

The Gold Coast Study Guide

The Gold Coast by Nelson Demille

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Plot Summary

The Gold Coast is a novel detailing the life of John Sutter and his life over approximately one year. Sutter is a resident of the North Shore of Long Island, or what is sometimes known as The Gold Coast, an area where the extremely wealthy have lived for many years. The area is now in a decline for many different reasons. John is married to Susan Stanhope Sutter, the daughter of one of these excessively wealthy families. Sutter is not poor, but does not have the vast fortune that the Stanhope family had at one time. Though the Stanhope's are still wealthy, they no longer have the never ending funds that they once did, and Stanhope Hall, the family estate sits empty, as many of the other great mansions in the area do. One such estate is Alhambra, next door to the Sutter's. Alhambra is purchased by Frank 'the bishop' Bellarosa, a Mafia don and very powerful man. Sutter and Bellarosa meet by chance, or so it appears, and before John realizes exactly what is happening, his entire life is turned upside down, leaving everything and everyone he cares about touched in some way by his relationship with Bellarosa.

John Sutter is originally put off by his new neighbor, caught up in the class structure he had been raised with. A WASP through and through, Sutter looks down on Bellarosa, considering him lower class and uneducated. After a few meetings with the don, Sutter not only changes his mind, but also begins to respect Frank a bit. Frank is not a stupid man at all, and Sutter discovers that if Bellarosa wants something, he will do what it takes to get it. This is no more evident than when Frank wants John to defend him against murder charges. Knowing that Sutter would be unwilling to mix himself up with the case, Frank arranges to have John investigated for tax evasion, and then provides him with the means to solve the problem. By accepting the assistance of the don, John is indebted to him. As such, Sutter defends Bellarosa regarding the murder charge, further entangling him in the life of the Mafia don.

Frank Bellarosa uses the people around him for his own gain, though he admires John Sutter and considers him a friend. In order to gain John Sutter as a defense attorney, Bellarosa is more than happy to cause the tax problems that require John to sell his summer home, losing a small piece of the life that John Sutter still enjoyed. When directly accused of orchestrating the tax audit in order to have Sutter come to him for help, Bellarosa does not deny his actions. Despite this, John Sutter still helps the don, having grown to enjoy the excitement and danger surrounding 'the bishop'.

Throughout the novel John and Susan struggle with their relationship and their lives, neither very happy with where things are or where they are going. Despite this they still love each other, and each suggest at different times that they should escape somewhere, away from Frank Bellarosa, though for various reasons they never do. As the two Sutter's become more involved with Bellarosa and his life, John steps away from the people that he has considered his friends for years, even cutting himself off from his family and Susan's Sutter seems to have realized that he was no better than they were, and if one good thing came of his association with Frank, it was John's ability to see they type of person he had become.



John represents Bellarosa in a bail hearing regarding the murder of Juan Carranza, a Columbian drug dealer, perjuring himself in order to be sure that Frank does not have to spend any time in jail. John meets the men that Bellarosa associates with and gets a better idea of the life of the Mafia don, realizing that Bellarosa is nothing like the fumbling man who is trying to fit into the life of those on the gold coast. Bellarosa is intelligent, and dangerous, as is being associated with him. John finds this out first hand when someone attempts to murder Bellarosa while the Sutter's and Bellarosa's enjoy an evening out. Though wearing a bulletproof vest, Frank suffers other injuries, and it is John's care that allows for Frank's survival.

Frank's empire crumbles while he is recuperating, and he is protected by the federal agents he once despised. Seeing no other option, Frank gives them the information they seek, providing information about his Mafia family and associates. His possessions are seized by the government, and the great estate of Alhambra is taken apart piece by piece. Bellarosa offers John anything he wants, knowing that John had saved his life. John's request is simple. Sutter tells Frank to end his affair with Susan, and tell her that she will not be running away to Italy with Bellarosa. Frank does not argue the point but simply tells John that he will do as he asked.

In the end, Frank's inability to control his wants and needs is his undoing. Susan Stanhope Sutter kills Frank with his own weapon, one that he had asked her to hold for him. It was not the Mafia that brought about his death, it was a woman. Ironically, Bellarosa had once told John to be careful of the women that he chose to have a relationship with, as they could result in a man's downfall. Susan claims that she had killed Frank for John, in order to free him from the don's clutches. Susan is found not guilty of the murder charges against her and moves away from the area with her parents. John Sutter still loves his wife, and she him, but their lives have been forever changed by their association with Frank Bellarosa. John Sutter winds up living in the gatehouse of the Stanhope Estate with Ethel Allard, the widow of George and lover of Augustus Stanhope.

John has plans for the future, and considers them while walking the once again ruined estate of Alhambra. Sutter is considering buying another boat, having destroyed his to keep the IRS from claiming it and sailing around the world. Once his journey is complete, he might dock in Hilton Head, the home of his in-laws and Susan, to see if their love can survive the time they have spent with Frank Bellarosa.



Part I: Chapters 1-5

Part I: Chapters 1-5 Summary

The Gold Coast is a novel centered on the life of John Sutter and those around him. John Sutter has settled into his life, but does not appear to be happy with it. The result of Sutter's midlife crisis proves damaging to all around him.

In Chapter 1, John Sutter, wealthy resident of the North shore of Long Island, visits Hick's Nursery to purchase some plants for outside the gatehouse and guesthouse at Stanhope Hall, his wife Susan's family home. As John is leaving a man approaches and introduces himself as Frank Bellarosa, John's new neighbor. John is able to hide his emotions, but barely. Frank Bellarosa, a well-known mafia don, has purchased Alhambra, the estate next door to Stanhope Hall.

In Chapter 2, John returns to Stanhope hall, wondering if Frank Bellarosa knows that the old money families that live on the Gold Coast will never accept him, or if the man even cares. Arriving at the gatehouse, John is greeted by George Allard, the caretaker of the estate, who lives in the gatehouse with his wife Ethel. The two men unload the flowers from John's Bronco, and John continues to the guesthouse, the home his wife was given as a wedding present, along with ten acres of land. Susan is on the patio drinking tea. John tells Susan about their new neighbor, and becomes a bit upset when Susan does not seem to react to the news of the mafia don moving in next door. Her biggest concern is that Bellarosa might not understand that riders of horses be granted passage on land that is not theirs.

In Chapter 3, John rides Yankee, one of Susan's horses, to Alhambra. There is a light on upstairs, but no one seems to be around the property. John half expected to be greeted by gun toting goons. The ruins of the estate surround him, including a reflecting pool where a statue of Neptune reigns, though his trident is missing. On the way back to the guesthouse, John comes across Susan, riding her horse, Zanzibar. Susan does not seem herself, but this does not worry John, as his wife likes to spice up their marriage by acting out sexual fantasies. John plays along, pretending to be lord of the manner, intent on punishing a trespasser. Telling Susan to strip, he pulls her onto his horse and the two have sex while they ride. Afterward, Susan walks naked back to her horse, telling John that she will see him at home. John is not happy about this, but knows Susan well enough to know that she will do what she wants, regardless.

In Chapter 4, John and Susan do some yard work, and then pick up the Allard's to go to church at St. Mark's. Though George drives, there is only one service at St. Mark's now, and John feels it would not look right to have the servants arrive in a different car. John and Susan attend St. Mark's because they always have, a tradition, though John does not like the Reverend James Hunnings.



After church, John and Susan return home, Susan reminding John that they are having dinner at the club later with friends. Susan tells John that no one answered her knock at Alhambra when she wanted to discuss the use of the land for riding. John reminds Susan that the proper thing to do would be to pay a social call on Bellarosa first, before discussing business, but does not want her to do so. The last thing that John wants is become involved with Bellarosa. Susan is not happy with her husband's directive.

In Chapter 5, John and Susan meet Lester and Judy Remson at The Creek Club for dinner. The Creek is an exclusive country club that all of the 'old money' families belong to. The two couples make inane small talk, until talk turned to Alhambra. The Remsons wondered if John and Susan had any idea who had moved in. Susan tells them that John had met the new owner, and he tells them of his meeting with Frank Bellarosa. Lester and Judy are properly awed and shocked, and Lester wonders how John feels about his new neighbor. John replies that he would rather live next to a mafia don that be surrounded by tract houses filled with stockbrokers and screaming children. The Remsons continue eating, and John remembers that Lester is a stockbroker.

Part I: Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The reader is introduced to John Sutter, a man in his fifties, who lives a privileged life on the Gold Coast, or the North shore of Long Island. Married to Susan Stanhope Sutter, John lives the quiet life surrounded by old money families, seemingly content.

John's meeting with Frank Bellarosa at Hick's Nursery is the beginning of change for John, though at the time Sutter is more concerned with the neighborhood than with himself. As the novel progresses, Sutter will change more dramatically than the neighborhood, though things will indeed change in the privileged corner of the world.

The reader is also introduced to Susan Stanhope Sutter, John's wife. Susan seems to be a bit stuck up, but as she has lived a life surrounded by enormous wealth, one can almost forgive her. Susan is a beautiful redhead, prone to mood swings that her husband has grown to recognize and deal with, just another part of married life. The two seem to have settled into a comfortable relationship, with an active sex life. The Sutter's have many friends, and seem to be happy.

John Sutter is a bit enigmatic, both interested in others, but intent on maintaining the status quo in his corner of the world. Frank Bellarosa moving in next door is not something that pleases him, and though he can not at this point in the novel know what is to come, Sutter can feel that changes are coming, and he is unsure if they will be good or bad.

The reader is provided with some sense of the area where the Sutter's live. The Gold Coast, which is the north shore of Long Island, is an exclusive area, where the rich and entitled live. Though the extremely wealthy have lived there for many years, there is a sense of changing times, with vast estates such as Stanhope Hall, Susan's family home, sitting empty, with taxes and dwindling fortunes resulting in land being divided



and smaller homes being built that house families of the newly rich. The families that have lived there for decades seem to be struggling to maintain some sense of history, but the arrival of Frank 'the bishop' Bellarosa signals that change is coming regardless of how anyone feels about it. Bellarosa will indeed change the lives of many, some for good, some for bad, some both.



Part II: Chapters 6-10

Part II: Chapters 6-10 Summary

In Chapter 6 a week passes quietly with John working in the city as well as in his Locust Valley office, dealing with the problems of the wealthy as a partner in his father's law firm, Perkins, Perkins, Sutter and Reynolds. After a day at work John heads to The Creek where he sits with a cool Lester Remsen. John tells Lester of a client that has come to his office with original stock certificates that date to the twenties. All is apparently forgiven over Lester's excitement at the thought of the large sum of money this woman had apparently stored in a closet for decades. John makes arrangements to meet with Lester during the week to go over the certificates.

