

An American Requiem Study Guide

An American Requiem by James P. Carroll

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Plot Summary

James Carroll sketches the struggle with his father, Joseph, in this autobiographical work that he subtitled, "God, My Father and the War that Came Between Us." James opens his story at age twenty-six, the day after his ordination as Father James Carroll. The Roman Catholic priest is celebrating his first Mass and preaching his first sermon. James' ordination gives him the strength to overcome his own silence and cowardice. Joseph Carroll is a domineering, Irish-American, traditional Roman Catholic father of five sons. He is a lawyer, successful FBI agent, Air Force Lieutenant-General in charge of enemy counts and targets for the Vietnam War and feels guilty from the Irish curse of his own failed attempt at becoming a priest.

The first chapter theme and title draws on a scriptural quote from Ezekiel that refers to a valley full of dry bones. Father James uses dry bones to describe the destruction his father and fellow generals cause by dropping napalm bombs on the Vietnamese people. Father James preaches a public, veiled condemnation of his father and his assembled comrades in arms. James, the author, but no longer Father, recounts the life and career of his father, Joe, and mother, Mary, from Irish Bridgeport to the FBI and their Washington success in the second chapter. James and his four brothers are born into privilege in Washington, D.C. As young boys they attend presidential inaugurations from 1945, on and see their father become the youngest Air Force general at thirty-seven. By 1958, the Carroll family is in Germany where the General's rank paves their way to Roman Catholic elites, Cardinals and the Pope. James recalls this as the best of times despite his struggles with adolescent sexuality and choice of career or calling. The Pope confirms his call to the priesthood. James confides that choice to his father in the fifth chapter he calls joy to his youth.

James' religious education begins in the sixth chapter when he enters seminary with the Paulists in 1963, graduates and is ordained in 1969. While in seminary, he develops his second and continuing vocation as a writer. His calling by progressive Pope John XXIII initiates a religious revolution that conflicts with his father's traditional Irish Catholicism. Joseph Carroll, the FBI agent, chases criminals and draft dodgers and as General chases Communists, despite Pope John's call to communicate with them. James' meeting with Robert F. Kennedy commits his interest and efforts to civil rights, but Joseph conspires to destroy Martin Luther King, Jr. The young seminarian takes the manner and style of the Negro slave that cuts capers in chains. James is silent about his beliefs when he is with his father. Their final conflict develops when Pope Paul VI preaches peace at the United Nations in 1965. James commits to the antiwar movement in direct conflict with Joseph.

James recounts his ordination as Father James Carroll in the ninth chapter and reflects on his first blessing and ritual imposition of hands on his parents and pre-ordination meeting with Tate, the hero of his writing career. The next chapter outlines his first assignment as a priest and development as an activist, radical priest and underground supporter. The last word in the eleventh chapter is Mary, the name of Joseph's wife and their mother. He is sick and dying with Alzheimer's disease. The family comes together

at his deathbed to watch and commemorate a man they honor, love and respect despite their differences.



Chapter 1, "In the Valley of Bones"

Chapter 1, "In the Valley of Bones" Summary and Analysis

James Carroll reflects upon what takes place in the chapel at Bolling Air Force Base on Saturday, February 23, 1969. He is then Father James Carroll celebrating his first Mass and giving his first sermon at his parent's parish according to tradition. Catholics call the chapel "Our Lady of Perpetual Help," but others call it the chapel. It is on the east side of the Potomac River between airplane hangars and the Officers' Club. More than two hundred are in attendance including Air Force officers and generals with their wives. Some attendees run Operation Rolling Thunder that drops more tons of bombs in Asia than was dropped in Germany in WWII. Host and hostess are Father James Carroll's parents, Lieutenant-General and Mrs. Joseph F. Carroll, Joe and Mary. He is founding director of the Defense Intelligence Agency in charge of enemy counts and evaluating targets in Vietnam. They sit together in the front pew at their son's first mass. Mary prays in a mix of dream fulfillment and worry.

