

Rod: The Autobiography Study Guide

Rod: The Autobiography by Rod Stewart

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Plot Summary

Rod: The Autobiography is the life-story of rock singer and music legend, Rod Stewart. The book sheds light on his notorious womanizing, exposing his personal thoughts and opinions, and details his rise from working class Britain to international stardom.

The book begins with the near-death experience of Rod Stewart after a performance in the summer of 1995. The jet he was planning to take back home struck a bird after take-off, causing engine failure that prompted an emergency landing. The passengers, including Stewart, were unharmed, yet the experience was deeply unsettling for Stewart. Why had he been so lucky? Apart from dodging death in a fatal plane crash, the blessings of Rod Stewart include a successful career, seemingly endless wealth, and a large, loving family. Stewart realized that life can end suddenly and without warning and the story of life as extraordinary and fortunate as Rod Stewart's deserves to be told before it's too late.

Rod Stewart was born in north London in a heavily working class area. His father was a plumber and football enthusiast, and his mother was a homemaker. In his youth, Stewart drifted from one manual labor position to the next, unable to explore his passion for music and entertainment. Indeed, the area had little opportunity for socio-economic advancement, let alone an avenue for musical growth. Beyond these vices, however, the experience of living in North London ingrained a hard work ethic in Stewart. Earning an income builds character and responsibility. These are values that Stewart retains to this day and he even instructs his children under the same value system.

After a period of aimlessness, Stewart was luckily discovered by "Long" John Baldry of the Hoochie Coochie Men and signed onto his first professional singing position. They toured the country, traveling in a beat-up mini-van, filling night clubs with adoring fans, playing blues and rock 'n' roll seven nights a week, experimenting with drugs, and meeting women. It was during this time that Stewart toyed with the idea of developing his own solo career. His experience singing backing vocals in the Hoochie Coochie Men and later the Jeff Beck Group fostered a genuine love of the spotlight. He wanted to sing, and in fact, could sing quite well. Unfortunately, Stewart was a lousy writer, often struggling for days just to draft a few verses. His first two solo albums, *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down* released in 1969 and *Gasoline Alley* in 1970 consisted largely of cover tracks. The albums received mediocre reviews. It wasn't until Stewart released the hit single "Maggie May" in 1971 when his career was radically transformed and he was catapulted into the world of rock-star celebrity.

Stewart was extraordinarily prolific early in his career from juggling a climbing solo career to touring with bands the Jeff Beck Group and the Faces, promoting his music, and raising a growing number of children. He produced fourteen solo albums between the years of 1970 and 1990 that included the much-loved hits "Mandolin Wind," "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy," "Blondes (Have More Fun)," and "Forever Young." However, his path toward musical greatness didn't go completely unblemished. Stewart struggled with drug abuse and addiction. At times, he felt that he simply could not perform without a



few sniffs of cocaine or steroids to alleviate the inflammation in his already over-strained vocal cords. He also, perhaps infamously, drifted from one romantic relationship to the next, causing heartbreaks for many women. If he was inconvenienced by a partner, or was simply drawn to other women, the relationship would collapse.

In this regard, *Rod: The Autobiography* aggressively scrutinizes the personal life of Rod Stewart. It provides detailed accounts of his romantic life, especially his multiple relationships and marriages. The reader is introduced to Stewart as an exceptionally flirtatious boy seeking attention and intimacy from girls. In one revealing chapter, during a period of exploration and carefreeness for young Stewart, his first girlfriend became pregnant. Both were tremendously young and ill-equipped to care for the baby and therefore, the child was placed in the care of adoptive parents. Stewart quickly moved on from the entire affair, however.

Once he devoted his full energy and time to music, his appetite for sexual gratification reached fever pitch. While he was with the Faces, for example, he would often have sex with more than one woman a night. Stewart's collection of relationships meant his family was growing in size. Sarah, the girl given up for adoption was only Stewart's first child. Later, he conceived Kim and Sean Stewart with his first wife Alana Hamilton; Ruby with girlfriend Kelly Emberg; Renee and Liam Stewart with wife Rachel Hunter; and youngest Alastair and Aiden with his current wife, Penny Lancaster. Today, Stewart is perhaps the happiest he has ever been. After winning his first Grammy in 2004 for *The Great American Songbook* collection, Stewart's career is rebounding from sagging popularity in the 90s. He keeps himself active playing and watching British football, building model train sets, and spending his cash on art pieces and cars. His personal life has reached some stability as well. He is deeply in love with wife Penny Lancaster and his eight children have a profound loyalty to him and for one another. He loves his children dearly. Even amidst his personal struggles, Rod Stewart has generated a tremendously successful career and a strong, and loving family. In his own words, he is a "truly lucky" man.



Introduction

Introduction Summary

Rod: The Autobiography opens with Rod Stewart's explanation of "a runner." He leaves stage after a performance, while the audience is still seated expecting an encore. This way, he can beat the traffic and catch a plane without a disturbance. Once, he did "a runner" out of Gothenburg, Sweden to travel back to London. Stewart professes that flying back home in a plane is one of the few places he can relax. After a rigorous performance, he anticipates a soft bed, a warm meal, and glass of wine. On that particular night, however, his ritual of relaxation was interrupted. After the plane ascended, passengers could hear an alarming thump. Stewart glanced anxiously at people seated around him, including his friends and colleagues. When the plane began to rattle and drop, Stewart feared the worst. He prepared for the possible end of his life and career. Not long after, however, the pilot announced on the intercom that they'd be returning to Gothenburg. One of the engines had failed (after colliding with a bird). The team landed safely and proceeded to recuperate at a local hotel bar. Stewart imagined that the following morning, tabloid news agencies would have a field day printing articles with titles such as, "Rod Cooks His Goose." It was only after the incident that Stewart learned the pilot had recently taken a refresher course on how to land an airplane in the event of engine failure. Stewart admits that this event characterizes his life: one of tremendous success and luck.

Introduction Analysis

The incident in the skies above Gothenburg, Sweden was a formative moment for Stewart. Not only had he faced the possibility of death, but the aftermath gave him an opportunity to analyze his life from a new perspective. "True, my life has been a full one - more spectacular and privileged and colorful than I would have dared to dream, with adventures and wealth and love beyond my share" (p. 3). The damage to the airplane turned out to be minor and the worst was avoided. His brush with death may very well have prompted him to begin writing his autobiography, in the hope of sharing his life with the world. From his point of view, he had been terribly lucky. The good fortune of Stewart springs up throughout Rod: The Autobiography, suggesting that talent alone cannot account for his meteoric rise to fame, loving relationships with his children and wife, and a successful battle with cancer. The Introduction to Rod: The Autobiography works as a metaphor for the reader: whenever life presents a seemingly insurmountable problem, or an inevitable disaster, Stewart always manages to rise above it and succeed.



Chapters 1 - 2

Chapters 1 - 2 Summary

Roderick David Stewart was born on January 10, 1945, in a small home on Archway Road, in northern London. The surrounding neighborhood where his mother gave birth had recently been bombed by German air attacks. Stewart rather humorously claims that for all the destruction Hitler brought upon London during the war, he failed miserably in stopping Stewart from entering the world. The Stewart family lived in relative comfort, never going without food, but was undoubtedly working-class. Stewart's father was a plumber and his mother stayed home to care for Stewart and his many siblings. Mary and Peggy were the eldest daughters, Bob and Don, the eldest sons. Rod is the youngest and the last of the so-called "Stewart Clan," an endearing term he uses to illustrate the overall camaraderie and loyalty his family members had for one another. At the same time, he unapologetically views himself as the favored child. He notes that on more than one occasion, his mother would give him the rabbit heart from her popular rabbit stew—a treat previously divided amongst his older siblings. Stewart was shy and largely kept to himself as a youngster. He enjoyed art classes in school, was diligent with his course work, but remained largely undistinguished. Ironically, however, music class was "torture." He would often skip music class by faking sick because he wanted to avoid singing solos in front of his peers. The fear of performing would plague Stewart for much of his childhood. That is, until he received a cheap guitar from his father for Christmas. After experimenting with the instrument for a while, Stewart gathered the courage to form his first small band with friends, the Kool Kats.

In Chapter Two, Stewart sheds further light on his childhood and young adulthood. He begins by reaffirming his love for English football, something that started for him when he was very small. His father had always been a huge football fan; one time showing up late for daughter Mary's wedding because he was busy watching a game that went into overtime. Stewart remarks that in many ways, playing football was the only path for young men of his age to achieve upward mobility. It was a "classic outlet for the under qualified, unconnected working-class kid" (p. 16). He once tried out for the Brentwood Football Club, but to his father's dismay, did not receive a follow-up call (this did not damper Stewart's love of football, however, especially his fondness of Scottish national soccer). During his youth, Stewart held mainly manual labor positions. "You learn a lot about yourself, doing physical work. And what I learned about myself, was that I didn't like doing physical work" (p. 22). Nonetheless, the small income he earned from working allowed him to delve deeper into other interests: clothing, fashion, music, and dating women. At eighteen, Stewart bought his first pair of leather Chelsea boots and steel-strung acoustic guitar. When he worked for his dad at a newspaper shop, he would sometimes close the shop down, take out his musical instruments and practice. Stewart was mainly attracted to American folk singers, especially Bob Dylan, and began playing in front of friends for entertainment.



In addition to clothing, Stewart began a life-long fascination with his hair. He explains, rather proudly, that he has had the same hairstyle for the past forty-five years: a "tousled mop of spikes...carefully organized" (p. 32). He started with a bouffant, or "beehive," combing it in the back, and blow-drying the front into an upward pointing puff. He would leave his parent's house after showering and travel to his sister to finish styling his hair (she had the hair drying equipment). The difficulty was keeping the bouffant erect, as it would collapse with the slightest breeze. Before male grooming products were available to the larger public, Stewart used caramelized sugar to keep his hair up. "When you woke up in the morning, it was as though someone had attacked you in the night with a stick of candy floss" (p. 34). The bouffant shifted to a more spiked look during his so-called "Jeff Beck Days," a period in his life where he and his close friends formed a rock band (a story that will be shared in detail later in the book). Stewart's hair has undergone changes throughout the years. He fiddled with changing the color, the length, the style. However, he swears to never cut his hair above his collar, exposing his neck. He is aware that cutting his hair would damage his reputation and ultimately, his trademark as a celebrity.