In Chapter 7, John spends the morning taking care of the Allards who have the flu, thinking about the rumors he had heard that Ethel had been the lover of Augustus Stanhope while George was serving in the war, then stopping by McGlade's the local pub. Afterwards, he checks in at his office and heads for home. George and Ethel inform him that a 'gentleman' stopped by to see him but George told him that the Sutter's were not receiving. John is amused by their description of what must be Frank Bellarosa, and tells George that if he stops by again to let him through. Sutter drives to the estate and looks around at the emptiness, thinking about the wasted land and the love temple behind the plum orchard where he and Susan sometimes make love, acting out one or another of Susan's fantasies. John realizes that he will miss Stanhope Hall and all it represents once it is gone.

In Chapter 8, John meets with Lester Remsen to take care of the ten million dollars in stock certificates his client had found in her basement safe. Lester tells John how easy it would be to transfer the stocks to cash and split the money. John is intrigued, but only in the thoughts of the other man, not in the chance to steal. Sutter is inherently honest, though he does not even know why sometimes.

The week passes, and Easter approaches. After mass on Good Friday, Susan and John walk around the estate discussing little things. John asks Susan if she would move away, but she declines, then she asks John if he had told Lester Remsen that he wanted to sail away. John admits that he did, but that he was drunk at the time. The two bicker, growing a bit angry. At the site of the old playhouse Susan tells John that the staff had used the location for illicit trysts, and that she had even caught her mother there with someone. Susan admits that she is the person who burned down the playhouse.

At the love temple, Susan requests that John make love to her and he does, washing away the anger that had taken over the couple. Susan tells John that he has grown disillusioned and perhaps he just needs a challenge, and maybe she can find it for him. John agrees.



In Chapter 9, John finds Susan in the stables with two local college boys, and grows angry that they don't even notice his presence. After driving away in a rage, John calms down and he and Susan keep a tennis date with friends. While playing, Frank Bellarosa arrives. John greets him and Bellarosa gives him the extra vegetable plants that he had purchased at the nursery. Susan is a bit snide and standoffish, making John a bit uncomfortable, but he tries to smooth things over as best he can without seeming like he welcomes Bellarosa as a neighbor. Bellarosa leaves and the Sutters and Roosevelts sit and chat, with John growing upset again as the conversation centers around Bellarosa. The company leaves, and Susan reminds John of a dinner date that evening. Disgusted, John takes the remaining port and walks into the hedge maze, drinking and becoming happily lost.

In Chapter 10, John wakes up on Easter Sunday on the ground within the hedge maze. Stumbling to the edge, he comes across Susan out riding, but grows angry with her again, and walks around. On Alhambra property, John discovers that Bellarosa has already restored the statue of Neptune at the reflecting pool. Turning to leave, John sees a woman, and rather than introduce himself, barks and growls instead. The woman runs away, and John leaves as well, but hears men and dogs pursuing him. Arriving at his home safely John showers and leaves, first stopping at a bar and flirting with a woman, then drives to his aunt's house for Easter with his family. Once there, John avoids everyone except his sister Emily, who is concerned for him, but encouraging as well. Emily had ended her unhappy marriage and was living in Texas with her lover, appearing extremely happy. John continues to avoid most people, and leaves, heading home. Susan arrives and asks if John is alright, he says he is. Sutter does feel very good, but also feels horrible. His behavior is curious not only to those around him, but to himself as well.

Part II: Chapters 6-10 Analysis

John Sutter's life begins to change, though not radically, but within him, bit by bit. Though he has not seen Frank Bellarosa since his visit to the nursery, the Mafia don is on his mind. When meeting with Lester Remsen regarding the stock certificates of his client, Remson jokes, only half kidding about how easy it would be to convert the certificates into cash and split the millions. Sutter listens, though he has no intention of following through with any such plan. Sutter considers himself an honest man, and wonders what it is that makes some people dishonest. Though the temptation may be there, he believes that most people would do the right thing, and remain honest. John knows that even Lester Remsen would not steal from a client, but must get some type of thrill at the thought.

John's relationship with Susan begins to change as well. Though Susan does not appear to have changed, the reader is given the impression that John has finally begun to tire of her behaviors. Though the couple appear to be in love and have an active sex life, Susan seems to be inherently selfish, perhaps a result of her upbringing. The Sutters communicate, but John does not seem to have the patience for the life they have led. When Susan cleans the stables with the two college boys, John loses his



patience, storming off. It's the beginning of a long weekend where he reevaluates his life. Sutter is jealous, and without consciously knowing so, compares himself to Frank Bellarosa. This is even more evident when Bellarosa interrupts the Sutter's tennis game with their friends and despite Susan's borderline rude behavior to the Mafia don's face, she and the Roosevelts spend the afternoon discussing Bellarosa. This seems to be the final straw for John, who refuses to attend a dinner engagement with Susan, instead wandering the hedge maze getting drunk. The maze itself is important, an symbol of John's confusion and lack of direction regarding his own life.

John has his first meeting with Agent Mancuso when he stops outside the gates of Alhambra on Easter morning. John is unsure how he feels about the FBI stationed on his street watching the comings and goings of the Mafia, but comments that at least they should be safe. John expresses his outrage about the situation to Mancuso, who agrees that something should be done. Mancuso seems ready to offer John the chance to do so, but John declines, stating that he is not a police officer, but would willingly serve on a jury and do his duty if it came to that. Looking forward, this is an ironic statement, but at the time it seems to be how John really feels.

Avoiding his family and friends with the exception of his sister at a family gathering is not like John, but he does not appear to care what anyone thinks of him, in fact, does not really consider how he feels at all, only that he feels better for his actions. His sister is understanding, but wonders if his behavior has anything to do with his neighbor. John is honest and tells his sister that he is unsure as well. Emily's warning about Evil being seductive will prove to be a wise one, but at the moment it just seems minor.

John's brief visit to Alhambra on Easter morning reveals some details to the reader as well. Bellarosa has been busy, restoring the property, including the trident to the statue of Neptune. Across from the god of the sea is a statue of the Virgin Mary, and John notes the differences between the man that restores a pagan statue, and balances it with the mother of God. Meeting a woman on the property results in John's biggest break with his personality. Sutter at first says hello, but then breaks with his personality completely, barking and growling at her. The woman flees and the first signs of Bellarosa's strength are revealed with dogs and men pursue John. When shots are fired, Sutter takes a look at his behavior, reveling in the fact that he has escaped with his life.

Sutter is torn between the life he had been content with and the future, unsure of where he is going. No longer content to stay on his current path, John appears to be battling the first feelings of a midlife crisis. The problem is that John seems to prefer embracing these changes, rather than fighting to maintain the life he has. The reader is able to witness Sutter's internal struggle, though at this point it is unclear where things will lead.



Part II: Chapters 11-14

Part II: Chapters 11-14 Summary

In Chapter 11, John heads to his Locust Valley office and spends the morning quietly. Frank Bellarosa arrives unannounced. Bellarosa wonders if Sutter has ever had problems with trespassers, relating his wife's scare on Easter morning. John changes the subject and the two discuss their schooling and children. Bellarosa asks John to represent him in a real estate deal, but John declines, stating that his clients would not like the association with Bellarosa and that he will not work for him. Bellarosa does not take offense, and the two part ways, Sutter having given the don a recommendation for another firm.

In Chapter 12, John and Susan exchanged notes by fax and he heads home to be greeted by a naked wife at the door. Susan feeds him his dinner and the two drive to the beach to make love. Susan tells John that she planted the vegetables that Bellarosa had given them at the big house. They discuss the history of Alhambra and the families that have lived there, Susan telling John that she thinks he is relieved that the estate will not be subdivided, but that he'd rather a criminal not be the one who had saved it. She also tells John that she wants to move the stables to her land but they need the permission of Bellarosa, as they will be near his property line. John is not happy, but does not argue.

In Chapter 13, John takes a call from Frank Bellarosa who agrees to allow them to move the stable near the property line, and tells John that he will send his builder over to give him an estimate on the project. John agrees reluctantly.

Dominic arrives and gives a very low estimate saying he can start Monday. John is unsure, but Dominic seems to plead for the work. Sutter agrees reluctantly and tells the mason to have Bellarosa call him. Frank does call and John thanks him again, being cautious on the phone in case the FBI is listening. The two discuss the fact that Bellarosa is repaying the favor of John's referral to another law firm. John tells Frank that Susan will move her horses to Alhambra's stables on Monday. After the phone call, John and Susan discuss the don again, and Susan tells John that she can tell her husband likes the Mafia boss. John tells her that he doesn't dislike him, and advises her to be cautious if she ever uses the phone to speak to Bellarosa because the feds might be listening. Susan wonders what Bellarosa wants with them, and John wonders if it might be respectability.

In Chapter 14, weeks pass uneventfully, with the exception of the stable being moved. Dominic walks to Stanhope Hall and John speaks with him, asking if Frank had asked the mason to look at the house. Dominic denies it.



John returns from a day at the office in Manhattan and meets Susan for drinks. John is unhappy to find that Susan has made arrangements for them to have drinks with the Bellarosa's at Alhambra. Despite misgivings, he agrees to accompany his wife.

Part II: Chapters 11-14 Analysis

Frank Bellarosa seems to be seeking out a reason to do business with John Sutter, but Sutter is unclear why. Though Bellarosa seems to be looking for someone to handle legitimate business for him in the area, John is unwilling to be linked to the don, still worried about keeping up appearances, even after the extreme change in his behavior over the weekend. Bellarosa does not seem offended when John explains his reasons for the refusal of business, as if he is accustomed to being turned down occasionally.

The Sutters need to deal with Bellarosa regarding the stables puts the ball back in the don's court. Bellarosa is gracious, offering his employees to help move the structure. Sutter is cautious, and specifically asks Bellarosa if they are equal when it comes to favors, aware that owing a favor to the Mafia boss would not be a good thing. John cannot bring himself to dislike Bellarosa, and seems to find a way to rationalize the budding relationship with Frank. Sutter tells Susan that a business relationship would be unacceptable, but a personal relationship would not be as bad.

Despite John's best efforts, it seems that Frank Bellarosa is going to be a part of his life, though at this early stage in the novel, Sutter has no idea how extensive and multifaceted their relationship will become. At one point when Susan wonders what Bellarosa wants from them, John wonders if it is respectability that Frank seeks. Susan jokes that perhaps Bellarosa wants John's soul. This statement is very close to the truth.