Celebration begins with the organ playing and choir singing a hymn. Procession of altar boys, twelve priests, candle-bearers, master of ceremonies and newly-ordained priest walk into the center aisle from the sacristy. The author is the newly-ordained priest. He is introduced by his sometime spiritual director, a priest, monsignor and Air Force chief of chaplains, Major-General Edwin Chess. General Chess introduces Father Carroll with a comment to this assembly of many generals that he is on our side. The phrase stirs up in Father Carroll his reflection that though once true, it no longer expresses his position.

James Carroll recalls boyhood memories growing up on Air Force bases when he is a would-be flyboy and on the side of anyone in blue. In his year at Georgetown University he is named Outstanding Air Force ROTC Cadet and is awarded a stainless-steel model B-52 bomber. He enters seminary the next year to become an Air Force chaplain under General Chess' guidance. In November 1965, a Quaker war-protester sets himself on fire at the Pentagon. James' feelings begin to change. By October 21, 1967, he chants antiwar slogans. The Jesuit priest, Daniel Berrigan, and his brother, Phillip, become James' new role models. He secretly throws his B-52 ROTC prize into the swamp behind the seminary.

He feels shame to admit his childhood neighbor on Generals' Row is General Curtis Lemay, a warmonger James had worshiped in the early sixties. He is in conflict and feels like two people but neither speaks publicly. Now a priest preaching his first sermon makes his cowardice apparent. His father is unsuspecting but his mother is uneasy. General Chess' words make James feel naked before his father and he avoids looking at him. He looks around at the other faces there. Father James sees his brother, Dennis, who becomes a draft fugitive and his brother, Brian, an FBI agent, who catches



draft fugitives. He looks down at the Scriptural passage he selects specifically for the occasion.

Ezekiel prophesies a valley full of vast quantities of dry bones in the passage Father James Carroll begins his sermon with. Dry bones are the metaphor and theme underlying this chapter and pervading the book of Ezekiel. Father Carroll confronts the wartime assembly with its use of napalm. The priest leaves unsaid rhetorical questions to those responsible for scorching the bones of a million Vietnamese. His fist unconsciously upraises while he asks whether these bones can live. Father Carroll joins with Ezekiel in affirming the power of Yahweh. He finishes preaching his first sermon by referring to General Chess' introduction that all are on the same side and reaffirming General Lemay's SAC motto that "Peace is our profession."

Father James Carroll realizes in clenching his fist in the face of Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll, a significant change in himself has occurred from the day before. His Eminence Terence Cardinal Cooke ordains him a priest with authority to prophecy over these dry bones. Only one general attends the reception following at the Officers' Club. General Carroll stands beside Father Carroll in the reception line greeting none of his fellow generals who boycott the reception. Recent news reports General Curtis LeMay proposes to use nuclear weapons to break a siege in the valley below Khe Sanh, Vietnam. James Carroll begins to recognize the breach with Joe Carroll his first sermon as Father James Carroll causes. For years he wonders how his antiwar stance would affect his father. Though he expects rejection, he does not anticipate his father's debilitation and its disheartening impact. The My Lai massacre occurs within weeks of his first Mass and affects his thoughts of family, nation, faith and himself. Father Carroll is anxious about the type of priest his declaration makes him. Five years later he breaks his vow and leaves the priesthood.

James Carroll reflects upon that period in his life years later. His tone is philosophical, and he is saddened by his recollection of how he publicly attacks his father and his father's comrades in war with scripture. Decades have passed since his ordination and his point of view is now that of a man much older than twenty-six and also much wiser. His rhetorical question of if these bones can live is answered in Jesus' words: let the dead bury the dead. He realizes his faith is not deep enough to sustain him as he believed at twenty-six. His parents die after the death of his own infant daughter. He recognizes that he will die, as did his father, falling far short of his dreams. James Carroll is a writer, no longer Father James, a priest. He sees being made in God's image as arranging memory and transforming experience to fit the narrative structure. It is the story from Ezekiel through valleys to Jesus that makes Him present and why the soul can rejoice. This first chapter reveals the conflicts that underlie the rest of the work. The place and time that he presents his antiwar position has an unanticipated outcome. With the benefit of years more experience--not limited to childhood and early adulthood flashbacks--his perspective may have been much different and more relevant to his current life as a writer of stories.



