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|----|------|---|------|
| 39 | 4-2 | In parenthesis I must say that this is exactly ... | 5:30 |
| 40 | 4-3 | At about midnight, the glare of a lorry's headlights... | 6:45 |
| 41 | 4-4 | I've thought about that often since. | 6:23 |
| 42 | 4-5 | George looked at Willi, waiting for him to protest. | 7:23 |
| 43 | 4-6 | I remember George's long puzzled look at Willi. | 5:26 |
| 44 | 4-7 | At last we managed to get Jimmy on his feet. | 8:03 |
| 45 | 4-8 | We walked up to the big room through the hot... | 6:16 |
| 46 | 4-9 | On this morning Stanley had stacked the top... | 7:54 |
| 47 | 4-10 | Paul turned his head with his characteristic... | 6:07 |
| 48 | 4-11 | 'Anna?' appealed George, looking at me. | 6:09 |
| 49 | 4-12 | George looked at me again... | 7:14 |
| 50 | 5-1 | He shut his eyes. | 7:33 |
| 51 | 5-2 | It must have been about six or eight months... | 6:11 |
| 52 | 5-3 | And then there was the affair of George's son. | 5:51 |
| 53 | 5-4 | All this time we'd been making jokes... | 7:02 |
| 54 | 5-5 | Next day bad temper prickled through the hotel. | 5:33 |
| 55 | 5-6 | It was nearly midnight when Paul remarked... | 6:15 |
| 56 | 5-7 | I left Willi in the bedroom and stood on the verandah. | 5:55 |
| 57 | 5-8 | Paul left me and I went into the bedroom. | 5:49 |
| 58 | 5-9 | The Red Notebook – The second notebook... | 3:32 |
| 59 | 5-10 | The next day. | 5:11 |
| 60 | 5-11 | 5th Feb., 1950 | 5:09 |
| 61 | 5-12 | 3rd Jan., 1952 | 5:50 |
| 62 | 5-13 | I see that I wrote yesterday, I would leave the Party. | 8:51 |
| 63 | 6-1 | I went up to canvass, three afternoons. | 7:13 |
| 64 | 6-2 | Jean Barker. Wife of minor Party official. | 3:39 |
| 65 | 6-3 | The Yellow Notebook – The yellow notebook... | 5:36 |
| 66 | 6-4 | Julia's last remark had struck a familiar note. | 6:13 |
| 67 | 6-5 | The idea for this novel had come to Ella... | 7:02 |
| 68 | 6-6 | Here was Dr West's house... | 7:06 |
| 69 | 6-7 | Now the talk began again... | 6:05 |
| 70 | 6-8 | Meanwhile she was restless to get away from him... | 5:26 |
| 71 | 6-9 | It was time to go home. | 7:16 |
| 72 | 6-10 | Paul was late... | 7:48 |
| 73 | 6-11 | This was so personal, that it was her turn to glance... | 5:32 |
| 74 | 6-12 | Later – and not so much later, he would say... | 6:46 |
| 75 | 6-13 | They did not speak again until they reached... | 3:45 |
| 76 | 7-1 | From the feeling of the house she knew it was still ... | 5:54 |
| 77 | 7-2 | Being with Paul Tanner that night... | 7:15 |
| 78 | 7-3 | That night Paul was humorous and very tender. | 7:39 |
| 79 | 7-4 | The next evening they met full of defences... | 4:12 |
| 80 | 7-5 | Five years. | 6:44 |
| 81 | 7-6 | The motif of Paul's attitude to his profession. | 6:56 |
| 82 | 7-7 | The end of the affair. | 7:10 |
| 83 | 7-8 | As for me, Anna, it was a remarkable fact... | 8:23 |
| 84 | 7-9 | They ate, and he looked over at her and said... | 4:05 |
| 85 | 7-10 | One day she went with him to his home. | 7:55 |
| 86 | 7-11 | Later that evening he said, laughing... | 5:47 |
| 87 | 7-12 | Ella had a dream which was unpleasant and disturbing. | 7:26 |
| 88 | 8-1 | The Blue Notebook – The blue notebook... | 5:43 |
| 89 | 8-2 | 9th October, 1946 | 6:37 |
| 90 | 8-3 | Jan. 19th, 1950 | 6:50 |
| 91 | 8-4 | Jan. 31st, 1950 | 7:42 |
| 92 | 8-5 | 15th March, 1950 | 6:00 |
| 93 | 8-6 | 9th June, 51 | 6:02 |
| 94 | 8-7 | 28th June, 52 | 6:22 |



