

# American Dreams Short Guide

## American Dreams by John Jakes

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# Characters

In this historical novel, Jakes creates characters who interact with real people, like Henry Ford, Barney Oldfield, Kaiser Wilhelm, Pancho Villa, Charlie Chaplin, Mack Sennett, D. W. Griffith, and many others.

He also incorporates numerous fictional secondary characters who appear in episodes occurring in Chicago, Detroit, New York, London, California, Mexico, Germany, and Belgium. The main characters have composite traits of famous people who were active in automobile racing, flying, making movies, and filming newsreels between 1900-1920. When Carl flunks out of Princeton because he is bored and yearns for adventure, he angers his father, Joseph Crown, founder of the Crown Brewery, a man whose life has been built on duty and hard work. Carl leaves Chicago and goes to Detroit, where he works for Henry Ford.

He delivers Ford's sturdy, Model-T automobile to eager customers. Its low price makes ownership a possibility for working class people. In comparison, other manufacturers continue to produce custom-built automobiles like the Hudson, Cadillac, and Packard for wealthy people until Ford's methods gradually become the production model for the industry.

During episodes at Ford, Carl observes the development of efficient assembly line methods. At a subsidiary foundry, where his black friend Jesse works, he observes hazardous conditions: molten metal, unsafe machinery, and flammable paints. Ford has strict rules about the behavior of employees, so when Carl gets in a fight to protect himself from thugs who have been hired by Wayne Sykes, a jealous rival, he is fired. During the fight, Jesse is so badly injured that he is permanently disabled.

Medical insurance or worker's compensation is, of course, nonexistent, but Jesse is a survivor.

Carl falls in love with Tess Clymer, daughter of a wealthy Detroit industrialist.

Clymer's disapproval of their relationship, and Carl's youthful obsession with race car driving postpone a commitment. With Tess's blessing and her red silk scarf around his neck, Carl leaves Detroit, unaware that he has impregnated Tess. To hide her indiscretion with Carl, Tess marries Wayne Sykes, a fortune hunter.

On weekends, Carl, wearing Zeiss goggles, a heavy duster, and gloves, races in an Edmunds Special, owned by a wealthy playboy. He competes with drivers who race Peugeots, Masons, and other custom-built cars. At the track, Carl meets his idol, Barney Oldfield, the famous race car driver. Out of a job, and thinking that racing will be an exciting adventure, Carl signs on as part of Oldfield's show, traveling the racing circuit and pretending to compete on the track with Oldfield, whose fans, fascinated by the speed and sound of the engines, mob him at every appearance. Oldfield's drinking



binges, fights, and instability disgust Carl. When Oldfield's wife falsely accuses Carl of sexual harassment, he is glad to leave the company.

Going from one fast lane to the next, Carl meets Rip Ryan at Redlands, California. Crippled with arthritis, Ryan gives Carl flying lessons in a Curtiss-designed airplane. The easy-to-fly plane is different from that of the Wright Brothers because the engine is mounted behind the pilot.

To pay for the lessons, Carl repairs the plane's hangar.

After he becomes a skilled pilot, Carl then signs on with Frenchman Rene Le Maye to do exhibition flying with a team of daredevils who thrill crowds with their exciting, death-defying stunts. They fly a Martin bi-plane, a Bleriot, and a Curtiss.

Rene signs a contract with Federalistas in Mexico to fly reconnaissance spy missions over Pancho Villa's troop trains and territory being invaded by rebels from northern Mexico. The United States supports the Federalistas at the insistence of W.R.

Hearst, who has oil and mining investments in Mexico. Following a plane crash, Carl barely escapes having "to face the adobe wall" with his back to a firing squad, the usual fate of American mercenaries in Mexico. Realizing they are on the losing side of a civil war, Carl and Rene abandon the Federalistas and enlist in France as fighter pilots. Carl flies reconnaissance planes over German lines and survives an air battle with an Aviatik and Fokker.

Hermann Goering is the German pilot who shoots Carl down and later writes him a friendly note.