Chapter 2, "J. Edgar, Joe, and Me"

Chapter 2, "J. Edgar, Joe, and Me" Summary and Analysis

Joe Carroll's life up through the birth of James Carroll, his second son, is outlined in this chapter of background history. The author objectively recounts the childhood and early adulthood of Joseph Carroll, his father. James' style is factual and descriptive with themes of Irish Catholicism and politics interweaving. Joe's childhood stands in stark contrast to the social standing he later achieves. Compared to the conflicted and painful opening chapter, this section is uplifting and expresses an admiring son's tale of struggles his father goes through. There are moderate uses of flashbacks and forwards to bring in memorable events in order to develop a broader, sympathetic and more mature perspective.

Roger Touhy is a Chicago bank robber, kidnapper and killer that has a significant impact on his father's career. The era is just after Capone and other Chicago hoodlums. Joe Carroll works days in the Chicago stockyards to support his family. He attends six years of night school at Loyola Law School. Less than one in twenty Americans go to school and only sons of the elite study law. He graduates *summa cum laude* and keeps it secret from fellow stockyard workers. Most notorious criminals are in prison from the FBI's glory day efforts. The FBI hires Joe in 1940, and he hopes this is his ticket out of town.

Joe grows up scrambling for nickels and dimes to help support his sisters. He is brought up in the yards district that is the home of Edward J. Kelly, Chicago's mayor and head of the Democratic Party. Kelly runs the political machine in the mid-1930s. He brings in millions through illegal gambling and other vices run out of city hall, police stations and ward offices. Kelly is responsible for delivering Chicago's vote to Roosevelt, for which he receives patronage through the WPA. Joe's father "Dike" Carroll is a heavy-drinking, occasionally employed janitor in a South Side ward house. He holds his job by delivering ten certified votes to Kelly in every election. When Joe is old enough to vote, he becomes one of the ten. When he marries, his wife joins the list. They cannot leave Chicago and the ward without replacing their votes. Joe becomes contemptuous of political hypocrisy.

Kelly's influence also affects Joe's attitudes about religion. Kelly claims Roosevelt is his religion as well as Irish Catholicism. Regardless of his weekly criminality, his weekends include Saturday night confession and Sunday Communion. Kelly's God is merciful, so he can partner in crime. Joe Carroll develops a ruthless conscience and attaches himself to the letter of the law. Joe Carroll describes his belief to James as Irish Jansenist, i.e. that human nature is incapable of good; Joe believes that of Kelly as well as of himself.



After twelve years in an archdiocesan seminary, Joe returns to Bridgeport at twenty-four. He feels like a disgrace for leaving the seminary. The next day he would take a vow of celibacy. His rigid morality causes underlying and pervasive feelings of unworthiness. He receives a sponsored seminary education to become a priest. Before leaving, the bishop-rector offers Joe the chance to study in Rome and earn a doctorate in theology. He refuses and returns home. An open question remains about when Mary Morrissey enters his life. Years later, when James asks his mother, Mary Carroll never says exactly when. Nor does she say it wasn't then as James Carroll's American wife makes clear. In Irish Chicago of that day, refusal to become a priest after twelve years of seminary makes Joe Carroll a spoiled priest. His return to Irish Bridgeport and the stockyards gives him another role to overcome. Joe Carroll does not drink and fail as expected. He works daily at the yard and studies law at night. He and Mary wed in 1938. Two years later they leave Chicago for FBI training. They believe they are firmly on a path to the American dream. After training, they are assigned back to Chicago, where they return to the neighborhood and voting rolls again.

Joe junior is born in 1940, and returns with them to the old Irish Catholic neighborhood in Chicago. Birth year of their first-born offers proof and a symbol to them that Joe senior was not all that spoiled. Joe junior is a sign of God's approval for the neighbors to see. Joseph and Mary have a son with the initials J.C. they joke and feel no longer unworthy. World War II is ongoing and Joe is assigned Selective Service enforcement. FBI agents are draft exempt, and Joe Carroll tracks down drafted GI Joes who don't show. Ironically Joe later on has one son who dodges the draft and another who is an antidraft conspirator.

