invitation to the nuclear facility and of course, Aaron's flat. She goes soon after and finds herself enjoying the sexual interlude after so long without male contact, but after Aaron leaves for the facility she immediately begins working on the combination to his safe. She uses his birth date, and guessing the year of his birth, she manages to open the safe on only her fourth attempt. Speed reading through the documents, she quickly acquaints herself with Project Skylight and its upcoming test and testing site.

Shasa's mining company owns the concessions to the land being used for the test and gets the contract to drill the hole. The project is going well until a phone call from Prime Minister Vorster dampens their enthusiasm. Their secret has become public knowledge, and a variety of countries are threatening action unless they are given access to inspect the drilling site. They refer to the project by name, and Shasa immediately knows that someone in their upper circle is a traitor. They manage to smooth things over, giving governments the grand tour of the drilling site and insisting it is being done for oil exploration. Once the storm has blown over, the South African Security Council spends months searching for the traitor in their midst. They finally settle on four Israeli scientists who have already left the country, and because no conclusive proof can be offered, the matter is dropped.



Section 9, Pages 299 - 342

Section 9, Pages 299 - 342 Summary

Isabella's reward for her information is two weeks of access to Nicky. She is taken to the airport where she boards a flight to an unknown destination. Ramon is promoted to General when his plan for abdication of Emperor Haile Selassie is successful. He attends a meeting of the council of ministers with Castro where Fidel smoothly explains Ramon's logic leading to Soviet domination throughout Angola, Ethiopia, and finally the continent of Africa. Ramon travels frequently, his reputation preceding him. He and Tabaka select a site at Chicamba as a base of operations for the ANC that they call Tercio. The site is so secure that Ramon adds his base of operations to the area. As time passes, Ramon realizes just how critical Red Rose is to their operations. With advance notice from her regarding political decisions, Castro is able to realize his vision of Communist rule.

After Haile Selassie is abdicated in Ethiopia, the Derg appoints and confirms General Aman Andom as President. The communist revolution, led by Ramon and Colonel Adebé, storms the palace and kills not only Andom but all who support him. Colonel Adebé is his immediate replacement as President, and the Red Terror flourishes. Tanks surround villages, rooting out all opposition and priests are disciplined and controlled via torturous means. The last of the opposition is Haile Selassie himself, and Ramon sends him into the afterlife personally. Afterward, he felt a sense of ecstasy unparalleled—he killed a king. Now his work in Ethiopia complete, Ramon returns to Tercio. After Tabaka brings him up to date, he has Adra and Nicky flown in. Nicholas is very self-contained until he spots Ramon, and then almost runs to him, but at the last moment controls his emotions, and Ramon is filled with emotion he has never before known. He returned the salutes of the men around him to Ramon's amusement and within a week he is a favorite at Tercio camp. Ramon is drawn to Nicholas more every day as he watches the child learn to drive, shoot and imitate his mannerisms. They swim, fish and when a call from Red Rose regarding Project Skylight comes and Ramon has to leave, he allows Adra and Nicky to stay at Tercio.

Section 9, Pages 299 - 342 Analysis

Ramon earns the promotion to General and it is unique in that he is not even Russian by birth. He has only had his naturalization papers for eight years, but having steered Ethiopia through the first stage of the revolution, he had the promotion coming. He seldom spends more than one night in one place, controlling several operations at one time. He and Tabaka choose Chicamba as a location for ANC headquarters; its seclusion so appeals to Ramon that he has his headquarters built there as well. After the abdication of Selassie, Ethiopia confirms Aman Andom as President, but he is not the Soviet choice. Ramon goes to Ethiopia and with the aid of Colonel Adebé, they overthrow the palace and eliminate Andom and all who support him. Adebé is given the



presidency with Soviet support, and Ramon stays until all supporters of the previous government are dead. Many are tortured and left as public spectacles to convince the locals that no revolutions against them will be tolerated. The last stage of governmental overthrow is the elimination of Haile Selassie himself, and Ramon volunteers for that job much to Adeb's relief. Ramon takes great pleasure in this task, relishing the fact that he personally killed a king.

With the new government securely in place, Ramon returns to the Tercio base at Chicamba where Tabaka fills him in on the latest updates. His next course of action is to have Adra and Nicholas flown in, and he hardly wants to admit to himself how much he is looking forward to seeing Nicholas. When they get off the plane together, Nicholas walks in front of Adra, a young man now and no longer holding her hand. He is confident and curious about his surroundings, and Ramon enjoys surreptitiously watching him for a few minutes. When Nicholas spots him, his smile is large and he breaks into a run but then controls himself and walks the remaining distance to Ramon, shaking his hand like a man. Ramon is fairly bursting with pride as he watches his son return the salutes of the soldiers as they pass and enjoys the questions the boy asks him. When Nicholas encounters no impatience in response to his curiosity, he relaxes even more. Soon he is the favorite of the camp. He learns how to drive, can instruct others how to take apart and reassemble an AK47, can shoot and hit a target better than half the time, and enjoys fishing and swimming with his father. When Ramon gets a message from Red Rose that will force him to leave for a while, Nicholas tries to hide his disappointment. He asks Ramon if he will be coming back, and his father assures him he will. This time Adra and Nicky will stay in Tercio while Ramon is gone. Ramon is discovering feelings he has never had before. He does not identify those feelings as love exactly, but he is aware that his heart is involved, especially when he finds himself putting his arm around Nicky and even taking his hand on occasion. The best part of it all is that Nicky trusts him, and seems to enjoy his company. He no longer pulls away or hesitates in his presence. Though he knows he has to leave, he already looks forward to returning.



Section 10, Pages 342 - 389

Section 10, Pages 342 - 389 Summary

Though Project Skylight is important, Ramon has a bigger agenda. He suggests that instead they allow the American media to do their work for them. By giving the press only small details, they can create a feeding frenzy that serves their needs. Ramon wrestles with his feelings for Nicky, telling himself that if necessary he has to be willing to sacrifice his boy for the cause. He decides the next visit Bella gets with Nicky will be at Tercio. She is allowed two weeks with Nicky and though distant at first, Nicky warms quickly. Bella's joy is tempered by Nicky's talk of the revolution and his familiarity with an AK47. Adra is unfriendly until one evening she whispers that Ramon will come to see her soon. He shows up on her last night, reinforcing that he is in the same boat as she is. He promises to help her get Nicky out. Nicky drives her to the airport the next morning, and Bella hears the soldiers refer to him as the true cub of the fox, El Zorro. Nicky offers her his hand at the airport, but she bends down and hugs him to his extreme humiliation.

Bella goes with Garry and Shasa to Chizora to see Sean who is out with his most prized client. When Shasa returns, he lashes out with a vengeance at Garry for scaring off a large bull elephant for which they had spent days setting up. Garry apologizes, but Sean taunts him until a fight ensues. Shasa understands that it has been coming for better than twenty years. At first, Sean seems to be stronger, but that changes and before long, Garry has the advantage. Garry locks Sean in a bear hug until the rest can hear Sean's ribs cracking before Garry lets Sean up insisting that from on Sean will behave himself. Later Bella ministers to Garry's wounds and the two nurses that travel with Sean's client, Otto, are happy to address Sean's injuries. Sean understands that he will never be able to seriously challenge Garry again and so responds by sending the two nurses into Garry's tent after he's long asleep. Garry doesn't wake immediately, but when he does, it is to the caresses of the two women. Garry takes one under each arm, and when Isabella and Shasa emerge from their tents, he invites them to report the events to Holly as he throws them into the cold water. Then next morning when Sean comes to the table, Garry is sitting in his seat at the head. He asks Sean to get him a coffee while he's up, and in the silence Sean smiles and does so. Then, as if nothing has happened, Garry asks him about Elsa Pignatelli - a wealthy and influential Italian woman who sympathizes with the South African government. Sean is bringing her to Karoo to hunt, where Garry will approach her regarding patents that the Courtney corporation covets. When Shasa takes Isabella back to town, she pumps him for information about Isabella, always looking for intelligence to forward for more favors with Nicky. He tells her that only four people know of this meeting that involves nerve gas developed by Elsa's chemical company. Code named Cyndex 25, the gas is odorless and fast acting, but unstable, having a shelf life of only six months. They hope to secure the formula for Capricorn Chemicals - a Courtney corporation.



Section 10, Pages 342 - 389 Analysis

Ramon has a larger view of the political and economic states of the world than most. His vision, shared with those in power around him, is usually well received and accepted. He prefers to think of himself as untouchable and in complete control of his every emotion, but that isn't entirely the case anymore which bothers him. He finds himself having feelings for his son Nicky that include pride and parental connections that could be called love, although he would never refer to them that way; Ramon even looks forward to upcoming time with Nicky. He is not used to these feelings and has always considered them to be bourgeois and weak minded. Now he wrestles with them himself. It goes against his vision of the all powerful self that he has created. All the women in his life have been tools and a means to an end. He has always looked down on those who can be manipulated through emotion and now finds himself in a similar situation, realizing at the same time that if it comes down to it, he might have to sacrifice Nicky to the cause. Suddenly, he is not as okay with that as he once was. It unnerves and unmans him to the point where he becomes angry with himself.