Paul lives in London with his wife Julie and their children. He travels the world making "actualities," or newsreels for the London Light publishing company. In Mexico, he and his assistant Sammy film a battle between Pancho Villa's rebels and Germanequipped Federalistas. In Europe, they film Kaiser Wilhelm's growing arsenal in Germany and evidence of increasing German nationalism. When Germany invades Belgium, they film refugees fleeing from goosestepping soldiers and modern trucks and artillery. From a barn, Paul films a family being executed with bayonets for setting up roadblocks to impede the well-equipped army. Paul smuggles the roll of film out of Europe to show to Americans, hoping to inform them of German atrocities. Most Americans, an ocean away from the war, follow the lead of President Wilson, a pacifist, but many German-Americans, like Joseph Crown, support Kaiser Wilhelm's aggression. When Paul returns to the Continent to film battle scenes, his young assistant Sammy is killed during a bombardment.

Meanwhile in America, moving pictures have become an important addition to communication media. These "movies," as fans call them, are shown for five cents in nickelodeons, empty store buildings with folding chairs in run-down parts of town.



People from all social classes flock to see jerky, black-and-white newsreels and comedies. Sound is not yet developed, so actors use exaggerated gestures and move their lips as if they are speaking dialogue.

Disappointed by her lack of success on the Broadway stage, and suffering from lack of income, Fritzi works for Liberty Films, a "blanket" company, so called because the photographer smuggles his camera under a blanket to location and uses other surreptitious means to avoid paying royalties to Thomas Edison, the inventor.

Many scenes are filmed outdoors, and others are filmed in warehouse lofts with makeshift props and costumes. Film processing chemicals are highly flammable, and during one editing session, a studio catches fire.

Bad weather in New York and harassment from patent detectives over use of Edison's motion picture camera force fledgling film companies to migrate to California. D. W. Griffith, director of Biograph, Billy Bitzer, famous cameraman, and the rest of the company head west. Fritzi leaves New York unwillingly to make films for Liberty near the "hick" town of Venice in sunny California. Later, she discovers that she loves her life as a film actress in California.

Though Fritzi longs for serious roles, producers, directors, cameramen, and fans recognize her natural ability as a mime and comedienne. Gradually, she becomes the focus of the "Lone Indian" series, and later becomes a star as "Knockabout Nell," a girl whose comical accidents have the unexpected effect of making things turn out right. Eventually Fritzi becomes a screen star, a member of "America's royalty."

Fritzi falls passionately in love with a mysterious cowboy bit player, Loyal (Loy) Hardin, who is always on the move. He is a Gary Cooper type, strong and silent and hard-to-get. Loy confesses that even though he loves her, he cannot make a commitment to Fritzi because he is wanted for murder in Texas. After he says goodbye forever, Fritzi is heartbroken. Too late, she discovers that the charges against Loy were dropped because the so-called murder was justified.

Later, Fritzi renews her close friendship with Harry Poland, who courts her and makes her feel loved.

Secondary characters are numerous.

Those with romantic attachments to Carl and Fritzi are Tess Clymer, Loy Hardin, and Harry Poland. Fritzi's associate from the Broadway stage, Hobart Manchester, becomes a father figure and her ally to the end. At Liberty Pictures, producer B. B. Pelzer knows Fritzi's worth as a person and her economic value to the studio. After he survives the sinking of the Lusitania and the death of his beloved Sophie, B. B. is institutionalized for severe depression. Defending Fritzi's rights at the studio helps him recover.

Villains include Pearly Purvis, a patent detective who tries to shove Fritzi under a train and falls to his death, instead; Wayne Sykes, fortune-hunter, who marries Tess with her father's approval; Rita Oldfield, whose lies get Carl beaten and fired; Al Kelly, short-

sighted and tight-fisted financier of Liberty Pictures; Kaiser Wilhelm, whose arrogance and German nationalism start a war that kills millions and nearly destroys Europe; and General Joseph Crown, whose loyalty to his German heritage and rigid adherence to duty, honor, hard work, and social conformity estrange his children.

## Social Concerns

John Jakes introduced the Crown siblings, Carl and Fritz, and their cousin Paul to readers in his best-selling historical novel *Homeland*. Members of the second generation of the German-American Kroner family traced in *Homeland*, these youths leave the security of their privileged life in Chicago to follow their dreams and ambitions during the first two decades of the twentieth century, when tumultuous social, economic, and technological changes occur in America. This journey is traced in *American Dreams*. Technological advances during the early and mid-twentieth century allowed for the production of cars, airplanes, cameras, the motion picture industry, and modern war weapons. At the same time, wealthy capitalists attempted to isolate themselves from social changes taking place in order to consolidate their power. However, despite their best efforts, technological innovations contributed to erosion of class barriers and provincialism. Another significant social movement that occurred in this time period is the struggle of women to gain the right to vote and to pursue careers. It was also during this time that dormant racial and class tensions expanded. African Americans in the North, peasants in Mexico, and Jews in Chicago, New York, and Germany all experienced persecution. In industry, the conflict between labor unions and open shops developed. The motion picture industry began providing audiences with newsreels about world events in India, Cuba, Africa, Mexico, the Philippines, and Europe, and movies became cheap, but fascinating, entertainment for anyone with a little money. Ordinary Americans dreaming of prosperity and personal achievement tried to ignore political and class conflicts in Mexico and Europe that led to two wars.