Roger "Terrible" Touhy breaks out of Joliet prison in September, 1942. The FBI prepares to launch a massive gangbuster manhunt as they did with Al Capone and other gangsters. But Touhy is not charged or convicted of any federal crime to establish jurisdiction. Joe Carroll is an expert at catching draft dodgers. He suggests Touhy violated federal law by escaping from prison without notifying his draft board of a change of address. That idea nets Joe Carroll assignment of the FBI's biggest case. The Touhy manhunt takes on the wartime symbolism of a hunt for Hitler. They hunt for him all over the Midwest and in the South Side neighborhoods of Bridgeport and Canaryville. They find him through a tip, sleeping in a fleabag hotel. Touhy is awakened by the hoarse, bellowing voice of Joe Carroll who threatens him to come out immediately or be killed. The author keeps and reflects on a photograph of that period in his father's life. James Carroll is impressed by the impact his father has in saying what he means and will do. It is clear if Joe Carroll says he will kill Touhy, he will, just as when he says no to God about the priesthood.

James Carroll goes through his deceased mother's possessions and finds a letter dated January 18, 1943, from J. Edgar Hoover to Joe Carroll. Hoover commends Carroll's action in capturing Touhy. He confirms his appreciation by assigning him to Washington as chief of kidnapping and bank robbery investigations for the entire Bureau. Four days later James, Joe and Mary's second son, is born in Chicago. He is born oxygen-deprived and in danger of dying but survives. At christening the priest wrongly calls him Joseph, the name of his two-year-old brother. When the error is brought to the priest's



attention, he refuses to change the name, thereby showing the rigidity and reactivity of the Catholic Church and its grasp on families. The author reflects on the Biblical significance of being named the first-born's name as Jacob receives Esau's birthright. James Carroll has a daughter who dies in his arms forty-three years later. He realizes the feelings his parents must have had when he almost dies at birth. The rigidity and legalism that imbues the life of Joe Carroll helps to explain his driving, overachieving accomplishments.



Chapter 3, "State and Church"

Chapter 3, "State and Church" Summary and Analysis

James Carroll reminisces on experiences as a young boy growing up in Washington, D.C. The Carrolls are well-connected politically, so they attend presidential inaugural parades. James is proud to attend inaugurations from Roosevelt through Kennedy and Nixon. The years from 1945 to 1973, are backdrop for his political conversion from awestruck two-year-old to war-protesting priest by 1973. He sees unity of the secular and sacred in D.C.

The author is two years old. His mother takes him and his four-year-old brother, Joe, to a presidential inauguration. It is wartime, so Roosevelt rules that a large celebration is inappropriate. Roosevelt's health is declining and provides further reason to minimize festivities. He dies a few months later. FDR is an admired president because of the way he treats his affliction. In 1921, he is struck with polio and paralyzed from the waist down. Despite this affliction, only one of the 125,000 photographs of him shows him in a wheelchair. This inauguration in 1945, is his last. No ball or parade is held and the president gives a short speech. Mary Carroll, Joe and Jimmy attend this inaugural and Harry Truman's in 1949. In 1953, Mary has three more sons, Brian, Dennis and Kevin to take care of at home. Joe is twelve and the author is nine. They go to Ike's inaugural alone. Eisenhower is the first president who wears a Homburg and not a top hat. Joe and Jim wear Democrat campaign pins with a motto "I like Everybody" to protest Republican's "I Like Ike" campaign pins.

At the next presidential inaugural in 1961, James is a freshman at Georgetown and a member of ROTC. He hopes his unit is picked to march in Kennedy's parade, but it is not to be, so he watches curbside. He is pleased this president wears no hat at all despite the cold. Lyndon Johnson's parade is a faint memory to James because Kennedy's funeral memory is still so strong. By 1973, and Richard Nixon's inauguration, James Carroll realizes he has been to every inaugural since 1945. He attends this year to protest the bombing of Hanoi. The inaugural connection with rituals of state and gathering of people to cheer a new president is a sacrament of the street. Washington's secular and sacred are the same.

