

# **Royal Flash, from the Flashman Papers Study Guide**

**Royal Flash, from the Flashman Papers by George  
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# Plot Summary

Royal Flash, from the Flashman Papers, 1842-3 and 1847-8 is a sequel to George MacDonald Fraser's Flash, a book which started the chronicles of Captain Harry Flashman. The book is written as part of a war hero's memoirs and misadventures.

Captain Harry Flashman, also known as Flash or Flashy, is a member of the Horse Guards, part of the British military. Flash is a highly decorated and admired soldier despite his relatively low rank. Flash does not much care about rank, however. Instead, the man prefers to focus on what his notoriety can do for him, in the way of invitations and forgiveness.

The book opens with Flash and his friend Speedicut going to a new club—one that still allows all of the things slowly being banned in Victorian England. In the midst of the evening, the club is raided. Flash and Speedicut manage to make a clever get away. A boy from the club points out the two men to the police and a chase ensues. Speedicut stays to fend off the Bobbies while Flash makes a run for it, hindered by an injured leg. Flash hides in a carriage and is discovered by Rosanna James. Rosanna is a saucy Irish woman married to a fellow British soldier. Although it angers Rosanna's companion, a Prussian soldier named Otto, Rosanna defends Flash to the police and then allows him to go home with her. The two embark on a wild and turbulent affair. Although it ends with Flash running for his life, the two meet again.

Flash goes about his life and while on a hunting expedition, runs into Otto, who loathes him. Otto turns out to be a baron and is even more obnoxious, pompous and condescending than the night he and Flash met. Otto does his best to humiliate Flash and win every competition, no matter what the price. The trip does not go well, but Otto and Flash pretend to part on civil terms.

Flash sees Rosanna again and learns that she is now using an alias, Donna Lola Montez. Flash sees to it that Rosanna is unmasked during a dance performance and Rosanna leaves London, swearing revenge.

Much later, Flash gets a letter from a mysterious countess begging for his audience. Flash uncovers that the woman is Rosanna, now referred to as Lola, the Countess de Landsfield. Against Flash's better judgment, he accepts Lola's invitation.

Flash become embroiled in an evil and complicated plot involving Otto and the impersonation of the Danish prince Carl Gustaf. The scheme takes Flash to the Duchy of Strackenz where he marries a duchess, nearly dies on a number of occasions, kills a man, and steals a fortune in jewels. Lola resurfaces and she and Flash sleep together again. When Flash awakes, he finds that Lola has robbed him.

Flash finally makes his way home to London and life resumes as normal.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

Harry Flashman, a captain in the Horse Guards, has just returned from serving his country in Afghanistan. Although Flash is only a captain, he is well loved, admired, and considered to be a hero by most standards. Flash takes full advantage of this status as a member of London society and combined with an affluence he attained through marriage, spends a great deal of time traveling about the city.

Upon Flash's return, he discovers that his wife, Elspeth, is unfaithful. While this is not acceptable, confronting her would prove nothing but to have him out on the street. Instead, Flash returns to his former role as socialite and carouser. While Flash is glad to be back in London, he spends time mourning the introduction of the Victorian era, with a more demure style of dress for the ladies and less action in the city's nightlife. In order to counteract this sad fact, Flash intends to continue to seek out adventure with his old friend Speedicut.

Speedicut is much like Flash in that he enjoys a raucous social life and is affluent enough to get away with it. One night the two men decide to try a new social club and casino, the Minor Club, located in St. James. The men are having a grand time with two prostitutes when the alarm is raised that the police have come. A full blown raid is on and people scramble furiously to retrieve clothing, hide or escape. Flash and Speedicut make a clever decision to get away by helping to hide a young man whom they later throw to the wolves in order to make their own escape. The men climb out a skylight and then from roof to roof until they reach the street. They cannot stand to go away without a look, so they venture back to the club where they are spotted and a pursuit takes place. Flash's injured leg gives out and Speedicut offers to stay behind while Flash gets away. Flash hides in the back of a carriage to avoid police and instead is discovered by a couple leaving a party. The woman, Rosanna, is shocked but not alarmed by Flash's presence on the floor of her carriage. The man, Otto, is not as understanding and rages at Flash. The police come by and stop to ask if they have seen a man running by. Otto orders the Bobbie to arrest Flash. Rosanna, having urged Flash to get up in the seat beside her, coyly asks if any of them look like a fugitive. As the Bobbie apologizes, he spots Flash and instantly recognizes him. The Bobbie is beside himself with pleasure and awe. Otto is getting angrier by the moment, demanding that Flash be arrested. The Bobbie argues with Otto saying that Captain Flashman is a hero and as far as he is concerned, Flash could break into Buckingham Palace and there is no way he would ever be arrested. After the Bobbie leaves, Rosanna and Flash are giddy with laughter. Otto, furious, storms off.

There is an instant attraction between Rosanna and Flash and before long they are embroiled in a passionate affair. Although Rosanna is also married, her husband is off at war and she is bored. Flash is fascinated by the woman with a husky Irish voice and



lack of inhibitions. After a week, however, Flash is completely exhausted and needs to rest. Rosanna will not hear of it and a fight ensues. Flash runs away.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

Harry Flashman is a decorated war hero just returning from the war in Afghanistan. Flash has mixed emotions about being back in London. While he is happy to be home again, the city is changing due to the inauguration of Queen Victoria. Styles are more demure for the women and there are fewer opportunities to drink, gamble, and carouse. This makes Flash very unhappy although he is convinced that all of those things are still available if one knows where to look.

Speedicut is an old friend of Flash's. The men have spent many nights trolling the city and its clubs. Flash sometimes thinks that Speedicut takes advantage of his friend's notoriety although Speedicut is well known and affluent enough on his own merit. Flash and Speedicut set out to check out the Minor Club, a new joint on St. James.