Part III: Chapters 15-17

Part III: Chapters 15-17 Summary

The Sutters arrive at Alhambra for drinks with Frank and Anna Bellarosa. Frank shows John and Susan to the dining room and leaves them for a moment. Susan tells John of her visits to Alhambra when she was younger and suggests that she paint the ruins for the Bellarosas as a housewarming gift. John tells her not to get involved.

Frank returns and they make small talk, John discovering that Frank is very entertaining. John asks Frank about security and Frank reassures him that a man is safe in his home. Anna Bellarosa arrives with a platter of cannolis, and John puts on his reading glasses so he does not look the same as he did on Easter morning. Anna wonders if they have met and John quickly changes the subject. Frank tells Anna to show Susan around the house, and he takes John to the library.

In Chapter 16, Frank and John again make small talk over drinks and cigars. Frank tells John that he would like Susan to be Anna's friend and show her around the area so that his wife does not miss Brooklyn so much.

Talk moves quickly to business when Frank mentions an accusation against him, the murder of a Columbian drug runner, Juan Carranza. John admits that he has heard of the matter. Frank tells John that the entire matter is a set up arranged by the US Attorney Alphonse Ferragamo. Frank's theory is that Ferragamo has set him up because his attorney, Jack Weinstein, had embarrassed Ferragamo in court years ago. Angry at the slight, the US Attorney has not made Frank a target of the Columbians. John is skeptical, but Frank insists that it is true. Bellarosa then tells John that he wants Sutter to represent him after the grand jury indicts him for the murder. Sutter resists, but Frank explains the difference between the Mafia and the other criminals; the Mafia follows rules, so Ferragamo knows that Frank will not attack him. Ferragamo is going after Frank because he can, and it is easier than dealing with the Columbians and such. John is resistant and Frank is calm. He tells John to stay and drink or leave and never be bothered again. John settles in for another drink.

In Chapter 17, Frank and John find the women in the living room, which is really the ballroom of the grand estate. Susan and Frank leave to see the conservatory, and John sits with Anna. Anna is a sweet woman, who wants Frank to find new friends and business associates. Once again Anna wonders where she has seen John, but he brushes it off, saying his face is a common one. John distracts Anna with tales of ghost stories surrounding Alhambra.

Susan and Frank return, and John tells them that he and Susan should be going. As they are leaving, Susan offers to paint Alhambra in ruin as a housewarming gift, despite John asking her not to. Frank and Anna accept, and the Sutters leave. On the way home, Susan asks John what he and Frank had been talking about and he replies,



'murder.' Susan believes her husband is joking and goes to bed. John wonders what he has gotten himself into.

Part III: Chapters 15-17 Analysis

John and Susan have a good time with the Bellarosa's despite John's reservations. Sutter has already discovered that Frank is a smart man, but he discovers that he is also entertaining. John baits Frank a few times about his business and his need for security, but surprisingly, Frank is very open about things. Ironically, Frank states that a man is safe in his own home, and there is nothing for the Sutter's to worry about while they are at Alhambra. This simple statement will come back to haunt both Frank and John, obviously for different reasons.

Anna Bellarosa is introduced to the reader, a pretty woman who defers to her husband completely. It is obvious that Anna loves Frank, but it is clear that she is not consulted about anything. The fact that Frank purchased Alhambra and told his wife they were moving there rather than ask her opinion proves this. Frank would rather Anna make new friends and leave Brooklyn behind. The fact that Anna would rather be with her family in Brooklyn does not matter in the least.

John is cautious when he meets Anna because of the encounter they had Easter morning, but though it appears that Anna knows him from somewhere, John believes that he has convinced her she knows him from around town. This will be visited again later, and John will find out that this is not the case at all.

John is drawn into discussing business with Frank, and is shocked by Frank's claims that the US Attorney has set him up to be murdered by the Columbians. Though John has understandable difficulties with Frank's theory, he does have to give Frank some credit. Obviously Frank has good instincts or he would not be the head of a large crime family. Frank tries to explain the way things work to John, and asks him to represent him when Ferragamo goes before the grand jury and indicts him for the murder of Juan Carranza. John tells Frank no, but the don is persistent. Frank makes John an offer: leave and he won't be bothered again, or stay for a drink. John elects to stay for a drink, effectively tying himself to Bellarosa. Sutter knows that he has made a poor decision, but cannot bring himself to leave.

As the Sutter's leave, Susan offers to paint the ruins of Alhambra as a housewarming gift, despite the fact that John had asked her not to. It is ironic that John keeps telling Susan not to get involved with the Bellarosa's but he is getting more involved by the second. The fact that Susan wants to paint the estate as it had been before Frank had restored it foreshadows the return to ruin that Alhambra will suffer, as well as the lives that will be ruined. John answers Susan honestly when she asks what he and Frank had been talking about, but John's answer of 'murder' does not seem to register for her. The idea that Frank Bellarosa is capable of murder seems to be beyond Susan, a fact that will cause even more damage.



part IV: Chapters 18-21

part IV: Chapters 18-21 Summary

In Chapter 18, time passes and John does not hear from Frank. John assumes that Frank is sorry that he aired his business the night they had dinner. Susan visits Alhambra often to paint and to see her horses. Susan seems to be developing a friendship with Anna though they don't have much in common. Susan rarely mentions Frank, only that there is high security at Alhambra for all visitors. John thinks that Susan is naïve.

Near Memorial Day, the stables are completed and Susan brings her horses back. Domenic refuses to discuss the bill, telling John to deal with Frank. John still has not heard from Frank at all.

At work in New York, John receives a call from Mr. Stephen Novac, an IRS agent. Novac arrives at John's office and tells him that he owes the government over three hundred thousand dollars for failing to pay taxes on capitol gains in a real estate sale. John is angry and goads Novac, but realizes in that moment that he is losing faith in the system.

In Chapter 19, John meets with Frank at The Creek, upsetting the members. Lester Remsen approaches John about it, but John brushes him off. Frank explains to John that Novac is jealous of John's success and will attack him because John is successful. Frank tells John that Mr. Melzer can guarantee that John will not face criminal charges and save him money. John agrees to deal with Melzer. Frank states that he would like John to arrange for his membership to the club, but John explains that Frank will never be allowed membership because of who he is. Frank quickly suggests another favor; represent him in the murder trial of Juan Carranza. John agrees.

Anna and Susan arrive and the couples have dinner, enjoying the evening, and entertaining the club members that watch them. A few missteps are cleared up, the couples have drinks and then are driven home.

In Chapter 20, John meets with Mr. Melzer, who used to work for the IRS and lays out the details of his job. John agrees and the two part company after John turns down a partnership with Melzer.

Lester Remsen calls John and tells him that the members of the club are not happy about his choice of guests. John is angry about the meeting that was held, but knows that he and Susan would not be asked to resign.

Edward and Carolyn, the Sutter's children, arrive home for a visit. The family heads to the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club for dinner and a weekend of sailing. At dinner the family discusses the Bellarosa's and the tax issues. The fact that the summerhouse might have to be sold to pay the back taxes is upsetting. Carolyn asks John is things



are alright between he and Susan, but he tells her nicely that it is not her business. Edward wonders if he can give John money from his trust fund to pay the taxes, making John a bit weepy.

In Chapter 21, the Sutter family spends the weekend sailing. John and Susan find the time to make love while the children are ashore. John tells Susan that they should escape for a few months, but this time she reminds him of his tax problems, and of his promise to help Frank Bellarosa. John does not remember telling Susan of his promise to Frank, but brushes it off.

Edward decides that he will fish for shark and in fact, one takes his bait. The young man fights for hours, refusing help, until John finally cuts the fishing line. The family seems renewed by their time together.

The Sutter's meet John's parents for dinner in Southampton. John's parents are not especially loving. They simply see family as an obligation. They go to dinner at a trendy place called Buddy's Hole and John grows more aggravated by the minute with his parents' lack of involvement in the lives of his family. John's mother is more concerned with the Native American that owns the restaurant than with her grandchildren. John stays quiet until the meal is over, but finally loses his temper, telling his parents that they have nothing common and he can see no reason to keep the relationship going.

After a few days at home, Edward and Carolyn leave; the house once again seems empty. While at work John receives a call from his father, but refuses to speak to him. John goes to his boat and thinks about leaving the past behind and moving toward the future.

part IV: Chapters 18-21 Analysis

Time passes quickly but quietly and John assumes incorrectly that Frank Bellarosa has decided to leave him out of his business. It seems however that Bellarosa was merely waiting patiently. After a few weeks, John receives a call from the IRS regarding taxes owed. Though John is disgusted, at this point in the novel he believes it to be a basic red flag in the tax system. As the novel progresses, the reader will discover that there are very few things that happen to John Sutter that are not directly related to actions taken by Frank Bellarosa.

John and his family reconnect when the Sutter children, Edward and Caroline visit from school. The family seems to be stable, but Caroline notices that her parents are acting oddly and wonders if they are getting divorced. John reminds his daughter that regardless of what is going on, it is no one's business but his and Susan's.

While fishing, Edward hooks a shark and struggles to land it, tiring himself completely. His family does what they can to help him, but the young man refuses help or to give up. After Susan finally cuts the line, Edward recovers and thanks all for their help. When Susan comments that Edward is as stubborn as his father, he thanks her. The battle

against the shark can be seen as symbol for the struggles that John faces. Frank Bellarosa can be seen as the shark, striking fear, but also to be respected.

John ends the relationship with his parents after many years of trying to please them, finally realizing that they are unable to be pleased. John's parents are self-absorbed, more concerned with trends and such than with family. Sutter finally realizes that trying to please them is futile. His father seems to feel some regret, but his mother is more upset that he would act in such a way, instead of with the act itself.

Selling the summerhouse is also symbolic. John loves the house, and has spent many happy times there, as have the children. Susan however does not have the same emotional ties. Though this may be because Susan was raised with such wealth that she never really formed any attachment to anything, it may also be because the house is an end to a life that Susan is no longer certain she wants.



Part IV: Chapters 22-24

Part IV: Chapters 22-24 Summary

In Chapter 22, Frank calls John and asks him to take a walk to on the beach at Fox Point, the ruined estate at the end of Grace Lane. While the two walk around, John relates stories of the lavish lifestyle that was lived on the gold coast during the 20's. Frank asks John if he needs any help raising the money to pay his taxes after the two discuss Mr. Melzer. Frank tells John that Edward had mentioned that the Sutter's were selling the summerhouse. John is sure his son would not have done such a thing.