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| 95 | 8-8 | December 3rd, 52 | 7:55 |
| 96 | 8-9 | 9th April, 1954 | 6:22 |
| 97 | 8-10 | Free Women 2 – Two visits, some telephone... | 6:56 |
| 98 | 8-11 | He sat down, arranged himself neatly... | 6:35 |
| 99 | 8-12 | Tommy lowered his head, sat frowning. | 5:49 |
| 100 | 9-1 | Tommy said: 'After I went to my father's office...' | 5:40 |
| 101 | 9-2 | This shock reached Anna's diaphragm... | 7:35 |
| 102 | 9-3 | She said at last: 'I know what you've come here for.' | 6:25 |
| 103 | 9-4 | Some time later, perhaps as long as an hour... | 6:03 |
| 104 | 9-5 | Now he came and sat down opposite her... | 5:31 |
| 105 | 9-6 | Marion, when she came in, smiled... | 6:05 |
| 106 | 9-7 | 'Why don't you go to bed?' | 7:09 |
| 107 | 9-8 | The Notebooks – The black notebook... | 6:31 |
| 108 | 9-9 | 'Oh, my dear, you are so marvellous...' | 5:12 |
| 109 | 9-10 | 'Do you remember the excitement you talked about?' | 5:36 |
| 110 | 9-11 | Letter from Mrs. Edwina Wright... | 7:54 |
| 111 | 9-12 | 'Anna, I liked your book so much.' | 8:59 |
| 112 | 10-1 | Now we are suddenly both very angry. | 4:41 |
| 113 | 10-2 | The Red Notebook – August 28th 1954 | 4:29 |
| 114 | 10-3 | I dreamed marvellously. | 5:08 |
| 115 | 10-4 | Here were pasted in some scribbled sheets... | 6:29 |
| 116 | 10-5 | The talk became desultory... | 5:11 |
| 117 | 10-6 | 'I often wonder if I am getting the correct advice...' | 5:20 |
| 118 | 10-7 | The Yellow Notebook continues – The Shadow... | 5:26 |
| 119 | 10-8 | Next morning she slept too long... | 6:02 |
| 120 | 10-9 | His face, his full eyes, were momentarily immobilised... | 7:38 |
| 121 | 10-10 | And now she made a decision. | 5:56 |
| 122 | 10-11 | Near her a man was sitting, absorbed in magazines... | 8:44 |
| 123 | 10-12 | Her son woke her two hours later... | 8:17 |
| 124 | 10-13 | He had a bed-sitting room and a bath... | 5:32 |
| 125 | 11-1 | She thought this one out slowly... | 7:00 |
| 126 | 11-2 | Ella spent the following evening with him. | 8:23 |
| 127 | 11-3 | The Blue Notebook continued... | 6:35 |
| 128 | 11-4 | It must be about six o'clock. | 8:54 |
| 129 | 11-5 | Now it is nearly eight o'clock... | 6:49 |
| 130 | 11-6 | And now I must hurry. | 6:59 |
| 131 | 11-7 | I ought really to be thinking over the coming... | 5:48 |
| 132 | 11-8 | When I get off the bus... | 6:41 |
| 133 | 11-9 | Meanwhile Comrade Butte sits waiting. | 4:10 |
| 134 | 11-10 | There is a startled silence... | 4:51 |
| 135 | 11-11 | I read magazines and periodicals published in English... | 5:11 |
| 136 | 11-12 | Before I start on the 'welfare work'... | 8:07 |
| 137 | 12-1 | About eighteen months ago... | 6:42 |
| 138 | 12-2 | For a year I have been answering these letters... | 5:47 |
| 139 | 12-3 | I say 'Jack, when I leave, will there be anyone...' | 4:42 |
| 140 | 12-4 | And now I see his face has put on a stubborn... | 4:22 |
| 141 | 12-5 | It is raining again, a small tedious drizzle. | 7:17 |
| 142 | 12-6 | And now the cooking for Michael. | 3:51 |
| 143 | 12-7 | I realise it is getting late. | 7:22 |
| 144 | 12-8 | Free Women Three – Tommy adjusts himself... | 7:07 |
| 145 | 12-9 | There never was a moment at which Tommy broke... | 7:14 |
| 146 | 12-10 | It was expressed by the single fact... | 6:41 |
| 147 | 12-11 | A few days later Molly telephoned... | 7:16 |
| 148 | 12-12 | Richard's lips actually trembled... | 5:32 |
| 149 | 12-13 | Refusing to help him, not only out of dislike for him... | 5:36 |
| 150 | 13-1 | Richard with an effort took himself to his desk... | 7:09 |