# Techniques

The third-person, limited, point of view alternates between Fritzi, Carl, Paul, and one or two secondary characters in six sections and eighty-nine chapters. The three main characters have careers that take them to different settings over a period of twenty years. *American Dreams* might have become another epic like *Homeland*, but editing has shortened the book, leaving some characterizations incomplete and other episodes short and choppy, rather like a synopsis for a movie script.

Jakes' characterization of Fritzi as a talented comedienne is especially noteworthy.

Readers will smile and applaud her performance on the stage as a witch in *Macbeth* and her role as Bigtop Nell in Hollywood. In a typical movie scene, Fritzi, dressed as a clown, puts her head into a lion's mouth.

He has bad breath, but he doesn't try to tear off her clothes like Buster, the chimpanzee, or fire her like Kelly, Liberty's financial officer.

The author incorporates real people, places, and things into the novel as characters, settings, and events. Carl's interview with Henry Ford at Ford's home seems authentic. Descriptions of the Curtiss airplane and instructions for Carl's flying lessons could be right out of a flight manual.

Superstitions connected with Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are woven into the plot when Fritzi gets a bit role on the legitimate stage. Scenes in New York, New Jersey, and California, where writers, directors, cameramen, actors, and investors "make movies," give insight into how the industry began. Occasionally Jakes' "name dropping" technique seems contrived, depending upon whether a reader is interested in a fast-moving plot and well-developed characters or in historical facts.

Jakes employs detailed descriptions of his characters' appearance. For example, Jakes describes Pancho Villa: The general was centrally seated on a stool with a respectful space around him. He was a stocky man, in his mid-thirties perhaps. His dark, flat face suggested Indian ancestry. His full mustache resembled a black shaving brush. On the shaded table beside him rested a bottle of clear liquid.

Paul saw the worm in the tequila. Unlike his foot soldiers, the general wore a plain khaki uniform, dusty boots, military cap.

His eyes, so dark brown they looked black, never seemed to blink.

Jakes describes clothing appropriate to the time and place. For example, when Paul and Fritzi meet their old friend Harry Poland (Herschel Wolinski) in New York, Harry is wearing: ... a fine black suit, worsted with a faint gray check. His shoes had fancy kidskin tops and patent leather needle toes shiny as black mirrors. His white linen shirt





sported thin vertical red stripes and a detachable white collar. A Windsor tie matched the wine-colored band on his derby.

In addition, Jakes' favorite setting for conversation between characters is during a meal, especially if the characters are at a German restaurant. For example, at Mitagessen in the Heidelberg Restaurant, Fritz and Ilsa order beefsteak, potatoes, string beans, noodle soup, carp, and a bottle of Liebfraumilch. The restaurant is decorated with displays of beer steins and cuckoo clocks on the walls, and a strolling accordion player in lederhosen and a green Tyrolean hat serenades them with polka music.

Jakes has included words and phrases appropriate to characters and settings, for example, German words Schrecklichkeit (terribleness) and Unterseeboot (submarine), or Spanish phrases El Tigre del Norte (the tiger of the north), and Cines noticias (news films). This adds authenticity to his dialogue, and readers who have no expertise in these languages or terms can understand their meaning by the context. He also employs slang such as "the prompt side to the o. p." (left stage to right stage in the theater), "race track vultures" (looters who strip wrecked racing cars) "mowing the grass" (driving an airplane up and down the field without taking off), and "scissorbills"(dudes pretending to be cowboys in movies).

# Themes

Fritzi Crown, one of the leading characters of the novel, states the basic theme of *American Dreams*. She contrasts her childhood dreams of becoming a dramatic Shakespearean actress on Broadway with her successful career as a slapstick comedienne in the movies: Unfulfilled dreams disappeared, rucked away in some ghostly bureau drawer like last year's unwearable style—mementos of what might or should have been. Sometimes dreams changed. . . . Her dream had come true in a way she couldn't have imagined a few years ago.

