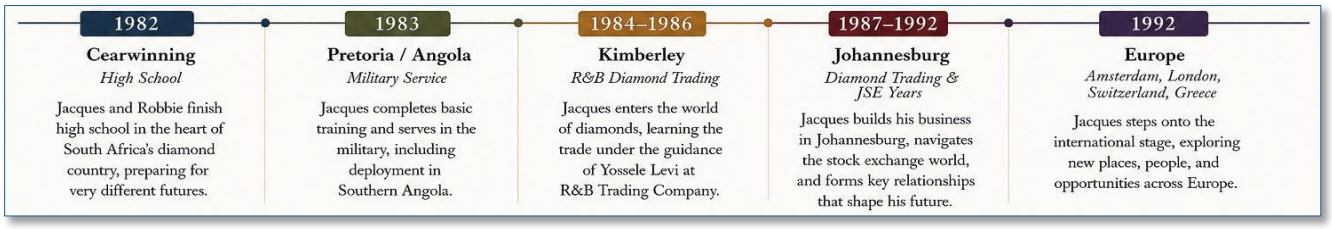
Diamonds and Destiny

Character & Places Guide

A spoiler-light reference for readers of *The Wild Diamond Chronicles*.



Main Characters

Jacques van Heerden aka "Van" *(van Heer-den)*
The protagonist. A young South African drawn into the diamond trade while never losing his fascination with nature and wildlife.
Robert "Robbie" Denneville *(Den-neh-ville)*
Jacques' best friend and confidant. Intelligent, widely read, loyal, and a steady source of humor and perspective.
Louis Liebenberg *(Low-ee Lee-ben-berg)*
A skilled Military Intelligence officer who recruits Jacques for a secret government initiative and becomes both mentor and manipulator.
Mr. Youssef "Yossele" Levi *(Yoo-sef "Yos-eh-leh" Leh-vee)*
A veteran diamond trader and Jacques' mentor, introducing him to the business, ethics, and opportunities of the diamond world.
Madame Swanepoel / Mrs. S. *(Svaa-neh-pool)*
Mr. Levi's trusted assistant and confidante. Practical, loyal, and quietly influential in Jacques' formative years.
Julia Lombard *(Lom-baard)*
A South African expatriate in London who becomes Jacques' friend, ally, and girlfriend.
Brad Williams
A New Zealander, book lover, sailor, and collector of useless-but-fascinating facts. A close friend of Jacques and Robbie and brings warmth and humor to the group.
Robert "Bob" Denneville *(Den-neh-ville)*
Robbie's charismatic but reckless father, a diamond buyer with connections to the illicit side of the trade.
Angelica "Angie" Denneville *(Den-neh-ville)*
Robbie's mother, a talented jewelry designer who provides wisdom and stability during difficult times.

The Canary Whisperer
A feared figure linked to organized crime, intelligence networks, and the illicit diamond trade—and Jacques' most dangerous adversary.

Cearwinning High School

Set in South Africa's diamond country, Cearwinning gives Jacques and Robbie their first exposure to the people and skills that will shape their futures.

Sandra Klein
Jacques' first serious girlfriend and mixed-doubles tennis partner; intelligent, athletic, and eager for a life beyond their mining town.

Cindy Klein
Sandra's mother and co-owner of the Cearwinning Hotel, a determined survivor with a practical view of morality and life.

Ian Klein
Sandra's father and hotel barman, a charismatic former Johannesburg businessman seeking a fresh start.

Mr. Brandt
Cearwinning's school principal and a former geologist who connects education with the diamond industry.

Mr. Brits
A former professional diamond grader who gives Jacques his first practical training in diamonds valuation.

Samuel
The school gardener and stable hand who encourages Jacques' growing love of plants, gardening, and the natural world.

Military Connections

During compulsory military service, Jacques meets friends, instructors, and mentors who influence both his skills and his future.

Hannes Viljoen *(Vil-yoon)*
A cheerful farm boy and Jacques' friend during basic training, known for humor and a practical outlook.

Staff Sergeant Erasmus
A demanding Military Intelligence instructor who teaches survival, intelligence work, discipline, and leadership.

Sean Miller
A gifted linguist, tennis player, and close friend Jacques meets during Military Intelligence training.