The men are having a good time with gambling, drink and women when the club gets raided. They leave the women behind to make an escape. Upstairs seems to be the best place and they are somewhat amused to see the panic in the eyes of the others who are trying to get dressed, hide or simply avoid being arrested. Flash seems to be full of concern when a young man runs upstairs and begs for help. Flash tells the boy to hide in a closet, and then leaves a handkerchief on the floor outside the door so that the boy will surely be discovered. Meanwhile, Flash and Speedicut go upstairs and remain undetected.

Flash and Speedicut cannot resist going back to the club to appear on the sideline as innocent bystanders. The boy spots Flash and Speedicut on the street and is furious that the men had managed to get away. The boy tells the Bobbies that they were also at the club and the men set off at a run. Flash's war injury causes him to have to stop. Speedicut offers to stay behind so that Flash can get away. Flash starts to object, and then convinces himself that it is Speedicut's choice.

Flash quickly shifts from fugitive to gentleman after being discovered in Rosanna's carriage. Rosanna is excited and charmed by finding a stranger in her cab, while Otto is incensed. The more flirtatious and cooperative Rosanna becomes, the angrier Otto gets. The Bobbies finally catch up and one is in utter awe of Flash. There is no way on earth the Bobbie would arrest a national hero. Otto demands Flash be arrested and the Bobbie says that since Otto is a Prussian soldier, he has no authority. The Bobbie takes his leave and Otto storms off.

Flash and Rosanna begin to have a passionate affair at once. Flash finds Rosanna to be a tigress, full of passion, vigor, and undying enthusiasm. All goes well for a week until Flash is exhausted and Rosanna still is not satisfied. They have a fight and Flash runs off to save his own skin.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

Flash escapes from Rosanna's house but is badly shaken. Although Rosanna is a demanding and passionate woman, she also possesses a violent temper and Flash muses that he will never be able to look at a hairbrush the same way ever again. Flash still considers Rosanna one of the most magnificent women he has ever known. Flash discovers later that Rosanna's husband is in the process of divorcing her.

Flash does not expect to see Otto again but one month later, both men are present at Tom Perceval's house to see a boxing match and do some hunting. The event lasts for several days. Flash arrives at Tom's to be told that everyone in attendance is an old friend, except one. A friend of Tom's uncle, the man has just arrived and is already irritating. Tom cannot seem to get rid of him. The man turns out to be Otto. Flash pretends not to know Otto and is surprised to find out that Otto is a baron. Otto reminds Flash of their first meeting.

Flash attempts to avoid Otto as much as possible but has little success. The rest of the men are in good spirits and enjoy their time together. The hunting expedition does not produce any game. On the way home, someone suggests having a steeplechase. After Otto learns what the race entails, he is eager to participate. Tom refuses because it is getting dark, Flash also refuses since the ground is slightly wet and the unfamiliar ground could prove to be dangerous. One thing leads to another and the men are goaded into the race. The race comes down to Flash and Otto. The horses are neck and neck until Otto commits a terrible act by cutting Flash off and nearly causes severe injury to one or both of the horses. Flash backs down and Otto wins. Otto becomes even more insufferable.

Everyone but Otto enjoys the boxing match held near Tom's house. Otto is more obnoxious than usual and declares that boxing is barbaric and pointless. The Brits do not take these comments well. Otto claims that fencing and dueling with weapons is far more civilized and takes skill where boxing does not. The men disagree with Otto and Jack Gully, a former boxing champion, takes supreme offense. The men work long and hard to convince Gully to fight Otto. Gully only agrees to stand in the ring and dodge Otto but will not hit him. Otto is quickly worn out and is begrudgingly amazed at Gully's skill in avoiding the blows. After the match is over, Otto grabs Gully and throws him to the floor, proving again that he has no sportsmanship and is livid over being embarrassed. Jack is somewhat injured, embarrassed and humiliated. Otto badgers Gully and after a bit, Gully agrees to fight. Otto only gets in one hit while Gully, who is gently tapping Otto instead of hitting, gets in many. In an accidental move, Gully bloodies Otto's lip. Once again, Otto attacks Gully after the match has been called.



The company parts ways and before they go, Otto tells Flash that he still feels that they have met before the incident with Rosanna. Otto is determined to remember when and where.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

Flash regrets leaving Rosanna for a minute but will always remember that she belonged to him for that one week. Later, Flash is disturbed to learn that Rosanna lied about her marriage to the fellow soldier and that the man was divorcing her. Flash alludes to the fact that Rosanna will become quite famous and have something to do with royalty.

Flash's meeting with Otto is not pleasant. However, Flash takes great care to maintain a sporting and gentlemanly façade even though he wants nothing more than to beat Otto to a pulp. Otto's behavior is childish, unsportsmanlike, and exceedingly arrogant. No one likes him unless there is a fair amount of drink involved.

Otto shows that he will do whatever is necessary to win, regardless of the consequences. More over, the man is proud of his actions even though he could have seriously injured the horses, Flash or Gully. Otto will never admit to being wrong or embarrassed although he is clearly both.



# Chapters 3-4

## Chapters 3-4 Summary

Flash spends the next while in London before he eventually meets up with Rosanna again. This time it is a fluke. Flash goes to the theater for some reason the man cannot recall when he spots Rosanna, posing as the Spanish dancer Donna Lola Montez. Flash recognizes her immediately. Instantly, Flash develops a plan to unveil Rosanna's true identity and goes off to visit Lord Ranelagh, an acquaintance of Rosanna's. The Lord is arrogant and dismisses Flash as a peasant although he listens to the ploy. Ranelagh says he has no intention of revealing Rosanna's true identity and that he will not do Flash's dirty work. However, if Ranelagh does go to the theater to see Rosanna dance, Flash is not to sit with him nor should he address the Lord in public.

Ranelagh does go to the theater. The audience is mesmerized by Rosanna in her new guise. Toward the end of the second act, Ranelagh stands up and shouts out that the audience has been swindled, that the woman is not a Spanish dancer but Betsy James, an Irish girl. The crowd goes wild and the dancer is booed off the stage. Despite all efforts to rectify the situation, Rosanna's career is all but ruined in London.