Chapters 1 - 2 Analysis

Stewart's love of women started early. His first childhood crush was his third grade history teacher, Mrs. Plumber. He was drawn to her legs, and the shape of her body hidden behind a tight, pencil skirt. He found being intimate with girls difficult at first, mostly because of his living arrangement. But after a few unsuccessful attempts, Stewart had his first sexual experience outside a local jazz festival. It was also during this time that Stewart entered a rebellious, beatnik phase. He grew his hair out, refused to bathe, became more engrossed in music (especially American folk), and entertained socialist politics (albeit superficially). This was a period of adventure for Stewart. He traveled to France, slept under bridges, hopped trains and performed on the streets for passersby. Stewart's parents feared he was consumed by a "lack of direction." It is unclear what caused Stewart to abandon his beatnik attire: perhaps his desire for female attention outweighed his urge to appear "folksy." What is clear, however, is that Stewart has always enjoyed nurturing his appearance, willing to spend money, time, and meticulous attention on achieving the perfect look. Importantly, fussing over his hair and clothing helped foster meaningful relationships with life-long friends like Ewan Dawson, girlfriends like Britt Ekland, and his hair stylist, Denny. Stewart views his hair as kind of "barometer" for his personal success. It is essential to his identity and self-worth. He "brings" his hairstyle wherever he goes— to small gigs, recordings, concert performances, music festivals, and interviews. In Stewart's eyes, if his hair no longer cooperates, or turns grey, or falls out, he might as well stop producing music altogether. Stewart discusses that his hair is in many ways, a trademark; an identifiable symbol for his name and business. Long, spiky blonde hair is a part of Rod Stewart, something which his fans have come to easily recognize and adore.



Chapters 3 - 4

Chapters 3 - 4 Summary

In Chapter Three, Stewart discusses how he met and courted his first serious girlfriend, Sue Boffey and the crisis they encountered as a couple. Stewart and Boffey met through a mutual friend and spent time hopping trains, listening to music, and going to the beach. However, within a year of their relationship, Boffey became pregnant. When she told Stewart the news, he recalled feeling disbelief, then immeasurable fear. How would his parents react? Stewart was confident they would not react well, so as a result, he concealed it from them. Stewart's close friends attempted to raise money for an abortion, but were unable to cover the full costs. In addition, abortion at that time was illegal under British law, and Boffey herself refused to undergo such a procedure. She decided to give the child up for adoption. They attempted to rekindle their carefree lifestyle after Boffey became pregnant, but after four months, they split apart. After the separation, she vandalized Stewart's guitar in a fit of rage - something which Stewart believes was a result of ignoring her. When the baby was born, Stewart quietly left his parent's house for the hospital and signed the adoption papers. He believed at that time, that he would never hear from Boffey or the baby again.

Stewart always enjoyed going to dark, seedy music clubs for a show. One venue he was particularly fond of was the Eel Pie Island Hotel. Stewart traveled to Eel Pie Island one night to see a friend's band play. This friend was Mick Jagger, and the band was the Rolling Stones. Stewart recalls feeling envious during the Stone's performance (at one moment, he concluded that his voice was superior to Jagger). Stewart imagined that he too, could be a successful musician. However, this initially proved difficult. One of the first bands that he joined was the Raiders, a band that was promptly rejected by every music producer they encountered. During this period of uncertainty in both his ability as an artist and his future, Rod Stewart met Long John Baldry, a lively and ambitious musician in the British blues music scene. Baldry noticed Stewart playing his harmonica late one night after a concert on the train platform in Twickenham and was impressed. He offered Stewart a weekly salary of 35 pounds and a background vocals position in his band, the Hoochie Coochie Men. After convincing his parents that the opportunity was legitimate, Stewart left with Baldry to begin his work in the band.

His first experiences in a band were exhilarating. He was extremely busy, sometimes playing seven nights a week with three shows per night on the weekends. The van that Stewart and his band used to travel between venues was an old, beat-up moving van, designed as a mock-WWII bomber and was complete with couches and an oil-lit stove. It was also during this time Stewart first ingested drugs to "enhance" his performance. He would take a small, black pill, or "black bomber" that gave him instantaneous energy and alertness. Drinking heavily was also a popular pastime of the group. After a round of drinks one night, Stewart recalled that his urge to urinate became so profound he was forced to relieve himself into an empty beer bottle. This bottle unfortunately overturned and soaked through the floorboards, dripping onto Baldry himself.



During his time with the Hoochie Coochie Men, Stewart expanded his range as a solo artist. Stewart finally was able to express his love of R&B, blues, and folk in front audiences for the very first time, singing Muddy Water's "Tiger in Your Tank" and John Lee Hooker's "Dimple." Fans responded well to his singing abilities and the Hoochie Coochie Men became a sought after commodity in the local, underground rock 'n' roll scene.

Chapters 3 - 4 Analysis

Stewart had lived a rather carefree lifestyle with his girlfriend Sue Boffey. The couple had spent their time doing as they pleased. However, reality hit when Boffey became pregnant with Stewart's child. Stewart and Boffey needed to confront their responsibilities as parents at a very young age. However, rather than raise the baby together, they gave her away to be adopted. It is unclear whether Boffey was pressured to make that decision, whether by her family, friends, Stewart himself, or that it was chosen freely. Indeed the conditions for raising the child were inadequate at best: Stewart and Boffey were incredibly young at the time and their relationship had altogether deteriorated. Stewart suggests that they simply could not adjust to the change - largely because their relationship was founded on flexibility, independence, and the freedom to explore. Having a baby would end that. Stewart was drawn away from Boffey, spending time with his friends and playing music, while she was left to carry the child alone. After signing the adoption papers, Stewart fully expected the problem had been solved. Boffey effectively disappears from the book after Chapter Three. Her condition becomes unknown. The reader is left to deduce is that without Boffey or the responsibilities of parenting, Stewart was free to move on and pursue his dreams in music.

After Long John Baldry discovered Stewart in a train station and signed him on to the Hoochie Coochie Men, Stewart became immersed in his new lifestyle, one that allowed him to engage fully with music. He was now beyond the authority of his parents and traveling with other like-minded, musically talented, young men. They would fill music clubs with adoring fans, perform late into the night, drink, take drugs, meet women, and do it all over again the next day. At the same time, Stewart was gathering a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge. "Here I was onstage with proper, highly accomplished, much older musicians like Cliff Barton, Ian Armit, and the guitarist Geoff Bradford" (Page 61). Rather than experimenting with amateur musicians in front of friends, Stewart was cutting his teeth playing with veteran musicians, selling out shows and recording albums. But perhaps the most influential figure in Stewart's life at that time was Long John Baldry. Baldry was an incredibly charismatic man and seemed to know exactly what fans wanted to hear and see. Learning how to stand, walk, and talk in front during a performance were things Stewart took from Baldry—information that he uses to this day. Indeed, Chapter Four sheds light on this remarkable evolution in Stewart's life. Stewart is introduced as an un-ambitious, directionless boy transitioning from one dead-end job to the next. Then by chance (and an ability to impress Baldry) Stewart is a hired, professional vocalist fraternizing with veteran musicians. Here, Stewart reiterates how incredibly fortunate he's been. If he hadn't connected with Baldry

that night on the train station, Stewart doubts he would have turned into the successful musician that he is today.



Chapters 5 - 6

Chapters 5 - 6 Summary

In Chapter Five, Stewart meets John Rowlands and Geoff Wright, two men interested in sponsoring Stewart's music and working as his managers. At first, Stewart was hesitant: "I was smart enough to know that these are famously shark-infested waters—and that, classically, this is the moment in the story when the emerging singer naively, and possibly even drunkenly, signs everything away". But after reviewing the contract and calculating the numbers with his brother Don, Stewart agreed to work with them. Rowlands and Wright worked diligently to promote Stewart, although attracting willing producers proved difficult at first. Some in the British music scene viewed Stewart as too unattractive or that his voice was too rough and off-putting for commercial success. Regardless, Stewart's managers were able to solidify a record deal with Decca Records - the record label that famously worked with the Rolling Stones. Even though he was tremendously excited, he arrived on the day of the recording session late and to the frustration of everyone in the room, had failed to prepare for the pop songs Decca Records advised he sing. Stewart proposed that they move away from pop and toward the blues. Decca reluctantly agreed. His first single, Sonny Boy Williamson's "Good Morning, Little Schoolgirl" and Big Bill Broonzy's "I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town," was released to public in the fall of 1964, but failed to become a success. However, Decca Records managed to reserve a spot on the hit British television show, *Ready, Set, Go!* for the fledgling Stewart.

In a separate component of Chapter Five, Stewart details his love and fascination with model railroads and trains. He is not particularly interested in trains themselves; rather he enjoys recreating the layout of cities and the landscape surrounding the railways. Modeling cities and their relationships to trains is what interests Stewart. His first train set was given to him by his father as a boy. As a young man, paper-Mache towns and model railroads crisscrossed his bedroom. Stewart transported his love of model trains to America, and in the early 1990s, began in earnest constructing a 300 square foot model based on American industry in the mid-twentieth century. Stewart has appeared on the cover of *Model Railroader* and received a diploma from the National Model Railroad Association.

In the fall of 1964, Stewart found himself with a failed first single and a band slowly breaking apart. Long John Baldry owed approximately £3,000 to lenders for trying to keep his band afloat. As a result, the Hoochie Coochie Men dissolved. It was during this time that Stewart began working with Giorgio Gomelsky, an Eastern European entrepreneur who was particularly interested in nurturing the R&B scene in Britain. Gomelsky, with the help of Baldry, hired Stewart, the youthful vocals of Julie Driscoll, and organist Brian Auger to form the R&B band, Steampacket. The band got off to a rough start. Stewart complained that the band consisted of too many vocalists. For Stewart, the four singers were, "an awful lot of ego to try and wedge onto the stages of some fairly poky provincial blues clubs" (p. 80). Quibbles emerged between band



members, many stemming from those who shared competing affections for Julie, the female vocalist. Stewart recalled that Brian Auger, in particular resented Stewart for choosing to work on his hair rather than set up the equipment for the night's show (Stewart was also intimate with Julie, much to Auger's chagrin). The band had its successes too. A performance at the London Palladium electrified the audience, including Stewart's own family who sat in the balcony. But sadly, Stewart noticed that the band was stuck in a "diminishing circle" (p. 83). They failed to garner a large fan base, sticking to performances at universities, blues clubs, and other small venues. They were also a cover band, unable or unwilling to write their own material. Stewart felt trapped. So after a disastrous trip to Southern France, where Stewart was abandoned in the U.K while his band members went abroad, Steampacket split. Undeterred and riding the momentum of his experience with his former bands, Stewart quickly joined the band Shotgun Express with Mick Fleetwood and Peter Green (both went on later to form the band, Fleetwood Mac). Yet once again, after failing to inspire British audiences with his cover songs, Stewart reached a dead end. He was sure that his singing ability was not to blame and he simply needed to produce original material.

Chapters 5 - 6 Analysis

As Stewart progressed in his career, he encountered numerous uncertainties and disappointments. In this regard, Chapters five and six both reveal how Stewart failed before he ultimately succeeded. After Rowlands and Wright entered the picture and began looking for recording opportunities, record companies refused to work with Stewart. They found his appearance lacking and his voice repellent. Similarly, his first covered solo singles, "Good Morning, Little Schoolgirl," "The Day Will Come," and the dance floor hit "Shake" all failed miserably in attracting the listening public. His band Steampacket never made it to the United States to tour—Stewart had also dreamt of traveling to America and immersing himself in American society and culture. America is the center of blues, jazz, and soul music and the birthplace of his idols Sam Cooke and Otis Redding. So after Steampacket fell apart and his solo career remained uninspiring, it appeared that Stewart was once again at a loss.