The Courtney family gathers at Chizora for their once a year usual retreat and witness a long standing undercurrent finally come to the surface. Sean, though the elder son who runs a successful business, has long harbored a jealousy for his younger brother Garry. Garry managed to take the seat at the head of the Courtney empire, and Sean believed it should have gone to him. Indeed it would have, had Sean not behaved so badly in his youth. To avoid arrest, Shasa pulled strings and sent him out of South Africa for a time, and during that time, Garry shed the family's image of him as "poor" Garry. He worked on his body to build up his scrawny frame and worked on his mind until he became a business force with which to be reckoned. Now, heading the Courtney empire, he has the power Sean covets, and this family gathering brings it to a head. Sean finds a fault in Garry's arrival and exploits it, goading Garry with everything he can until finally Garry lunges for him. They scrap to Bella's horror, but Shasa sits back and allows it to happen, knowing it is necessary for both of them. When the brawl is over, Sean is the one who is put down and forced to conceded. He tries to get the upper hand one more time by encouraging two nurses to sneak into Garry's tent and encourage him to be unfaithful to Holly. When Garry wakes to the two women in his bed, he dumps them into the cold water. The next morning, Sean rises to find Garry at the head of the table with a new attitude, and it is clear to all that Sean has been dethroned. Sean graciously admits his defeat and the family breathes again.

The two brothers begin discussing business which Isabella wishes she could hear. She finds out that there is to be a meeting with Elsa Pignatelli and prods Shasa expertly for information about the woman. She discovers that very few know about the meeting and the secrecy is valid. The meeting is to secure the patent and formula for a chemical weapon code named Cyndex 25. This is information that her "handlers" will appreciate, and though she feels a stab of guilt, she pries further and deeper anyway.



Section 11, Pages 389 - 428

Section 11, Pages 389 - 428 Summary

Shasa watches Sean fly in with Elsa Pignatelli and is immediately taken with her. Trackers discuss the hunt Sean has planned, but she defers to the meeting arranged by sending Bella out with Sean to check the leopard baits, while Garry, Shasa and Elsa discuss Cyndex 25. Elsa has misgivings about control of the manufacturing. She slowly excludes Garry from the conversation, focusing her attention on Shasa so Garry tactfully withdraws. When Sean returns at lunch, he announces the leopard has fed again, but Garry convinces Sean he is about to come down with a terrible case of malaria so their father will have to take Elsa on the hunt. It takes a moment, but finally Sean clues in and agrees to set it up. Later, Garry tells Shasa that Sean is too sick to hunt and asks his father to go instead. Elsa and Shasa sit close together on camp chairs with rugs on their laps. They hold hands waiting for the leopard to come. He arrives after dark and they hear it, but can't see it so they quietly wait until daybreak. To their fortune, the leopard is still in the tree. Elsa aims, and watches as the leopard stretches, and jumps down. The animal is so beautiful that she can't pull the trigger. Shasa immediately understands. After cleaning up and having breakfast, Shasa and Elsa tell the others of their intention to fly to Victoria Falls for a few days.

Visible from sixty miles away, Victoria Falls rises two-thousand feet from the ground. Shasa banks the Beechcraft to give Elsa the best view he can before landing and checking into the Livingstone Suite at the hotel. The next four days are like a honeymoon. They talk about everything, dance, and share with honesty that is seldom found. Both feel the time is too short, but Sir Clarence Van Wyk is due at Chizora for which they must return. They are a formidable business group, each with their own strengths and advantages in negotiation. That night they hunt doves, shooting competitively in pairs, and once they are done, Elsa's mind is made up. She tells Shasa she has decided to trust them with the Cyndex 25 with the condition that Shasa come personally to her home in Lausanne to finalize the details. The helicopter that is to pick them up is delayed due to terrorist action and Sean is asked to join the Scouts in hot pursuit. He and a Ndorobo tracker, Matatu, hurry to the chopper while the rest decide to ferry back in the Beechcraft instead.

Section 11, Pages 389 - 428 Analysis

Shasa has been a bachelor for some time by choice, but he is immediately taken with Elsa. In so many ways they compliment each other that it is clear to anyone watching that love is blossoming - even before they realize it themselves. Garry sees it and quickly fades from the meeting, understanding that his presence simply isn't necessary or wanted. Sean is a bit slower to catch on, but Garry makes it clear to him that he should leave Shasa and Elsa alone, even orchestrating a phony case of malaria so Shasa will be the one to take Elsa leopard hunting instead of Sean. His efforts to give



them privacy are appreciated, and they draw even closer as they sit throughout the long night side by side in the wilderness. By the first light of dawn, the feelings generated from this interlude are so strong that Elsa is unable to shoot the leopard they are hunting, despite its appearance and availability. Shasa understands her inability to kill something at this time, the evening having meant so much that capping it with the termination of such a beautiful creature would have seemed sacrilege. They make arrangements to spend a few days at Victoria Falls and fly out that afternoon, and again Sean is restrained by Garry from voicing his disappointment where the leopard is concerned.

The time at Victoria Falls is one of openness and honesty and exploration after which they both realize that they have something on which a foundation could be built. They share their pasts, their present and their future hopes with the kind of attentive devotion usually seen in newlyweds, and four days later they are still reluctant to return to Chizora, but it is time to return to the business that brought them together. Garry is correct in assuming that leaving Shasa and Elsa alone will pave the way through the negotiations for the blueprints for Cyndex 25, as the trust that develops between them is the key to unlocking the deal. Isabella watches Shasa, Elsa, Garry, and Sir Clarence while they discuss the ins and outs of the deal, each with their own peculiar, though effective styles, and she marvels at them all for their ability to negotiate so effectively with such large sums and important contents. Elsa uses her beauty and sexuality, exploiting her looks and charms; Sir Clarence is well mannered and suave while unyielding with consummate timing; Garry uses his hearty laugh and almost bumbling myopic nature to conceal a calculating business mind sharp as steel; and Shasa sits aloof, allowing Garry to do most of the bargaining but able to contribute comments that often result in equitable compromise when log jams are reached. Isabelle is awed by the intensity of the minds at the table.

Sir Clarence is a lady's man who avidly pursues Isabella, and though she knows he is married, he admits his wife is out of town. After allowing him to chase her for a while, she agrees to clandestinely go to his ranch to see his Arab stallion when he invites her. The truth is more that Bella has been alone for some time and craves the companionship that will not have the complications of pursuit afterward. Elsa decides to release the patents and blueprints for Cyndex 25, asking only that Shasa come to her home to personally see to the details which is a condition he has no trouble adhering to.

The meetings complete, the group is waiting for the helicopter to return them to their various destinations, and when it is late, Sean becomes concerned. A radio message confirms his suspicions that the helicopter is being rerouted to chase a terrorist cell, and as a Ballantyne Scout himself, Sean's presence is requested. Along with his Ndorobo tracker, Matatu, Sean eagerly boards the chopper when it arrives, as always thrilling to the chase and enjoying the adrenaline rush that danger brings. The rest of the group is left to return in the Beechcraft.



Section 12, Pages 428 - 461

Section 12, Pages 428 - 461 Summary

Ten scouts are in the helicopter, half are loyal Matabele. Sean knows them all and to them he and Matatu are living legends. Roland Ballantyne, founder of the Scouts, tries often to get Sean to commit as his second in command to no avail. Sean and Matatu drop to the ground first and pick up the spoor of five of the twenty terrorists of whom they are in pursuit. They meet with the regiment giving chase and learn the direction, then board the helicopter again to cut the fleeing terrorists off. Matatu uses his legendary senses to interpret their direction, guiding the Scouts and the helicopter in the right direction. In fifteen minutes, Matatu gains them eight hours. They fly on again, leaving four men to follow. The next landing zone is more difficult, but they follow Matatu's lead. Within moments of landing, they are taking fire though there was only a million to one chance that they were within five miles of a terrorist. One scout is hit, and Ballantyne himself is almost killed, but Sean shouts a warning, saving his life.

Shasa takes Elsa marlin fishing off the toe of the island of Mauritius. After two hours, they are still without a bonito for bait. Finally, Elsa offers to weave a spell, and to Sean's amazement, it works. He hooks the bonito carefully through the eyes and releases it. In no time, the bonito is found and eaten. For four hours, Shasa in tandem with the crew of Le Bonheur wear down a great marlin but in the end the rod breaks and the huge fish is free even though it is too tired to swim away. The crew is ready to gaff it, but Shasa won't let them. The fish won. The boat backs up to the fish and Shasa strokes it gently applauding its victory while it slowly regains its wits. They return to shore, Shasa still nursing the wounds created by the battle with the huge marlin. As they drive up to the House of the Trade Winds, Shasa's home for many years in Mauritius, they notice the rest of the group is already there, ready to attend the conference between Capricorn Chemical Industries and the technical representatives of Pignatelli. Most of the family gathers for this affair. Holly tells Garry that she and the children hardly get to see him, so he suggests they come along and Centaine decides to join them when she becomes aware that her grandchildren will be there. Isabella is there in her capacity on the board of directors of Capricorn Chemicals and the house is filled to bursting. It is a frivolous affair when Shasa and Elsa come down, and Centaine, once introduced to Elsa, is pleased with Shasa's choice despite the length of time it took him.