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| 151 | 13-2 | She opened her eyes, giddy and afraid... |
| 152 | 13-3 | Anna reached the cleanliness of her own flat... |
| 153 | 13-4 | Marion said: 'I'm sorry if I gave you a fright...' |
| 154 | 13-5 | She sat staring, serious, ironical. |
| 155 | 13-6 | 'Do you remember that black leader...' |
| 156 | 13-7 | Marion left, creeping downstairs... |
| 157 | 13-8 | With which she went to the bathroom... |
| 158 | 13-9 | That was the dream she woke with in the morning... |
| 159 | 13-10 | The Notebooks – The black notebook ... |
| 160 | 13-11 | 12 th November |
| 161 | 13-12 | In every direction, all around us, were the insects... |
| 162 | 14-1 | Suddenly Paul sprang over and trod deliberately... |
| 163 | 14-2 | We prepared for a lazy interval. |
| 164 | 14-3 | There was again an intense silence. |
| 165 | 14-4 | Time passed. We smoked. We waited. |
| 166 | 14-5 | Maryrose closed her eyes again. |
| 167 | 14-6 | 'Look,' said Jimmy. |
| 168 | 14-7 | The right side of the black notebook... |
| 169 | 14-8 | Came to know the young American writer... |
| 170 | 14-9 | Easter Sunday |
| 171 | 14-10 | Blood on the Banana Leaves |
| 172 | 14-11 | Here was pinned to the page a review... |
| 173 | 14-12 | The Red Notebook continued... |
| 174 | 15-1 | The Yellow Notebook continued... |
| 175 | 15-2 | A few weeks later, Ella sees Julia, tells her... |
| 176 | 15-3 | Next day she telephones Julia... |
| 177 | 15-4 | That evening Ella goes to Julia's house... |
| 178 | 15-5 | Ella finds this story inside herself... |
| 179 | 15-6 | About this time Ella pays a visit to her father. |
| 180 | 15-7 | Ella, alone in her room, looks into her private pool... |
| 181 | 15-8 | For something like eighteen months... |
| 182 | 15-9 | I remember how she sat opposite me... |
| 183 | 15-10 | 'What do you want me to say then?' |
| 184 | 15-11 | At this point, another thick black line across the page. |
| 185 | 15-12 | Telling Mother Sugar of this dream... |
| 186 | 16-1 | What is happening is something new in my life. |
| 187 | 16-2 | Another heavy black line. |
| 188 | 16-3 | Within a week of my having gone to bed... |
| 189 | 16-4 | Well, from the moment Nelson came in... |
| 190 | 16-5 | It was quite late, as I've said, about midnight... |
| 191 | 16-6 | But now, suddenly, the tiny blonde woman... |
| 192 | 16-7 | He went off, shouting and screaming at me... |
| 193 | 16-8 | I suddenly had a telephone call from him... |
| 194 | 16-9 | Later on in the evening he told me the following story. |
| 195 | 16-10 | In the morning I gave him breakfast. |
| 196 | 16-11 | Free Women 4 – Anna and Molly influence... |
| 197 | 16-12 | Molly telephoned, in a state of near collapse... |
| 198 | 17-1 | The stairs were narrow and dark. |
| 199 | 17-2 | Anna's voice cracked. |
| 200 | 17-3 | At this moment a sound from the foot of the stairs. |
| 201 | 17-4 | Anna went home slowly. |
| 202 | 17-5 | The Notebooks – The black notebook... |
| 203 | 17-6 | The red notebook, like the black notebook... |
| 204 | 17-7 | Meanwhile our old friendship had been restored... |