Frank tells John that the grand jury is seated regarding the murder of Juan Carranza, and that once he is indicted he will be arrested on a Tuesday morning in order for Ferragamo to get the best news coverage. John finds this hard to believe but Frank is very convincing. Frank informs John that he is to be at Alhambra at 5AM every Tuesday morning until the arrest, and he will have a briefcase to carry any bail funds. John tells Frank that he will get no bail, but Frank tells him that it is Sutter's job to make sure that he does, explaining the reasoning behind why Ferragamo wants him in jail for a few weeks maximum.

In Chapter 23, John cleans his boat at the yacht club and is visited by Mr. Mancuso. Mancuso boards the boat wanting to talk to John, and the two go for a sail. Mancuso tells John that the Mafia has been romanticized and he should be careful. Mancuso relates a story about Frank Bellarosa beating a man within an inch of his life with a metal pipe. While John is capable of envisioning this, he is not willing to admit that the Mafia is dangerous to the average citizen. Mancuso proposes Sutter placing bugs in Alhambra and John informs the agent that he is Bellarosa's attorney, explaining his belief in the frame-up that Ferragamo is engineering. Mancuso tells John that he is blinded by the excitement and danger, and that he should get away from Frank Bellarosa while he can.

In Chapter 24, John helps George Allard with some plantings and they discuss William Stanhope's offer to the Allard's to leave the gatehouse. John tells George to refuse the offer and breaks for lunch. He returns to find George dead.

George is waked and buried, with the appropriate fanfare for a loyal servant. Ethel elects to stay at the graveside alone for a bit and John returns to pick her up. George's graveside is empty; Ethel stands at the graveside of Augustus Stanhope, her lover. Ethel says that she loved him, but they could never have been together. John agrees and takes her home.

William Stanhope sells the estate to Frank Bellarosa. William and his wife Charlotte have dinner with John and Susan to discuss the details. Stanhope mistakenly believes that Frank Bellarosa is a stupid man and does not know what he is doing when it comes to business. John grows more and more disgusted, finally telling Susan's father that he



is a schmuck, among other things, and leaves taking Susan. Arriving home John announces he is leaving, but when he goes to the bedroom to get a bag finds Susan in bed, naked. They make love and John sleeps, deciding to wait until tomorrow to leave.

Part IV: Chapters 22-24 Analysis

John Sutter gets a better look into the mind of Frank Bellarosa when the two take a walk to Fox Point. Bellarosa lays out his plans to Sutter, explaining how Ferragamo will get an indictment from the grand jury, even predicting an arrest on a Tuesday morning. John still has trouble believing that the government would make arrests in order to get better news coverage, but Bellarosa insists that it is true.

Bellarosa goes into further detail, explaining that Ferragamo is looking to cause as much damage as possible to him. Whether the Columbians kill Frank in retaliation, or his own family kills him for perceived threats, Ferragamo will have accomplished what he wants. Though John still cannot believe it, the facts will speak for themselves.

Bellarosa asks John about his tax problems, wondering if he needs any more help, but Sutter tells him that Mr. Melzer is handling things. The fact that Frank is aware of the summerhouse sale stuns John, as does the knowledge that Edward is the person who mentioned this to Frank. John cannot believe that Edward would do such a thing. Though John is not aware of it yet, this is a small clue to the growing relationship between Frank Bellarosa and Susan.

Mr. Mancuso's visit to John aboard his boat is revealing as well. Mancuso at first tries to enlist John's help in bugging the Bellarosa home. When Sutter informs the agent that he is Bellarosa's attorney, Mancuso seems more concerned with saving John and his wife from Bellarosa than collecting evidence. John realizes that he should have followed his original instincts and stayed away from Frank, but it is now too late.

The death of George Allard is life altering for many reasons. John will miss the man, having a friendly relationship with the family retainer. Sutter is also a bit stunned to find Ethel Allard at the graveside of Susan's grandfather, declaring her love for the man. Sutter knew the rumors of Ethel's affair with Stanhope, but never imagined that she would come close to revealing the truth.

The sale of the Stanhope Estate to Frank Bellarosa does not surprise John, but the fact that Susan arranged the meeting between her father and Frank does strike him a bit odd. John takes the opportunity over dinner to share his true feeling with William Stanhope, shocking both William and Charlotte, but apparently not Susan. The breaks that John is making from the people that have been in his life for so long liberate him. The reader can sense the changes that are taking place for Sutter, even as he marvels at them.



Part V: Chapters 25-27

Part V: Chapters 25-27 Summary

In Chapter 25, the end of July, Mr. Melzer calls with a settlement offer from the IRS. John accepts after some brief negotiation, and asks Melzer again why the IRS has chosen now to target him with a tax audit. Melzer does not have a definite answer, but does tell John that it does not seem to be a random act, and advises him to let things go.

Luckily, Sutter also receives an offer on the summerhouse and is able to get a fair price in the soft real estate market.

In Chapter 26, John makes his third early morning Tuesday walk to Alhambra. Frank bets him fifty dollars that today is the day he will be arrested. The two men talk while they eat breakfast, and Frank tells John that the murder charge has revealed many of his assets to the government. Bellarosa predicts that Ferragamo will start RICO proceedings, so that the government can seize his properties.

One of Frank's men announces that the FBI has arrived, and there is some anger as they realize that Mr. Mancuso is alone, walking up the driveway to take Frank into custody by himself. Mancuso arrests Frank after allowing Bellarosa some time with his wife and leaves with the don. John promises Anna that he will get Frank out of jail, and he leaves with two of Frank's men to meet Bellarosa at Federal Plaza. Traffic is slow and John realizes that there are four cars pacing them, actually keeping them from reaching Bellarosa. Deciding that Ferragamo has arranged things so that John would not be at court on time, Sutter issues instructions to Vinnie and Lenny, telling them to go directly to court. The men are not happy, but agree.

In Chapter 27, John is forced to leave the car and run through mid-town traffic to reach the courthouse. Inside he is detained by curious marshals and finally reaches the courtroom. He sits and waits, but is convinced that he has made a mistake, coming to the wrong place. A marshal tells him that Frank is being arraigned elsewhere, and John is about to leave when he realizes that Ferragamo is toying with him again. Back in the courtroom, John arrives just as Frank is brought before the judge, Sarah Rosen. John begins to present his case for bail, and is speaking to the judge when Alphonse Ferragamo bursts in, interrupting. The judge is not pleased with Ferragamo's grandstanding and John grows angry. The two attorneys argue and things grow more heated. The judge is about to refuse bail and John declares that he saw Frank at Alhambra the morning of Juan Carranza's murder. Judge Rosen grants bail, and Frank is free to go.

In the car, Frank tells John that he handles things well, with the exception of some of the questions from the press. Alphonse Ferragamo calls Frank, stunning John. Bellarosa



directs his driver to Giulio's, a small restaurant he likes, so that the two men can rest and decide on the next step.

Part V: Chapters 25-27 Analysis

John Sutter's life continues to change, as does his wife's. When the news comes regarding the IRS settlement and the sale of the house, John is once again unable to reach his wife. Sutter knows that Susan had been spending quite a bit of time at Alhambra, but thought that would change when the stables were completed and the painting was finished. This is not the case. Though husband and wife argue more often, they still seem committed to each other, regardless.

Sutter is thrown into the world of a criminal lawyer the day that Frank is finally arrested. Bellarosa is calm, even betting on the action, an act that will come back to John later and anger him. For now, Sutter just thinks that Bellarosa is more in tune with the workings of criminal courts than he will ever be.

Bellarosa reveals his alibi to John as Mancuso arrives to arrest him, suggesting that Sutter perjure himself so that Frank can be released on bail. John is angry, but grows angrier when Bellarosa suggests that Susan might lie for him. Disgusted John refuses and Frank backs down. It appears that Bellarosa has let the matter drop, but he once again proves himself a fantastic judge of character. When the battle takes place in court between Sutter and Ferragamo, John does in fact tell the judge that he saw Frank at the time of the murder of Juan Carranza. Sutter is shocked at his own behavior, but Frank seems to have known that John would lie, if only to beat Ferragamo, who had annoyed him at every turn.

John Sutter seems resigned to the fact that there is no breaking away from Bellarosa any longer. He is tied to the Mafia don now, more than he ever was before.



Part V: Chapters 28-30

Part V: Chapters 28-30 Summary

In Chapter 28, John and Frank eat and talk at Giulio's while Vinnie and Lenny watch the door. Frank suggests that John call Alphonse Ferragamo and show some respect for his office in order to deflect the statements in court that morning. John agrees to do so, though he is amazed that Frank would care. Frank meets briefly with some men who are in the restaurant, and John assumes that he is politicking, showing the locals that he is not in jail, and not revealing family secrets to the Feds. Frank tells John that they will be staying at the Plaza hotel for a few days so he can meet with some people.

In Chapter 29, Frank and John watch the news, including the clip of John announcing that the charges were part of a vendetta. Frank is not happy about this clip. Bellarosa calls home and Susan answers the phone at Alhambra. The two chat, but John does not speak to Susan. Sutter moves to his room to shower and reflects on his actions and the effect they will have on those around him. John also reflects on the fact that he is involved with Bellarosa, because he was trying to prove something to his wife.

That evening, the hotel fills with men that Frank is associated with, mostly his employees but some men that seem more adversarial. Frank holds meetings and seems to hold court, proving that he is a man who cannot be beaten by the government. John speaks with Jack Weinstein, another of Frank's attorneys, who tries to explain the way the Mafia operates to John. Sutter is shocked to find out that a snitch in Ferragamo's office had alerted them to the morning arrest, and angry that Frank had cheated him out of fifty dollars. John continues to wander the room, speaking to a few people until he realizes this is not wise.

The group watches the 11PM news and the press conference of Alphonse Ferragamo who rehashes the arrest and the investigation leading up to it. The group thins some and John wants to go to bed but is unable as Sally Da-Da, Frank's brother-in-law, is in his bedroom. Frank tells John to wait up for the midnight papers and they do, reading the many different accounts of the morning activities. Afterward John goes to his room, and finds a note from Susan in his suitcase, congratulating him on his court victory, and commenting how lucky it was that John had seen Frank the morning of the murder. Unable to think anymore for the day, John retires for a restless sleep.

In Chapter 30, John calls Susan and tells her that he had a dream that she was having an affair with Frank Bellarosa. John realizes that the dream is true and confronts his wife, who denies it, but does tell him they have some things to talk about. John agrees and says they will talk when he gets home.