Section 12, Pages 428 - 461 Analysis

Sean and Matatu join the Ballantyne Scouts and are greeted with almost reverent awe. They are well known for their ability to track anything over any terrain and mostly invisible trails to all others. Matatu hangs out the door of the helicopter, biting back his fear of flying to find the trail the terrorists are on; he manages to do so with accuracy despite how far in the air they are. It is a skill that the Scout's founder, Roland, would love to exploit further, and he repeatedly tries to engage Sean as his second in



command, but Sean loves the action and loathes the idea of responsibility. He is a free spirit who is used to working on his own; as Roland's second in command he would be back in the position of having to take orders from someone else. The way things are now, the Scouts put out a call to him when they really need him, and he and Matatu come in and enjoy complete autonomy while the entire force of Scouts defers to their ability. Sean holds Matatu who leads them along the trail from the air, putting them down in a spot that gains them hours just long enough to confirm the trail before taking to the air again. Shaking with anticipation, the second time Matatu puts them down it is almost on top of the terrorists they are seeking; once on the ground, Sean is almost ready to concede that Matatu missed this time when they begin taking on fire. Again, the tracker's skill baffles even Sean.

Shasa and Elsa spend more and more time together. He takes her marlin fishing, using the same Captain and crew that he always uses, and she loves to watch him assert his manhood. They are a perfect fit, and the more time they are together, the closer they become. They fish for a bonito first, to use as bait, and when nothing seems to work, Elsa laughingly offers to weave a spell to enchant the bonito to their boat. Shasa is only laughing for a short time as they manage to land a bonito shortly after Elsa uses lipstick to draw on his chest while solemnly voicing an incantation. Their relaxed and obviously close relationship does not go unnoticed by the rest of the family when they gather for the conference regarding the Cyndex 25 proposal. They go to great pains to maintain a semblance of propriety by keeping separate rooms in the House of the Trade Winds, but the rooms are connecting, and they are seldom apart. Elsa bathes the injuries Sean suffers while fighting the great marlin he hooked and lost, and when they go down to greet everyone, even Garry cracks quiet jokes to those in hearing range regarding the depth of their relationship. Centaine, who is usually the most difficult to please where her family is concerned, is immediately taken with Elsa and approves of her son's choice in women, despite the length of time it took him to find her. She is obviously worth the wait.

Bella has managed to be at this conference as well because of her seat on the board of directors of Capricorn Chemicals - a seat she worked her way into so that she could glean more information for the people holding her son hostage. She is outwardly pleasant and even flirts with one of the men also attending, but underneath her facade is a frightened and confused woman who suffers at the hands of a shadowy villain who controls her life. She reminds herself over and over that she has to take this one day at a time.



Section 13, Pages 461 -502

Section 13, Pages 461 -502 Summary

Bella sits at the conference, careful to maintain a neutral appearance lest the rest see the revulsion on her face. It takes considerable effort. Production of the entire plant will cost the same as a single Harrier jet, and to make enough Cyndex to guarantee the safety of the country for an entire year will cost the equivalent of fifty air to air missiles. That anyone can joke about the horrific details is beyond her. As no human testing had ever been done, questions are raised as to how symptoms can be so accurately projected, but a scientist assures them that testing on Chimpanzees was done and extrapolated. When the suggestion is made that in Africa they have an inexhaustible supply of Chacma baboons indigenous to the area, Bella's outburst is immediate. Garry breaks in to silence Bella's outburst by mentioning how baboons have attacked their newborn lambs at Camdeboo, adding that they aren't his favorite animal, and everyone nods in agreement. Bella is told she can withdraw from the project if she is too offended. She is repulsed by Garry's enthusiastic approval but manages to keep her seat on the board. At the end of the conference, all documents and dossiers are shredded, including the few notes Isabella made. Three days after arriving in Cape Town, she sends a dispatch as Red Rose to London and is given instructions to ensure that she become part of the recruiting team. Then, she is to be sure Benjamin Afrika is hired. He is well qualified, and Bella manages to do as they ask. At first she didn't place the name, but when she sees him Bella realizes that he is her half brother. She meets in secret with him after his interview and warns him they can't ever admit knowing each other because of the animosity on her side of the family where he is concerned. He agrees.

When in Johannesburg, Isabelle spends much time in the house Holly created for the family. She is promised access to Nicky again as soon as she can report that successful tests have been done with Cyndex. Along with many other dignitaries, she attends the first test conducted on four infant baboons. Isabelle is horrified by what she sees and is hardly able to swallow her bile in the three minutes and eight seconds it takes to kill three of the four subjects - the fourth being the only one in a protective suit. She leaves the observation room, throws up, and leaves the plant without seeing anyone or returning to Holly and Garry's. The following day an urgent call comes in from Weltevreden asking Bella and Garry to come home immediately - a matter of life and death. When they arrive, Bella sees that her scrapbook with photos and details of Ramon and Nicky is on Shasa's desk and he and Centaine want answers. At first she insists that their action will kill Nicky and Ramon, but then they show photo after photo with Ramon in uniform at Castro's side, and her fear turns to anger. Without questioning her loyalty or the price she paid to keep Nicky alive, they group together and begin to formulate strategies to bring Nicky home. They send for Sean who immediately takes over the planning, while the rest each have their positions of support and logistics. For the first time in years, Bella feels hope.



Section 13, Pages 461 -502 Analysis

Isabella continues a dedicated effort as Red Rose to gather enough information to earn time with Nicky again. She manages to get close to the action because of her seat on the board of directors at Capricorn Chemicals and sends off information that includes the strengths and projection of Cyndex 25. She is told to make sure her half brother Benjamin Afrika be hired in the new plant and is told if she provides confirmation of the first tests, she will get access to Nicky again. It is not only nerve racking to spy on her own family and government but goes against her own nature to watch the testing where young baboons are used as testing agents. Before she can report on its success/effectiveness, she and Garry get an emergency call to return to Weltereden. When they get there, Bella learns her secret is out. Centaine and Shasa know all about Nicky and Ramon, and in fact know much more than she does. Shasa has done some digging and informs her that Ramon has been pulling the strings from the very beginning. He proves it to her with photographs of Ramon in uniform and a dossier of his accomplishments. Her fear for them turns to hatred for Ramon and fear for Nicky's safety. Now the focus is on how to rescue Nicky from Ramon and bring him home. For the first time in years, Bella dares to be hopeful, and tells them everything she can remember about the last time she saw them. From the time it took to get there, they can extrapolate the distance and have a rough idea of where the base called Tercio is.

They don't spend any time questioning Bella as to her part in the information she passed along, though they know that she did, and instead, they formulate plans to confirm Nicky's location and how to get him back. Bella's relief is obvious.



Section 14, Pages 502 - 528

Section 14, Pages 502 - 528 Summary

Eleven days after Bella's report is sent regarding the Cyndex tests, she is granted another visit with Nicky. The members of the Courtney family pull together quickly, hiding a transponder in a bicycle pump for Nicky; they remove nets and fishing gear from the Lancer and equip it for the upcoming rescue mission and arrange the coordination of Garry in the Lear jet and Sean on the trawler with twenty hand-picked Ballantyne Scouts. The day arrives and Bella boards a flight while Sean goes over the last minute details aboard the Lancer. Bella spots Nicky as soon as the plane taxis in. He runs to her but then controls himself and shakes her hand while she hands out cigarettes to the guards. The atmosphere is more relaxed. They spend the next two days swimming and playing, laughing and telling jokes, and on Monday night Bella turns on the transponder in the pump, hearing it click inside. Nicky comes to bed, shyly hugs her, telling her he loves her before showing embarrassment and climbing into bed.

Shasa and Garry in the Lear jet fly over the Lancer's position and check in with them. There is still no sign of Bella's signal. They are picked up on radar before they see her signal and radioed that they are in restricted airspace. Shasa gives them a story about engine malfunctions but they don't believe it. MiG's are launched and radar is locked on. They hear the MiG's requesting weapons-free just as they pick up Bella's signal about six kilometers ahead at the mouth of the Chicamba river. Garry rolls the Lear into a dive and Shasa worries the wings will sheer, but Garry knows if he can't reach the thunderstorm, the MiG's will shoot them down. Convinced the MiG's won't follow them into the storm, Garry continues the death dive, and then visibility is gone as they reach the cloud mass. The Lear struggles to stay in the air but Garry's plan works. The MiG's report the target is destroyed and Garry is able to call the Lancer and report Bella's position. Their job is over and they return to Windhoek Airport. Garry walks around the Lear and is stunned to see a yellow ATOLL air to air missile buried in the fuselage that failed to detonate.