The urge to give up singing was just around the corner. His talent had not yet been fully realized and he was still bound to petty family distractions. For example, during his performance with Steampacket at the London Palladium, he feared "catching" the eye of his Aunt Edna or embarrassing himself in front of family members who were seated in the balcony. It is also important to note that Stewart never viewed his involvement with bands the Hoochie Coochie Men, the Raiders, or Steampacket as a "career" or something of permanence. He believed that Britain's love of American R&B and rock 'n' roll wouldn't last. He enjoyed it when it was available, taking positions when offered to him. Yet at the same time, he deeply desired to continue, but was finding it increasingly difficult to make an impression (especially as a solo artist). As made evident with the demise of Steampacket and Stewart's initial failure as a solo artist, cover music only goes so far. In order to continue singing and performing, Stewart needed buckle down and give the public new material.



Chapters 7 - 8

Chapters 7 - 8 Summary

Chapter Seven begins with Stewart meeting the guitarist Jeff Beck at the Cromwellian bar in 1966. The two admired each other's work; Beck a talented guitarist from the Yardbirds, Stewart a promising singer and entertainer. Beck had produced a hugely successful single, "Hi Ho Silver Lining," a song later enshrined in British pop music history and British culture. Unfortunately, Beck hated everything about the song as well as the commercial success it brought him. He and Stewart envisioned their collaborative music as grittier, more experimental rock. Stewart describes this type of rock as "Chicago blues but harder and heavier" (p. 90). They formed the band, the Jeff Beck Group, with Beck leading vocals at the behest of his manager Mickie Most. Their first gig was in the spring of 1967. Sadly, the concert was a flop and the band entered a rough patch. Stewart concedes that the band's shared vocals caused a conflict of egos. And Beck, whenever in a moment of despair, seemed to fire the drummer and hire a new one. The Jeff Beck Group also failed to create their own brand of original music—Beck lacked the creativity and Stewart tended to gravitate toward folksy, the exact opposite of futuristic, heavy blues. It is because of this that their first album, *Truth*, was comprised almost entirely of cover songs. Stewart likens the Jeff Beck group to a proto-Led Zeppelin (Jimmy Page and John Bonham were fans of Stewart and Beck), but Led Zeppelin succeeded where the Jeff Beck Group failed. Led Zeppelin was able to master original material. In 1968, the Jeff Beck Group toured America: Stewart's first trip to the States. They made it a priority to visit the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Stewart notes the wonderful irony that he, one day, would be performing at the Apollo Theater alongside Smokey Robinson and James Brown. Their first performance in the States was, surprisingly, a massive success (although Stewart feared he wouldn't be considered a legitimate blues musician because of his whiteness). The *New York Times* praised the band, including Beck's guitarist ability and Stewart's singing. According to the *Times*, the Jeff Beck Group had the, "brilliance of Jim Morrison teamed with Eric Clapton" (p. 99).

In a subsection of Chapter Seven, Stewart explains his love of cars. He notes that he's never fully understood the mechanics of cars but he's always held a fascination of them. Indeed, buying cars has always been a motivation for Stewart to continue working. He had hoped to buy an MG Midget while working for the Hoochie Coochie Men but failed because his father used the money to pay an important bill (Stewart was sore but understood). But after working with the Jeff Beck band, Stewart was able to purchase his first car, a secondhand Mini Traveler. At the time however, Stewart didn't have a license. He enlisted the help of his friend Pete to pass drivers training for him (Britain at the time didn't require photo IDs). Having a car gave him tremendous independence. It gave him the ability to pick up women and go out for the evening. After his financial ability grew, Stewart purchased a plethora of expensive, luxury vehicles: a Marcos, a Miura S Lamborghini, and a white Rolls-Royce (after "Maggie May" soared on the British and American music charts), a Lamborghini Espada, a Shelby Cobra, a black Porsche Turbo Carrera, and a pale blue Murcielago. Fortunately, given the speed of



these vehicles, Stewart has only been involved in two accidents, both of which were relatively minor. He was once carjacked and forced at gunpoint to hand over his Porsche. Today, Stewart doesn't drive fast or carelessly. In part, he claims age has weakened his ability to drive safely. But more importantly, given his large family and loving wife, he has "too much to lose" (p. 117).

Chapter Eight covers the years between 1969 and 1974, a period that was marked by high productivity and transformation in the life of Rod Stewart. It was also the time when he felt it was his last chance to "make it." Up until 1969, he had wonderful, formative experiences with various bands such as the Hoochie Coochie Men and the Jeff Beck Group. But all of the exhausting and sacrificial hours spent on stage and in the studio hadn't amounted to anything of notice. By the time Stewart began his solo career, the Beatles had already come and gone and the Rolling Stones were international superstars. Stewart needed to give Mercury Records his best effort, and prove to the world that he was a singer. He was confident that he would succeed: "I was blessed with distinctiveness. The voice had its own character, and it was a character...that spoke directly to people" (p. 120).

During this time, Stewart created albums for Mercury Records. In addition to covering songs of Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones, Stewart finally wrote and prepared his original material, "Blind Prayer," "Cindy's Lament," and "I Wouldn't Ever Change a Thing" to name a few. In the fall of 1969, Stewart's debut solo album, *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let you Down* (The Rod Stewart Album in the U.S.), was released to the public to popular and critical acclaim. He later recorded his second album, *Gasoline Alley*, an ambitious compilation of folk, rock, soul, blues, and pop. As a result of his second album, *Rolling Stones* magazine noted that he was a "supremely fine artist," a major confidence booster for the young Stewart. His third album however, *Every Picture Tells a Story*, and his single, "Maggie May" changed everything. The song (which Stewart admits he originally disliked and even toyed with the idea of leaving it out of the album altogether) became an international sensation. DJs across the world, chiefly in the United States, played it frequently. "Maggie May" soared to the top of U.S and U.K music charts and garnered a legion of life-long fans for Stewart's music. He finally had the attention of the public—he wouldn't waste this opportunity.

Chapters 7 - 8 Analysis

The chemistry between Rod Stewart and Jeff Beck in the studio and on stage was remarkable. Stewart later claimed that there simply was nothing like Beck's guitar paired with his voice. They electrified American audiences and helped usher in a new era of hard rock (U.S audiences were attracted to this heavier brand of rock; something which British audiences found more distasteful). Both men had a deep respect for each other as musicians; their ability and ingenuity. Yet at the same time, they were polar opposites and bumped shoulders often. Beck, the steely guitarist could roll his eyes at Stewart, the flamboyant vocalist and entertainer. Stewart was also close friends with Ronnie Wood, so when Beck kicked Wood out of the Jeff Beck Group, Stewart lost interest in the band. The Jeff Beck group fell apart in 1969, right before the famed Woodstock



festival, although the band was invited to perform. Beck and Stewart remained friends after the break up. Yet relations soured when Stewart invited Beck to contribute to his 1984 album, *Camouflage* and to join him on tour. In short, the arrangement did not work out. Much to Beck's disappointment and frustration, he was cast as a background supporting role. Beck indeed left the tour, making a spiteful comment that Stewart's audience consisted mostly of "housewives"—a group that Beck apparently didn't want to waste his time on. They reunited briefly in 2009 to little success and attempted to reignite their previous collaborative genius. It failed once again. They haven't spoken since. As mentioned above, Stewart attributes their eventual parting of ways to their inability to overcome personal, behavioral differences. Both men simply did not want to work in each other's shadow.

In Chapter Eight, the readers finally witness Stewart rising above the "diminishing circle" of small-time tours and sporadic popularity with the release of his first three solo albums. The key to their success, Stewart contends, is their abundance of original material that Stewart created and recorded. This is especially insightful because Stewart found writing lyrics tortuous. He procrastinated heavily, often waiting until the night before a jam session, forcing himself to the desk to write lyrics for his songs. He also feels self-conscious about exposing his lyrics to an audience; a feeling generated from a previous traumatic experiences in grade school music class. Yet he desperately wanted to emulate blues songs of the past - blue songs that had a compelling narrative and a soul (in other words, Stewart recognized greatness, yet struggled to achieve that level of musical creativity). In addition he learned, perhaps the hard way, that covering music only provides temporary and limited success. The bands that he was involved in early in his profession dissolved rather rapidly, most likely due to their inability to produce original material.



Chapters 9 - 10

Chapters 9 - 10 Summary

In Chapter Nine, Stewart felt compelled to fill a vacated front man position in the rock band, the Faces (formally the Small Faces). The Faces at the time were in need of direction. Their lead singer Steve Marriott had abruptly left the band to pursue his own solo career and the remaining members, Stewart's old friend Ronnie Wood, Ronnie Lane, and drummer Kenny Jones, were left struggling to fill seats for concerts. In part due to Stewart's mounting confidence as a singer (his first album, *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down* was released around the same time to critical acclaim), and in part due to Stewart wishing to return to band life, he happily agreed to sing lead vocals for the Faces. The Faces appeared on the world stage at a time when progressive hard rock was becoming popular, especially in the United States and Canada. This brand of rock music involves a heavy reliance on the electric guitar and loud, spectacular performances. After the release of their album, *First Step* in 1970, they were met with enthusiasm at Boston, Detroit, and Toronto. During his time with the Faces, Stewart experimented with performance "tricks" such as swinging the microphone stand in the air, dancing around on stage kicking soccer balls into the crowd and holding conversations with audience members. One time, Stewart flung the microphone stand so high in Detroit, Michigan that it lodged into the lighting rig and never came back down.

The Faces were impromptu, playing music without adequately practicing or planning, and were wild partiers that drank heavily, snorted large amounts of cocaine, slept with multiple women, and demolished hotel rooms. Stewart recalls using "pharmaceutical" cocaine throughout a performance. When it became apparent that cocaine was wreaking havoc on their nasal cavities and vocal cords, Stewart and the other members of the Faces opted to take the drug anally. Lastly, their behavior in hotel rooms (i.e. breaking furniture, drawing penises on the wall, smashing liquor bottles on ground, holding loud parties) eventually led to their blacklisting from the Holiday Inn hotel chain. It wasn't long however until fractures began to emerge in the group. The solo career of Stewart was getting more attention than that of the Faces. Record label companies would treat Stewart and his band members disproportionately, providing separate, more expensive cars and hotel rooms for Stewart. In the America, the band was dubbed, "Rod Stewart and the Faces." Ronnie Lane was horrified: his worst fears, that front men cannot be trusted and will abandon their fellow band members, had once again come into fruition. Lane accused Stewart of hoarding his best energies and material for his own solo albums and leaving the leftovers for the Faces. Unable to find a resolution, Ronnie Lane left the band in 1973. Ronnie Wood soon followed, lending his guitarist abilities to the Rolling Stones.