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| 6:42 | 205 | 17-8 | The yellow notebook continued. | 6:57 |
| 7:44 | 206 | 17-9 | *7 A Short Story | 6:29 |
| 5:48 | 207 | 17-10 | *12 A Short Story | 5:57 |
| 7:08 | 208 | 17-11 | *19 The Romantic Tough School of Writing | 5:52 |
| 5:27 | 209 | 17-12 | The blue notebook continued, but without dates. | 7:33 |
| 5:44 | 210 | 18-1 | I put myself back into the state of mind... | 6:21 |
| 8:59 | 211 | 18-2 | The American, Mr. Green, was coming today... | 5:17 |
| 5:03 | 212 | 18-3 | Saul Green came to see the room... | 5:06 |
| 5:48 | 213 | 18-4 | (From this point on in the diary, or chronicle...) | 8:50 |
| 5:59 | 214 | 18-5 | Spent today playing 'the game'. | 6:57 |
| 7:19 | 215 | 18-6 | I felt my stomach clench... | 5:03 |
| 6:36 | 216 | 18-7 | He has a way of being about at the time... | 6:28 |
| 7:12 | 217 | 18-8 | I wrote the last sentence three days ago... | 5:16 |
| 6:41 | 218 | 18-9 | I slept lightly, with terrible dreams. | 5:33 |
| 7:28 | 219 | 18-10 | Then we went to drink coffee, and we talked... | 6:12 |
| 5:50 | 220 | 18-11 | I sat in the kitchen and thought over what I'd just said. | 7:56 |
| 6:17 | 221 | 18-12 | When he came back, I knew I'd been waiting... | 6:11 |
| 5:28 | 222 | 18-13 | Then the delight vanished as I came across an entry... | 4:02 |
| 8:23 | 223 | 19-1 | I've just been up to have another look at the diary... | 6:24 |
| 3:03 | 224 | 19-2 | Today he came in and I knew by instinct... | 6:04 |
| 8:48 | 225 | 19-3 | He gave me a quick, startled look and walked out. | 6:01 |
| 5:35 | 226 | 19-4 | He stopped in his striding walk around the room... | 7:15 |
| 8:07 | 227 | 19-5 | (*17) We have had a week of being happy. | 5:33 |
| 6:51 | 228 | 19-6 | He said: 'Come here' – moving away and gesturing... | 4:42 |
| 7:41 | 229 | 19-7 | Last night, when I had finished writing... | 7:05 |
| 8:22 | 230 | 19-8 | But now, writing it, and reading what I've written... | 6:32 |
| 5:56 | 231 | 19-9 | We began discussing the state of the left in Europe... | 5:26 |
| 3:53 | 232 | 19-10 | Then in front of my eyes I saw the letter... | 5:36 |
| 8:21 | 233 | 19-11 | Saul had not moved. | 6:56 |
| 6:47 | 234 | 19-12 | When he came down it was late... | 8:10 |
| 6:51 | 235 | 20-1 | I said to myself in my sleep... | 5:28 |
| 6:47 | 236 | 20-2 | And then I got up and switched on the lights... | 7:52 |
| 5:47 | 237 | 20-3 | After breakfast I took my shopping basket... | 6:59 |
| 7:05 | 238 | 20-4 | The Golden Notebook | 6:27 |
| 4:12 | 239 | 20-5 | As his feet went down the stairs... | 7:21 |
| 7:13 | 240 | 20-6 | Then the dream, or the sleep, became quite thin... | 7:39 |
| 6:06 | 241 | 20-7 | This voice faded; but already the film had changed. | 5:14 |
| 6:42 | 242 | 20-8 | I woke into the stuffy dark of the room... | 6:25 |
| 6:01 | 243 | 20-9 | I put on some early Armstrong. I sat on the floor. | 6:50 |
| 6:44 | 244 | 20-10 | I rang Molly's number, and I said... | 6:14 |
| 7:44 | 245 | 20-11 | And suddenly he leaped up and off the bed... | 7:45 |
| 6:08 | 246 | 20-12 | He was cold, so I held him in my arms... | 4:29 |
| 6:16 | 247 | 21-1 | I stood and thought... | 5:05 |
| 4:39 | 248 | 21-2 | As soon as the dream came on... | 6:35 |
| 6:50 | 249 | 21-3 | A short story: or a short novel: comic and ironic... | 8:52 |
| 6:32 | 250 | 21-4 | I cooked and we slept. | 8:46 |
| 7:49 | 251 | 21-5 | Free Women 5 – Molly gets married... | 5:39 |
| 6:58 | 252 | 21-6 | Anna found that she was spending her time... | 5:57 |
| 7:25 | 253 | 21-7 | One afternoon she went to sleep and dreamed. | 6:00 |
| 7:01 | 254 | 21-8 | Late that night the bell rang. | 6:13 |
| 6:37 | 255 | 21-9 | He returned to the table and remarked... | 5:23 |
| 3:47 | 256 | 21-10 | At last he said: 'Well, that's fixed. Another soul... | 7:56 |
| 7:17 | 257 | 21-11 | In the morning she felt him deadly cold in her arms... | 4:20 |
| 7:10 | 258 | 21-12 | When Janet came home she found Anna... | 5:05 |