Sean and his Scouts plan to engage the "enemy" at two in the morning when everyone's guard is at their lowest. He gives them all last minute instructions and collects their personal belongings from them. With night scopes they work their way to the beach and head for the communications hut first. One of the Scouts is trained with a slingshot and takes out the patrolling guard with a steel ball-bearing, cleanly and quietly. They cut the wire but before they reach the hut, a woman screams. Gunfire erupts and combat begins.

Section 14, Pages 502 - 528 Analysis

Isabella is ashamed of herself for not having trusted her family earlier. Right from the beginning she should have told them, she realizes and is amazed and filled with love for



them as she watches them plan Nicky's rescue without a single recrimination. No one has asked yet about the depth of her deceptions, but Bella is only too aware of them. She tearfully tells her father that she has done terrible things, but he puts that aside telling her they will deal with all of that when his grandson is home with her and they are both safe. Again she marvels at their capacity to give and to pull together for her, feeling more loved than she has in a long time. When she gets the message that a visit has been approved, she knows that soon Nicky will be home with her, and she is both nervous and elated at the same time. She boards the flight they arrange for her, and as usual another flight takes her to the compound. Nicky is waiting in a jeep with a driver and reveals his joy at seeing her but still restrains himself from hugging her. His upbringing has discouraged all displays of emotion, and he struggles to contain his enthusiasm when he shakes her hand. Bella asks Adra if Ramon is in the compound, and Adra tells her that he will be there soon and he sends his love. Bella fears that she will not be able to maintain the facade if he comes, knowing now who he really is. She hopes her rescuers come first.

The Ballantyne Scouts are aboard the Lancer and chomping at the bit to get going. Sitting around is nerve racking, and they are glad when Sean arrives and they know they are leaving. He briefs them again, and they sail while Shasa and Garry fly out in the Lear jet to mark Bella's position. As is expected, they encounter resistance, and are told to leave the restricted airspace they are flying through, but Garry manages to pull off a daring and nerve shaking dive that takes them into a thundercloud. The MiG's on their tail fire their air to air missiles, but Garry manages to lose them in the storm and the MiG's report that they have been destroyed. When they get back on the ground, they discover a missile buried in the fuselage of the Lear; both Garry and Shasa are intensely aware of how fortunate they were that it didn't detonate or they would have been shot down as reported.

Sean receives the coordinates from Garry and the Lancer takes them quietly to the mouth of the river. From there, they go in - eager to engage the enemy. Sean reminds them that the hostages they are retrieving are his sister and nephew to underline the importance of their survival, and then relieves them of their personal possessions so that nothing can be traced back. Sean lives for this kind of thrill and excitement, as do the rest of the men he has with him.



Section 15, Pages 528 - 576

Section 15, Pages 528 - 576 Summary

Adra tells Isabella that Ramon will come that night. She cringes, and tries not to show the revulsion she feels at the idea. Adra slips out and Bella knows she can't prepare in any way for Sean should they come this evening. She prays Sean will reach her before Ramon does, but not too long afterward, she smells Ramon in the hut. He comes to her, and she desperately tries not to show her true feelings as he reaches for her, telling her the same lies he always does and promises her they will be together soon. She knows the truth, but part of her still wishes it was real. He makes love to her, and her body betrays her by responding. He falls asleep on top of her and wakes when he hears the first scream and the sound of gunfire. Bella hears Sean call out, and she responds, telling him she is not alone and that Ramon is armed. He grabs her, and using her as a shield he makes his escape, telling Sean he'll kill Bella if he doesn't call off his men. Sean does as requested but follows trying to get a clean shot as Ramon collects Nicky and Adra, telling them to stay close to him. Adra stumbles and is shot dead. Ramon gets Bella and Nicky into a jeep and drives towards the encampment where Raleigh has reinforcements. Before they reach the point where Sean's ambush is set, Bella manages to grab the wheel, and they end up in the water. Sean jumps in, saves Bella and Nicky, but Ramon eludes him. Ramon hides at the river mouth, holding on to a mangrove tree as Sean and his men go back to the Lancer. Ramon is livid, feeling the loss of his son, and vowing this will not be the end.

He tells Raleigh that he will take control of the Cyndex program and Raleigh doesn't like it. At the same time, Shasa sits with the family at Weltevreden and questions Bella as to the extent of her deception. She confesses, telling them of the information she has shared and the threatening video they showed her of Nicky. When she tells them of hiring Ben Afrika, even Centaine pales, knowing who he is right away. Shasa calls the plant to have him arrested but discovers Ben has not been there in four days. Shasa has them check the inventory, and Bella tells them about the day she went to see Michael and Ben showed up with another man. Their plan becomes obvious when it is confirmed that ten kilos of Cyndex 25 are missing. They are convinced Michael is going to use his plane to distribute the Cyndex during The Rand Easter Show, which attracts more than two-hundred-thousand people. Sean immediately heads to Michael's and sees both Ben and Ramon there. He tries to shoot Ramon who uses Ben as a shield before throwing down his lifeless body and getting into the plane with Michael. They manage to get off the ground, but Sean calls Garry to intercept them in the air. Before they can reach the Easter show, they are forced down and Michael is killed instantly. Ramon is trapped in the wreckage and becomes a victim of the gas he intended to use on everyone else. His death is without mercy.

Shasa and Elsa are married, and Isabella, contritely does her penance to show appreciation to the family that rescued her and Nicky and then covered for her. Her life will be dedicated to making amends. She watches as Nicky plays with the puppy



Centaine gave him from her champion, Dandy Lass's last litter. Nicky names her Twenty-six after his former companion. Centaine tells him stories of her history, and slowly his mind heals.

Section 15, Pages 528 - 576 Analysis

Bella's visit this time to Nicky is much less guarded than previous visits have been. While her luggage is still searched, she has no trouble with the bicycle pump containing the transponder, and there is no strip search. She tries to hide her nervousness and maintain normal outward appearances, but she wrestles with whether or not to tell Adra and invite her to come with them. She is the woman who raised her son, and Bella is only too aware of the misery that separation can bring. When she finally works up her courage and finds a moment to approach her, Adra misinterprets her and instead reassures her that Ramon loves her and will come soon. Bella tries not to show her revulsion at the thought and prays that Sean will reach them before Ramon shows up. She has turned on the transponder and listens for any activity but now can't prepare the way she'd hoped by keeping herself fully dressed under her night clothes. She smells Ramon before she hears or sees him and steels herself for contact with him. She's afraid to speak, knowing he is intuitive enough that her voice will give her away. He gives her the same story, the difference this time being that she knows it is all lies and makes love to her. She is appalled that her body still responds, and he falls asleep with her.

Sean and his team of Scouts are heard soon after and Ramon springs out of bed and grabs his weapon. Sean calls out to Bella, who warns him of Ramon's presence with her and his weapon. Ramon is rigid with anger as he grabs her and uses her as a shield to get to Nicky's tent where Adra and the boy increase his safety by huddling around him as he runs for a jeep. He warns Sean that he will kill Bella, so the Scouts back off at Sean's command, knowing it is his family with whom they are dealing. Ramon almost gets away, but first Adra is killed when she stumbles and makes a clear target of herself. Bella grabs the wheel and the Jeep careens into the water. She and Nicky are rescued by Sean, though Nicky struggles and bites Sean, screaming for his father. Sean is unable to keep track of Ramon, who escapes but vows that he will not let this rest.

Once Sean, the Scouts, Bella and Nicky are back on the Lancer, Ramon finds Raleigh and informs him that he is taking over the Cyndex project. Raleigh is unhappy that Ramon would step in at this stage but knows he can do nothing to stop it. Now that Bella and Nicky are safe, Bella is questioned as to the depth of her deceptions. She is honest and forthcoming, and while most of what she has shared doesn't surprise them, the hiring of Ben Afrika does. Centaine knows who he is immediately and pales at the thought that he has had access to the nerve gas. Shasa calls the plant and at first it seems as though everything is alright, but a check of the contents of the containers reveals that a considerable amount of Cyndex 25 is missing. Bella adds to their distress when she tells them about the day she saw Ben and another man going to meet with Michael.



Sean heads to Michael's and finds both Ben and Ramon with him when he arrives. He hides outside, and when Ramon comes out, he shoots, but Ramon pulls Ben in front of him so that Ben takes the shots instead. With Ben dying, Ramon drops him and runs back into the hangar. He and Michael manage to take off, although Michael is having second thoughts. Sean gets Garry into the air to help force them down, and Garry still gives Michael a chance to land, promising to help him if he does, but Ramon has such a strong hold over Michael that he only hesitates a moment before telling Garry he is committed. Garry forces Michael's plane down, killing him instantly, but Ramon survives the crash only to be killed by the gas he had planned to disperse. It is a more painful death than Ramon ever imagined.

Centaine and Shasa decide not to turn Bella in for her treasonous behavior and she in return will devote the rest of her life to proving they made the right choice. Nicky is slowly healing, learning English, and warming to the family who loves and rescued him. It is a slow process, but Centaine is patient and she sees improvement in him. Shasa finally decides to marry Elsa and his choice is met with much approval and enthusiasm by all.