In a separate component of Chapter Nine, Rod Stewart discusses his experience when the Scottish national team qualified for the 1978 World Cup in Argentina. Stewart and a good friend, Ewan Dawson traveled to Buenos Aires to attend the matches. Upon their



arrival, Stewart and Dawson were invited to dinner by a record label executive. After their meal, bandits suddenly stormed into the restaurant and demanded that Stewart hand over his jewelry. "However, someone must have hit an emergency alarm button, because before the bandits could collect their prize, the sound of a two-tone police siren was heard from the street" (p. 160). A gun battle ensued. After ducking underneath the table and fearing for his life, the police announced that the bandits had been killed. Stewart was able to retrieve his jewelry. Unfortunately the next day, Scotland lost to Peru 3-1. Stewart's pre-released World Cup song, Ole Ola, plummeted in the UK charts, and his manager, Warner Bros. demanded that he return back to the States.

Stewart opens Chapter Ten with a party he and his band, the Faces, attended in Los Angeles, California. It was common for women to throw themselves on Stewart and his band members. However, one woman in particular, caught his attention. Her name was Dee Harrington, a record company secretary and the daughter of a Royal Air Force pilot (British, like Stewart). Harrington was a pretty blonde, but Stewart was attracted to her palpable self-confidence and her love of soul music. The two began seeing each other and not long after, were engaged. At that time, Stewart's single, "Maggie May" had made him an incredibly wealthy man. He now had piles of money to spend, and a girl to spend that money on. Stewart bought a mansion in the English countryside called Cranbourne Court—a beautiful stucco-faced Georgian mansion once owned by comedian Bob Hope. The couple went about decorating its multiple rooms and populating the land with dogs, birds, cows, and cats. Stewart recalls the fun they had together; playing hide-and-seek, cooking spectacular dinners, hosting parties and inviting friends, and taking walks to local pubs.

Although Stewart's career and wealth it generated enabled an active, luxurious life with girlfriend Dee Harrington, it also was the largest point of contention between them. Stewart was becoming a musical sensation and in high demand. His album, *Every Picture Tells a Story* and his hit single, "Maggie May" were tremendous successes. Stewart also became more heavily involved in cocaine and alcohol use (he describes two relationships, one with Elton John, and with the Keith Moon, the drummer of the Who, as particularly drug-hazed). Stewart is quick to point out, however, that he could control his urge to use drugs, somehow. He was never really drawn to getting completely drunk as his former band members in the Faces often would do. And he always prioritized Sunday morning football over a Saturday night binge. Elton John gave up the habit in the late 1970s and Moon, unfortunately succumbed to a drug overdose and died around that same period. The relationship between Dee and Stewart began to collapse. Stewart's rising fame meant less time for him to spend with Dee in England. It also encouraged a constant barrage of infidelity accusations coming from the tabloid press. This pushed Dee further away from Stewart, constantly suspicious of his time away from her. In 1975, after suspecting Stewart of infidelity again, this time with Britt Eckland, she moved out of Cranbourne Court. The relationship was over.



Chapters 9 - 10 Analysis

The departure of Steve Marriot from the Small Faces in 1969 emotionally wounded the remaining band members. It appeared that Marriot, like so many other front men of rock bands, preferred to further his individual career over the shared success of the group. It was no wonder then, that Ronnie Lane in particular was suspicious of accepting Stewart and resented him for having a solo career. *Rod: The Autobiography* touches on the contention between fame and personal relationships. In Chapter Ten, Dee Harrington gradually drifted away from Stewart and became suspicious of his activities, chiefly because his celebrity put a strain on the relationship. Similarly, the division between Rod Stewart and his band, the Faces, existed in part because of Stewart's success relative to the other band members. For Stewart, fame created great wealth and opportunity. However, it also engendered suspicion, jealousy, frustration, and betrayal. Being in a rock band is incredibly personal; each band member made vulnerable to the criticisms of each other. Yet at the end of the day, the Faces were a business entity. In this light, the decision for Stewart to abandon the Faces was strictly business—he had limited energy and time and wished devote it to cultivating his solo career. Indeed, Stewart gathered many valuable experiences during his time with the Faces. He plunged into the lifestyle of a successful rock artist, a symbol of rebelliousness and luxury. His decision to spend greater time on his personal music was never meant to ignore those successes and experiences, or to hurt the band members of the Faces. Stewart was simply could not push aside the attention his work demanded of him.

Another sign of rebelliousness in Rod Stewart's life is his unwavering love of Scottish and Celtic football. Stewart's rooting for Scotland, especially during Scottish v. England matches, is particularly rebellious because he himself is an Englishmen. A brief overview of British history reveals the historic contention between Scotland and England—Scotland, as well as Wales and Northern Ireland were subsumed by the English Monarchy to create the United Kingdom. Where did his love of rejecting the English football team come from? Stewart grew up in England, had an English mother, and as a youngster, never traveled there. Stewart traces his love of Scottish football to his father, who was a passionate Scottish football fan. Indeed, on one occasion, Mr. Stewart as a young man broke into Wembley Stadium to watch the Scottish national team play. Searching for a place to sit and blend in, he chose a seat nearest to him: the seat reserved for the king of Afghanistan. Beyond the Scottish national team, Stewart is huge fan Celtic club football. He even had the gall to invite them to train in his backyard. Much to his disbelief, they agreed. Stewart was overjoyed.



Chapters 11 - 12

Chapters 11 - 12 Summary

After Dee Harrington moved out of Cranbourne Court, Stewart saw actress Britt Eckland more often. Eckland, made internationally famous through her role in the James Bond film, *The Man with Golden Gun*, had recently left her husband, music mogul Lou Adler and met Stewart backstage at a Faces concert in 1975. Stewart described Eckland as "genuine and down-to-earth...always pitching in at other people's houses, helping with the cooking, doing the washing up" (p. 192). Complimenting her warm nature, Eckland loved art and music, and was an expert in interior design. She introduced Stewart to exotic vases, lamps, lion-skin rugs, and other fashionable furniture pieces. The relationship between Eckland and Stewart invited criticism, however, especially from the British press. They accused Stewart of becoming "all Hollywood" for dating Eckland, an American actress. Some in the press even accused her of breaking up the Faces (similar accusations are placed on Yoko Ono as the one who destroyed the Beatles for her relations with John Lennon).

Adding to his "Hollywood" label, Stewart left Britain for Los Angeles to be closer to Eckland. Stewart admits another motivation for moving was financial: "The particular rate of tax from which I was exiling myself was 83 percent. You can surely imagine how much it was paining me to have that much gouged out of my earnings on an annual basis" (p. 197). His manager Billy Gaff (formally the manager of the Faces) set him up with a living arrangement, under the condition that he not travel back to Britain for year (mostly for tax evasion purposes). Soon after the move, Stewart purchased a \$750,000 home in the Holmby Hills area and settled into the community there, joining a small football club of British expatriates. During this time he began work on his fourth album, *Atlantic Crossing* in Los Angeles and the Muscle Shoals Sound Studios in Alabama. Stewart encountered some difficulty while recording the album, however. The studio Stewart played at shockingly small and dilapidated. Alabama was also a dry state at the time, meaning beer and liquor was unavailable for Stewart to calm his nerves before performing. Nonetheless, *Atlantic Crossing* and *A Night on the Town* that Stewart released in 1976 came to be Stewart's most successful albums. As far as his relationship to Britt Eckland, the attraction soon wore off, and Stewart began to secretly see other women. He had romantic flings with Susan George and Liz Treadwell, yet both did not last. Eckland discovered Stewart's infidelity, and left him, although as opposed to Dee Harrington's exit, Eckland angrily fought back. She sought legal attention and demanded that Stewart pay her \$12.5 million dollars in "palimony"—the equivalent of alimony for non-married couples. Stewart was able to avoid court and settled privately with Eckland.

In Chapter Twelve, Stewart recalls with fondness his mischievous adventures with the "Sex Police:" a group of men under the leadership of Pete "Gruppenfuhrer" Buckland dedicated to pulling pranks on friends attempting to seduce women and have sex. Sex Police members would break into hotel rooms with skeleton keys, suspend luggage



from hotel room windows, and in one memorable instance, release a group of chickens into a room where Stewart was taping an interview with the late Dick Clark. In a separate section of the Chapter, Stewart playfully suggests a number of activities to busy oneself during the low moments of a tour. Among them, wearing the sleeve of a dry-cleaned suit as a strait-jacket, balancing various objects on one's head, and filling elevators with mattresses and headboards to send down to the hotel lobby.

Chapters 11 - 12 Analysis

In a separate section of Chapter Eleven, Rod Stewart discusses his unpleasant relationship with punk rock. Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols once called Stewart an "old fart"—accusing Stewart of falling out of touch with his fans, living lavishly, and becoming complacent to the swift changes music was taking in the late 1970s. To some extent, Rotten had a point. With Rod Stewart's rise in fame and celebrity, it was becoming harder to connect with audiences. Similar to the Rolling Stones, Stewart would often be separated from an adoring fans while standing on stage guarded by security. "You might have felt you loved the Stones, but you never felt you knew them" (Page 209). The Sex Pistols struggled to reinvent music, to do away with the barrier between the musician and the audience. In their mind, Stewart sold out to the wishes of the music industry. Stewart promptly disagrees with that assertion. Even with his mass appeal, Stewart has made a conscientious effort to connect with his audience during a performance. He also gave his fans what they wanted to hear. Stewart engaged in a short, but revealing "battle over the charts" with the Sex Pistols where his single "The First Cut Is the Deepest" remained on top of the U.K. music charts above "God Save the Queen". Indeed, Stewart, the "old fart" that he is, managed to survive the music business for decades, mostly by staying relevant, inventive, and widening his fan-base. Although Stewart admits he never really enjoyed the sound of punk music, it taught him a valuable lesson: that fans deserve a musician that stays on their toes, never losing their love of performance or their love of music.



Chapters 13 - 14

Chapters 13 - 14 Summary

After his relationships with Britt Eckland and Liz Treadwell ended, Stewart continued seeing multiple women, including Bebe Buell, a former Playboy centerfold model. Stewart admits his relationships never lasted very long, mostly because he was turned off to commitment. This pattern changed in 1978, however, when Stewart met Alana Hamilton. Like Stewart, Hamilton came from humble beginnings. She was born in rural Texas in a home without electricity and left home to work for Texas Airlines as a flight attendant. She later became somewhat famous when she married actor George Hamilton and adopted his name. Stewart and Alana Hamilton began dating and soon became "inseparable." The two partied heavily, spending their nights at nightclubs, going out to dinner, and hosting parties. They were happy with their lives together. It was during this period that Stewart recorded his popular album, *Blondes (Have More Fun)*, and perhaps his most recognizable and commercially successful single; "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?" Then in the winter of 1979, Hamilton became pregnant. With the responsibility of becoming father loomed over Stewart, he admits to contracting cold feet. In his words he "behaved badly," engaging in flings with other women and avoiding his pregnant girlfriend. Nonetheless, the couple reconciled while on tour in Sydney and became engaged, and Hamilton gave birth to their daughter, Kimberley Stewart. What followed was a period of momentary bliss for Stewart. He appeared to thoroughly own his role as a husband and a father. Indeed not long after, Hamilton gave birth to Stewart's second child, a son, Sean Stewart. Rod Stewart enjoyed the quiet moments with his children—relaxing on the beach, drinking tea, going for walks. Stewart was a family man, enjoying the simple pleasures with his children. Everything appeared perfect; *Blondes (Have More Fun)* was massive success, he and Hamilton had reconciled their differences and were devoted parents, and Stewart had two, beautiful, healthy children. However, sadly, it did not last.