Frank and John spend the morning driving around Brooklyn and conducting business. Frank shows John the neighborhood he grew up in, and takes him to his church where they have coffee with the priests. The priests tell Frank that the Bishop is considering



closing the church because of money, and Frank writes a large check on the spot. They continue their journeys about town, and John realized that Frank is making sure that the little people in his organizations can see that he is working and acting like business as usual. After a long day, which John has enjoyed, the two men head back to Manhattan.

Part V: Chapters 28-30 Analysis

The pace of the novel picks up a bit and John is thrown further into the life of the Mafia. At first the lunch at Giulio's seems to be just a celebration of victory, but it becomes clear that Frank is making sure his face is seen, so that no one can accuse him of working with the government and making statements that would harm his family and associates. John is amazed to find himself in this situation, with men guarding the door and other men stopping in for meetings with Bellarosa. Though John has of course been aware from the beginning, dealing with Bellarosa in the element is new for him. The fact that Lenny searches John for a wire or weapons when he uses the bathroom drives this fact home to the reader as well as John Sutter. By taking the case and perjuring himself for Bellarosa, John has stepped outside the life he has always lived, and might not ever be able to go back.

This is also evident when the group checks in at the Plaza Hotel. The purpose of staying in New York for a few days is simple. To make sure that the right people are aware that Frank Bellarosa had won that day in court, and that he was still in charge. The night is one of celebration, but also business. Jack Weinstein tries to explain this to John, and though he understands, it is still difficult to comprehend. Sutter realizes, essentially, that he has thrown his old life away in order to impress his wife, a wife that he now strongly suspects of having an affair with the man he has defended, Frank Bellarosa. There have been very small clues along the way, but Sutter now realizes that they have been there from the beginning. Susan is obviously the person that had told Bellarosa about the sale of the summer house, Bellarosa always asks how Susan is, stating that he hasn't seen her, but John can never reach her at home. John confronts Susan, who denies it, but states that she has finally realized that she loves John and does not want to lose him. While not a confession, it rings of insincerity, and John's suspicions are confirmed.

There is nothing that John can do with this knowledge, and he knows this. Without a confession on Susan's part, John cannot forgive her, and he certainly cannot confront Bellarosa with a guess. Unable to make any decision at this time, Sutter realizes that he will have to continue on the path he has chosen, one he feels that Susan is equally responsible for.



Part V: Chapters 31-33

Part V: Chapters 31-33 Summary

In Chapter 31, Frank and John have the suite to themselves and talk. Bellarosa senses John's mood and reminds him that the state his life is in is his own fault. John agrees, but takes the opportunity to reveal that he knows that Frank set him up with the IRS so that he would have to go to Mr. Melzer for help. Angry at himself for not confronting Frank with his affair with Susan, John heads to the bar where he runs into Jenny Alvarez, a news reporter. Alvarez tries to convince John to do an interview with her but he declines. She follows him to the lobby, and Lenny and Vinnie spot them. To avoid a confrontation, John invites Jenny to his room for a drink, convincing the two men that he has not spoken to the press about Frank.

In the hotel room, John and Jenny go to his room, but John is stopped by Bellarosa who reminds him to be careful what he says to Alvarez, and asks him what's wrong. John wonders if Frank has spoken to Susan, for if he has, then he would know. Frank acknowledges that he has, and tells John he is wrong, and to get thoughts like that out of his head. John tells him he will and says goodnight.

John and Jenny spend a nice evening enjoying each other's company and not discussing business. John is a bit shocked to learn that he and Susan are separated, news that Jenny claims she had gotten from neighbors and friends on Long Island. The two do not discuss Bellarosa, simply watching the news and talking about life and baseball, the first relaxing night that John has had in quite a while.

In Chapter 32, John speaks to Alphonse Ferragamo regarding Frank's case. Ferragamo offers Frank a deal if he can provide information that is reliable and that he will testify to. John agrees to share the offer but is not surprised when Frank turns the offer down. The two men do not discuss Frank's affair with Susan, but Bellarosa does warn John that sometimes people think revenge is a good idea and warns Sutter against it. John assures him that he is not interested in revenge. Frank invites John and Susan to Alhambra for dinner that evening, but John does not accept or decline.

In Chapter 33, John arrives home to an empty house where he packs a bag and leaves to find Susan. Coming across his wife in the orchard, Susan once again denies her affair with Bellarosa, despite the fact that John has told her he will forgive her if she is honest. Susan admits that she is close to Frank, but they are not lovers, and she is sorry if the relationship has upset John, since she loves him. John tells her they will work on things, but a separation now seems the best thing.

Arriving at the yacht club, John discovers that his boat, the Paumanok, has been seized by the IRS for tax reasons. Angry, John takes the sign down and sails the boat out. After drinking for a while, John sinks the boat, stringing flags from the mast that state 'fuck you'. Drinking and thinking in the life raft, John knows that he would have gotten the



boat back from the IRS after the tax payment had been paid, but does not want the one thing that has consistently brought him happiness used by the government to hurt him.

Part V: Chapters 31-33 Analysis

The relationship between Frank and John begins to shift slightly, as Frank becomes aware that John is not as easily led as some of his other associates. John is obviously angry, and Frank is a bit worried where that anger will lead. At first Frank believes that John's anger is the result of Frank pushing the IRS to investigate John in order to create the favor that will result in John being indebted to the don. John is angry with this, but realizes that if Frank had not succeeded with this attempt, there would be other opportunities for Frank to draw John into his plan. Sutter realizes that Frank had orchestrated the entire relationship, perhaps from their very first meeting at Hick's Nursery. What John does not know, is if Frank had planned to have an affair with Susan from the beginning, or if that had just followed some unplanned course.

John confronts Susan in the orchard at Stanhope Hall and more or less begs her to admit to an affair with Bellarosa. John loves his wife, and believes that he can forgive her, but they will be unable to move forward if she cannot tell him the truth, or admit it to herself. Susan is unable to admit it, but reveals that she and the don do have a close relationship, one that she can see would be upsetting to John. Susan suggests again that the two of them get away, leave their troubles behind and move on, but John is unable to do so, unwilling to leave things unfinished.

The fact that the Paumanok had been seized by the government angers John because the boat is his final place of refuge, the one thing that is his, and his alone. By sinking the boat, John frees himself of the last tie to his old life, effectively cutting the ties that bind him to his former self.



Part IV: Chapters 34-38

Part IV: Chapters 34-38 Summary

In Chapter 34, it is now September, and things have changed a bit in the life of John Sutter. The children had returned home around Labor Day, and the family had taken some day trips. Susan visited her parents for a few days and John drove the children back to school. Alphonse Ferragamo was still postponing the trial, telling John that the witnesses were afraid to testify against the Mafia don.

John and Susan have dinner with Frank and Anna at Giulio's on the seventeenth. The evening goes well enough, though all present are a bit uncomfortable. After dinner Frank and John exit to see about the car. John sees two men approaching before Frank, and the shoot Vinnie, then Frank, sending him crashing through the window. John enters the restaurant and realizes that Frank's carotid artery has been cut, and he quickly administers first aid. When the ambulance leaves, Susan approaches and asks John if he had tried to save Frank's life, and tells him that she would not have done so. The police give Susan a ride home, and take John in for a long night of questioning.

Returning home, John climbs into bed, and Susan brings him a glass of juice. John tells her that Frank is alive, but in critical condition. Susan tells John that maybe he had done the right thing in saving the don, and that only time would tell.

In Chapter 35, John visits Frank at Alhambra after the don is released from the hospital. The area is not manned by federal agents, who are there to protect Frank from the people who tried to kill him. Frank denies that he is cooperating with the government, though John encourages him too, if only to save himself and his family. John tells Frank that the rumors he has heard point toward Sally Da-Da as the person who had paid the men to kill Frank. Bellarosa seems to know this, but refuses to consider cooperation. Frank tells John that Ferragamo is now after him, for saving Frank's life and ruining his plan. John is aware of this.

The two men make small talk and Frank asks how Susan is, angering John, who is well aware that Susan has visited Frank despite his request that she does not. Frank thanks John for saving his life, and tells him that he owes him a favor. John agrees to think about what he could possibly requires from Bellarosa.

In Chapter 36, John spends some time in New York straightening out work at his law firm. Returning to Stanhope he speaks briefly to Susan who tells him that she still visits Frank despite his request. She also suggests that John not visit Bellarosa.

Against Susan's wishes John does visit Alhambra, to collect his fees and a favor. Frank is in bed, surrounded by more agents. Bellarosa informs John that he has cooperated with the government, and can no longer pay bills that they don't allow him to. Stanhope



Hall has been sold and will be divided into smaller properties. John is not pleased with the news, even though he does not plan to be living there much longer.

Frank tells John that once the government is finished with him he will be going to Italy, and living in the witness protection program. John asks if Anna will be going as well. Frank hesitates but tells John she will. Bellarosa asks John what favor he wants, and John tells him that Frank should tell Susan that their affair is over, and she will not be going to Italy with him. John also wants Frank to tell Susan that he used her to get to him. Frank agrees without hesitation, but tells John that he had not used Susan to get to him. John tells him that he knows this, and leaves.

In Chapter 37, John prepares for a trip to visit his sister, and Susan announces that she is going for a ride. At 11PM, Mr. Mancuso arrives and John is worried that something has happened to Susan. Mancuso assures him that Susan is not hurt but requests that John come with him. The two men drive to Alhambra, where Frank Bellarosa lies dead, shot three times by Susan Stanhope Sutter. Susan sits calmly and stands when John approaches. Susan tells him that Frank had given her the gun she had used to kill him, asking her to hide it from the FBI. Though shaky, Susan seems to be alright, though unclear as to why she can't just go home. Susan tells John that she had killed Bellarosa for him. After Susan is cuffed and before she is led to a waiting police car, she explains that Frank was evil and had destroyed them. According to Susan, she had killed Bellarosa because John had not.

As he leaves, John passes the painting that Susan had done for the Bellarosa's as a housewarming gift. The picture is beautiful, and one of Susan's best. Unable to control himself, John smashes the picture before leaving.

In Chapter 38, John walks the property of Alhambra in January. The house is gone, bulldozed by the government. Foundations have been dug for the new small homes that will take the place of the once great estate. John wanders and thinks about Susan, who he has not seen since her court date in November. The government had decided not to bring Susan to trial for murder, and John is happy about this because, despite everything that has happened over the past year, he loves Susan and does not feel that she should be in jail.

Susan had gone to live in Hilton Head with her parents. John was living in the gatehouse with Ethel Allard, the guesthouse having been sold to a young couple that worked in the city. John Sutter is unsure of the future, but looks forward nonetheless. Sutter considers buying another boat and sailing around the world. When the journey is over perhaps he will dock at Hilton Head, and see if the love that he and his wife promised to share forever is really still there.