Flash will see Rosanna again, but not until years later. In the mean time, news of Rosanna is not scarce. The woman regularly inserts herself into royal courts and continues to have her infamous temper tantrums.

Flash realizes that if he had not left Speedicut the night of the raid, been rude to Otto, set Jack Gully upon Otto, retaliated against Rosanna, he may have been spared involvement in a shocking plot.

It is 1847 and Flash is back in London with a pocketful of ill-gotten gain. Upon his return, Flash discovers that Elspeth's parents have taken up residence in London. Mr. and Mrs. Morrison, the in-laws, despise Flash and take every opportunity to remind him that they foot the bills for Flash's household. Naturally, they argue. Later, Elspeth confides in Flash that her parents want to marry off their other two daughters and hope that Flash will be able to help in some way. Flash wants no part of the scheme but has no choice in the matter.

Flash receives a mysterious letter from the Countess de Landsfield which is full of flattery and affection. The Countess wants nothing more than for Flash to come to Germany to help with a delicate matter. The letter is baffling since Flash has no idea about the Countess or what she could possibly want. The temptation of the 500 pound check for traveling expenses is too much for Flash and he goes to see the people who are in charge of the money. After a period of questioning, Flash discovers that the Countess is none other than Rosanna, although the persona of Rosanna James is long dead. The Countess is now referred to as Lola. According to the men, Lola is a queen in all but official title. Flash is hesitant but cannot turn down such a large amount of money.





## Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Flash and his in-laws completely despise one another. Mr. Morrison is fond of belittling Flash. Flash says that Morrison was proud when he was a war hero. To that, Morrison has no reply. Still, the in-laws feel that Elspeth has married beneath her, even if Flash has family and friends who carry royal titles. Elspeth seeks Flash's help in finding suitable husbands for her sisters but Flash refuses. Flash suggests that Morrison pay a handsome dowry for the girls, one of which is not especially attractive. Elspeth insists that Flash help the cause and Flash sees no way out.

The letter from Rosanna, now known as Lola, is surprising to Flash. There is still a part of him that remembers the woman as a passionate and eager lover although her famed temper tantrums are quite frightening. Flash is suspicious of Lola's motives and thinks she must be crazy in referring to him as one of her oldest and dearest friends. Flash is tempted to throw the letter away except that Lola has ordered that Flash should be paid 500 pounds, easily ten times what it would cost to make the trip. Against his better judgment, Flash takes the money.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Elspeth does not have many objections to Flash leaving London after he says it is a military assignment. The Morrisons rant and rave, accusing Flash of more "godless gallivanting" and finally calm down when Flash says they should be happy that the trip means he will be far away from Elspeth.

Since Flash does not speak any German, he offers to pay the fare of a neighborhood waiter if the man will teach Flash some German. Flash believes that it is foolish to go into a foreign country without even a little bit of knowledge regarding the language. There are also unknown hazards to be encountered and Flash packs a knife, although he leaves the pistols at home.

The trip to Germany takes a few days, by way of Paris. Along the way, the German waiter teaches Flash some of the language and is pleased at his student's aptitude and progress. The two part ways in Munich.

Flash spends time in the city visiting the palace and various beer gardens and gratefully stumbles upon groups of people who speak either English or French, allowing him to hear some gossip. The people speak of Lola a lot and Flash finds out that the Countess is not loved as much as he was led to believe. In fact, many people think of her as trashy and foul, and her violent rages are not admired.

After three days, Flash finally gets to see Lola. The Countess is in rare form, throwing about orders and being waited on hand and foot. Lola seems glad to see Flash but will not discuss the "delicate matter" referred to in the letter. Flash wants nothing more than to be alone with Lola but it does not happen. That night, there is a dinner party, and Flash breaks his own rules by getting "beastly drunk." All the while Flash is trying to get to Lola, a fat blonde baroness tries to get to him. Flash is disgusted by her and rebuffs her. Finally, Lola takes Flash by the hand and leads him to a darkened room. Flash rests on a bed and passes out.

When Flash awakes, he finds that the fat baroness is on top of him and although he insistently refuses her advances, the baroness will not give up. Flash finally gives in and in the middle of it all police break into the room and arrest him.

Flash is thrown into jail and is not allowed to contact the English ambassador. Despite his threats and tantrums, Flash is told that he could serve ten years for his actions, which include rape. After a long while, one of the officials in the cell tells Flash that the whole thing has been contrived because he is needed for a special assignment and they had to make sure he would cooperate. Flash realizes that he has no choice.



A long journey ensues. After three days, Flash and his captors arrive at a structure that is half castle, half mansion. Flash is still confused but begins to understand when he is led into a room where Otto is waiting for him.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Flash is annoyed that he is forced to wait days before seeing Lola. Although Flash admires Munich for its cleanliness and scenery, he is bored with the wait. Things become more interesting when Flash begins to hear tales of Lola's behavior and discovers that the information regarding the beloved Countess is false. The people hate Lola.

Flash continues to be suspicious even after meeting Lola but soon puts it aside. The only thing he can think of is getting the Countess into bed. Flash has no choice but to put up with the servants and hangers on, and holds onto the hope that he and Lola will be together soon.

The fat baroness disgusts Flash and he has no problem in shoving her away. Flash may have been able to avoid what came next if he had obeyed his own rules about drinking too much. When the police rush into the room and arrest Flash, it is obvious that Flash had been had. Due to Flash's objections to the arrest, he is knocked out cold.

Flash knows that arguing against the charges is in vain but cannot help it. Flash is scared and angry at himself and Lola. After the official admits to blackmail, Flash frantically searches his brain for the answer to this dilemma.

Flash is taken on a trip which is not completely unpleasant. Upon arriving at the destination, Flash is depressed at the bleak sight in front of him in the way of the half castle, half house. There is no way to know who lives there. Finally, Flash is taken to a room where he discovers Otto waiting for him. Flash is immediately disheartened and angry.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

Flash discovers that he has been taken to Otto's family home, Schonhausen. Flash is shocked to see Otto, who looks horrible from too much food and drink. Otto tells Flash that there is still a score to settle since he is still missing a tooth from the bout with Gully. Otto tells Flash that it is not the reason he was brought from London. Otto needs Flash for a mission. Flash says Otto could have asked but Otto replies that Flash never would have come. Otto goes on to say that the mission is top secret and should never be revealed to anyone.