In achieving her dream of becoming an actress, Fritzi adapts to social and technological changes, even emotional losses—estrangement from her father and the death of her lover. The result is fame, adventure and the enrichment of other people's lives through comedy and laughter.

Carl's dreams of adventure and fame also evolve. He discovers that racing and flying for excitement and the adulation of audiences are not satisfying. His expertise and courage as a pilot serves him best in a war against tyranny in Europe, rather than in defense of tyranny in Mexico.

Prejudice is an underlying theme in nearly every episode of the work. Hobart Manchester, Fritzi's kindly mentor on the Broadway stage, confesses to her that he is a homosexual. If others find out about his sexual orientation, he will be barred from directing or acting. Jesse, a skilled mechanic, accepts his role as an underpaid Black employee in a hazardous job. He overcomes hardships and eventually owns his own home and develops a business. In Hollywood, D. W. Griffith's famous epic film, *The Clansman*, depicts Ku Klux Klansmen as heroes. It ignites resentments still smoldering from the Civil War. Paul's assistant Sammy is Jewish, an identity he must carefully conceal while he is with Paul in the presence of German officials. Joseph Crown's prejudice against Fritzi's "immoral" lifestyle as an actress, and his outrage at Carl's passion for excitement and adventure alienate him from his children.

Sexual harassment is another theme.

Women who dare to leave the protection of a father or husband set themselves up as targets for predators. Fritzi's fast thinking, athletic body, and long hatpin save her from numerous unwanted sexual encounters. The drunken manager of the Bleeker Hotel, where she works as a maid, tries to rape her. She narrowly escapes rape and murder at the hands of Pearly Purvis, a patent detective. Carl's problems with Barney Oldfield reach a climax when Oldfield's wife claims that Carl has tried to seduce her. In reality, she has been the aggressor, and Carl's rejection has made her vengeful enough to accuse him of harassment.

Oldfield gives Carl a Mickey Finn, beats him up, and fires him.



Physical disabilities and aging affect the lives of several characters. Joey Crown, an important character in *Homeland*, loses his youthful dreams after an accident cripples him. In *American Dreams*, he is a cynical alcoholic, dependent upon his parents, Joseph and Ilsa Crown. Joseph, the patriarch of the Crown family, suffers and survives a heart attack. Clinging to values from a former time, he coldly rejects the ambitions of his children and cuts them out of his life.

Too late, he regrets his unwillingness to give his blessing to their pursuits of happiness. A. R. (Rip) Ryan, talented airplane mechanic who has built a Curtiss-designed Eagle, is crippled with arthritis. No longer able to fly, he instructs others from the ground, and soars vicariously. Songwriter Harry Poland's loyalty to an invalid wife restrains him from forming a permanent bond with Fritzi for many years, even though she is the inspiration for his popular songs.

The power struggle between authoritarian rule and individual liberty is a theme exemplified throughout the book. Joseph Crown becomes a tyrant as he attempts to force his values of hard work, duty, and social conformity on his adult children by withholding his love and financial support. In spite of his previous heroism during the Civil War and Spanish-American War, and pride in being an American, Crown supports Kaiser Wilhelm's attempt to rule Europe.

The futility of trying to pacify an aggressor is related to the power struggle on several levels in *American Dreams*. In the course of achieving their dreams, Carl, Fritzi, and Paul learn to defend themselves and their ideals. Traits of mental acuity, physical strength, courage, and stubbornness help them succeed. At the beginning of Germany's militant behavior, British and American political leaders choose to ignore the threat of war. Lord Yorke, Paul's London publisher, forbids publication of his pictures of German atrocities because they might conflict with official British propaganda. Many Americans, like Crown, are sympathetic to Germany. When Paul shows these pictures at lectures in the United States, people are repelled, not angered, by the violence. They wish to remain neutral, to avoid a life-or-death conflict. With President Wilson's approval, laws are enacted forbidding Americans to participate in the European conflict. In defiance, Carl joins the French Foreign Legion, and Fritzi marches in "Stop the Huns" parades, a real deterrent to her career in Hollywood.

## Key Questions

American Dreams is set in the early twentieth century, a time of great change politically, socially, and technologically. Many of the issues he addresses are still pertinent to modern society.

1. Which of the three main characters, Carl, Fritzi, or Paul, have dreams and adventures that are most interesting to you? Why?