Part IV: Chapters 34-38 Analysis

Lives change quickly in The Gold Coast, and as fall arrives, things seem to be ending for John Sutter and Frank Bellarosa as well. At dinner with the Bellarosa's no one



seems comfortable, and Frank is doing his best to pretend that nothing has ever gone on between himself and Susan. John is aware of this and Susan seems annoyed by it. Only Anna is unsure of what is going on, but as a good wife, she does not comment.

The attempted murder of Frank reveals several things. Though John has been trying to find a way clear of the man, he can not help himself from trying to save him, proving that he is essentially a good man, despite all that he has become involved in over the past several months. Susan's comment that she would not have saved Frank shows the reader another side of her. Susan has become deeply involved with Frank, more so that John on a different level. Though for some reason she cannot or will not break free of him on her own, his death would make that possible, even if he were to die due to an assassination attempt. Anna shows that despite her husband's choices regarding his life and his lack of respect for her as a person, she loves him and will continue to, no matter what he has done.

Frank's downfall is underway, despite his statements denying it. John knows that it is only a matter of time and that Frank is in denial. Sutter cannot understand why Frank would be willing to keep silent, essentially living in a prison in his own home so as not to upset the very people that had tried to kill him. Frank is still in denial, though that changes over a matter of weeks. When John visit's the second time Frank seems resigned to the fact that he will never have his old life back, that he has outlived his usefulness. Bellarosa does tell the government about his associates, finally realizing that he has no choice.

John's final request of the don is the downfall of both men. Frank finally admits that he has had a sexual relationship with Susan, and John is forced to see that his wife has been lying to him all along, though in his heart he knew already. Frank tells John that he had not used Susan, seemingly to relay that he had loved Susan, without saying so. Regardless, it is a woman that will be Bellarosa's downfall when Susan takes his life with his own gun. She never tells John if she had killed Frank because he had ended their relationship, instead she tells him that she had killed Frank for him. John seems to understand what she means. Frank had enticed both of them, and poisoned both of them, effectively ending their lives when he entered theirs.

The novel ends with Susan free and living in Hilton Head with her parents. John still loves his wife, but needs his time to recover from the long year behind them. Sutter plans to sail around the world and hopes that when he returns, he will find the love that the two of them have lost.



Characters

John Sutter

John Sutter is an attorney in his fifties, who is married to Susan Stanhope Sutter. The couple live on the North Shore of Long Island, New York, what is often referred to as the Gold Coast. John Sutter lives a life of wealth and privilege, though the wealth is primarily that of his wife's family. Though John is a successful attorney and descends from a family with an excellent reputation, being married to Susan increases his status in the social class that they exist in.

Having grown accustomed to his life and the things that come with it, Sutter is shocked to learn that his new neighbor is a mafia don, and that the man seems intent on being friends. Though Sutter initially rebuffs Frank Bellarosa's hand in friendship, Sutter eventually does find himself involved with the don for various reasons, ranging from what seems to be a basic unhappiness with his life, to what turns out to be an orchestrated tax problem with the IRS.

Sutter and his wife get drawn into the life of the don and his family, though at various points in the novel they both seem to be against this involvement. Sutter winds up not only helping Bellarosa in business dealings, but representing him on a murder charge that the don has convinced him is false. Drawn closer into the life of Bellarosa and all that entails, Sutter gets the change in his life that he was striving for, however his life and the lives of those closest to him are forever changed as well.

After the murder of Bellarosa, Sutter winds up living in the gatehouse of Stanhope Hall with Ethel Allard, the last remaining family retainer of the once great Stanhope family. Though his wife is charged with the murder of the don, Sutter still loves her, and despite all that the couple have gone through, the reader understands that the love Sutter has for his wife will not change, despite the place where they find themselves.

Frank Bellarosa

Frank 'the bishop' Bellarosa is a mafia don, and head of an important mafia family, though it is never revealed in the novel which family that is. Bellarosa moves to the Gold Coast of Long Island, New York, upsetting the local residents who feel that he is trying to make a place for himself above his class. Bellarosa moves into Alhambra, the estate that borders the land of Stanhope Hall, where John and Susan Sutter live in the guesthouse. Bellarosa extends the hand of friendship to the Sutters, and though at first the couple make it clear that they do not intend to include him in their lives, let alone in their lifestyle, eventually Bellarosa becomes a large part of their lives, so much so that he is a central figure.

Bellarosa sometimes seems to be less than average when it comes to intelligence, but the reader eventually learns that this is not the case. Bellarosa has spent his life rising



through the ranks of the criminal family he now controls, using his intelligence and cunning ways in order to do so. Unwilling to take no for an answer, Bellarosa is more that willing to arrange things so that he achieves his goals. An example of this is using contacts within the IRS in order to force John Sutter to ask for help. Once Sutter owed Bellarosa a favor, the don collects immediately, engaging Sutter as his defense attorney in a murder case.

A family man, married to his wife Anna and the father of three sons, Bellarosa nonetheless has an affair with Susan Stanhope Sutter, the wife of John Sutter. Sutter realizes this during the novel, but can think of no way to confront either party about their relationship until it is too late. The victim of an murder attempt, Bellarosa is saved by Sutter, who demands that in return for saving the don's life, Bellarosa leave Susan alone, and tell her that he will no longer have anything to do with her. Bellarosa agrees, but this turns out to be his downfall, as Susan kills Frank with his own gun in the foyer of the once grand Alhambra.

Susan Stanhope Sutter

Susan Stanhope Sutter is the wife of John Sutter, the main character in the novel. Susan is a wealthy woman, though the family fortune is nowhere near as extensive as it once was. Susan live in the guesthouse of Stanhope Hall with her husband, a wedding gift along with ten acres from her parents. The house belongs to Susan alone.

Susan is not a mean spirited woman, however she has a sense of entitlement that seems to be prevalent among the residents of the North Shore, or Gold Coast, of Long Island, New York. Susan is not only wealthy, but also beautiful and smart. She is periodically moody and sullen, a fact that her husband John is aware of and deals with in the way of couples that have been married for a long period of time. Susan likes to keep her sex life active, and often engages in fantasy with her husband John in various locations in the home and around the estate. John is a willing partner in this, but sometimes wonders what his wife is trying to achieve.

Susan, like her husband, seems to be unhappy with her life, and searching for something to make it more interesting if not more meaningful. Susan's search for something interesting leads her to become involved with Frank Bellarosa, at first innocently by painting a picture of his estate as a housewarming gift, but gradually moving into the role of lover. As life spirals out of the Sutter's control, Susan becomes more entrenched in Bellarosa's life, finally resorting to murder.

Susan tells John that she committed murder for him, in order to free him from the ties that bind him to Bellarosa, however the reader is not privy to her thoughts and feelings. John Sutter believes that his wife had actually fallen in love with the mafia don and when Bellarosa ended the relationship with Susan, she could not bear it.



Ethel Allard

A lifelong employee of the Stanhope family, Ethel Allard and her husband George live in the gatehouse of the Stanhope estate. The only two remaining employees, John Sutter discovers that Ethel had an affair with Augustus Stanhope, Susan's grandfather, while George was away at war. Sutter is sure that if the opportunity arose, Ethel would not be above a bit of blackmail in order to retain her position with the Stanhope family.

A softer side of Ethel is revealed when George dies and she chooses to remain at the cemetery for some time alone. John Sutter returns to give her a ride home and finds her standing at the graveside of Augustus Stanhope. Ethel tells John very simply that she had loved him, and that there was no way that they could have been together.

George Allard

The husband of Ethel Allard, George is the mostly retired caretaker of Stanhope Hall and the estate. George is dedicated to his duties as such, and seems to prefer the old days of glory. George dies while planting trees at the estate, but John Sutter reflects that George would rather have died while working than growing old and frail doing nothing.

Special Agent Felix Mancuso

An agent with the FBI, Mancuso has dedicated his career to ridding the country of the mafia. Mancuso first runs into John Sutter on Easter morning, outside the gates of Alhambra, the Bellarosa estate. Mancuso speaks briefly with Sutter, suggesting that he avoid Bellarosa.

Mancuso is a law abiding, honest agent, who has worked his entire career fighting the Mafia and trying to end their control over others. Now focused on Frank Bellarosa, Mancuso first tries to get John Sutter to work with the FBI by planting bugs in the home of Bellarosa, then watches as Sutter gets drawn into the world of organized crime. He tries to warn Sutter of the dangers, but is unable to convince him to stay away from the Mafia don. Once Sutter is drawn into the fold, Mancuso maintains contacts, continually trying to help Sutter break free. Mancuso understands the draw that the Mafia can have, but tries to give Sutter a better picture of the evil that takes place in the life of Bellarosa almost daily.

Alphonse Ferragamo

The US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Alphonse Ferragamo charges Frank Bellarosa in the murder of Juan Carranza, a Columbian drug dealer. Though it is Ferragamo's job to put criminals in jail, it appears that he has a personal vendetta against Bellarosa, and will do anything it takes to be rid of the Mafia don.



Bellarosa makes a good case to John Sutter, explaining that Ferragamo does not want him in jail, but would prefer him dead. To accomplish this, Ferragamo has set Frank up to look guilty in the case of the Carranza murder, hoping that the Columbians will attempt to kill Bellarosa. Frank also has to worry about members of his own Mafia family trying to kill him, as Ferragamo will try and make it appear that Bellarosa has provided evidence against his associates in order to stay out of jail.

Ferragamo's plan fails, as Frank is expecting it, and has the help of John Sutter to keep him out of jail. Though Ferragamo attempts to sideline any legal steps, Sutter is quick to figure out the deflections and is able to keep Frank out of jail.

Jack Weinstein

Frank Bellarosa's attorney of record, Jack Weinstein has handled all of Frank's criminal cases up to this point. Weinstein is friendly and willing to help John Sutter in any way he can, guiding him through the criminal court system. Weinstein also provides Sutter with valuable help in understanding the varied ways in which the Mafia operates, helping him understand the subtle nuances of the don and his associates.

Juan Carranza

The Columbian drug dealer that Frank Bellarosa is accused of murdering. John Sutter commits perjury and states that he saw Frank at the time of the shooting.

Anna Bellarosa

Frank Bellarosa's wife.

Caroline Sutter

John and Susan's daughter and oldest child, Caroline is away at school. When visiting, Caroline notices that her parents are acting oddly and wonders if they will be getting divorced. Caroline loves her parents, and is as close to them as she can be, considering that she has attended boarding schools for most of her life.