Flash is impatient while Otto tells of the German and Danish conflict over the states of Schleswig and Holstein. Flash keeps wondering aloud why this pertains to him at all. Otto finally gets to the point by saying that Prince Carl Gustaf of Denmark is set to marry Duchess Irma, the ruler of the Duchy of Strackenz, an important municipality in Holstein. The marriage, set to take place in six weeks, is crucial in preventing a war between Germany and Denmark. However, Prince Gustaf has contracted a social disease and cannot marry the Duchess until the ailment is cured. Flash suggests postponing the wedding but Otto says that it is impossible.

Otto reveals to Flash that he finally remembered where he had seen him before the night in Rosanna's carriage. It turns out that it was not Flash Otto recalled but Prince Gustaf. The two men are doppelgangers. Flash's part in the mission is to impersonate Gustaf during the wedding and for a few weeks to follow until Gustaf can assume his duties as husband to Irma and ruler of the Duchy of Strackenz. Flash immediately objects but soon learns that he has no choice.

Flash's head is shaved and the resemblance to Gustaf is astonishing, even to Flash. Following Otto's orders, Flash spends the next six weeks learning to speak Danish and memorizing everything there is to know about Gustaf, from childhood memories to signature speech patterns and gestures.

Flash is horrified when Otto says that Gustaf has two scars on his face from dueling and that Flash must have them or the plan will not work. Flash vehemently objects but, in the end, is cut in a dueling match.

By the end of the six weeks, Flash is completely versed in Gustaf's life, speaks Danish, and has adopted the Prince's speech and gestures as his own.

Otto finally reveals the rest of the plan, saying that when the time is right, Flash will make a journey and spend the night at the house of an acquaintance. Flash will be removed from the Prince's apartment and the switch will be made. The Prince will fall and hit his head, so that the injury can be used as a cover story for any confusion regarding incidents that happened while Gustaf was in seclusion.



## Chapter 6 Analysis

Flash despises Otto more than ever and is outraged by the twisted plot the Baron has contrived. Flash is convinced that it can never work, even if he does bear a striking resemblance to Gustaf.

Having his head and whiskers shaved off is traumatic for Flash. After it is done, Otto and his men goggle at Flash and could swear that it is Gustaf standing in front of them.

Being forced to duel and become scarred is more than Flash can take. It is obvious that he has no choice and, in the end, is resigned to it.

Flash has a knack for fast learning, especially when it comes to languages. Gustaf speaks only Danish and a bit of German, so Flash is saddled with a lot of work. There are daily lessons on every aspect of Gustaf's life and Flash is soon surprised to find that his persona has been replaced by Gustaf's.

Flash thinks Otto's plan for the switch is insane and could never work. Otto explains that there is an inside man to do the switch and that everything has been carefully planned. Flash comes up with a number of scenarios and Otto becomes angry at the suggestion the plan could fail.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Flash sets off for the three day journey to Denmark, along with Otto's men Rudi and de Gautet. The trio meets up with Detchard, Otto's inside man. The switch is made and Prince Gustaf is successfully led out of the palace.

The first person to be fooled by Flash's disguise is Gustaf's personal physician. Flash finally believes that the ruse could actually work. The men leave Flash alone and he admires Gustaf's bedchamber. Flash tells Gustaf's new valet, Josef, to send in a chambermaid to turn down the bed. Despite his own judgment, Flash seduces the chambermaid.

Flash sets out for Strackenz and is already feeling the effects of being treated as a royal. Flash is greeted by the constable of Strackenz and given the keys to the city. On a whim, Flash hands his sword over and says that it is to protect the honor of Strackenz. Flash does not realize that the gesture has a great amount of political significance and the crowd goes wild with approval. To Flash's annoyance, he is taken to several places before being escorted to the palace.

Flash finally gets to meet Duchess Irma. Flash realizes that the plan is really working and that he is to be married the following day. Duchess Irma is a beautiful woman but Flash perceives her as being as cold as stone. Their efforts to become acquainted are awkward. Flash and Irma go into a luncheon and Flash thinks that Irma will do anything to avoid being alone with him. Two ministers go over the wedding ceremony with Flash and remind him of the political advantage such a wedding will bring and that Flash must be sure to treat Irma well and with reverence.

Rudi and de Gautet return to the palace and inform Flash that there is a hiccup in the plan. Gustaf's closest friend, whom he has known since childhood, has decided to attend the wedding. Flash is convinced that the friend will discover the ruse.

Flash and Irma are married and drive away in a carriage. A protester shouts at the carriage and the incident upsets Irma enough to send her into a rage. The Duchess demands that the man be arrested and punished.

The wedding reception is held in a grand ballroom and it is almost the end of Flash when Gustaf's childhood friend comes to congratulate the couple. Hansen, the friend, notices something wrong with Flash and must know that he is an imposter. It is a terrifying moment for Flash but the evening ends without further incident.

Flash and Irma go to a hunting lodge where they spend the wedding night. Flash drinks too much and is undeterred by Irma's cold demeanor. At first, Irma lies there like a corpse while Flash has her but later Irma proves that she is "as randy as a monkey."



Flash and Irma spend ten days at the lodge. Flash and de Gautet go riding through the woods with a scout. The scout's horse becomes lame during the trip and Flash and de Gautet continue on. After the boy leaves gone, Flash hears a gun shot behind him. De Gautet is trying to shoot Flash in the back. Flash avoids being shot and eventually, falls back on his military training to disarm de Gautet. Flash tortures de Gautet until he confesses that Flash is supposed to die the entire time and will never collect the money. Flash is shocked and demands to know why. De Gautet finally explains that Prince Gustaf is not ill but is being held in a dungeon for safe keeping. The plan set forth by Otto is to have Flash murdered then it will be discovered that he was not Prince Gustaf but an English agent. There will be retaliation against the English and consequently, there will be war. Flash breaks his promise to let de Gautet go and instead, pushes him off a cliff.