DORIS LESSING
(1919–2013)
THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK

Doris Lessing is not a comfortable writer. Her life has been dedicated to examining the received wisdoms of her age and concluding that they aren't wise and shouldn't be received as such. Having recognised these evident facts, she has set about exploring them through powerfully autobiographical writing that has startled, alarmed, amazed and frequently irritated. The irritation of course is because she refuses to do what she is expected to do, even by those who might have thought she was on their side: some who reviewed her early novels favourably were irritated by her decision to write science-fiction; and those feminists who admired her fearless exploration of gender inequalities were annoyed by her refusal to be a poster-child for them.

Doris Lessing is used to this. She has refused to allow the standard morality to determine her moral choices, and the result has often been ostracism, either by others or self-imposed. Stultified by her mother's attempts to give her an upper-middle-class Edwardian upbringing while living on a farm in Southern Rhodesia, she ran away from home at 15. Determined not to be trapped into a state of impotence by marriage and motherhood, she divorced her first husband, leaving him and their two children. Disillusioned by the Left in Africa, she divorced her second husband and moved to London with their child. By 1956 she had been prohibited from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa for her outspoken opposition to apartheid and nuclear arms. In the UK and America she was criticised for arrogating to women the rights of men – the right to read freely, think freely, act freely and have sex with whomever you choose.