The Roman Catholic Church opposes pluralism and democracy and suspects Protestant America. James believes American Catholics know democracy is good and influences Rome. His parents do not see themselves as religious liberals but await the breakthrough the first Catholic president, John Kennedy, and Pope John XXIII eventually make. Joseph gives his family a motto *Pro Deo et Patria*. Mary initiates the children into Washington mysteries. Children are born in two to three year intervals, which is dictated by church teaching that forbids any birth control method but abstinence and timing. Joseph pursues his career in the government. Mary raises their children. She drives the children to pick Joseph up at night and gives them a tour of Washington on the way home. When guests visit from Chicago, tours are especially



exciting and Joseph shares Bureau stories. James and his brothers listen to FBI radio stories and envision modern-day Knights Templars. He sees agents blurring into priests and wants to be what he believes his father once was.

Joe and Mary Carroll have twelve brothers and sisters. When they arrive in Washington a parade of Back of the Yards relatives visit them. Guests receive a nighttime tour on the way to pick up Joe. Mary points out two buildings the Franklin Roosevelt monument and above it, J. Edgar Hoover's office. Hoover promotes Joe to FBI troubleshooter and counterespionage. Joe stands out in the postwar period during 1949 and 1950, by resolving infamous cases of Soviet Union agents penetrating United States secrets. FBI is a stop on Joseph's career and Mary's tour. Days after James' birth, a Department of War Building is ready. Mary points out distinctive features and size as her tours near the Pentagon. Through political intrigue, Joseph becomes an instant brigadier general and the youngest Air Force general at thirty-seven. They believe success is a miracle and evidence of heaven's favor.

Hoover temporarily lends Joe to Stuart Symington, the first Air Force Secretary to devise an Air Force security agency structure. The structure Joe proposes is politically problematic but exactly what Symington wants. Legislation is proposed, passed and approved by Truman to establish the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Joseph Carroll is released from the FBI, commissioned brigadier general and appointed director. He stays in the Air Force twenty-five years rather than the six months originally expected. The intrigue involves Joe Carroll breaking into Pentagon offices to identify the author of a slanderous letter to a Navy undersecretary. This disclosure establishes Joe Carroll as a hero to the Air Force brass. James is conflicted by an expression his father uses when denouncing Vietnam peace protestors, that the ends do not justify the means.

Shortly after these successes, Joe junior is struck with polio. He develops a severe case of the disease, undergoes a dozen operations over the next fifteen years, and walks with a limp for the rest of his life. James becomes more responsible to help out and assist their family when needed. He interprets the experiences of their lives in Christian terms as the cross they must bear. Mary silently does penance and feels guilty. She sees herself as a Mother of Sorrows. They try to determine the cause and identify it as polluted water or germs. Joseph believes his own pride causes his son's disease and whistles "Beautiful Dreamer." They believe polio is from an Irish curse on the spoiled priest and his family.

The Carrolls no longer have visitors from the old neighborhood. Tours at night don't go past Washington monuments. Mary drives to doctor's offices and hospitals. She drives to Little Rome where seminaries, convents and monasteries concentrate around Catholic University. They visit the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception so Mary can buy scapulas, miraculous medals, sacred oil and relics for Joe. James rides along but sees no improvement in Joe. He learns that religious faith involves suffering and unhappiness. Nearby is St. Paul's, a seminary he first hears as cemetery and years later enters.



A dimension of the state and church nexus revolves around the Roman Catholic Church and Irish American Catholicism. The Carrolls are good Catholics, practicing the rhythm method of birth control, busy in public service and raising their sons. Joe and Mary are proud to show guests and relatives from the old Chicago neighborhood their new adopted Washington. When Joe junior is struck with polio, they are consumed with guilt that it happens because Joe senior is a spoiled priest. They receive no more visitors but make many visits to doctors and religious stores to buy memorabilia to help Joe junior. In his young mind, James experiences the association of pain and suffering with religious faith.



