CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

King Solomon's Mines

H. Rider Haggard · *1885 · original English text*

Allan Quatermain, fifty-five last birthday, takes up a pen to write a history he still half distrusts. Haggard's 1885 adventure follows a hunt for a missing brother, a desert, a lost kingdom, and the mines of a famous name. The book is a rousing tale, and it is also a document of imperial attitudes that must be taught, not copied.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What is a treasure hunt worth, and how should a reader handle a story that is both brave and dated in its view of Africa?

"It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a history."
Allan Quatermain · The opening of Chapter I, "I Meet Sir Henry Curtis"

Sir Henry Curtis, Captain Good, and Quatermain go north after a lost brother and a legend. Umbopa's true name, a desert march, a kingdom's war, and the mines themselves are the plot. This is Haggard's original English, PG #2166, complete, signed at the end by Allan Quatermain. Quote a continuous clean stretch; do not put the book's imperial or racial slurs on the map. Teach the adventure, and teach that the book's view of African peoples is of its time and is not the library's. For older students, with that caveat plainly said.

KEY CHARACTERS

Allan Quatermain
The hunter-narrator, modest, brave, and fifty-five last birthday when he takes up the pen.

Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good
The brother in search, and the naval comic who goes with him.

Umbopa
The man who enters their service, with a face and a name that will matter later.

the people of the lost kingdom
The kingdom into whose war the three are drawn; not décor.

FIFTY-FIVE LAST BIRTHDAY

> *"It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a history."*
> **Allan Quatermain** · Chapter I

Grades 8–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Man Takes Up a Pen

CHAPTER I

Quatermain, a hunter and a modest narrator, begins a history at fifty-five and meets Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good.

- The opening is exact, including the dashes around 'fifty-five last birthday.'
- The chapter title in this text is 'I MEET SIR HENRY CURTIS.'
- The voice is practical and a little ashamed of fine writing; keep that tone in view.

> *"It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a history."*
> **Allan Quatermain** · Chapter I

02

A Legend, and a Bargain

THE EARLY PLAN

A map, a missing brother, and the name of Solomon's mines. The three men agree to go, with their eyes open about the risk.

- The legend is the hook; the brother is the human reason.
- Good's comedy and Curtis's will are set early.
- This is a quest, not a puzzle only.

03

Umbopa, and the Desert

THE MARCH

A new man enters their service; a hunt; a terrible thirst on the way in. The country is the first antagonist.

- Umbopa's name and later identity are a hinge of the plot.
- The desert chapters are the book's first test of courage and loyalty.
- Keep the practical details; they are the adventure's texture.

04

A Kingdom, and a War

THE LOST LAND

They come into a hidden kingdom and are drawn into its succession and its fight. Treasure is no longer the only object.

- The war is the book's large set piece; teach it as a story of courage, not as a spectacle of slaughter.
- A local people and a local kingship are at the center; do not flatten them into décor.
- The book's imperial language appears here; name the problem, and do not quote slurs.

05

The Mines, and a Return

THE CLOSE

The mines of the title, a last trap, a way out, and Quatermain's later word from a ship toward England. The hosted text is complete.

- The ending is in this file, signed in the narrator's name.
- The treasure is not the only prize; the brother and the friends matter more.
- Teach the adventure, and teach the dated view of Africa as a fault to be judged, not as the library's voice.

A Quest | Courage and Loyalty | A Lost Kingdom | Treasure | A Dated Imperial Gaze

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 8–12

1. The hosted text is H. Rider Haggard's original English (Project Gutenberg #2166), complete, ending in the narrator's own voice. The opening of Chapter I is exact: "It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a history." (dashes in this file).
2. The book is a famous 1885 adventure, and it is also a document of imperial and racial attitudes of its time. Teach the quest, and teach that problem plainly. Do not put slurs or the book's contemptuous language on the map. The library's voice is not the narrator's on that point.
3. For older students, with that caveat. This is King Solomon's Mines, not She or the later Quatermain books; keep the plots distinct.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #2166, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/king-solomons-mines/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.