Flash tried to develop a plan to keep from being killed. Finally, Flash makes his way to a cabin and asks for a mount. The old man in the cabin sends for someone's horse and Flash must wait for four hours. Eventually, several peasants come but do not have a horse. They lead Flash to another location where he is confronted with Erik Hansen. Flash knows he is done for and that there is no way to fool Hansen this time. Hansen is confused and cannot tell if Flash is an imposter or the real thing. Finally, Hansen speaks to Flash in Danish and Flash fails to answer. Flash is taken out to a tree where a noose waits for him.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

Flash is terrified that the plan will not work until he meets Ostred, Gustaf's physician. If Ostred can be fooled, almost anyone can be. Flash instantly takes to the princely life but hates the traveling from place to place to meet with constituents and children. Finally, Flash is taken to the palace where he meets Irma.

Flash sees Irma as an arrogant, cold fish. The Duchess' conceit is bigger than it should be for a 19 year old but Flash credits it to her royal position. All evening, Irma avoids being alone with Flash.

Flash remembers little of the wedding but begins to figure out Irma. Irma shows her true colors when she flies into a rage over the protester who dares approach the royal carriage.

The hunting lodge is pleasing to Flash. Despite Irma's cold demeanor, Flash does not hold back when it comes to the wedding night. For the first couple of times, Irma lies as still as a stone. Later in the night, Irma wakes Flash and becomes more active. Irma begins to fall for Flash.

The riding expedition with de Gautet is when everything changes. Flash learns that his death will start a war with the English and eventually affect Strackenz as well. This has been Otto's plan all along. De Gautet underestimates Flash who gets all the information he can before pitching the would-be assassin over the edge of a cliff.

Flash is shocked to be confronted with Hansen and his chances for survival are now nearly zero.





# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

The men in the cabin confront Flash, who admits that he is not Gustaf. The lead man, Sapten, refuses to listen to Flash's explanation. Hansen is shocked and wants to know Gustaf's whereabouts. Flash explains that he is a British soldier and has been forced into impersonating Gustaf against his will by enemies of Strackenz. Flash finally convinces the men to hear his story. Flash tells almost all of the truth except for his real identity and fabricates the kidnapping of his wife and daughter as the reason he went along with the scheme.

The men argue over the story and its validity. After a long discussion, Gundvig, a doctor, says he believes Flash's incredible tale. Flash is still in danger, however and the men go outside to discuss the matter further.

The men, who turn out to be Danish sympathizers, decide to spare Flash's life but concoct a plan to free the real Prince Gustaf. Although the plan seems insane and frightening to Flash, he has no choice but to go along.

Hansen and Flash swim to the shore near the castle where Gustaf is imprisoned. When Hansen gets out of the water, he is shot to death by Rudi, who has been waiting for them.

Rudi takes Flash inside and gives him drink and dry clothes. Flash tells Rudi the whole story, as he has no choice if he wants to live.

Flash finally comes face to face with Gustaf, who goes into shock at seeing his own face on another body. Rudi threatens Gustaf by saying he will be weighted and pitched into the river to meet his old friend Hansen. Gustaf is outraged. Flash is led away.

Rudi shares his new plan with Flash. Rudi plans to kill Gustaf and the sympathizers and escape with Flash. The men will return to Strackenz where Flash will continue the charade long enough for Rudi and Flash to rule the Duchy while stealing from its coffers. Since a revolution has begun, Otto is too busy and will not notice. Flash objects to no avail.

In the night, Flash knocks Rudi out with a wine bottle and tries to escape. Meanwhile, the sympathizers have begun their attack. Rudi catches Flash and says that he must die. The two men engage in a long duel and Flash ends up in Gustaf's cell in an attempt to get away from Rudi. Meanwhile, Gustaf hurls furniture at Flash's head. Flash tries to convince Gustaf that he's on his side, not Rudi's. During the fight, Flash slips on the stones and falls head first into the black pit. Rudi laughs as Flash plunges toward his death.



Flash doesn't die. Instead, he comes out in the river. It is winter and if Flash wants to survive, he has to return to the castle. After a discussion with Gustaf and the sympathizers, Flash is set free.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

Flash cannot seem to get out of trouble. The sympathizers are furious with him even though Gundvig believes his story. After long discussions, it is decided that Flash will help the men rescue Gustaf from the dungeon. Flash objects but, since he cannot escape, has little choice.

Because it is midwinter, the river is freezing and Flash almost drowns because he cannot swim in such cold water with his injured leg. Hansen pulls him along and they finally reach the shore. It seems that Rudi has dumb luck and just happens to be on the shore when the men arrive. It seems a shame to Flash that Hansen gets shot but he is frantically searching for his own escape route. There is none.

Both Flash and Gustaf are in shock when they meet face to face. Gustaf thinks that Flash is on the side of the enemy and does not think differently until Flash saves him from Rudi's saber. Flash is petrified after he falls into the pit, sure that death awaits him. He had not had time to take a breath before falling into the water and feels himself beginning to drown. Just as he fears the end is near, his training or need for survival kicks in and pulls him through. Flash is relieved when he surfaces in the river.

The decision to return to the castle is one of self-preservation for Flash. Once inside, however, he proclaims that he has returned to save Gustaf. Gustaf is already indebted for Flash's heroics and it is determined that Flash should go free. Flash has nothing more on his mind than finding a way to escape and get back to England.



# Chapters 9-10

## Chapters 9-10 Summary

Flash leaves the castle and instead of going back to England or France, returns to Strackenz and Irma. Flash explains that he must go away but will return soon. The guards are told to watch Irma carefully, even if it means leaving the jewels unguarded. The men have no choice but to obey. Flash steals the jewels and leaves the duchy.