In a digression from Chapter Thirteen, Stewart explains his "addiction" to amassing late-nineteenth century paintings. "I've always loved Pre-Raphaelite pictures, ever since I was a kid: the romance of them, their color, the classical drapery, the high drama and emotion" (Page 234). He would often take dates to art museums, especially the Tate in London where he would inspect one of his favorite pieces, *The Lady of Shalott* by John William Waterhouse. Britt Eckland, his previous film-star girlfriend, greatly expanded his love of art. Alana Hamilton also encouraged Stewart to explore his interests in paintings. It was Hamilton who directed Stewart to a Waterhouse painting: *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*, Stewart's first acquisition. Rod Stewart also loves to attend art auctions. He enjoys the tension of bidding and the anticipation of acquiring an art piece that has caught his eye.

Chapter Fourteen begins in the fall of 1982, when Stewart received a visitor at his home in Los Angeles. The visitor was Sarah, the girl Stewart had with Sue Boffey and had given up for adoption nearly twenty years earlier. Sarah, now 18, arrived with her



adoptive mother and a journalist from the Sunday People newspaper out of London. Alana answered the door and immediately contacted Stewart, who was working at the time on his album, *Body Wishes*. "It's impossible to account for the mixture of feelings that ran through me at that point, though fear was chief among them" (p. 240). Not wanting the press to be involved, Stewart and his lawyer arranged a meeting with Sarah at the Record Plant studios. Again, Stewart noted that he felt extremely nervous. How was to behave around her? Should he embrace her or stay professional? Indeed, the meeting turned out to be contrived and awkward. Stewart fumbled around the studio, showing her his work, and presenting her with his various albums. The little conversation they had was about music. Afterwards, Stewart felt drained and then angry - angry that the press somehow tried weasel themselves into his affair. They most likely coaxed Sarah and her mother to confront Stewart in those circumstances. To make matters worse, after the reunification, a popular tabloid magazine published the article, "Rod's Love Child" that embellished the events.

At the same time, Stewart's marriage to Hamilton was beginning to disintegrate. The long hours of Stewart's work, his love of soccer and his spending time with friends put a strain on their relationship. Hamilton viewed his social life as corrupting his family life, and Stewart viewed Hamilton as a "snob." It didn't help the situation either when Hamilton fell ill after contracting the Epstein-Barr virus (an illness that causes fatigue and listlessness) and refused (or unable) to partake in Stewart's more active lifestyle. In addition, Hamilton developed an interest in "all things spiritual and psychic," buying wishing candles, attended self-discovery meetings, and became involved in numerology and astrology. These activities deeply annoyed Stewart. It was not long until Stewart started to see Kelly Emberg, a successful Vogue model, and his marriage to Hamilton collapsed.

Chapters 13 - 14 Analysis

When the album, *Blondes (Have More Fun)* went on to sell more than two million copies worldwide, Stewart was taken aback by its reception. The single "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy," lit up the airwaves and became one of Stewart's most cherished and recognizable songs. He wasn't bothered by its mainstream success: in fact, he embraced the attention it received. In reference to the "pink toilet seat" comment that Jeff Beck made about the success his commercial hit, "Hi Ho Silver Lining" gave him, Stewart remarked that, "I on the other hand, had been the driving force in the creation of my pink toilet seat—had painted it myself, if you like" (p. 224). Unlike Jeff Beck, Rod Stewart was never ashamed of his commercial success. However, he felt critics misunderstood the intent of the song. "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" was supposed to capture the anxiety associated with dating; instead critics lambasted Stewart for what they perceived as Stewart attempting to glorify himself sexually. Stewart feared the song would be a blow to his traditional male fan-base. An additional problem that surfaced with the release of *Blondes* was an accusation that Stewart plagiarized the song "Taj Mahal" by Brazilian musician. Although Stewart admits that he listened to Ben Jor's song on a trip to Rio de Janeiro and enjoyed it, he flatly denied knowingly ripping-off the music. If plagiarism was committed, it was unconscious, as if "Taj Mahal" had entered his psyche and

directed his creative process. Nonetheless, Stewart agreed to pay royalties to Ben Jor and the problem was resolved.

Another intriguing aspect of Chapters thirteen and fourteen is Stewart's role as a father. In Chapter Thirteen, Stewart's wife Alana Hamilton gives birth to Kimberly and Sean. Stewart enjoyed having children, spending generous amounts of time with them and spoiling them with gifts. It was almost as if Stewart was finally ready to settle down and devote his life to raising Kim and Sean. Then in Chapter Fourteen, Sarah enters the picture again. Sarah was effectively discarded by Stewart in the early 1960s as he pursued music. Indeed, at the time he was incredibly young and immature to handle the responsibilities of being a father. Stewart holds plenty of guilt about his handling of that situation (his treatment of Sue Boffey, for example). The reunification between Rod Stewart and Sarah was awkward. Stewart remembers feeling angry that somehow he was set up by the British press, or more upsettingly, Sarah may have had a financial motive to locate him. In the end, Sarah was simply hoping to make a connection with her biological-father. Tragically Stewart is never able to give Sarah what Kim and Sean have. He did not raise her and they never cultivated a loving relationship. It was as if the circumstances of Rod Stewart's life allowed for some children to receive love and attention, while others were left to fend for themselves.



Chapters 15 - 17

Chapters 15 - 17 Summary

During the tumultuous last stages of his marriage to Alana Hamilton, Stewart managed to organize a date with Kelly Emberg. Emberg was a renowned model from Texas. Her face covered hundreds of magazines including Vogue, Cosmopolitan, and Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition. Stewart was deeply infatuated with Emberg and pursued her aggressively, calling her incessantly, sending her flowers, and showing up unannounced to her shoots. Yet on the night of their first date, Stewart arrived two hours late. When Stewart got on his knees for Emberg to forgive him, she poignantly stated, "Who do you think you are - Rod Stewart?" (p. 260). Stewart was attracted to her quick wit, confidence, and warmth. The two began to see each other regularly and soon entered a romantic relationship. They spent most of their time together in England, where Stewart sold his former home, Cranbourne Court, and bought a nineteenth century manor dubbed the Wood House. The home was located in the idyllic English countryside, complete with rolling lawns, fishponds, and barn animals. Unfortunately, it did not take long for Stewart to betray Emberg and see another woman; Kelly LeBrock. This act was particularly spiteful because Emberg and LeBrock had a contentious relationship. Around the time of the affair, Emberg was offered a part in the John Hughes movie, *Weird Science*. After preparing for the role, she was replaced at the last minute by another actress - Kelly LeBrock. After discovering the affair, Emberg and Stewart abruptly separated. But they reconciled not long after. Emberg became pregnant and had Stewart's fourth child, Ruby Stewart.

With his romantic relationships on the mend and his family once again taking shape, Rod Stewart was also excelling in his professional life. After he released *Every Beat of My Heart* and *Out of Order*, he agreed to undergo what would later be the biggest tour in Europe in his life. Stewart pleased fans with new hits like "Forever Young," "My Heart Can't Tell You No," and the covered Tom Waits song, "Downtown Train." Stewart also managed to complete a tour with Queen in Rio de Janeiro for the "Rock in Rio" festival and perform in his beloved hometown at Wembley Stadium. The concerts were getting larger, louder, and more spectacular during this period. This suited Stewart who always enjoyed performing. He has always struggled with other aspects of his profession (i.e. recording, songwriting, producing, doing promotion), yet loves to be on stage. However, the frequent concerts that demanded he be in top shape took a heavy toll on Stewart's vocal cords. In order to combat his throat problems, Stewart resorted to taking Prednisone tablets, a steroid, which soon developed into an addiction.

With the explosion of his popularity and the demands placed by frequent touring, Stewart's relationship to Emberg started to fall apart. Stewart's womanizing had simply been too much to bear for Emberg. Indeed, during her pregnancy with Ruby, rather than caring for her, Stewart would be out sleeping with various women while on tour. In one incident, Stewart was invited to shoot a Pepsi commercial with Tina Turner. He traveled to France for the project, stayed in a reserved hotel room, and underwent his "long, hot



summer" of anonymous sex, binge drinking, and cocaine use. After a disastrous attempt to propose to Emberg (after making plans for an elaborate proposal, Stewart immediately regretted his decision), Emberg and Stewart went their separate ways.

In Chapter Sixteen, the reader is introduced to Rod Stewart's second wife, Rachel Hunter. Stewart recalled seeing her for the first time on an infomercial where she and Elle MacPherson discussed the benefits of a particular brand of exercise equipment. He watched the infomercial over and over again, not because he was interested in the product, but rather he was hooked on Hunter. Later, he bumped into her at the Roxbury Club and was able to coax her and her friends into spending the remainder of their night at his New York apartment. Much to Stewart's happiness, the night was a success. Stewart and Hunter began to see each other regularly. When Stewart's father suddenly passed away, Hunter was there to comfort Stewart, traveling with him to England for the funeral services. After spending a few days in the Bahamas together, the two became engaged and were married in 1990 (Stewart was in his late forties at the time, Hunter had just turned twenty). During this time, Stewart was working on the song, "Rhythm of My Heart", a Scottish love ballad complete with bagpipes. It was part of the album, *Vagabond Heart*, and dedicated to his late father (whose old soccer team was the Vagabonds).

While on the *Vagabond* tour in 1991, Stewart again complained of voice problems. He always hated canceling shows, not wanting to upset his fans. He once canceled a show in Berlin, Germany due to throat pain and had to cancel the redo-show in Cologne. The German fans were of course, livid. So, in order to ease his throat pain, Stewart injected himself with a cocktail of drugs—vitamin B, antibiotics, and steroids. One time he overdosed and required a blood transfusion. Ultimately, it was the invention of the modified ear piece that helped him recover. The ear piece fit perfect in his ear cavity, allowing him to receive real-time feedback of his voice during the performance. He no longer would have to scream at the top of his lungs to be heard.

Stewart remained entirely faithful to Rachel Hunter during his marriage to her. They had two children together, Renee born in 1992 and Liam in 1994. Their marriage appeared to functioning properly. However, Hunter was dissatisfied and ended the relationship after eight years (she later expressed that felt oppressed by her and Stewart's chaotic lifestyle; she was young and wanted to explore). Stewart was shocked. The break-up hit him especially hard. In a search for answers and relief, he bought numerous self-help books, took impulsive vacations, and became involved in yoga. His depression over Hunter's exit would last for nearly four months.