Characters

Isabella Courtney

Isabell is tall and well tanned giving her a look of excellent health. Her figure is lithe and confident in her appearance; she wears the short skirts that are the fashion of the time. Her spirit is one that comes across as wild and free and easily attracts the attention of those around her. Her hair is dark, highlighted with ruby tones that catch the sunlight. She likes to wear it piled on top of her head, accentuating the line of her neck in elegance and grace. The hair is healthy with long tresses that curl in coils when released. She is athletic at twenty four years of age and carries herself with an air of self assurance and resilience. She has the trademark Courtney eyes, so blue that they are somewhere between cornflower and sapphire in color and a standout feature of which she is well aware. Her friends call her Bella, and she is a romantic at heart but still has the spoiled attitude of a child who has always been indulged.

She drives a brand new 1969 Mini-Cooper that was a gift from her father on her birthday and then customized to her tastes including white Connolly leather and a silver glitter paint job that matches her father's new Aston Martin. Her initials are gold leafed on the door and its engine is also souped up allowing her to drive with occasional reckless abandon.

Shasa Courtney, her father, invited Bella to join him in London at the age of twenty one to be his official embassy hostess, and in just three years she had built up a reputation making her invitations sought after in diplomatic circles.

Ramon de Santiago y Machado

Soft spoken, Ramon has wavy, dark thick hair that he wears in a medium length. He is obviously strong, with striking green eyes that are remarkably clear but have a deadly undercurrent about them. Ramon despises his origins and only uses his title and blood lines to get what he wants. He is in peak physical condition with a flat belly and well-defined form. He considers his appearance to be little more than a tool for his many operations and has no vanity beyond that.

Ramon was born in Spain to a Cuban mother who was an aunt of Fidel Castro's. As a child, he attended exclusive prep schools where he learns to speak English like a native. He has superior academic skills. His mother dies in police custody in Havana when Ramon is only fourteen, and his father dies in the same prison shortly afterward from bad conditions and a broken heart. Ramon inherits little more than the title of Marques and is taken in by the Castro family. Fidel recognizes the potential in his protege, and sends him to America to study political history and social anthropology at the University of Florida. While there he infiltrates a group of Cuban exiles and is largely responsible for passing on the information crucial to the defense of the Bay of Pigs. By



the age of seventeen, he has earned the nickname of the Golden Fox for his ability to set and execute a honey trap. His talents are well known by both sides by the time he graduates cum laude and returns to Havana. From there, he is sent to Moscow with Castro's blessing to further his training and is indoctrinated into the KGB.

Ramon is able to ride exceptionally well, fly fish proficiently, and is an awesome shot when it comes to hunting partridge. He is the complete package. He is handsome, can shoot, ride, sing, dance, and has proven his valor with Castro.

Shasa Courtney

Father to Isabella Courtney, Shasa is as handsome as he is wealthy and confident. Shasa wears an eye patch over his left eye which he lost flying against the Italians in Abyssinia giving him the air of a dashing pirate. Shasa is a shrewd business man, who knows how to use his charm and strength of presence to advance his political career. His efforts are noticed by the current prime minister, John Vorster, taking the sting out of his mistake made backing the wrong man in the last election. Still not much past the age of fifty, Shasa feels he has a lot more to do in life. The prime minister gives him the onerous task of heading up Armscor, which will challenge his time and energy.

As the head of this large family of self-possessed children who are now all powerful adults in their own right, Shasa has much of which to be proud. His daughter is a Senator in the Upper House, having earned her seat with hard work and intelligent ideas; Sean is an excellent hunter, pilot and business man who runs a wilderness hunting camp known throughout the world; Garry succeeds him in business with a mind that is always sharp and an eye toward good business sense that often surpasses his own, and Michael is an assistant Editor and writer for one of the many smaller businesses they own, and is politically sharp while maintaining a kind and caring demeanor and a love for the people and the land that shows in all he does. Shasa has much about which to brag. He still has a hand in business, though he allows Garry free rein to run the corporation and has no worries about Garry's capabilities in that area.

He is far from retiring himself. Shasa still wears many hats. He is in charge of Armscor - an armaments corporation developing weapons of last resort and is entrusted with ensuring the nation has every means to protect itself and deciding which of those are morally acceptable. He spent three years as the South African Ambassador in London and then returned to chair Armscor and still retains his seat on the Courtney board of trust, of course. He is sharp witted and confident with the intelligence to know when to exercise power and when to merely enjoy it. Down deep, he remains a family man, devoted to them all and especially to his mother, Centaine.

Sean Courtney

The eldest of the three Courtney boys, Sean takes after his father Shasa, inheriting his adventurers spirit. Very handsome, he is a soldier who was decorated with the Silver Cross for his bravery in Rhodesia's bush war. When his time tracking down terrorists is



done, he spends his time as a skilled hunter in a concession he owns in the Zambezi valley. Skilled in everything he does, Sean is a success no matter what arena he chooses. He has a quick and sharp mind and is dedicated and honorable. Combining this with his self-made wealth and god like appearance, he is every bit the "eligible bachelor."

Sean is extremely self possessed, but underneath his aura of confidence, he harbors an intense jealousy for his younger brother Garry. Having been wilder in his youth, Sean found himself at odds with the law more than once, and though his father manages to keep him from going to jail, he still forfeits his position as the successor to the family conglomerate of businesses. This position falls to his younger brother, Garry, who after years of teasing and not always well-intended harassment from Sean, built himself up physically and mentally. He not only lost the image his family held of him as "poor Garry" but gained their respect and trust - all excepting Sean who resented his climb to the top of the family fortune. It wasn't the money Sean coveted, but the position of power; after years of silent resentment, it all comes to blows at a family gathering in Karoo. Sean goads Garry as he has always done, resorting to childhood taunts until Garry finally reveals his inner and outer strength and removes him from his position at the head of the family table. Sean knows then that he will never challenge his brother again, and that Garry has truly come into his own.

Sean is not without skills worthy of mention. He is a guide and hunter surpassed by none. His reputation ranges throughout the world, and his clients pay huge sums for the privilege of hunting with him. He is an excellent pilot and knows the African wilderness like none other, taking after his grandfather in his free spirit and independent ways.

Garrick Courtney

Garrick is the second of three brothers in the Courtney family. Despite being less to look at than his dashing handsome older brother, Garrick makes up in intelligence and diligence where he lacks in handsome looks. He is near sighted, and wears thick, horn-rimmed glasses. As a younger boy, he worked his body until his determination built him a barrel chest of muscles and powerful arms that require clothing to be tailor made. His childhood as an asthmatic was unhappy to the degree that many referred to him as "Poor Garry" for most of his youth. Despite these deficits, Garrick also inherited his family's stubborn determination, spirit and shrewd business sense. He had no natural ability to hunt, but he manages to be a scratch golfer, a four point polo player and a terrific shot with both rifle and shotgun.

His natural intelligence and business sense aided his succession to chairman and chief executive officer of Courtney Enterprises when Shasa retired. Though still not thirty years of age, he successfully runs a complex of companies valued in the multi-billion dollar range. His attention to detail and hard work made him successful; Bella calls him her Teddy Bear because he is so cuddly, big and hairy.



Michael Courtney

Michael is the youngest of three Courtney brothers and is the peacemaker of the family. He is a gentle soul who also bears the distinction of being the only Courtney who has never killed a wild animal, despite encouragement and coaching from his father and brothers alike. He is thoughtful, sweet and gentle, finding his niche in writing, having authored three books that were all successful. Poetry and African history and politics are his niche, and he also writes and is deputy editor for the Golden City Mail, which is outspoken in its opposition to the Nationalist Afrikaner government and its policy of apartheid. To make his job easier, he learns to speak both Xhosa and Zulu ensuring he can effectively communicate with the majority of the black population in Africa. Bella considers him her protector and confidant and trusts him with more surety than anyone else in her life. He has the Courtney blue eyes, but his eyes are thoughtful and mild as opposed to the other Courtney's.

Michael discovered his desires were geared to men early in his life but keeps this secret from everyone. He is finally seen by Bella with another man and his secret is out with her, but she has no problem with maintaining his secret where the family is concerned, knowing the consequences for Michael if his secret became common knowledge.

Comrade Director Joe Cicero

With startling black opaque eyes set against silver white hair and an unhealthy pallor, Cicero is a stubborn man who is used to getting things his own way. He dislikes anyone who is not Russian and resents passing on any responsibility to them. He has headed his section for nearly thirty years - the last ten of which he operated as the head of station south responsible for the African continent below the equator. He recently was promoted from colonel to colonel-general, but to Cicero it is little more than window dressing as he received confirmation of a diagnosis of carcinoma in both lungs on the same day. In the past week, his hair has gone from black to a white with a sickly yellow tinge and he wheezes and coughs with the smallest exertion. He notices increasing weakness and night sweats and knows his time is short. Dying of lung cancer as a result of the Turkish cigarettes he smokes makes him jealous of Machado's youth and good health.