Chapter 4, "The Pope Speaks"

Chapter 4, "The Pope Speaks" Summary and Analysis

The ever-present symbol and embodiment of the Catholic Church is the Pope, Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII. His picture is everywhere the author goes as a young boy. He attends grade school at St. Mary's School and begins high school in the Priory School at a Benedictine monastery. He is preceded by Joe, who is a good student. James sees the Pope's picture everywhere so he feels as if he knows him. Pope Pius XII is known by 1950s Americans as a crucial ally in struggles against atheistic communism. Despite neutrality with Fascists and Nazis, the Pope excommunicates all Communists in 1949. This action endears him to Americans and confirms their sense of moral purity. He restates the Catholic Just War theory and emphasizes acceptability of predictable, though unintended, consequences. Pope Pius XII further states that an American Catholic may not assert his own conscience by refusing to serve in a legitimately declared war. The Pope denies Catholic Americans' right to conscientious objection. General Carroll accepts the rule by suppressing his conscience. Two of his sons become outlaws because of it.

In October 1958, Pope Pius XII dies while the Carroll family is in Wiesbaden, Germany. Two-star General Carroll is serving as chief of staff of the Air Force in Europe. He is in charge of pilots, warplanes and nuclear weapons and is based in Germany. James Carroll is just two months into the Air Force-sponsored high school year when the pope dies. At the special service, Monsignor Chess has James realizing a girl he desires is not Catholic, not like us he thinks. He reflects on vocation and compares it to feelings of sex.

The Carroll family's time in Germany is perceived by James as their best. The General's responsibilities and privileges provide Mary and their sons unusual benefits. They live in a lavish and sprawling house built on a hill for a Kaiser's marshal. On another hill is the American enclave. They learn in school that General Carroll's rank precedes all others. Joe junior is away at college and James is in an all-American public school with girls and sports. He is now the general's son not the crippled kid's brother. He feels like his father is back. James plays football with other European city teams. His senior year Homecoming Day game is with Paris. His father does not see any games but shows up unexpectedly as James catches a touchdown pass and they win the first game. Joseph sees his son's moment of success and then leaves.

Another grand house in Wiesbaden is now the Eagle Club. Queen Victoria and President Eisenhower used it before it becomes a serviceman's bar and music joint. Elvis Presley is said to visit occasionally. He is stationed at an Army post near Frankfurt. Elvis is a sexual image ideal for the author. He is the opposite of the Puritanism James is raised in at parish and monastery schools before Germany. Like other Catholic teens, James thinks morality is just repression of impure thoughts. Temptation is their constant companion that nuns and priests call a great enemy. Elvis provides missing notions of



what girls are, how to deal with feelings about them and youth. Next to the high school is the American Youth Association where they meet afternoons for Coke, music and dancing with girls. Saturday nights they meet at the Eagle Club where high school kids aren't allowed.

When Elvis does appear and then disappears quickly without fanfare, the author realizes how celebrity imprisons one. He sees the irony of believing Elvis to be free so as to be free oneself is an illusion. He believes Eisenhower tells the truth about Powers U-2 flight that is shot down until Khrushchev exposes a lie with Powers' own words. James believes as a young boy that Eisenhower is virtuous. He wonders now as a teenage boy how his father can be virtuous if the noble Eisenhower is not.

James sees two tracks in his life in Wiesbaden. He perceives himself as the successful all-American high school student. He believes he can finally become who he wants to be. He is a football hero, has a cheerleader girlfriend, dances, and is a class officer and active in drama, the yearbook and Lettermen's Club. Although he is a "C" student in high school, he declares himself an Air Force Academy candidate. He thinks and a college counselor confirms that competitive admission is not a barrier to a general's son. Monsignor Chess idealizes another track. James caddies for him and his father and shares their fellowship. On the golf course with the general and the priest, James imagines himself and his father a priest also. On these days, thoughts of his Air Force Academy dream and his girlfriend drift away. When Father Carroll does celebrate his first Mass ten years later with Generals Chess and Carroll, the shame of his betrayal is worse for these shared days.

Young chaplains in Wiesbaden reflect a new image of priests than James and his mother remember. They dress and drive cars that appeal to American GIs. The image appeals to James also. He attends Mass in the mornings and sometimes serves instead of uniformed servicemen. James imagines helping the chaplain serve GIs on the battlefield. In high school he tries to reduce sexual inhibitions with his girlfriend. He experiences the sexual confusion of trying to be son and man in relation to his mother. The girlfriend he loves seems an occasion of sin. He does not recognize his growing selfhood. Young chaplains attract his mother's affection with a sexless holiness that appeals to his heroic ideals.