She was born in Persia, now Iran, to British parents who had met when her father, who lost his leg in the First World War, was recovering in the hospital where her mother was a nurse. He was a clerk in the Imperial Bank of Persia at the time of Lessing's birth in 1919, but the family moved to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) five years later in the hope of making a new life as farmers. Lessing's childhood was largely miserable, and not just because of the vast distances between their farm and any of the neighbours'. The maize farm was a failure, but worse was Lessing's being sent away aged 7 to a convent school, where she was profoundly unhappy. She was no happier at a girls' high school and she left it at the age of 14. Already deeply attached to reading, she continued to educate herself through classic literature – and after leaving the potentially suffocating atmosphere of her home she supported herself in various jobs (including telephone operator and nursemaid, where she was ineffectually wooed by her employer's brother-in-law). Frustrated in almost every regard, she married Frank Wisdom, a Civil Servant, but after the birth of their two children, she realised she was in danger of falling into precisely the kind of life she so wanted to abjure, and so divorced him.

Intelligent and socially aware, she was drawn to politics, particularly the Left, and this brought her into contact with other intellectuals. One of them was Gottlieb Lessing, whom she met through the Left Book Club and married in 1945 despite not liking him very much. By him she had another child. When that marriage ended, Lessing left Africa for the United Kingdom, bringing her son with her, and set up home in London intending to make a living as a writer. By the age of 30 she had forcefully determined her own destiny on several occasions despite the social expectations and considerable obstacles of the

time. She was to stay in London where, for all the claims of greater freedoms, the ingrained attitudes of the previous generations were showing no external signs of dying out. It is this world which is the immediate backdrop to *The Golden Notebook*, and there is plenty of autobiographical material in the finished novel. She was a member of the British Communist Party until 1956, for example; and Willi bears more than a passing similarity to Gottlieb.

Indeed, much of her work is pro-foundly autobiographical, reflecting not just the worlds in which she grew up – wrenched by wars, empire-building and clashes of civilisations – but also the worlds within her. Initially, the broader geographical context was most noticeable. She arrived in London with the manuscript of her first novel *The Grass is Singing*, a critique of the white civilisation in Africa, and followed it with a collection of short stories touching similar themes, and with the opening novels in *The Children of Violence* sequence. The heroine in these novels showed many of the traits that would become familiar to Lessing's readers – a strong, complex woman, one who is engaged, active, seeking a better world politically and socially, and searching the layers and alternative personalities that make up her character.

The Golden Notebook, published in 1962, has something over and above this. While it was championed as a feminist work, sniped at for being anti-men, lauded for its sexual (even biological) explicitness, criticised for its criticisms of social inequities, and is again deeply autobiographical, it is also a triumphant piece of literary invention. There are layers upon layers of authors, contexts, realities and self-referential meta-textual games – a fictional character keeps detailed notebooks, including one which is a novel in which a fictional character is very like the fictional character in the fictional book... and so on.

The structure is brilliantly original, if relatively straightforward to describe: there is a short novel called *Free Women*, about Anna Wulf and her friends. This story is broken up by a series of excerpts from Anna's various notebooks, each one of which is colour-coded. The notebooks cover every aspect of her life – personal, professional and political. This combination of structural invention, social questioning, political engagement and frankly honest self-analysis gave the book its immediate impact, opening a closed world of feminine intelligence and sexuality to the wider world. But the theme of the fractured self, reflected in the book's structure as much as in its content, and the examination of the fragmented nature of the personality have had at least as lasting an effect.

Doris Lessing is one of the most prolific authors of the 20th century, and she has received awards from all over the world. Her work includes multi-volume sagas and short stories; poetry, novels, plays and opera librettos; reviews, essays and memoirs; non-fiction, science fiction, books on cats – and of course autobiography (directly or otherwise). *Alfred and Emily* (2008), which she describes as her final book, is another kind of indirect autobiography, a fictional book about her parents, and how they were formed and forged by war. Doris Lessing is still questing, crusading and exploring her past, herself and her imagination in search of truths about ourselves and our world – whether they are comfortable or not.

Notes by Roy McMillan

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