In the opening of Chapter Seventeen, Stewart is diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Upon hearing the news, Stewart remembers feeling afraid and vulnerable. The cancer had developed near his voice box and the threat of chemotherapy and the loss of his hair would spell the end of his career. Thankfully, surgeons successfully removed the tumor only centimeters away from his vocal chords. He was also able to dodge chemotherapy when the cancer disappeared. Although the cancer was defeated, Stewart had to undergo months of therapy to bring his voice back. Nearly six months past and he still had no voice—he wondered if he'd ever return to music. Then Stewart contacted his



friend, Nate Lamb. Lamb suggested that he stay the course in his therapy. He recommended that Stewart perform with his band, singing repetitive verses of "Maggie May" until his voice improved. Gradually, with painstaking effort and patience, Stewart could sing again.

Chapters 15 - 17 Analysis

In 1983, Rod Stewart was scrambling to reinvent his image. After the release of his tenth studio album, *Foolish Behavior*, he had become complacent, expecting his fame to carry him into perpetual success. It didn't. And Stewart soon discovered that he was losing fans and failing to fill seats at his concerts. This was Rod Stewart's so-called "disco era" where he deviated from the traditional folksy rock he started with and produced softer-pop music. In a panic, Stewart hired on his new manager, Arnold Stiefel, to fix his ailing reputation. Not surprisingly, Stiefel identified that Stewart needed to return to the basics; what originally made fans love him. They collaborated with Jeff Beck to produce the harder rock song, "Infatuation" that became a tremendous success, especially in America where heavy metal was becoming popular. Stewart once again entered music relevancy. In this regard, Stewart had been incredibly lucky to find Stiefel, a former film agent.

Chapters Fifteen through Seventeen reaffirm the good fortune of Rod Stewart. He has been incredibly lucky throughout his life. In the introduction of *Rod: The Autobiography*, Stewart narrowly escapes with his life after the airplane he was taking out of Sweden after a show hit a bird after take-off. Although his relationship to Rachel Hunter ended was a terrible blow to Stewart, it allowed him to find Penny Lancaster, the woman he confesses is his soul-mate. Likewise, the outcome of his battle with cancer was equally fortunate. For starters, Stewart beat cancer. It was luck that prevented the cancer from spreading throughout his body. It was luck that allowed Stewart to opt out of chemotherapy treatment because the cancer had receded from his thyroid. The surgical process to remove the cancerous growth took place literally centimeters from his prized vocal cords, and yet they remained intact. Lastly, Stewart made a speedy recovery and was able to regain some of his lost singing abilities.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

After the gloom of his breakup with Rachel Hunter dissipated, Stewart attempted to date again. He spent time with Canadian model, Tracy Tweed, former Playboy playmate, Kimberley Conrad, and Caprice Bourret. All of these relationships failed to turn into anything meaningful or permanent. But Stewart recalled an encounter he had with a young photography student, Penny Lancaster, some months back. They met at a hotel bar where Lancaster approached Stewart requesting his autograph. The two got into a discussion and Stewart discovered her interests in photography. After giving Lancaster the opportunity to photograph one of his shows, she wholeheartedly agreed. Stewart remembered feeling a connection with her, so he decided to contact her again, this time for dinner. The first date was a success (Stewart found it endearing when she clumsily spilled two glasses of wine and profusely apologized during dinner). They had planned to meet at Theydon Oak pub the following day for the birthday of Lancaster's grandfather. When Stewart failed to show (he thought the meeting was for dinner, not lunch), Lancaster and her grandfather drove to Stewart's home and surprised him. He was beginning to fall in love with Lancaster and desired to see her more often.

The two went on a number of trips together. She accompanied Stewart during his tour in Australia. They spent time in the Bahamas and the south of France. Once, while on tour in North America, Lancaster and Stewart visited a church. He remembers praying for a solution for their relationship, that somehow he could stay with her and everything would work out. Only after did he discover that Lancaster was praying for the very same things. At the time of her seeing Stewart, Lancaster was still involved with a long-term boyfriend. In order for her relationship with Stewart to progress, she needed to make a decision on who she wanted to spend her life with. Lancaster always wanted children, yet Stewart was getting older. They promised each other that they would do everything in their power, medically and emotionally, to have a baby. During a romantic trip to Paris, Stewart proposed to Lancaster. Lancaster gave birth to son Alastair in 2005 and the couple wed, in a beautiful ceremony in 2007.

In a separate section of Chapter Eighteen, Stewart relay a number of parenting insights and stories of raising his seven out of eight children. Among them, he recalls pulling harmless pranks on his kids. Pranks such as putting random household items in their school lunches, removing light bulbs around the house, and playing the "couch game" where two or more people would work cooperatively to tip a couch over onto its back. The moments of innocent fun and love have not always been there, however. "I have always been a good father in the sense that my love for my children has been unwavering. But I was certainly, for significant periods of my older children's lives, an absent father" (Page 344). Indeed the nature of his job required that he move constantly and for extended periods of time. But at the same time, Stewart is trying to make amends, giving the attention to his older children that they didn't receive early on.



Regardless, Stewart's children are incredibly close. They love him and one another. In Stewart's words, they represent a true Stewart clan.

Chapter 18 Analysis

As a sixty-seven year old man, Stewart regrets having not met Lancaster earlier. At last, he had found a woman to share a loving relationship and to spend the rest of his life with. Stewart feels as if Lancaster is the woman he was always meant to be with. However these feelings are coming from a man with two previous marriages and a string of girlfriends under his belt. Were all of his previous relationships victims of circumstance, or was Stewart largely to blame for their demise? How could his relationship to Lancaster possibly be any different? There are a number of clues in Chapter Eighteen that provide insight into these predicaments. For one, Stewart claims he is finished chasing women. Indeed, during his marriage to Rachel Hunter almost twenty years prior to his relationship to Lancaster, Stewart swore off extra-marital affairs and remained faithful. Secondly, as opposed to when he held partnerships with Alana Hamilton and Kelly Emberg, Stewart is much older now. Perhaps sleeping around and feeling repulsed to commitment is something that predominantly plagued Stewart as the younger rocker. Before meeting Lancaster, Stewart was ready to settle down with who he believed was the love of his life, Rachel Hunter. Their marriage could have very lasted if Hunter hadn't felt dissatisfied and left him. Lastly, Stewart is a father with an ever-increasing pool of children. He deeply regrets the treatment that his older children endured while he was busy cheating on their mothers and touring the globe. Penny Lancaster represents the love, stability, and harmony that Stewarts finally is ready to accept in his life.



Chapters 19 - 20

Chapters 19 - 20 Summary

Chapter Nineteen opens on a dismal note. Rod Stewart, an icon of the 1970s and 80s, had failed to produce anything of merit in nearly twenty years. His latest album in 2001, *Human*, was a complete flop. Granted the album consisted largely of cover songs (Stewart made identical mistakes early in his career). After "Forever Young" released in 1988, he rarely wrote and produced his own songs. "I was beginning to think of myself as entirely a voice for hire: tell me what to sing and I'll sing it" (p. 349). Stewart turned to music producer Richard Perry for help. They produced tracks like "You Go to My Heart," "Stormy Weather," and "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face." With the assistance of his trusted manager, Arnold Stiefel, the three men set out to find a record deal for Stewart. He was promptly rejected twice, until he met music mogul Clive Davis. Davis enjoyed the Stewart's demo tracks and agreed to sign Stewart on to a two-album deal. The Great American Songbook series, a collection of songs true to Rod Stewart's roots in soul and blues music, was a resounding success. The album went double platinum in the U.S., sold 5 million copies, and earned Stewart a Grammy music award—the first in his life.

In the book's conclusion, Stewart contemplates the future of his career. At sixty-seven, Stewart struggles physically, although he has quit using drugs entirely. He tries to stay active, playing soccer in an over-fifties club. Sean Connery once attempted to get him involved in golf in the 1980s. Suffice to say, the experiment failed miserably (Stewart claims he finds golf boring, and much prefers the excitement of football). Beyond his physical state, Stewart wonders where his career will take him. He was offered a two-year residency at the Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Even though it is a far cry from the grungy, noisy nightclubs Stewart started in, he appreciates the new position very much. During this time, Stewart also earned the honorary title of "Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Order", accepting the award from Prince Charles himself. Recently, Stewart has returned to songwriting. Once considered an exceptionally difficult task, Stewart has gained new inspiration to write by reflecting on his life. He wrote the song "Brighton Beach" about his childhood adventures. He also drafted songs that are advice to his children and a song of gratitude to his father. For the first time in his career, Stewart will be releasing an album wholly consisting of original material in 2013. He notes that, "sometimes when you think you've finished, it turns out that you haven't" (p. 364). Stewart does not see retirement in the near future. He loves his work too much to quit.

Chapters 19 - 20 Analysis

The final Chapters of *Rod: The Autobiography* depict a man who is resilient to giving up. On numerous occasions, Rod Stewart had the opportunity to stop producing music, cut his losses, and focus on other interests, like his family. In 2001, many critics assumed



Rod Stewart was finished after his album *Human* fared poorly among the listening public. For them, the vivacity of Rod Stewart was for all intent and purposes over. This proved outstandingly false when Stewart gathered the ability and resources to produce *The Great American Songbook* collection in 2002, reclaiming his relevancy in the music business. This resurgence of Rod Stewart's popularity after periods of doubt has come to define his career. Not only was Stewart "finished" in 2001, but 1983, and after the breakup of the Hoochie Coochie Men in 1964. Even today, Rod Stewart is not finished. He hopes to release an album comprised entirely of original material, a feat for a man who always struggled with songwriting, next year. Rod Stewart had always been focused on rebuilding and reshaping his career; now he is focused on preserving his legacy.



Characters

Long John Baldry

Long John Baldry was the lead singer and manager of the Hoochie Coochie Men, the band that employed Rod Stewart at the beginning of his music career. He was also one of Stewart's closest friends and mentor. Long John Baldry is attributed with first discovering Stewart in the early 1960s at a train station in Twickenham. Baldry saw Stewart's potential and signed him onto the Hoochie Coochie Men as a backing vocal. Baldry is described by Stewart as an immensely tall man, approximately six feet, seven inches, and "shockingly handsome" (Page 48). Baldry could light up a room with his presence: he captivated audiences with his booming, rich voice. Stewart claims that Baldry taught him how to behave during a performance: how to walk, dance, and talk in front of an audience.

Jeff Beck

Jeff Beck was the lead singer and guitarist in the Jeff Beck Group, one of the last rock bands Stewart played with before he carved out his successful solo career. Beck was unusually serious as a musician. Rather than giving fans what they wanted to hear (i.e. commercially popular songs), Beck preferred to create his own musical style and play what appealed to him. For example, his song, "Hi Ho Silver Lining" was cemented in British pop history—Beck deeply regretted making that song and disliked the attention it gave him. In this regard, Beck was the opposite of Stewart, a flamboyant musician that loves performing for mass audiences in large arenas. Throughout their friendship, Stewart and Beck disagreed often. Yet when they performed together, and the public caught a glimpse of Stewart's voice with Beck's guitar, there was simply "nothing like it" (Page 107).