2. Does Jakes' weaving of historical events and real people stimulate your interest enough to do a little extra research on specific subjects? For example, Henry Ford's manufacturing methods, D. W. Griffith's films, Thomas Edison's camera and film patents, the Curtiss airplane compared to the Wright Brothers' airplane, careers of Charlie Chaplin and Mack Sennett, or Barney Oldfield and race cars?

3. Watch a silent film starring Charlie Chaplin or Pearl White and compare and contrast Fritzi Crown's talents as an actress and comedienne. How do modern movie or television comedians compare to Fritzi's style?

4. Some of the episodes in American Dreams seem incomplete, such as Paul and Sammy's presence in Mexico. If you could revise and edit the novel, which episodes and characterizations would you expand? Which episodes would you cut?

5. In the first novel, Homeland, General Joe Crown is characterized as a war hero, a loving husband, and a protective, if strict, father. How do you explain his semi-villainous role in American Dreams?

Is it realistic?

6. One of modern America's social problems today is teenage violence and vandalism. Some authorities attribute this to lack of parental authority and guidance. Using Fritzi and Carl as examples, which of their character traits indicate that they have matured enough to defy their father and make their own decisions? Give examples.

7. At the end of American Dreams, Paul and Julie and their children live in England, and Carl discovers he has a son with Tess. Fritzi and Harry are "showbiz" personalities. If John Jakes writes a sequel to his Crown Family Saga, 1920-1950, predict which characters he might continue to develop. Which characters will he drop? Predict historic events and famous people that might engage members of the Crown family in future sequels.

8. Read Langston Hughes' poem "What Happens to a Dream Deferred." Does prejudice against a particular race or group of people in your community exist? If so, how does social opposition block achievement of their dreams?

## Literary Precedents

Many biographies of famous people like Henry Ford, Charlie Chaplin, Pancho Villa, and histories about the invention of automobiles, car racing, airplanes, and silent films are on shelves in libraries. Examples include *The Silent Clowns* by Walter Kerr (1975), *Cock of the Walk: The Legend of Pancho Villa* by Haldeen Braddy (1955), and others.

On television, viewers can watch restorations of silent films on Turner Classics.

A different perspective of German involvement in World War I is Eric Maria Remarque's poignant novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928). The narrator is nineteen-year-old Paul Baumer, who is conscripted into the German army with his schoolmates. Remarque's novel about the senseless horrors of war and the effects of British bombardment on these youths at the front, followed by "carbolic, gangrene, and death," provide contrast to Paul Crown's picture of German power and atrocity. *All Quiet on the Western Front* was banned in Nazi Germany in the 1930s because its brutally realistic portrayal of youths engaged in war might cause German youths to question their leaders and refuse to fight for the Fatherland.

Another relevant novel, because it deals with Jakes' topics of photography, Germany prior to World War I, Henry Ford, and Sarah Bernhardt, the famous actress, is *Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance* by Richard Powers (1985). On May 1, 1914, pioneer photographer August Sander takes a photograph of three young Germans near Cologne. Because it is one of the first examples of a candid camera snapshot taken of common, ordinary people, it appears in a Detroit museum, founded to celebrate the machine age and modern technology, especially of the camera and automobile. Between 1900 and 1920, this same technology led to the development of modern war weapons: the tank, warplane, submarine, poison gas, and arms. Ironically, walls of the museum are covered with murals by Diego Rivera, a Mexican artist, which depict human figures in a "mutually parasitic relationship to metal."

The antique photograph fascinates a modern museum viewer who investigates the identity of the three youths. About the same time, another modern American, a writer for a computer magazine, discovers a print of the same picture in family memorabilia and begins his own inquiry to discover his roots. Chapters shift from modern times and the lives of the two Americans to episodes featuring each of the three farmers in pre-World War I era in Germany. Chapters featuring inventor Henry Ford and actress Sarah Bernhardt give authenticity to this historical novel.

The "politically incorrect" historical novel *The Clansman* (1864) by Thomas Dixon, Jr., was the basis for a famous movie, *The Clansman: Birth of a Nation* (1915). Fritzi Crown meets D. W. Griffith in New York when he is director at Biograph Studios. Later in Hollywood, she observes his methods as he films *Birth of a Nation*. Her lover, Loy Hardin, is one of hundreds of extras in the epic movie that, today, remains a film classic.



Griffith greatly influenced modern directors and movie-making techniques, especially in filming panoramic action scenes.