Cicero has dark, cold eyes that are not unlike those of a shark. His voice is low and hoarse and his penchant for cigarettes has not diminished despite the death sentence they gave him. He is ruthless and relentless in his pursuit of power and control over others. He has a short fuse and a long memory for those who do not do things his way.

Raleigh Tabaka

Raleigh is the deputy director of Umkhonto we Sizwe or "Spear of the Nation." He is an intense South African with definite leadership air. As nephew to Moses Gama, he comes by his forceful character honestly, having witnessed the south African police murder his



uncle. At thirty years of age, he is talented, courageous and has proven his self worth many times over. He is well versed in death, political power, intrigue, and is an executive of the ANC. He moves with the grace of a boxer, aggressively poised, broad in the shoulders and narrowing at the waist. He dresses elegantly in pure wool suits and silk ties and he has even, white teeth. A non-drinker, Raleigh claims to prefer a clear mind. He was educated at Waterford School in Swaziland and is a shrewd and calculating man.

Tabaka will use anyone and anything that may further his cause and the revolution he is spearheading for his people. He believes in his cause and is willing to make any sacrifices to further it.

Centaine Courtney - Malcomess

Grandmother to Isabella, Centaine is largely responsible for the training and education Bella received growing up. She turned seventy years old on the New Year's Day just past and was named for her birth which occurred on the first day of the twentieth century. Despite her age, she is slim and athletic, and her bearing is elegant and aristocratic. She raised Shasa alone after his father was killed in France before he was born. An accident left her alone in the desert during which time she found the famous diamond mine, H'ani. Having run the mine for thirty years, she built an empire that she then handed down to her son. Courtney Enterprises is the legacy that Shasa ran until he then passes the chairmanship to his son, Garrick. Centaine still has thick and dense hair, cut short and the color of gun metal with highlights that resemble pure platinum. Her beauty has not diminished over the years but instead evolved and transformed into a dignified kind of serenity. She has a strong jaw and cheekbones that are proud. Her forehead is high and intelligent, and her eyes are dark and piercing able to reflect humor and wisdom and the next moment the ferocity of a predatory cruelty.

Centaine drives only Daimlers, replacing them each year with the new years' model, and each one is yellow by request. She wears a necklace that contains over a thousand karats of yellow diamonds that took ten years to hand pick from her mine at H'ani and then set into platinum.

Adra Olivares

Nanny / Housekeeper hired by Ramon to help Isabella as she nears the full term of her pregnancy, Adra is in good physical condition, robust but slim in her early forties. She wears her hair in a slick bun that is jet black but for a few white strands. Her face is dark and she is kind and funny, but also solemn. She has powerful brown hands that are equally adept when doing housework for Bella and just as light and quick when cooking or ironing. At the same time, she could be so gentle and comforting when massaging Isabella or putting olive oil on her belly to reduce stretch marks. She is Bella's tutor for Spanish and loves to hear about Bella's family in Africa, but she is not as forthcoming with her own past or family. She tells Bella that her husband is dead but past that is not



inclined to disclose her personal details. Bella overhears her talking to the doctor after a visit in the clinic, and she is sure that Adra must have medical experience, but Adra denies it claiming to be nothing more than a maid.

Nicholas Miguel Ramon de Santiago y Machado

Bella and Ramon's son has a peach-colored complexion and dark, thick hair. He has eyes that are the same pale shade of green that his father has. He is taken by Ramon from Bella when he is just one month old and has been with Bella just long enough to ensure that she bonded with him properly.

Victoria Gama

Referred to as the black Evita, or the mother of the nation, Vicky carries herself with regal dignity. She is more beautiful than photos can do justice. She has a dark beauty, fine boned and wears an emerald green turban and a caftan of green and yellow that are the colors of the banned African National Congress. Her grip is strong, firm and cool to the touch, and her skin is as dark as amber and smooth as velvet. The first wife of Moses Gama, she bore him a son as did Michael's mother, who is the second wife to Gama.

Aaron Friedman

Aaron is a professor / nuclear physicist who is on sabbatical from the University of Jerusalem. A gentleman, he has a great but droll sense of humor, and is a wonderful conversationalist. He works at the Pelindaba research institute and has been divorced for five years. He has a love for horses and rides well with confidence and gentle hands. Well groomed and mannered, he has dark eyes that have the aura of burnt honey. He can dance, play polo, and is besotted with Isabella from their first meeting. His touch is light and instinctive, and Isabella finds herself enjoying his company despite his lack of hair. He is born on November seventh, a Scorpio by birth sign.

Elsa Pignatelli

An avid huntress, Elsa is forty-two years old and one of the most wealthy women in Europe. Her hair is dark which she wears coiled in a severe roll behind her head. She has a finely-boned face with a high and domed forehead to compliment her vaulted cheekbones. Her mouth is a little wide, and her lips appear soft and supple. Her skin is well cared for and flawless, and her grip is strong and sure. Her eyes are rays of brown and gold that are bright and intelligent, and her lashes are curled and long. She has only a hint of an accent, and speaks excellent English. Everything about her radiates confidence. Her teeth are white and obviously her own, and she has a memory better than most.



She runs a successful conglomerate of business that include pharmaceuticals and chemicals with everything from heavy engineering, jet engines and armaments under the umbrella - all in her control since her husband passed away some seven years previously. She has a reputation for being tough and fearless, drinks very little and has hunted with Sean for three seasons. She is also in control of certain patents that the Courtney family has interest in, and Garry would like a way to gain advantage over her. Elsa is Italian, but is a sympathizer with the South African government, with many ties to the continent. Her husband developed an appreciation for the country he shared with her when he spent time as a POW in South Africa after his capture in Benghazi. She is beautiful still, having modeled for Yves St. Laurent in the days before she married her husband, Bruno Pignatelli.

Sir Clarence Van Wyk

A towering presence, Clarence is six-foot-five inches tall, with an upper class English accent despite his Afrikaner origins. His political and financial mind is imposing and he has the dubious reputation of being a lady's man. Sir Clarence's father was chief justice of South Africa when it was still part of the British Empire. Sir Clarence himself was not only an officer of the Guards regiment but also was a minister charged with managing the funding for the Rhodesian guerrilla warfare while avoiding sanctions imposed by both the British and the United States government had imposed. He is a big game hunter of some skill and displays manners that that are suave and courtly even when conducting business.



Objects/Places

Highveld

The Ambassador's residence in Chelsea.

Weltevreden

The Courtney family home at the Cape of Good Hope.

Arm Scor

The largest industrial undertaking that has ever taken place on the continent of Africa; Arm Scor is an acronym for Armaments Development and Production Company.

Malaga

The first place Ramon invites Bella to for the weekend where he wins the pigeon shooting competition.

Sierra Nevada

Site where Ramon's family castle is in Granada, now in disrepair and in the hands of the state.

Malaga

Coastal fishing town that Ramon takes Bella to when her pregnancy is nearing its term.

Amber Joy

A yellow Labrador retriever who is Shasa Courtney's hope to take the cup in competition owned and handled by Bunty Charles.

Mason's Agency

Name of contact at Blushing Lane that Bella is to use in case of emergency only.



Golden City Mail

Newspaper company that employs Michael as assistant editor and staff reporter.

Daimler

Vehicle model of choice for Centaine, it is always new and always yellow.

Group Areas Act

Legislation that divides the country into areas that are specifically designated for each racial group.

Publications Control Act

An act under which government censors use almost unlimited power to ban or suppress any material or publication necessary to protect the political status quo.

Drake's Farm

A black township that houses almost a million people and is only entered by white people if special permission is obtained from the local police station in conjunction with the township management council.

Black Swan

Name given to Oliver Kendrick, a ballet dancer and friend / supporter of Raleigh Tabaka.

Noblesse Oblige

Privilege carries responsibilities - a saying Bella's father ingrained on her for all her life.

Miguel Fernandez Roig

Finest cigars in the world and the only ones Ramon smokes.

Pelindaba

Nuclear research institute where Armscor is developing an explosive device.



Project Skylight

Code name for the Armscor nuclear project at Pelindaba.

Cyndex 25

Odorless and lethal, this nerve gas is the twenty-fifth prototype contracted by NATO and then later abandoned. Highly unstable, the gas has a shelf life of only six months.

Victoria Falls

Visible from 60 miles away, Victoria Falls rises two thousand feet from the bottom, and the Zambezi river that feeds it is a mile wide. Thirty-eight thousand cubic feet of water fall through the restraining cliffs continuously.

Taita Falcon

One of rarest bird in Africa.

Ballantyne Scouts

Rhodesia's crack unit known for their incomparable fighting force.

Mauritius Island

World recognized for its marine life by big game anglers, the toe of the island is rich and a favorite spot of Shasa Courtney.

Lancer

Trawler owned by the Courtney family and working out of Walvis Bay with a speed capability of thirty knots and a range of roughly four thousand miles.