Flash eventually makes his way to Munich but has run out of money. The revolution has exploded and the streets are rife with angry people who want nothing more than to depose Lola. Flash goes to the palace in time to see Lola walking out into the crowd. Despite threats and curses, Lola holds her head high and the crowd parts for her. No one says a thing. Lola gets into her coach and prepares to take off. Flash realizes that this may be his only way out of Munich and begs Lola to take him out of the city.

Flash is allowed to ride with Lola to the outskirts of town. Lola is harsh and cruel to Flash and he is confused as to why. Eventually, the pair ends up together in bed once again. When Flash wakes up the next morning, Lola is gone. Flash is left nothing more than a letter, saying that Lola has taken the treasure but left him a little money to travel back to England. After all, she said, Flash would have done the same.

Some time later, Flash learns that Lola has taken up with a viscount and will certainly be up to her old tricks.

Flash makes it back home to England to find the Morrisons are still at his house. For some reason, Morrison is slightly less hostile than usual. Flash's father has been cured of his ailments and is in an upstairs bedroom. Elspeth is thrilled to see Flash and immediately comments on his scars and shaved head.

## Chapters 9-10 Analysis

Flash lets his emotions and need for payment get the better of him. Against good judgment, Flash returns to Strackenz. Flash is pleased to see Irma who is obviously distraught without her husband. Flash makes up a tale about doing his duty and says that he must go away but will return shortly. Part of him believes that Gustaf will return and all will be well. Flash steals the crown jewels and convinces himself that it is justified as he has not been paid for his efforts.

Flash manages to make his way to Munich, taking extreme caution to avoid Otto. After a long ride, Flash decides to take a train to Munich, which leaves him broke and annoyed with himself and the situation. Coming across Lola again is somewhat lucky. Although Lola is cold as ice, she does not refuse Flash and will eventually let him into her bed.



Flash turns a blind eye to Lola's character by letting his guard down around her. It is clear that she has a cold heart and feels no remorse for her part in Otto's dastardly plan. Flash is dismayed but not at all surprised to find that Lola has stolen the jewels. In fact, Flash admits to himself that he probably would have done the same.

Flash is happy to be back in London where it is safe; he will never set foot in Germany again. Mr. Morrison seems almost cordial to Flash except for a scathing remark about Flash's father. Flash ignores him to go to Elspeth who seems to have genuinely missed him.



# Characters

## Captain Harry Flashman

Harry Flashman is a Captain in the Horse Guards and a bonafide war hero. Harry, also known as Flash or Flashy, is rumored to have won the war in Afghanistan practically single handed and attained a great deal of status and praise due to his actions. This is increased by the fact that Flash was injured more than once in combat.

Although Flash is married to Elspeth, he has no qualms about bedding other women. Flash justifies this by saying that Elspeth is a trollop and has lovers, so it is perfectly acceptable for him to do the same.

By all standards, Flash is a handsome man who enjoys his waning status among the upper class. Part of Flash's appeal comes from his outrageous spending habits, paid for in part by Elspeth's family money, a fact which Elspeth's parents will never let Flash forget.

Flash has had a great deal of experience and training yet often finds himself in trouble due to his libido, greed, or ego. Even when it is obvious that getting together with Lola is a big mistake, Flash goes ahead with it anyway and is always somewhat surprised to discover she has used him once again.

Regardless of all the foolish mistakes and adventures, Flash is a resilient sort who will be around for many years to come.

## Mrs. Marie Elizabeth Rosanna James aka Lola Montez

Rosanna is the fiery wife of a British officer who is away on duty. Although her husband is away, Rosanna is not one to sit at home and wait. Otto Bismarck is her escort on the night she meets Flash, an incident that amuses Rosanna. It is not long after Rosanna and Flash meet that he is in her bed. Rosanna is a passionate and somewhat crazy woman, who is demanding and suffers from temper tantrums and rages. Rosanna has no problem with deceit as long as it gets her what she wants.

Rosanna proves cleverness every time she reinvents herself. The first reinvention is as the famed Spanish dancer, Donna Lola Montez. Although Flash makes sure Rosanna is unmasked, she retains the name Lola throughout the rest of her life. Lola's dancing career fails after she is revealed as a fraud.

Lola will come and go from Flash's life but takes the opportunity to seek revenge after she has assumed the identity of Countess de Landsfield. No matter what Lola has done in the past, Flash cannot help but be taken by her, in more ways than one. Even she has put him in harm's way, Flash takes Lola to bed once more and is robbed of his treasures.



Flash goes back to England and Lola is off to find her next conquest. There is no doubt that the two will meet again.

## **Baron Otto Bismarck**

Baron Otto Bismarck is a Prussian soldier who discovers Flash hiding in Rosanna's carriage. Otto becomes Flash's adversary.

## **Tom Perceval**

Tom Perceval is one of Flash's friends.

## **Jack Gully**

Jack Gully is a former boxing champion and friend to Flash.

## **Speedicut**

Speedicut is Flash's closest friend and is always up for an adventure.

## **Prince Carl Gustaf**

Prince Carl Gustaf is the crown prince of Denmark, son of King Christian, and future ruler of Stackenz. Gustaf is also Flash's doppelganger.

## **Duchess Irma of Strackenz**

Duchess Irma of Strackenz is the 19 year old ruler of Strackenz and who is betrothed to Prince Gustaf.

## **Rudi**

Rudi is one of Otto's trusted henchmen.

## **Erik Hansen**

Erik Hansen is Gustaf's closest friend since childhood.



## **De Gautet**

De Gautet is one of Otto's trusted henchmen.

## **Elsbeth Flashman**

Elsbeth Flashman is Harry's wife.



# Objects/Places

## London

London is the home of Captain Harry Flashman, war hero and borderline socialite. Flash lives in a house in the city with his wife, Elspeth, daughter of a wealthy Scotsman.