Elton John

Elton John, the rock 'n' roll legend and international superstar, befriended Stewart in the mid-1960s as both men were jump-starting their professions. John and Stewart were both connected to Long John Baldry, the charismatic front-man of the Hoochie Coochie Men. Stewart owes his career to Baldry (Baldry discovered Stewart at a train station), while John and Baldry were friends and briefly toured the blues circuit in the U.K. together. Elton John endearingly referred to Stewart as "Phyllis" and Stewart called John "Sharon". Stewart and John shared many memorable moments together, often playing pranks on one another, and in on one occasion, staying up until ten in the morning to perpetuate a cocaine-enhanced conversation about who had the bigger bank account. Elton John is also incredibly generous. Stewart recalled once when he gave John a portable refrigerator for Christmas; John returned the favor by giving Stewart an authentic Rembrandt painting.



Kelly Emberg

Kelly Emberg, the famous Vogue model and actress, dated Rod Stewart in the mid-1980s and gave birth to his third child, Ruby Stewart. The two met in Los Angeles after Stewart left his first wife, Alana Hamilton. Stewart remembers showing up late to their first date prompting Emberg to snort, "Who do you think you are—Rod Stewart?" (Page 260). Indeed, Emberg managed to preserve his confidence, warmth, and humor even after Stewart and Emberg underwent a messy break-up. Emberg temporarily lived with Stewart in the Wood House, Stewart's second British home; a late-nineteenth century manor in the English countryside.

Alana Hamilton

Alana Hamilton is the first wife of Rod Stewart and the mother of Kimberly and Sean Stewart. She met Stewart in 1978 at a party and soon began to date. Like Stewart, Hamilton came from humble beginnings. She was born in Nacogdoches, Texas in an area of economic, rural hardship and a home without electricity. Hamilton was discovered by the Ford modeling agency and married actor George Hamilton. Her marriage to Stewart was tumultuous, however. Stewart admits he hadn't yet disavowed his bachelor life or fraternizing with women other than Hamilton. Hamilton also engaged in new age spiritualism and mysticism—something which pushed Stewart further away and contributed to the demise of their marriage.

Penny Lancaster

Penny Lancaster is the current wife of Rod Stewart and the mother of his two youngest children, Alastair and Aiden. She met Stewart as a photography student and was invited to take pictures of Stewart's upcoming concert. There times when Lancaster is clumsy; knocking over wine glasses, spilling food, but Stewart finds this incredibly charming and cute. After his marriage to Rachel Hunter fell apart, he began dating Lancaster, . Stewart claims that Lancaster is the woman he wants to spend the remaining years of his life with. The two currently live together in Beverly Hills, California.

Arnold Stiefel

Arnold Stiefel is Rod Stewart's manager from 1983 to the present. Before working with Stewart, Stiefel had never been a music producer—he worked as a film agent. Yet Stiefel was confident that he could work successfully as Stewart's manager. After Stewart reached a lull in his career in the mid-1980s, Stiefel worked to reinvent and turn-around Stewart's dwindling image. He worked with Stewart to develop "Infatuation", a popular rock-hit that brought Stewart's classic rock fans back in droves. He also encouraged Stewart to produce The Great American Songbook collection in 2002 that catapulted Stewart back into music relevance and earned him his first Grammy award.

Ronny Wood

Ronnie Wood or "Woody" was a guitarist in the Jeff Beck Group and the Faces. He is also one of Rod Stewart's closest friends. They spent their time together writing songs and performing, picking up women, and playing pranks. In addition, Wood and Stewart both shared a life-long love of fashion and clothing—the two were devoted to their hair and physical appearance. Wood eventually left Stewart and the Faces to work with the Rolling Stones.



Objects/Places

Archway Road

Archway Road is located in north London and is the birth place of Rod Stewart. The street was heavily bombed during the second world war, prompting Stewart's father to board up the windows. The home where the Stewart family lived, 507 Archway Road is described as a two-story terraced building with a backyard. In addition, the Stewart family lived up the road above a candy and newspaper shop. The inhabitants in the surrounding neighborhood were largely honest, hardworking people—factory employees, plumbers, craftsmen, and day laborers, but the neighborhood itself lacked the kind of opportunities Stewart needed to pursue his life dreams.

The Eel Pie Island Hotel

The Eel Pie Island Hotel, in Twickenham England was "an ancient, damp ballroom stuck out on a lump of land in the middle of the Thames and reached by a rickety wooden footbridge" (Page 45). The hotel is where Stewart and then girlfriend, Sue Boffey, went to see the Rolling Stones play. On page 46, Stewart remarks that watching Mick Jagger sing and dance from the audience was a formative moment—that he was capable of becoming as successful, if not more, than the Stones. Not long after that show, Stewart was discovered by Long John Baldry at the Twickenham train station and signed onto the Hoochie Coochie Men. The train station is located not far from the Eel Pie Hotel.

The Marquee Club

The Marquee Club in London was where the Hoochie Coochie Men opened for Sonny Boy Williamson, the famed American folk singer and one of Stewart's music idols, in the spring of 1964. This was also the location where the managers John Rowlands and Geoff Wright first discovered Stewart and later signed him onto his first solo recording deal with Mercury Records.

Zenith Acoustic Guitar

A Zenith Acoustic Guitar was the first guitar Rod Stewart purchased. He brought the steel-strung guitar with him to Europe where he played for small groups and friends. Sue Boffey, the mother of Stewart's first daughter, Sarah, vandalized the instrument in a fit of rage after the two separated. Stewart still has the guitar in his possession, however, keeping it as a memento of his early life and early love of folk music.

Wembley Stadium

Wembley Stadium is located in London, England and is the home playing home field of the English national soccer team. Stewart first visited the stadium in 1959 to watch the English v. Scottish international match to root for the Scotland. In fact, the Stewart family adores Scottish football. Once, Stewart's father famously climbed into the stadium and sat in the seat of the king of Afghanistan to watch a game. After Stewart grew in popularity, he visited the stadium to watch the Scottish national football team. After a stunning 2-1 victory, the fans stormed the field and hoisted Stewart on their shoulders. The stadium would also serve as a popular concert hall for Stewart later in life.

Cranbourne Court

Cranbourne Court was the first home Rod Stewart purchased after he released the international hit, "Maggie May" in 1971. The house was a stucco-faced Georgian mansion located in the countryside near London. He moved in with his girlfriend, Dee Harrington, and the two lived in comfort and luxury. Living at Cranbourne Court represented a period of freedom, relaxation, and exploration for Stewart. He and Dee would prepare meals together, buy fancy equipment and furniture, enjoy their many animals, and walk to the local village and pubs.

Prednisone Tablets

Prednisone Tablets are steroids that Rod Stewart consumed during the latter stages of his career in order to combat recurring throat illnesses and voice impairment. Although Stewart notes that it is common for singers to lose their voice after years of performing, Stewart felt losing his only means of income was unacceptable. The steroids indeed helped, but led Stewart down a path of dependency, addiction, and medical complications.

Themes

Adventure

The theme of adventure—to leave the familiar in search of a new experience—recurs throughout Rod: the Autobiography. Adventure begins for Rod Stewart at a very young age. He remembers staying up late and hiding behind furniture, watching his parents dance at parties they hosted. Cheering for Scottish football teams also deviated from the norm of his community, although he learned this from his adventurous father (adventurous at least when it came to sneaking into football matches). As an adolescent, Stewart entered a period of tremendous change and exploration. He traveled to continental Europe on an impulse, slept under bridges, played music in the streets, and hopped trains. He refused to wash, change his clothes, or cut his hair. Stewart even became involved in subversive socialist politics by subscribing to the London Daily Worker. This "beatnik" phase was certainly a form of rebellion; but it also was period of remarkable freedom, where Stewart could leave the confines of his home and the watchful eyes of his parents. Lastly, to a great extent, the love of adventure is what ultimately propelled Stewart into music instead of following (or falling into) his father's working class footsteps. Rod Stewart loved the feeling soul and blues music gave him, it was a feeling he wanted to chase for the rest of his life. Choosing a path that hadn't been paved by his older siblings or parents ultimately paid off handsomely.

As an adult, Stewart did not abandon his adventurousness. His abundance of wealth and connections only enabled him to travel greater distances. On an impulse, he would travel to Hawaii or to Paris, only to return after a few days of relaxation. As a professional musician, Stewart traversed the globe, spending time in Moscow, Berlin, Hong Kong, and Rio de Janeiro. However, as an internationally successful singer he entered a new phase of control and restriction. Stewart could never adventure out of a particular style of music—he feared his albums would sell poorly. And the media watched his every move intently. Nonetheless, Stewart did find moments to break protocol. In Chapter Eight, Stewart recalls a moment when he and Lancaster were touring the Australian countryside in his Lamborghini convertible, when Lancaster in burst of excitement, suddenly jumped out of the car and ran through a field naked. Stewart ran after her and the two embraced while his expensive car sat idle in the distance. Finally, Stewart's ability to compose original material took creativity, but also a feeling of adventure, to plunge into the unknown. In fact, this level of originality and adventure has accelerated for the elderly Stewart with his upcoming album release in 2013.

Love and Partnership

A significant portion of Rod: The Autobiography is devoted to the women in Rod Stewart's life— indeed entire Chapters are sectioned off to a single relationship. Based on his notorious collection of female companions, it is clear that love and partnership



are primary motivations for Rod Stewart. First, it is important to differentiate between a serious relationship and a "fling." As Stewart became more deeply involved in his music and more recognized as a musician, he engaged romantically with an untold number of women. It was almost part of the job to sleep with anonymous women while on tour. These encounters were neither love nor partnership. Stewart was, however, involved in a number of long-term affairs and relationships. His first serious girlfriend was Sue Boffey. The two lived in relative freedom until Boffey discovered that she was pregnant. Stewart could not handle the looming responsibility of being a father and the relationship disintegrated. It is unclear whether Stewart was seeing another woman at the time of his partnership with Boffey. But what is clear, is that he rebounded relatively quickly unscathed by the experience he had with Boffey.

The reader is next introduced to Dee Harrington, Stewart's girlfriend around the time he released "Maggie May." Harrington and Stewart were very happy with one another, living in luxury in the English countryside. Yet the relationship ended when Stewart cheated on Harrington, perhaps multiple times. A pattern emerged that would come to characterize the romantic relationships of Rod Stewart for the next twenty years. Stewart remarks that when it came to betraying his spouse or girlfriend, "the opportunity came very easily to me, and because the opportunity looked like fun, and because in those days I simply didn't know how to resist...because I thought I could get away with it" (Page 266). On occasion this behavior would get Stewart into a lot of trouble. Take for example his particularly messy, drawn-out, and expensive breakup with Britt Eckland after she learned of Stewart's unfaithfulness. And also, more than once, his partner actually discovered him in the act of cheating. Indeed, the life of Rod Stewart presents somewhat of a paradox: he rigorously sought out companionship, then after committing to an individual woman; he would go behind her back to look for the next "connection." Things dramatically changed after his marriage to Rachel Hunter in the early 1990s. Stewart abandoned chasing women and desired to settle down and focus on building a healthy family. Unfortunately, Hunter did not want to share that future and left him. Stewart was badly hurt by the breakup and contemplated whether he would remain a bachelor for life. But then he met Penny Lancaster—fell deeply in love with her and the two were married. It appears that after fifty years of broken relationships, Rod Stewart has finally found true love and partnership.