Themes

Honey trap vs Love

Ramon effectively snares Isabella in a honey trap. He lures her in gently, first as the stranger who rescues her from evil and then ingratiating himself with her. Ramon makes Bella believe that he only has eyes for her and begins to separate her from friends and family. It happens subtly at first. He invites her to spend a weekend with him and then devotes himself to her, convincing her to lie to her family. He takes her to his family's castle, telling her the government has claimed it for monies owed, but he still manages to present the front of a semi-wealthy banker. He is out of the country often and invites her to join him, appealing to her innocent and romantic nature, while stealing her birth control pills when she is not looking. This act of treachery leads to her pregnancy and because this happens out of wedlock, puts her in a position where it is easier to continue lying to her family than it is to be honest. Her love and respect for her family is overshadowed by what she believes to be the romance of her life - despite his "small" confession that he has a wife who currently refuses to grant him a divorce. He promises his love and undying devotion to their unborn child and to their lives together - just as soon as he is free. Then he lures her to Spain to have their child. Once he has her isolated, pregnant, and still lying to family and friends, she is so deep in the trap that she can't even see it for the manipulation that it is. When their child is born in Spain, he is, of course, at her side and is organized enough to have adoption papers handy for his son, taking away any legal leg she has to stand on - all under the auspices that he wants his son to have claim to his "Marquis" standing. Once Bella has bonded with her son, it is easy to separate them and use the son to control Bella. Under the threat of harm to her son, Isabella will do anything to keep "them" from hurting him, for years never realizing that Ramon is the one who is controlling everything.

Despite all the warning signs, Bella wants to believe their love is real so badly that she ignores the obvious. Hiding everything from her family, she does as her son's kidnappers ask - working her way into politics, and passing information to them on any subject they require. It is a slippery slope of dishonesty that doesn't come to light until her Nanny comes across her scrapbook of photos and mementos of her son Nicky and shares them with patriarch, Shasa Courtney. Shasa gathers the family together and confronts Isabella who finally confesses all. Shasa has access to intelligence from many circles of government and easily discovers that Ramon is the finger at the controls. He convinces Isabella of Ramon's deception and involvement, and together the family helps Bella to unburden herself. They launch immediately into plans for the rescue of Nicky, coordinating ground and air support, and creating the necessary electronics to ensure the safety of both Nicky and Bella when Bella goes to visit Nicky. Bella quickly realizes she should have confessed all to her family much earlier, seeing the evidence of their support and love.



Ramon's honey trap vs Bella's honey trap

Ramon uses every angle he can to lure Bella into believing he is something he is not. He charms and beguiles her, arranging unexpected meetings with her, and even sleeps with her. She takes him at face value, and falls in love with him, which is his intention, but love is not a strong enough bond for Ramon. He needs the kind of devotion from her that can be used for years to come. That kind of bond is created when he switches her birth control pills for aspirins, and she becomes pregnant. She is ready to terminate the pregnancy when she finds out, but Ramon convinces her that the baby is a product of their love, and that he is thrilled with the surprise. Once she is too far along to turn back, he has everything he needs. He keeps her at arms' length by inventing a wife who won't divorce him, and when the baby is full term, he talks her into having the baby in Spain so his child can claim its rightful heritage. All of this is merely to maintain control and ensure that spiriting the child away will not be an issue, especially as he convinces her to allow him to adopt the boy when he is born.

When Bella is faced with a similar circumstance, requiring information for the people who are holding her son, she falls back on a honey trap of her own. If she knew the full scope of Ramon's deception, she probably would not have behaved in this manner, employing all Ramon's techniques to lure a nuclear scientist in. She feigns interest in him and wrangles an invitation to the facility and to his flat where she manages to access the information she needs from his safe. She even sleeps with him in order to gain his trust to a degree where he will leave her in his apartment unattended. All these things are in exact parallel to Ramon's behavior. Neither one loves the person they are trapping with their affections, and both victims of the honey trap believe they are being dealt with honestly. Ramon uses his trap to gain information, as does Bella making them both equally culpable in that they are willing to use people to get what they want. The difference between them lies in the fact that Isabella uses her honey trap to gain access to her son, and it is out of love for her child that does whatever is necessary. Ramon, on the other hand, sets his trap in order to further his political ideals and is willing to sacrifice love and family if necessary to further these goals.

Nature vs Nurture

In Golden Fox, son Nicholas is born to very different people. His mother is South African with strong family values and ties. In fact, Isabella Courtney grew up in an environment envied by many. Her family amasses a small fortune beginning with her grandmother Centaine, who founded the H'ani diamond mine; with a continuing progression of intelligent, business and politically strong-minded men the wealth of the family grew substantially. Centaine passes on her philosophy in life, having begun with nothing and determined never to be in that position again, to her son Shasa. Shasa follows in her footsteps, learning the business from the ground up and in turn makes his own decisions with her guidance that eventually earn him a position at the head of the board of directors. He passes this knowledge down to his sons Sean, Michael and Garry, and to his daughter, Isabella. Garry follows in his father's footsteps earning himself a seat on



the board; learning from his father and grandmother, he continues to help the Courtney fortunes grow. Sean steps out on his own path but still takes the wisdom and business sense with him, creating his own fortune doing what he enjoys. All of this is possible because the former generation takes the time to educate and direct the next one. In Isabella's case, her direction becomes more politically inclined - both by design and by familial tendency. Her father Shasa brings her into the London embassy where she acts as his hostess becoming familiar with the ways and means of government; later she becomes deeply politically involved in both government and Courtney Enterprises.

Shasa's wife Tara is seduced both mentally and physically by another highly-motivated political power, Moses Gama, but his motivations lie in revolution. She bears him a son, Benjamin Afrika, and is ostracized by both family and country when she aids Moses in an attempt to blow up the parliament building, killing Centaine's husband in the process. Tara raises her son Benjamin in London where she runs a hotel that caters to political refugees, arranging safe haven for those in need and attending rallies that oppose the government on several fronts. Her son Benjamin, growing up in that environment, becomes politically involved as well - also on the side of the revolution. This all creates a situation that pits brother Benjamin against his half brothers in South Africa and in the end is responsible for his death. Nicholas, born to Ramon Machado and Isabella Courtney is raised in his early years by his father and nursemaid Adra. He lives in a revolutionary environment and is schooled to respect and aspire to be a son of the revolution. When he is finally rescued and returned to Weltevreden with his mother, Isabella, he fights those that rescue him and struggles against the ideals he has learned to rally against for all of his young life. The nature of his environment is changed, but by nurture he is guided to let go of the revolutionary ideals and conform to the political leanings of the Courtney family. All of this strengthens the idea that while a child can have certain traits by nature, such as personality and appearance, it is the nurture or the environment that the child is raised in that determines the quality and character of the individual as an adult.

Revolution vs Democratic process

In Golden Fox, Ramon Machado is a Russian KGB agent who believes that the only way to further his country's agenda and political power is by revolution. In that mindset, he is willing to sacrifice any number of lives including his own or those of his family. He sacrifices love or the idea of love, convincing himself that it is weakness that will deter him from succeeding, and he sacrifices himself and his very soul, committing acts of betrayal and treason that he must live with the rest of his life. Ramon is convinced that under no circumstances should popular elections take place, knowing that if the will of the people is followed, in most cases peace will be the outcome. He is responsible for steering Ethiopia into the first stages of revolution without showing any Russian presence, and finding a kindred spirit in Angola, manages to steer them away from elections and into a declaration that the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola or MPLA should assume power to avoid chaos. He and his Russian directorate choose political allies that are weak and easily controlled, and by putting them in power they manage to surreptitiously increase their own circle of control. It is Ramon's brainchild to



steer the United States into opposition to South Africa using apartheid and nuclear testing to alienate the two countries so that Russia can be sure that when Russian forces move into South Africa, they will not face the strength of US opposition. In addition he helps to pave the way for talks between Cuba and Russia, and together with Fidel Castro, they seek power by any and all means.

The countries involved in revolution are struggling mostly against a democratic-based system of government. People in any country that are given the opportunity to vote for government will generally vote in the power that is most likely to benefit them and bring peace to their lives. No one wants war or strife, economic chaos, or political dictatorship. These are the goals of men who crave power and control over others. The smaller countries that were already on their way to democratic and peaceful rule are quietly invaded; their leaders who were voted in by democratic process are killed or exiled and tortured, and then all those who support the democratic position are simply killed. In the madness that follows, it is not difficult for a tyrant to assume power and impose a martial law of sorts to ensure their continuing success - especially if this new ruler has the strength and support of a power such as the KGB to fall back on if needed. It is only by strength of numbers and determination that this kind of evil can be eliminated and order restored. The old adage that for evil to succeed it requires only that good men do nothing is certainly true in government of any country.



Style

Point of View

Golden Fox by Wilbur Smith is an epic tale written partially in the first person perspective, alternating between the two main characters, Isabella Courtney and Ramon de Santiago y Machado. The rest is told in a reliable omniscient third person narrative. Smith is a masterful story teller, adept in weaving a story that blends history with creative license and produces a tale that flows with masterful ease. The tapestry of characters Smith uses includes and switches between main characters Isabella Courtney who begins as a protagonist but develops into an antagonist as a result of her encounter with the second main character and antagonist, Ramon Machado. The omniscient narrative introduces the reader to the rest of the Courtney family and their significant others, the political arena surrounding Russia and South Africa, and the attempt made by Russia to control the African continent. Smith combines political intrigue, love and betrayal and familial loyalty with such expertise that it is easy for the reader to follow and become involved in the story. Wilbur Smith adeptly involves the reader in the Courtney family, bringing the characters to life with an intimate knowledge of their aspirations and their unflinching devotion to each other both publicly and privately.