Clearly one-sided in its focus, Dixon's *The Clansman* contains many historical facts about Reconstruction and the resulting social and economic upheaval in the South.

On the other hand, it glorifies the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and portrays Negroes, at least from today's point of view, in an insulting and antagonistic manner. Set in Piedmont, South Carolina, this historical romance is divided into four parts: "Book I: The Assassination" introduces star-crossed lovers, Ben, a wounded Confederate soldier, and Elsie, daughter of an influential Yankee Congressman. It portrays Lincoln as a compassionate President who wishes to restore peace and order to the nation and includes episodes that dramatize the political conflicts between Lincoln and Congress.

After Lincoln is assassinated, the nation experiences a power struggle for leadership. "Book II: The Revolution" is about the attempted impeachment of President Andrew Johnson. Under leadership of villain Austin Stoneman, Congress passes punitive laws that establish a militia, raise taxes, enfranchise Negro voters and remove citizenship from Whites. It creates laws that confiscate property and award forty acres and a mule to former slaves. In "Book III: The Reign of Terror," characters experience anarchy and the influx of "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags." In "Book IV: The Ku Klux Klan," impoverished and persecuted Southerners organize in secret to defend their women, property, and honor.

Jakes' characters, cousins Paul and Carl Crown, participate in the Mexican Revolution, Paul as a photo-journalist and Carl as a mercenary. *Renegade Cowboy* by Nelson Nye (1940) is a novel about Rio Jack Golden's romantic adventure with Juanita Guzman, the captive of Pancho Villa. Her father is Venustiano Carranza, Villa's rival during the Mexican Revolution. In order to rescue her, Rio Jack must pretend to be Villa's ally.

In *American Dreams*, Paul's photographs of the Kaiser's preparation for war before the invasion of Belgium and of German atrocities are an attempt to warn France, Britain, and the United States of impending war. B. B. Pelzer's beloved wife Sophie drowns when the *Lusitania* is torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. The sinking of the *Lusitania* is the incident that drags the United States out of neutrality and pacifism. These same issues are addressed in *Lusitania* by David Butler (1982), a long, historical novel about the lives of two sea captains. Will Turner is captain of the *Lusitania*, a passenger vessel carrying weapons and supplies from the United States to Britain before the U.S. has formally declared war on Germany. Walther Schwieger is captain of the German U-20 submarine which sinks British and French ships in the North Sea and eventually sinks the *Lusitania*.

This novel gives insight into the personalities of the two captains and political conditions in Europe before World War I.



## Related Titles

Author Jakes is famous for his American Bicentennial Series, also published as the Kent Family Chronicles, a saga of seven generations of an American family. He is also author of The North and South trilogy, and California Gold, all related by settings and conflicts to American Dreams. With the book Homeland, Jakes begins a new series about members of the Kroner family, who emigrate from Germany to America before 1900.

Josef Kroner changes his name to Joe Crown and establishes the successful Crown Brewery in Chicago. In 1890, his penniless and orphaned young nephew Paul Kroner leaves Germany and comes to Chicago, where he lives with Joseph and Ilsa and their children, Joe, Jr., Fritzi, and Carl.

Young Joe and Paul leave the Crown home because of conflicts with Joseph, Sr., a patriarchal authoritarian. Joe, Jr. joins a radical socialist group that engages in acts of terrorism to gain their political goals. Eventually, he returns home, disabled and in broken spirits. Paul's love affair with heiress Julie Vanderhoff offends Joseph Crown's moral values, so Paul leaves the Crown home in disgrace and eventually becomes a news photographer. Paul and Joseph reconcile their differences in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Paul, now famous, marries Julie, the young widow of a brutal man, who is murdered by his mistress.

Two major themes in Homeland are the German immigrant experience, and the conflict between tyranny and individual freedom. Personality traits that enable Josef Kroner to succeed in America include emotional control, honor, duty, hard work, and social conformity. They are traits that lock Joseph into rigid, judgmental paternalism in American Dreams.

The conflict between tyranny and individual freedom is a basic theme in the second book of the Crown Family series, American Dreams. On an individual level, Joseph Crown's values alienate him from his children, Fritzi and Carl. On an international level, Kaiser Wilhelm's obsession, that Germany should rule Europe, precipitates World War I. Paul, Fritzi, and Carl's individual freedoms are challenged by petty tyrants in numerous episodes in American Dreams.

# Copyright Information

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