London is going through a dramatic change since the coronation of Queen Victoria. Flash laments that the city is turning puritanical with less revealing clothes for the women, and bans on some of his favorite activities such as whores, gambling, and drinking. Flash recognizes that there are still many places in London where one can get the things he needs, from Whitechapel to the newest club in St. James, the Minor Club. There are still ill-gotten gains and opportunities for clever men like Flash and his wingman, Speedicut. The pair takes great delight in finding the seedy underbelly of the city and taking advantage of all it has to offer. It is this kind of activity that leads Flash to meet Rosanna, who had been attending a private party in the city. Flash goes home with Rosanna and a tumultuous affair begins.

London is Flash's home base and regardless of where he roams, Flash will always return. Flash's behaviors and status are frowned upon by Elspeth's wealthy parents, the Morrisons. Part way through the book, the Morrisons also move to London and plan to spend a great deal of time with Elspeth, much to Flash's chagrin.

## Germany

Germany is a country that is at the beginning of a revolution. This act is spurred on by Otto Bismarck, of the Schonhausen family. Flash visits various places throughout Germany, including Munich. Flash likes Munich, with its clean streets and plentiful beer gardens. Although Flash speaks little of the language, he finds that there are people in the city who speak English and French, two languages in which Flash is fluent.

After Flash is arrested and detained by German police, he is taken to Schonhausen, home to Baron Otto Bismarck. Otto has become an adversary to Flash and the man's arrogance and evil ways bend him toward the goal of killing Flash.

Schonhausen is a bleak place, half castle, half mansion and not at all like many of the beautiful palaces in the country.

After Flash's adventure in Schonhausen, he is taken to Strackenz in the state of Holstein. Flash is too involved with the plot to impersonate Gustaf and so has little time to enjoy the lifestyle of the Duchess and her constituency. After Flash returns to Munich and finally escapes, he never sets foot in Germany again.





## **Afghanistan**

Site of the war in which Flashman was a soldier.

## **Minor Club**

The Minor Club is a St. James casino that gets raided and finds Flash and Speedicut in a jam.

## **Tom Perceval's House**

Located in Leicestershire, Tom Perceval's house is the site of the hunting and boxing bout between Otto, Flash and friends.

## **Munich**

Munich is the city in which Flash travels to meet Irma and is arrested.

## **Duchy of Strackenz**

The Duchy of Strackenz is a small municipality that is the center of political controversy between Denmark and Germany, and is the home of Duchess Irma.

## **Hanover Square**

Hanover Square is a place in London where people can still carouse despite the new Victorian attitude.

## **Denmark**

Denmark is the home of Prince Carl Gustaf and is one of the two main countries bidding for Strackenz.

## **Paris**

Paris is one of the cities visited by Flash on his way to Munich to meet Lola.

## **Flashman House**

The Flashman home is the London residence of Harry and Elspeth Flashman, paid for by Elspeth's parents.

## Schonhausen Estate

The Schonhausen Estate is Otto Bismarck's family home.



# Themes

## Debauchery

Upon Flash's return from the military, it is obvious to him that Elspeth has taken at least two lovers during his absence. While this makes Flash angry in some ways, as he refers to Elspeth as a trollop, he sees no reason to abstain from taking lovers. The birth of the Victorian age is depressing to Flash, who is fond of women's exposed breasts, gambling, and drink. However, Flash quickly proves that those things are still attainable if one has the appropriate connections.

Aside from a couple of short lived romps, Flash's debauchery tends to be focused on Rosanna. After their initial meeting in Rosanna's carriage, the pair is nearly inseparable. Rosanna is utterly insatiable, to the point that Flash is completely exhausted. Rosanna is rough, playful and often violent, yet there is something about her that causes Flash to refer to her as one of the most magnificent women in Victorian England. Flash and Rosanna seem to be extremely compatible, at least sexually. However, when Flash rebuffs Rosanna's advances, she attacks him with a hair brush and he must flee from her house to avoid being beaten.

To Rosanna, sex is a weapon and she will use it to get whatever she wants. It proves to work for her as she manages to land one royal male after another.

## Military

As a Captain in the Horse Guards, Harry Flashman has a decent career in the military. In 1842, Flash becomes a war hero after a stellar performance in Afghanistan. The notoriety wins Flash a great deal of respect and opens many doors for one who is otherwise on the outskirts of society. Speedicut also takes advantage of Flash's notoriety, although he is affluent himself.

Throughout the book, Flash is awaiting a new assignment or two, although one never comes through. While the pay would be nice, Flash is in no real hurry to return to active duty.

Flash's status as a captain of the Horse Guards as well as British war hero gets him out of many scrapes. The night Flash is caught in Rosanna's carriage, the Bobbie all but kisses Flash's feet and flat out refuses Otto's demands to have Flash arrested. In fact, the Bobbie is rude to Otto and wishes Flash nothing but the best before he leaves.

Flash's military training also manages to save him in times of trouble, such as the incident involving the saber fight with Rudi.

Flash has little ambition to move up through the ranks, unless his father-in-law is willing to pay for it, which seems unlikely.



## Schemes

There are many intricate schemes woven throughout the book. Flash is an accomplished liar and takes pride carrying out various schemes while finding various ways in which he can talk his way out of messes.

Rosanna has a number of ruthless schemes and seems to have no conscience about pulling them off, despite the casualties. The scheme to capture Flash fails quickly because of her temper and Rosanna's vanity gets the best of her when she assumes the identity of Donna Lola Montez. Rosanna's biggest schemes involvd luring titled men into her bed, which grants her a place in a royal court. The affairs or marriages never last too long but there is always another scheme to be carried out.

The biggest and most complicated scheme is the one presented by Otto. The plan he reveals to Flash is not the true scheme at all, although he made it seem believable enough that Flash might go through with it. The true scheme will cause a war in England and discredit the British, which Flash will never do. Since the scheme changes so often, Flash is left to concoct schemes of his own, even when it seems that there is no possible solution to the predicament created by Otto.

Flash creates a few schemes of his own, showing his well honed survival skills. One can only guess at the next scheme Flash has in mind, as the man cannot be expected to sit still.

# Style

## Point of View

Royal Flash is a novel written in the first person. The book is said to be part of Captain Harry Flashman's memoirs and therefore is written in his own voice. The use of first person is appropriate for this reason.