Setting

While this story begins in London where Isabella is working towards her doctorate and her father Shasa is the South African ambassador, the author takes the reader on a journey that includes the Courtney homestead in Capetown, South Africa called Weltevreden as well as a variety of outback locations such as Karoo and apartheid-controlled shanty towns like Drake's Farm, to KGB headquarters in Russia, and to Malaga, Spain. Wilbur Smith is adept in his description and obvious knowledge of these areas, making it easy for the reader to envision the cultural and visual differences from Spain to Russia and from white South Africa to the areas set aside by apartheid for blacks. He paints a picture so visual that the politics of the region are understood. The main characters travel a great deal.

Isabella Courtney begins in London where Ramon Machado sets up a honey trap and snares her in a web that keeps her trapped until the very end. He coaxes her to lie to her father, remain in London and then when he manages to ensure her pregnancy, he convinces her to have the baby in Spain. She remains there until Ramon determines she is bonded strongly enough to their son at which point he aids in the son's kidnapping and instructs Isabella to return to Capetown. While she is back in South Africa, her instructions are to work her way up in the political arena. As she does so, she is given occasional access to her son. The first time is when Nicky is three years old, and she is given an afternoon with him in a controlled environment in Spain. Later, her visits lengthen and she is allowed to spend up to two weeks with Nicky at a guerrilla base named Tercio at the mouth of the river Chicamba.



Ramon Machado is a KGB operative who lures Isabella Courtney into his trap. Like a spider, he weaves a web around her that she cannot escape. Meanwhile, his agenda is not to be together with her and their son. His agenda is to expand the communist Russia's rule over the world if possible. He is behind a plot to overthrow the governments in Ethiopia and encourages the director of the KGB to do all he can to use the American government to bring about Soviet rule in South Africa.

Language and Meaning

Golden Fox is told in a narrative by two very different characters, although both have ties politically. Isabella Courtney enters the political arena in South Africa to appease the kidnapers that took her son Nicky from her. She quickly manages to work her way into positions of importance and has access to sensitive material, but her interest in all of it is only to further her access to Nicky. Despite her original motivation, she finds herself enjoying the political process. Ramon Machado is motivated by much different factors. He sincerely believes in his ability to unify South Africa with Russia, making communism a force to be feared. He uses his skills to manipulate everyone he comes across, and is willing to do anything to further his agenda. As his interests are Russian, there are many references made to the bourgeois behaviors of others and his reluctance to fall into that trap with either Bella or Nicky, considering it as soft.

The story includes references to the political struggle for democracy in many smaller countries, and how revolutionary efforts to overthrow the governments and install KGB selected and easily controlled allies lend realism and strength to the novel. There are numerous examples of how revolutionary zealots use power and trade love and family for it without thought or concern for either. An example is a honey trap which demonstrates how sex can be exploited for personal or political gain.

Structure

Golden Fox is five-hundred and seventy six pages in length, and while there are obvious divisions throughout the novel that indicate either plot changes or alternate character introductions and motivations, there are no actual chapters or parts used to divide the book. Despite that, Wilbur Smith manages to create a flow that is easily followed and takes the reader on a journey that is hard to put down. Beginning in London with the introduction of Isabella Courtney, her father Shasa and the protagonist, Ramon Machado, Smith gives us enough background to ensure understanding of the dynamics of the family. Powerful both financially and politically, they are an obvious target for the likes of Machado who sets his honey trap for Isabella and convinces her to stay in London while her father returns to South Africa. Ramon's connection to the KGB is introduced early in the story, so his motivations are clearly understood from the beginning, and it is no surprise when he seduces Isabella and ensure her pregnancy by replacing her birth control pills with a placebo. From there, she is easily manipulated and naive enough to believe that Ramon loves her.



The balance of the Courtney family is in South Africa where Smith draws a vivid picture that takes us from the political climate to the outback where hunting of elephant and lion are commonplace. The reader is drawn into the struggle of apartheid and introduced to the lifestyles of the wealthy where money can buy any luxury. The Courtney family enjoys unlimited resources at their disposal throughout the story, including access to planes, boats, and numerous homes and getaways. Underneath it all, Smith manages to convey the familial bond and support that rescues Nicholas and Isabella and shelters them from further recriminations despite treasonous behavior.

Quotes

"She is uniquely placed to become an extremely valuable field-operative." Section 1, pg 29

Ramon to Joe Cicero and Raleigh Tabaka regarding Bella - code named Red Rose.

"This is a miracle, Isabella, the greatest miracle and mystery of the universe." Section 2, pg 76

Ramon to Isabella when she confesses her pregnancy to him.

"You come home soon now, child, you hear, where old Nanny can keep an eye on you. All that hot Courtney blood - we'll find you a good clean South African boy." Section 3, pg 84

Isabella's Nanny when Isabella tells her that she will be staying in London while the rest of the family returns to Weltevreden.

"I want my son to be born in Spain, so that he, too, will be a Spaniard and his claim to the title will be secured." Section 3, pg 119

Ramon to Isabella when he coerces her into having her baby in Spain, giving him complete control of her and the child.

"If the woman is to be of the utmost value to us, then it is absolutely necessary that she bond to the child before we proceed to the next stop in the operation." Section 4, pg 146

Ramon to Cicero explaining why he still hasn't severed his relationship with Isabella.

"He sells a charm to make all men and women love you, and lion bones to give you success in business and money matters. He can give you the fat of vultures for your eyesight and another potion made from the hymen of a virgin that will make your meat-plough hard as granite and tireless as a war assegai." Section 6, pg 207

Driver who meets with Michael to take him to Tabaka gives him a tour of Drake's Farm townships more reputable section where the elite live.

"We both know that destiny has dictated that you play a role beyond the shores of this lovely island. Africa awaits you." Section 7, Pg 255

Castro to Ramon when they meet to discuss the future of Cuba and it's financial needs.

"We have a traitor - and at a very high level." Section 8, pg 297

Shasa to Prime Minister Vorster after he finds out that other governments have discovered he is drilling for Project Skylight and even know the code name.

"If you kill Brutus, then you must kill all the sons of Brutus." Section 9, Pg 327

In 1510, Niccolo Machiavelli said this and Ramon advises the revolutionary appointed President Adebé that it is still sound advice immediately following his rise to Presidency.



"We must eliminate not only the opposition, but also the thought of opposition." Section 9, Pg 328
Ramon to President Abede.

"We must make absolutely certain that no nation - not even one of the superpowers - can ever with impunity consider armed intervention in our internal affairs." Section 10, Pg 385
Conversation Isabella recalls having been part of where Teddy Kennedy asserted his views, as she is trying to understand her father's position on weapons of mass indiscriminate destruction.

"Capitalism cannot co-exist with a system that reserves power and privilege to a hereditary minority, a system which suppresses the free-market principles of labor and goods." Section 11, Pg 420
Garry to Isabella as he explains his motivations for striking down the sanctions and prohibitions set up by current government.

"Once the two agents of Cyndex 25 are mixed, the gas becomes highly unstable and has an extremely short effective life span." Section 13, pg 462
Scientists explaining to the Courtney delegation the positive sides of the nerve gas, citing that after elimination of the population, the treated terrain can be easily taken under control again as the gas has a short life span once dispersed.

"This bastard who has tied her up is a general in the KGB - so we know who Bella's masters are." Section 14, pg 506
Shasa to Centaine after finding out that Ramon has been extorting information from Isabella for years.

"Give me a hectic day at the Stock Exchange or a nice bloody takeover deal any day." Section 15, pg 579
Garry talking to himself as he takes off to intercept Michael and Ramon with the nerve gas.



Topics for Discussion

Why doesn't Isabella tell her family about Ramon? What makes her lie to cover up this relationship?

Why is Isabella a target of Ramon to begin with? What does he hope to gain?

What is a honey trap, and why is Ramon so good at executing it? What is the significance of the nickname "Golden Fox"?

Ramon has his fingers on the pulse of many different governing agents. Name them and his reasons for coveting each relationship.

How does Ramon keep Isabella under his control? What tricks does he use to manipulate her into obeying him without question?

What is Ramon's ultimate goal?

How does Isabella's family respond when they discover the truth behind Isabella's political aspirations?

How is the traitorous behavior by Isabella dealt with by her family?

How does Nicky feel about his "rescue" and why?

What tradition do the Scouts indulge in before each mission? Why?

How is Michael involved in the Cyndex 25 theft and what is their goal?

Why is the Cyndex 25 stolen and who is the inside man? What is his connection to the Courtney family?

Why is Benjamin Afrika so hated by Centaine Courtney-Malcomess?

Which Courtney family member was exiled from Africa and why?