“Cowboy” Gert Maritz
A larger-than-life radio operator and trusted comrade during Jacques’ service on the Angola border.
Commandant McMillan
A respected senior officer overseeing operations in the South West Africa–Angolan border war.
Karmi bin-Avrahim *(Kar-mee bin Ahv-rah-heem)*
An Israeli military instructor who becomes Jacques’ lifelong friend and an important link to Israel’s diamond industry.

Israeli Diamond Trading Family

The bin-Avrahim family works at the heart of Israel’s diamond industry in Ramat Gan, near Tel Aviv.
Mr. bin-Avrahim *(bin Ahv-rah-heem)*
Family patriarch and head of the Ramat Gan diamond-cutting operation, with close ties to Mr. Levi. Karmi’s father.
Ari *(Ah-ree)*
A master diamond cutter whose skill shows Jacques that cutting a diamond is both science and art.

The Richtersveldt Diamond Fields

A remote alluvial diamond-mining operation where Jacques sees where a diamond’s journey begins.
Hennie Beukes *(Hen-ee Beeu-kes)*
Owner and chief geologist of the Richtersveldt Mining Company, with passions for geology, mining, and the natural world.
Petrus Skoonveldt *(Peh-trus Skoan-felt)*
The mine’s operations manager, whose practical experience gives Jacques a hands-on view of diamond mining.

Johannesburg Stock Exchange

South Africa’s financial hub, where Jacques encounters a world in which information, influence, and risk can be as valuable as diamonds.
Mr. Serguei Sokolski *(Ser-gay So-kol-ski)*
A wealthy, charismatic stockbroker and businessman with extensive political and financial ambitions.

Raoul Whitestein *(Rah-ool White-steen)*
A confident stockbroker and market strategist who introduces Jacques to the psychology of stock market speculation.
Belinda "BS" Seligman *(Selig-maan)*
A lively stockbroker and radio commentator who moves comfortably through Johannesburg's financial circles.
María José *(Mah-ree-ah Ho-zeh)*
Mr. Sokolski's Spanish personal assistant and close acquaintance of Jacques.

Happy Valley Youth Hostel, Amsterdam

Jacques' introduction to Europe's backpacking world—a lively mix of travelers, dreamers, entrepreneurs, and adventurers.
Barbara Franks
A curious and enthusiastic South African backpacker who becomes one of Jacques' closest friends in Amsterdam.
Colin Andrews
The Canadian manager of Happy Valley, an outgoing traveler who quickly becomes Jacques' friend.
Wilhelm "Wim" Detlef *(Vil-helm (Vim) Det-lef)*
The hostel's Dutch owner, an entrepreneur and adventurer who becomes both friend and mentor to Jacques.
Tessie Williamson
An Australian backpacker whose carefree outlook captures the adventurous spirit of hostel life in Amsterdam.
Briana Davies
Tessie's easy-going Australian traveling companion and part of Jacques' international circle of friends.

European Connections

As Jacques travels through Europe, new friendships and business relationships broaden his world beyond South Africa.
François Deway *(Fran-swah Deh-WAY)*
A Brussels-based Swiss banker and trusted adviser who assists with Jacques' international financial affairs.
Elize Bianco *(Eh-lize Be-anko)*
A Swiss schoolteacher and athlete whose love of travel and the outdoors connects naturally with Jacques.
Noah Bianco *(No-AH Be-anko)*
Elize's father, a witty and successful Swiss investment banker who becomes part of Jacques' European network.

Victor Brennen
An Israeli Embassy official in London who helps connect Jacques with people from his past in London.

Phillipe *(Fee-LEEP)*
A knowledgeable Brussels hotel concierge who helps Jacques navigate his first few days in Europe.

Places at a Glance

Cearwinning, South Africa: A small mining community in diamond country and the setting for Jacques' school years.
Pretoria: Where Jacques begins military service and later receives specialized training.
South West Africa–Angola Border: A remote and dangerous military setting during Jacques' service.
Ramat Gan, Israel: One of the world's major diamond-cutting and trading centers.
Richtersveldt: A rugged, remote region of Southern Africa known here for alluvial diamond mining.
Johannesburg: South Africa's commercial center and home to the stock exchange and major diamond interests.
Amsterdam: Jacques' introduction to European backpacking life, friendship, and new opportunities.
Brussels: An important European center for Jacques' financial and banking connections.
Switzerland: A setting for friendships, finance, and a glimpse of life beyond Jacques' familiar world.
London: A crossroads for Jacques' South African, European, and Israeli connections.