Aging

In most biographies, the author tracks the life of the protagonist in a linear, chronological fashion. Rod: The Autobiography is no different. Yet with the autobiographical format, the reader witnesses Stewart coming to terms with his age and the eventual end of his career. As a young, emerging musician, Stewart was incredibly free. He would play music well into the early hours of the morning, take drugs, drive recklessly, and chase women. Now Stewart is barely able to play football, his favorite sport. In Rod: The Autobiography, there is also a sense of regret and guilt with the personal choices he's made. Stewart regrets the way he treated some of his older children, missing out on their lives while he toured the world and fraternized with women. He regrets not meeting Penny Lancaster earlier; perhaps he would not have had to endure a string of broken



relationships if he had been with Lancaster from the start. Nonetheless, those moments have passed on and Stewart is left to grow old. Stewart is one of many successful rock musicians that are aging and slowly deteriorating in front of the eyes of a watchful public. These individuals emerged in the post-war period as music became more accessible, defining the angst and rebelliousness of an upcoming generation. For musicians such as Elton John, Mick Jagger, and of course, Rod Stewart, they have no choice but to adapt to their increasing age in a profession that glorifies youth, vitality, and mobility. "There is no template for growing old as a rock star. There's no pattern out there that you can follow. We were the first to come this way, flaunting our youth as we did so, and we've got no choice but to be pioneers" (Page 359).



Style

Point of View

Rod: The Autobiography is told from a first person perspective. Every interaction and thought comes from the author, Rod Stewart. As a result of Stewart authoring the book, rather than an independent biographer, Stewart decides what stories are retold and included in his narrative and what is left out or censored in some fashion. With a few exceptions of personal guilt or drug addiction, Stewart largely portrays himself in a favorable light. At the end of the book, the reader is left with the impression that Rod Stewart is a charming, talented musician and a doting father. In Stewart's relationship with Jeff Beck, for example, the two enter into conflicts often, yet Beck is usually the one who is unflatteringly characterized. Beck is headstrong and rude, making cooperation for future projects nearly impossible. An independent biographer may have taken a more balanced approach. On the other hand, there are many revealing moments in Rod: The Autobiography. Stewart unflinchingly discusses his marital infidelity, dishonesty, and drug abuse. In one section of the book, Stewart reveals, perhaps for the first time publicly, that he regrettably cheated multiple times on his girlfriend, Kelly Emberg, while she was pregnant. Of course, behaving in such a way hurts Stewart's image and hurts his ability to win new fans or admirers.

Setting

Rod: The Autobiography is set in a number of different locations, chiefly due to the nature of Rod Stewart's career. His wealth enabled him to purchase homes abroad and his profession demanded that he move frequently to record albums, meet friends and colleagues, and go on international tours. However, the vast majority of the book is set either in England or the United States, particularly Los Angeles, California. Stewart was born and raised in North London, an area characterized by its working class aesthetic and culture. He remembers going to football games in nearby Wembley Stadium, playing music on the beach, and traveling to local music clubs as an emerging vocalist. The setting shifts dramatically when Stewart moves to Los Angeles, specifically the Beverly Hills neighborhood, in the early 1970s. Los Angeles is the place where Stewart played with his wealth and the surrounding environment reflected his change in financial ability. The reader sees the wealth and privilege of Rod Stewart in the numerous sports cars he leisurely drives around the city, in his rare art collections, in the exclusive sports clubs he joins, and in the expensive restaurants he enjoys. Indeed, the juxtaposition of Los Angeles and North London perhaps mirrors the transition of Stewart himself—from scruffy artist to extravagantly wealthy entertainer. The remainder of the book is set in other, more diverse locations such as Paris, where he proposed to his wife, Penny Lancaster. Chronologically, the book covers the birth of Rod Stewart in 1945, through his adolescence in the mid-twentieth century, his explosion in popularity in the 1970s and 80s, and finishing with the present day.



Language and Meaning

Rod Stewart comes from humble beginnings in working-class Britain, dropping out of school at a young age to pursue music full time. And at the beginning of his career, he spent the majority of his time interacting with musicians who came from similar working-class backgrounds. All of these aspects contributed to the formation of his speech. Throughout *Rod: The Autobiography*, Stewart speaks in his native accent, occasionally using British slang or cockney to describe a particular person, object, or emotion. When he uses culturally specific words like "plonker" or "Marigolds", a footnote is included to translate the word into Standard English or explain what the word represents for a non-British layman. Stewart also uses cockney rhyming slang in the book. For example, while Stewart and his girlfriend were considering names for their daughter, Stewart was initially resistant to Emberg's choice of "Ruby"—apparently a "ruby" is the food curry in cockney rhyming slang. It's plausible that Stewart intentionally exaggerated his usage of slang for its endearing qualities. Referring to the experience of being disappointed as feeling "gutted" may leave a few non-British English speakers in the dark. But for most readers, they are drawn to his warmth, approachability, and humor.

Structure

Rod: The Autobiography consists of nineteen chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. The book largely follows a chronological pattern, beginning with the early life of Rod Stewart in working-class Britain, his rise in the musical industry, and ending with the present moment—sixty-seven year old Stewart contemplating the future of his career. Interspersed within the Chapters are "digressions" that disconnect from the chronological narrative and highlight a particular hobby, quirk, or personal story that is pertinent to understanding Rod Stewart. Each Chapter is approximately 10-15 pages long and covers a specific period, or a specific relationship, in Stewart's life. For example, Chapter Sixteen is almost exclusively devoted to his courting and marriage to model Rachel Hunter. Similarly, Chapter Eighteen discusses his relationship to his wife Penny Lancaster and little else. The book also contains a number of pictures from Rod Stewart's life. The collections of pictures are separated by approximately fifty pages, which give the reader an opportunity to connect images with characters and events discussed by Stewart in the preceding pages without being overly distracted.



Quotes

"I wanted to be able to sing these songs and I wanted to be able to play them - to inhabit them entirely" (p. 27).

"The hair is part of job. It's my signature: a convenient shorthand for me and what I do, and, if you will, a logo for the business" (p. 38).

"For Jeff [Beck], who, more than anyone I knew, genuinely couldn't have given a toss about commercial success, releasing that song [Hi Ho Silver Lining] was like shooting the world's biggest albatross" (p. 91).

"America totally got the Jeff Beck Group. Audiences completely understood it - more quickly and more enthusiastically than people in Britain" (p. 99).

"I'm glad we didn't play Woodstock. Woodstock made quite a few people's reputations, but at the same time it rather set them in stone. It's hard to slip away from your image as "an act that appeared at Woodstock" (p. 107).

"I had to reckon, at the back of my mind, that the offer from Mercury Records to go into a studio and make an album of my own was a last shot at the big time. Screw this up and who knows? It would probably be cruise ships forever after" (p. 119).

"The best aspect of the blues, the best aspect of Dylan, for me, in both cases, was the storytelling. But when it came to writing those stories for myself, I would rather have done almost anything else" (p. 124).

"We were young and foolish and nobody bothered with the details because we were all rich beyond our dreams" (p. 153).

"I loved the romance of [being a rock star in mid-70s]; I loved the excess of it. I was in a state of permanent wonderment about it: that someone from a pretty basic and humble background could suddenly find his life going 'whoosh'...I don't think state of wonderment has ever left me. It's always there, just below the surface of everything I do" (p. 200).

"[Cocaine] was considered so chic at the time...The idea wasn't to snort line after line...You were using it more like snuff, to pep the evening along - just a little puff of this pillowy white powder off the back of your hand. And then maybe another little puff. And perhaps another" (p. 231).

"It was very fashionable at this time, among my peers, to deride stadiums and sports halls as places for rock music, to say they lacked intimacy and were emotionless and had no soul. My argument was the opposite of that. I reckoned that, if they felt cold and soulless, it was because you weren't doing them right" (p. 272).



"I know that eventually and it may be sooner, rather than later - I will reach a stage where getting out there and performing is simply no longer possible...It's been there all my life. I've given so much to it, and it's given so much back to me. I worry about the hole it will leave" (p. 356).



Topics for Discussion

Rod Stewart has garnered tremendous wealth as a result of his successful career as a singer and entertainer. However, he still identifies with the British working class. How do working class values and culture inform his life as an adult? In what ways does his behavior reflect his identity as a product of the British working class? Be sure to provide plenty of examples to strengthen your argument.

Rod Stewart admits he loves R&B, soul, and folk music. Indeed, Stewart got his start playing the blues at small music clubs around Britain. Based on what you have gleaned from *Rod: The Autobiography*, do you believe Stewart kept true to his music roots throughout his career or did he deviate from playing the music that he loved as his popularity rose? If so, why do you think he changed as a musician? If not, why do you believe he has been consistent? Be sure to provide examples to strengthen your argument.

The journey of Rod Stewart from a working class guitarist to international rock superstar did not happen immediately. At first, he faced many disappointments and rejections from the music industry. Yet some never doubted his potential and eventually contributed to his success. Who were some of the musicians, managers, and record companies that assisted Stewart along the way? How did they support his music and ambitions?

In 1975, Rod Stewart moved from Great Britain to Los Angeles. What drew Rod Stewart to live in America? Did he have reservations from moving away from his home country? What aspects of American culture does Stewart identify with? What does he dislike about American culture? Be sure to provide plenty of examples to strengthen your argument.

Over the course of Rod Stewart's career in music, he has had many romantic female acquaintances, lovers, and wives. In Chapter Eight, Stewart meets his current wife, Penny Lancaster, describing his marriage to her as love "at last" (p. 339). Why did his previous marriages and romantic relationships fail? Why do you think he sees Lancaster as his final romantic partner? Please provide specific examples that support your argument.

In Chapter Eight, Stewart is faced with a dilemma in raising his children: what can he give his children and what must they earn? Do you think his parents (Bob and Elsie Stewart) encountered a similar problem with raising young Stewart? What was given to him? What did he have to work for? Lastly, now a father himself, why do you think Stewart finds this lesson important? Be sure to give plenty of examples to strengthen your argument.

On page 364, Stewart remarks, "There is not a day goes by that I don't wake up and think how lucky I am." Similarly, after his near-death experience in the skies of Gothenburg, Sweden in 1995, Stewart said, "I get lucky" (p. 4). Do you agree that Stewart has been unusually lucky? Where else in his life has Rod Stewart been

fortunate? Please be sure to include examples from both his music career and personal life.