Edward Sutter

John and Susan's son and youngest child, Edward is also away at school. While visiting Edward hooks a shark while fishing and battles the fish, eventually losing the fight. When told that he is as stubborn as his father, Edward is grateful.

Though Edward seems to be a typical child of wealth raised without a care in the world, when he learns of his father's tax problems he promptly asks if there is anyway he can



give his father his trust fund, proving that he does indeed have a sense of decency and caring, and loves his parents.

Lester Remsen

A friend of the Sutter's Lester is a typical WASP, unwilling to accept new people, particularly the 'new rich'. Lester tries to tell John to stay away from Frank Bellarosa, but John ignores his advice, preferring to continue on his journey of danger and discovery.

William Stanhope

Susan's father

Charlotte Stanhope

Susan's mother

Vinnie

An employee of Frank Bellarosa, Vinnie is killed outside Giulio's restaurant the night that Frank is attacked.

Anthony

Another of Frank's men, Anthony lives in the gate house, and sometimes acts as Frank's driver.

Lenny

Another of Frank's men, Lenny is responsible for setting up the hit outside Giulio's. Afterward, Lenny is found dead in the trunk of the limo, killed by the men he had worked for.

Mr. Melzer

A former IRS agent, Melzer helps John Sutter when he is investigated by the IRS. Melzer guarantees that John will not face any criminal charges and that he will save a bit of money.

Steven Novac

The IRS agent that investigates John's negligence in paying his taxes.



Objects/Places

The Gold Coast

The North Shore of Long Island, New York, The Gold Coast is a bastion of old money and old world wealth, where the privileged live. Highly exclusive, the 'old' money families are highly upset by the news that Frank 'The Bishop' Bellarosa, has moved into one of the estates.

Stanhope Hall

The family home of Susan Stanhope Sutter, John's wife. Stanhope Hall, a fifty room mansion is vacant. Susan and John live in the guest house which was deeded to Susan along with ten acres when she married. The gatehouse is occupied by George and Ethel Allard, retainers, or lifetime employees of the family.

Alhambra

The Spanish-style mansion that Frank Bellarosa purchases, next to the Stanhope Estate.

Hick's Nursery

The location where John Sutter first meets Frank Bellarosa.

Grace Lane

The private road that provides access to the homes of the Sutter's and the Bellarosa's.

St. Mark's

John and Susan's church.

The Creek Country Club

The exclusive country club that the Sutter's are members of. John and Susan take the Bellarosa's to The Creek for dinner, upsetting other members.



Perkins, Perkins, Sutter and Reynolds

John is a partner at Perkins, Perkins, Sutter and Reynolds, his father's law firm.

McGlades's

The pub in town where the locals sometimes go to relax and have a drink.

Buddy's Hole

The trendy restaurant where John, Susan and the children have dinner with John's parents. It is here that John tells his parents that he no longer wishes to see them, having grown tired of trying to please them.

Giulio's

The Italian restaurant where Frank and John eat after Frank is released on bail. This is also the location of the failed attempt to murder Frank Bellarosa.

Paumanok

The name of John Sutter's boat.



Themes

Midlife Crisis

In *The Gold Coast* by Nelson DeMille, midlife crisis is a central part of the novel. John Sutter, the main character, suffers from midlife crisis, which can be defined as a period of self-doubt that some people might go through during their middle age, when they realize that their youth is behind them and old age is approaching. With midlife crisis, a person might feel that their life is not meaningful, or simply grow bored. This is the case with John Sutter. Sutter has been perfectly content in life, but the arrival of Frank Bellarosa seems to trigger feelings of unhappiness within him. Sutter is smart enough to realize that something within him has changed, but he is unsure what or why. Susan Sutter's reaction to the Mafia don living next door bothers John as well. Sutter begins to change his behavior, acting out of character. John no longer seems to care about the things that have mattered up to this point, such as keeping up appearances, working at his law firm, and his marriage.

Susan Stanhope Sutter also suffers a midlife crisis, though it is unclear whether she has been headed down that path from the beginning, or if her strained relationship with John has something to do with it. Susan's relationship with Frank Bellarosa had started as a friendship, perhaps Susan taunting the old money friends on the Gold Coast by forming a bond with the Mafia don. The relationship progresses and the two became lovers, culminating with Susan killing Frank in his own home. Though Susan tells John that she has killed the don for him, it appears that Susan has killed Frank because he had ended their relationship.

Frank Bellarosa also seems to experience a crisis of some kind. The head of a powerful Mafia family, Frank moves to the exclusive Gold Coast, and makes an effort to fit in, perhaps trying to change his life and remove himself from the things he has done in the past. Bellarosa is not able to break away, and instead involves John Sutter in a murder trial, and begins an affair with Susan. Ironically it is not the dangerous Mafia life that brings about the end of Frank Bellarosa, it is a woman scorned.

Honor

Throughout *The Gold Coast*, honor is continually revisited. Honor, or the way a person's actions can define their honesty, respect and integrity is an important part of the life of Frank Bellarosa, a Mafia don. Bellarosa controls a large empire of businesses both legal and illegal, and the way people value his honor plays an integral part in his life. If Bellarosa was not respected his empire would not only crumble, but also his life would be in jeopardy. This is evident when he is indicted for murder. Frank must spend days making sure that his extended Mafia family knows that he is still in control of the situation. Despite this, someone attempts to murder Bellarosa while he is out to dinner with his wife and the Sutters. Frank knows that this is a possibility and prepares for the



situation by wearing a bulletproof vest, saving his life. By allowing himself to be indicted for a crime, Bellarosa had lost some of the respect he had earned, in effect losing honor with his peers.

Frank also demonstrates honor when he vows anything to John Sutter after the attorney saves his life. Sutter requests that Frank end his relationship with Susan. Though the affair in itself can be seen as a breach of honor, in the world for Frank Bellarosa this is not the case. It is almost expected for the don to have an affair. Not doing so might make some question his manhood. Frank explains to the Sutters one evening that a married man is supposed to have multiple partners, but a married woman is not. Perhaps in Frank's mind it is Susan who has no honor. Frank acting within his twisted code of honor does break off the relationship with Susan, effectively ending his life as well. Throughout his life Bellarosa had done many things others would frown on, but within his world, his honor had been maintained.

Betrayal

Betrayal is a recurring theme in *The Gold Coast*. Betrayal can be defined as a breach of trust that destroys a relationship. Many of the characters in *The Gold Coast* are both victims of betrayal, or betray others, sometimes both.

John Sutter, the main character, betrays himself. This process begins when Sutter becomes enamored with Frank Bellarosa, his new neighbor. At first John does not wish to have anything to do with the Mafia don, but circumstances combine to push Sutter into the life of Bellarosa. Their relationship causes Sutter to turn against the life he has led for so many years, seeing his friends and associates from a different perspective. Sutter changes his life and his behavior so drastically he ultimately perjures himself in order to provide an alibi for his neighbor.

John's wife Susan betrays herself as well as her husband. Susan had originally mocked their neighbor, appearing to ridicule him, at first not even knowing who the man was despite his fame as the head of a large Mafia family. Susan's life included only the things that she valued, and those things were simply anything she enjoyed. Wealthy and privileged, Susan has spent her life doing whatever she pleases and nothing she does not. The arrival of Bellarosa changes her, and though she claims until the end to love her husband, Susan winds up having an affair with Bellarosa, a dramatic betrayal that results in her murdering the don. Susan also betrays herself at this time. Having lived a life caring ultimately for herself, she claims that she killed Bellarosa for John, to free him from the ties that bind him to Frank.

Frank has lived a life of selective betrayal, doing what needs to be done in order to advance in the Mafia and then to stay on top. It is possible that Bellarosa has lived his life for so long having whatever he wanted that the act of an affair with Susan does not seem to be an act of betrayal to him, but John Sutter obviously would not feel the same way. Bellarosa's affair with Susan is his ultimate betrayal, and ultimate downfall, killed at the hands of a woman, one who is married to a man he considers a friend.



Style

Point of View

The Gold Coast by Nelson DeMille is written in the first person, past tense, from the point of view of John Sutter, the protagonist of the novel. This is helpful to the reader, because the novel centers on the main character, Sutter, and the changes that take place in his life throughout. The reader is privy to Sutter's thoughts and feelings, as well as his interpretation of the actions of those around him. As the Gold Coast is a novel detailing the life of the affluent on the North shore of Long Island, the reader has a better idea of the details of the lives of the extremely wealthy, and the actions of the class as a whole.

The novel is written with detailed descriptions of the area and the people that live on the Gold Coast, as well as dialogue that gives the reader insight into the characters. The descriptive passages give the reader not only a general idea of the setting of the novel, but also history of the area and the rise and sometimes downfall of the privileged who live in the area. The dialogue moves the story along when the need arises, keeping the reader focused on the plot, and providing a humorous look at Sutter's changing beliefs and opinions.

Setting

The novel takes place in and around the North Shore of Long Island, New York, which is sometimes referred to as the Gold Coast, the title of the novel. The North Shore has a reputation as an enclave for the extremely wealthy, with well-known families such as the Vanderbilts and Roosevelts having estates in the area. John Sutter had married Susan Stanhope, and lives with his wife in the guesthouse of the Stanhope estate, which now sits empty and unused. Though the area is still inhabited by the privileged wealthy, from the standpoint of John Sutter, the Gold Coast seems to be disappearing into subdivisions and smaller neighborhoods, something that the wealthy in the area are not happy about, but forced to deal with because even they can no longer support the lifestyle that they have grown accustomed to.

Other locations are visited, which give the reader an idea of what kind of life Sutter and the people he associates with live. Many evenings are spent at The Creek, an exclusive country club, since most of the wives in the area seem more interested in tennis and riding than in cooking and being homemakers. The local yacht club is the location where John keeps his boat, and where the family sails from for a weekend when the children come home from school to visit.

John and more often Susan are frequent visitors of Alhambra, the estate that borders theirs, and the home of Frank Bellarosa, the mafia don. Alhambra is used at one point to show the reader the class difference between the Sutters and the Bellaraosas when



Frank and his wife are unsure what all the rooms in the mansion are and their proper use.

In contrast, the same takes place when John visits Brooklyn with Frank. The author describes John's discomfort at fitting into the lifestyle of Bellarosa, and dealing with the daily customs that exist in his life. The reader is able to get a good sense of the differences and similarities in the two main characters, through the locations that they visit.

Language and Meaning

The language of *The Gold Coast* is modern, as the novel takes place in the 1980's. The descriptive passages allow the reader to see the area through the eyes of the main character, John Sutter. At the beginning of the novel the reader is privy to Sutter's opinions and apparent prejudices about the area and the people that live there, and as his opinions change, the manner in which he describes things changes as well.