Flashman's view of the world and its events lends the work an air of authenticity, suggesting the time period in which it was supposedly written. The novel was not written or published in the 19th century, but was published in 1970. Flash's voice however, can convince the reader that the book was written in Flash's later years as the author suggests.

The point of view also allows the reader to spend some time in Flash's head. The man has a somewhat unusual way of looking at events in his life and how they do or do not relate to him and his needs or desires. Flash is not a rogue, per se, but his explanations of events shows the reader that he is not a man who shies away from a good time with gambling, drink, and women. In fact, Flash requires these things and would not consider himself to be alive without them.

Finally, Flash's view allows the readers insight into the man's prejudices and predilections. These insights are valuable in that they help the story along without making it predictable.

## Setting

There are two main settings in Royal Flash: London and the Duchy of Strackenz.

London is where Flash is based and where he maintains a home with Elspeth, his wife. The pair is relatively well suited, although Elspeth's father disagrees. Elspeth's parents also relocate to London from Scotland, no doubt to keep an eye on Flash and his activities.

Flash laments the new attitudes that are being forced on the city through the coronation of Queen Victoria. Flash is a bit of a playboy and likes to have the opportunity to gamble, drink, and pick up prostitutes on a whim. While those things are still available in various parts of the city, it is more difficult to enjoy oneself. When Flash has had enough of London, he finds reason to go elsewhere but in the end, he always returns.

Due to a convoluted plot set forth by Otto Bismarck, Flash ends up going to the Duchy of Strackenz while impersonating its future ruler, Prince Carl Gustaf of Denmark. The Duchy is a place comprised mostly of Danish peasants and citizens, although it is located in Germany. The position of the land makes it an important pawn in a game of

war between Denmark and Germany. Like much of Germany, the area of Strackenz has a great deal of wooded land and is separated by a large river.

## Language and Meaning

Royal Flash takes place in the mid 19th century and language is used in such a way as to reflect the time period. As the book takes place in England for the most part, the Queen's English is the language of preference. Although Flash professes to be bilingual, there is little to no French present. When Flash travels to Germany and Strackenz, German and Danish are used, but sparingly. It is fortunate that the reader is not expected to adopt new languages as easily as the main character.

For anyone who has ever read a 19th century work, the language is quite easy to understand. It is not old English which tends to be overly proper and flowery. Much of the language is similar to today's English, especially the Queen's English.

There are slight differences in the tone used by someone of Flash's class, however. This basically means that the language is slightly more sophisticated than the average person.

Flash uses many expressions that are explained through footnotes, although the meaning is usually clear through the use of supporting text. There are also many references to events of the day, also explained through the use of footnotes.

Over all, the language and meaning in Royal Flash is in no way laborious and lends an air of reality and flavor.

## Structure

Royal Flash is a novel consisting of 245 pages, divided into 10 chapters. The chapters are not numbered or titled, simply separated. The shortest chapter is 9 pages long; the longest chapter is 49 pages long. The average chapter length is 23 pages.

The book begins in London, as Flash and Speedicut venture into a new club. The first part of the book remains in London before switching to various parts of Germany, from Munich to the rural German countryside to Strackenz. Finally, the book switches back to London again, where the story ends with Flash arriving home safe and sound.

Since the book is written in first person, it allows the author to adapt the work to the emotions of the main character. In the beginning, Flash is somewhat cocky and devil may care. When he is discovered in Rosanna's carriage, the structure turns more toward fear and despair, which quickly returns to the former after Otto is dismissed. There are moments of anger, pure abject terror, frustration, and relief. The structure of the words and chapters are designed to reflect these strong emotions and each chapter seems to have its own specific flavor.

The structure of the scenes in and around London differs greatly from the parts where the main character is in Munich or Strackenz. It is almost as if the author has adjusted the work to reflect the change of location.

Despite the action or lack thereof, the structure tends to remain the same throughout the book—descriptive without being overly detailed or monotonous.



## Quotes

"I didn't hesitate. Anyone who is ass enough to sacrifice himself for Flashy deserves all he gets," p. 9.

"Now I've dealt with raging women before but I'd never met anything like her,"  
Regarding Rosanna, p. 16.

"I hadn't liked him before, but from that moment, I hated Bismarck, and decided that if ever the chance came to do him a dirty turn, I wouldn't let it slip past me," p. 20.

"One of the difficulties of writing your memoirs is that they don't run smooth, like a novel or play, from one act to the next," p. 38.

"My own idea of theatrical entertainment, I admit, is the musichall; strapping wenches and low comedians are my line, and your fine drama and music bore me to death," p. 42.

"I have a nose for risk; the uneasy feeling that had come over me on first reading her letter was returning," p. 56.

"She was beautiful in her royal rage, just as I remembered although now she had her clothes on," p. 66.

"I wonder sometimes if any man on earth has come to in a cell more often than I have," p. 75.

"I can't say I gave a tuppenny damn about his work, or the building on a united German state, and I couldn't for the life of me see what all this had to do with me," p. 93.

"The next thing I knew I had been hurled to the floor, and as I lay there, blinded with my own blood, all hell broke loose," p. 110.

"There are ways of being drunk that have nothing to do with alcohol," pp. 128-129.

"If I've had more than my share of bad luck in my life, I've had some good to make up for it," p. 158.

"Cowards, as Shakespeare has wisely observed, die many times before their deaths, but not many of them can have expired more in spirit than I," p. 171.





## Topics for Discussion

What might have happened if Rosanna's husband would have been with her when Flash was discovered in the carriage?

How might the trip to Tom Perceval's have changed if Flash had won the Steeplechase or if Otto had been beaten badly by Gully?

How might things have worked out if Flash had turned down Lola's offer to go to Germany?

Do you think Irma knew that Flash was an imposter after Gustaf went back to Strackenz? How do you think she would have reacted?

How would the Morrisons' continued presence in London affect Flash's relationship with Elspeth?

Flash says that this story has only been told to his lawyer, many years later. Why do you think Flash did not share it with Speedicut?

What do you think will become of Lola?