The dialogue also allows the reader to differentiate between the characters in the novel. The wealthy residents of the area speak in such a way that their place in the social class is evident. In contrast, the speech of Frank Bellarosa and his associates allows the reader to differentiate between them and the friends and associates of John Sutter. This is fairly consistent throughout, with a minor exception. Though Bellarosa grew up in Brooklyn, New York, John Sutter does point out that his accent places him as something outside of the norm; Bellarosa explains that though he is from Brooklyn, he attended school in Long Island, so he does have some of the affectations that the locals do.

Structure

The Gold Coast, by Nelson DeMille consists of thirty-eight chapters of varying lengths that are divided into six numbered parts. The novel takes place over approximately three quarters of a year and details the life of John Sutter and those around him. Each chapter provides the reader with some insight into the thoughts and feeling of John Sutter, as well as the reaction of those around him. The different parts of the novel separate different times in Sutter's life, and reflect not only the passage of time, but the emotional changes that Sutter goes through.

The plot of *The Gold Coast* is fairly straight forward, detailing the life of John Sutter and his growing restlessness. As the novel progresses the reader is able to be part of the changes that Sutter makes in his life, and the reasons behind the decisions that he makes. As the novel is told in the first person, the reader is also able to understand the feelings behind Sutter's actions.

The novel moves at a fairly fast pace despite the fact that the story takes place over the course of almost a year, with dialogue and exposition twining together to carry the story forward. One is able to follow the plot easily, and the novel is a thoroughly enjoyable read.



Quotes

"My name's Frank Bellarosa. I'm you new neighbor."

What? I think my face remained impassive, but I may have twitched. "Oh," I said,

"that's..." Pretty awful.

"Yeah. Good to meet you."

So my new neighbor and I chatted a minute or two and noted each others purchases.

He had tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and basil. I had impatiens and marigolds. Mr.

Bellarosa suggested that I should plant something I could eat. I told him I ate marigolds

and my wife ate impatiens. He found that funny.

In parting, we shook hands without any definite plans to see each other again, and I got into my Ford Bronco.

It was the most mundane of circumstances, but as I started my engine, I experienced an uncustomary flash into the future, and I did not like what I saw."

Part I, Chapter 1, pg. 4

"I do make love to my wife, Susan Stanhope Sutter, in our bed, and we enjoy it. Yet, I believe that marriages entirely grounded in reality are bound to fail, just as individuals who cannot escape into flights of fancy are bound to crack up. I'm aware that a couple who acts out sexual fantasies must be careful not to step over into the dark side of the psyche. Susan and I have come to the brink a few times, but always draw back."

Part I, Chapter 3, pg. 19

"The problem with a church, any church, I think, is that unlike a country club, anyone can join. The result of this open-door policy is that for one hour a week, all the social classes must humble themselves before God and do it under the same roof in full view of one another. I'm not suggesting private churches or first-class pews up front like they used to have, and I don't think dimming the lights would help much. But I know that years ago, it was understood that one sort of people went to the early service, and the other sort of people to the later one.

Having said this, I feel i should say somethin in extenuation of what could be construed as elitist and antidemocratic thoughts: First, I don't feel superior to anyone, and second, I believe fervently that we are all created free and equal. But what I also feel is socially dislocated, unsure of my place in the vast changing democracy outside these immediate environs and uncertain how to love a useful and fulfilling life among the crumbling ruins around me. The Reverend Mr. Hunnings thinks he has the answers. The only thing I know for certain is that he doesn't."

Chapter four, pgs. 23-24

"One of the nice things about having old money, or having other people think you do, is that you can drive anything you want. In fact, the richest man I know, a Vanderbilt, drives a 1977 Chevy wagon. People around here take it as an eccentricity or a display of supreme confidence. This is not California, where your car accounts for fifty percent of your personality.

Besides, it's not what you drive that's important; it's what kind of parking stickers you have on your bumper that matters. I have a Locust Valley parking sticker, and a Cree,



Seawanhaka Corinthian, and Southampton Tennis Club sticker, and tht says it all, sort of like the civilian equivalents of military medals, except you don't wear them on your clothes."

Part II, Chapter six, pg. 41

"I realized that my growing criticism of my peers was more a result of changes within me than any changes in them. What had once made me comfortable was now making me restless, and I was, quite frankly, concerned about the compromises and accommodations that had taken over my life in insidious ways. I was fed up with being the caretaker of Stanhope Hall, tired of everyone's obsession with the status quo, impatient with the small talk, annoyed at old ladies who walked into my office with ten million dollars in an old valise, and generally unhappy with what had once made me content.

Oddly enough, I didn't recall feeling that wavy the week before. I wasn't certain how this revelation came about, but revelations are like that; they just smack you across the face one day, and you know you've arrived at the truth without even knowing you were looking for it. What you do about it is another matter.

I didn't realize it then, but I was ready for a great adventure. What I also didn't know was that my new next-door neighbor had decided to provide one for me."

Part II, Chapter six, pgs. 54-55

"I lay very still and looked up at the dark ceiling, feeling about as good as I'd felt in a long time, and about as bad as I'd ever felt in my life. What had happened to me in the last few days, I thought, was both apostasy and apotheosis; I had abandoned my old faith, and in the process had acquired new godlike powers. Well, that might be overstating the case, but certainly I wasn't the same man I had been a few weeks ago. After a few minutes of metaphysics, I closed the door on the day. The sound of thunder rumbled in the distance, and I imagined myself out on the ocean at night, alone with my boat, the waves breaking over the bow, and the sails filled with the wind. It was a good feeling, but I knew ultimately, when the storm broke, I could not handle the helm and the sails alone. Wondering what to do about that, I fell asleep."

Chapter 10, pgs 126-127

"Susan, by all accounts, was a precocious, snotty little bitch who everyone thought was bright and beautiful. That hasn't changed much, but the extroverted young woman I first met has become increasingly moody and withdrawn over the years. She lives more in her own world as the world around her closes in. I would not describe her as unhappy, but rather as someone who is trying to decide if it's worth the effort to be unhappy. On the other hand, she is not unhappy with me, and I think we're good for each other.

Regarding our current lifestyle, like many other people around here, we enjoy the good life, though as I said, we live among the ruins of a world that was once far more opulent. Susan, I should point out, can afford to provide us with more hired help, gardeners, maids, even a stableboy (preferably an old gent), but by mutual and silent agreement we live mostly within my income, which, while extravagant by most American standards, does not allow for live-in servants in this overpriced part of the world. Susan is a good sport about doing some house and garden chores, and I don't feel insecure or



inadequate regarding my inability to move into Stanhope Hall and hire fifty servants."
Chapter 12, pg 151

"Then let me put it this way. My prediction is that by the end of this century, Frank Bellarosa will be on the club board, or perhaps there won't be a Creek Country Club. And when it's a town park or a shopping mall, everyone can go there, and we can complain about tight parking and rowdy kids."

"You may be right," said Lester unexpectedly. "But until then, John, we would appreciate it if you didn't bring Mr. Bellarosa in as a guest."

"I will think about that."

"Please do," Lester said. "My best regards to Susan."

"And my regards to Judy. And Lester...?"

"Yes?"

"Go fuck yourself."

Chapter 20, pg 303

"Mr. Mancuso put his jacket on and gathered his shoes and socks. "But being involved with Frank Bellarosa is unethical, immoral, and unwise. Very unwise." He stepped closer to me in the small galley where we were standing. "Listen to me, Mr. Sutter. Forget that I asked you to bug Bellarosa's house, and that he may be innocent of this particular charge. The man is evil. I like you, Mr. Sutter, and I want to give you good advice. Tell Frank Bellarosa to go away and stay away from you and your wife." He actually grabbed me by the arm and put his face near mine. "I am the voice of truth and reality. Listen to my voice. That man will destroy you and your family. Ant it will be you fault, Mr. Sutter, not his fault. For the love of God, tell him to leave you alone."

He was absolutely right, of course, so I said, "Thank you. I like you, Mr. Mancuso. You restore my faith in humanity, but not in much else. I'll think about what you've said."

Chapter 23, pg 365

" Now on to Susan. No, I can't blame her for what happened, for my being at that moment in the Plaza Hotel with a mobster, an accused murderer, and a man who had about two hundred people looking to kill him. I couldn't blame her for my decision to be Bellarosa's attorney. and I couldn't blame her for the unwanted press attention she and I were both now getting and would continue to get until perfect strangers knew all about us. No, I couldn't blame her. But you do see that it was mostly her fault.

I mean, no, not her fault, but sort of her responsibility. In a very small nutshell, it was like this: Susan thought Frank Bellarosa was interesting, and perhaps by inference, more of a man than her own husband. her husband, who truly cares what his wife thinks of him, did not like that. Her husband is a jealous man. And her husband thinks he is every inch the man that Frank Bellarosa is. More of a man in many ways. But it doesn't do a bit of good to say such a thing. You have to show it.

And so, when the opportunity to do so presented itself, ironically through the person of Frank Bellarosa himself, the husband, showing more ego than judgment, proceeded to ruin his life so he could show everyone a thing or two.

Did I have any regrets as of that moment? Not a one, really. In fact, I felt better than I'd felt in a long time. I knew I would."

Chapter 29, pg. 486



"I stood. "Okay, Frank, here's something that's not so funny. You know fucking well that Susan and I are barely speaking and you know fucking well why. If she wants to come here, that's her business, but I don't want you talking to me about her as if you're making polite small talk. Okay?"

Chapter 35, pg 595

"I took her head in my hands and played with her soft red hair. She stopped babbling and looked at me. Those catlike green eyes stared right into me, and with crystal-clear sanity now, she said to me, "I did this because you couldn't, John. I did this to return your honor to you. You should have done it. You were right not to let him die, but you should have killed him,"

Chapter 36, pg. 618



Topics for Discussion

What changes are evident in John Sutter as the novel progresses? What might have caused these changes?

How do the Sutters feel about Frank Bellarosa moving in to the estate next door to them? How do their feelings change as the novel progresses?

What does the novel tell us about the class structure on the Gold Coast? How does John Sutter address these issues? Do his opinions change?

How does Frank Bellarosa manipulate John Sutter into becoming involved with him?

What motive does Frank Give John for the Attorney General trying to frame him on murder charges? Does John believe him? Why?

How do the Sutter's friends react to their relationship with the Bellarosas?

What is Susan's reason for killing Bellarosa? Do you feel that she is being honest? Why or why not.