The rank General Carroll achieves allows his family to have friendships among the elite of military Catholicism. Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York is the most exalted and known as the military vicar. The author reflects on Spellman's questionable integrity in sexual matters. In the 1950s, the issues are deeply hidden but by 1990, the Church can no longer cover them up. James Carroll is not as much concerned with rumored pederasty and homosexuality as he is with the dishonesty and abuse of the Church. This pathologic sexual misbehavior of priests is perceived as central to the culture of celibate clerics.

When they meet Spellman, James is at war with himself sexually, but is unaware of the sexual lie at the heart of Church practice. He recalls his father rejected celibacy to marry. James is conflicted considering renunciation of sexual intimacy to embrace the



spiritual power that Spellman embodies. The Cardinal's power comes from his famous friendship and familiarity to Pius XII. Spellman represents Catholic Irish-American ambition. He is a friend and hero to GIs, Presidents, and J. Edgar Hoover. He visits the Carroll home in 1958. Spellman reveals a confidence by predicting when Jimmy is ordained it will be by him.

The Cardinal is out of favor with the new pope, Roncalli. Pope John XXIII undercuts many Catholic absolutes. His encyclical *Pacem in Terris* questions Pius XII's rejection of conscientious objection and he refutes the underlying premise of American military strategy that nuclear war can be just. He meets Khrushchev's son-in-law and encourages talks with atheistic Communists. In 1959, the Pope convenes an Ecumenical Council to refresh the Church. Previously the Church is believed a perfect society with no need of reform. Cardinals hold power subject to no one. Pope Pius XII's silence and the Roman Catholic hierarchy's submission to Hitler expose myths of a sinless Church. The Vatican and hierarchy under Pope Pius XII do not resist Fascism and Nazism nor repent of their complicit culpability. John XXIII does not exempt himself from confession of sin and corruption and, along with Kennedy, open an American optimism the Carrolls can grow in.

General and Mrs. Joseph Carroll and their sonsm Joseph Jr., James, Brian, Dennis and Kevin's introduction to the new Pope is preserved in a gold-framed certificate and photo the author finds years later after his mother's death. The audience occurs in his senior year just before leaving Europe. It is a highlight of his parent's life. It is memorable for James because of its proximity to his almost first sexual consummation and secret way out of religion. The Pope turns from Joe junior to James and takes his shoulders in his hands. Pope John seems to know James' secret and share it. James is conscripted by the Pope to spend twelve years in seminary. He abandons a dream to follow General Carroll in the Air Force. James' call to vocation is personal in Rome as he accepts belief in God.

James Carroll's autobiographical work covers the period of three popes and several lesser Roman Catholic officials. While General Carroll and his family live in Wiesbaden, James is in an American high school. He discovers girls, sports, life as the General's son and conflicts of sexual desire, guilt and the prospects of a vocation or a commission to the Air Force Academy. Further muddling his teenage desires is Elvis Presley as a sexual image. He represents the sexual desire James represses from a Catholic upbringing on morality. The Air Force chaplains symbolically unite the Elvis sexuality and the priestly celibacy.

Another irony James experiences with the Church is sexuality. When he meets Spellman in 1958, James is unaware of the pathological sexual behavior of priests that the Church can no longer cover up by the 1990s. The Cardinal predicts he will ordain Jimmy but not until he meets the new pope does James feel conscripted. He meets the Pope just after almost resolving sexual conflicts that he thinks disqualify him from the priesthood.



Chapter 5, "Joy to My Youth"

Chapter 5, "Joy to My Youth" Summary and Analysis

The Carroll family returns to Washington from Germany in 1960. James drives across the Potomac on a summer evening to pick up his father, who is working late. General Carroll exits the Pentagon and gets in the passenger side of the car. James drives with his father alone in the Lincoln. He is in college now and working for the summer as an FBI cryptanalyst's aid. James is proud to show his father how well he can drive. He looks forward to the time they are alone on the way home. It is not yet midnight as they drive through town. They see the lights of Bolling Air Force Base and illuminated Washington Monument and Capitol dome as they drive home. James reflects silently on his return to Washington as a college student and his opportunities to meet girls. The General is in a somber mood when he tells his son he has something to tell him.

General Carroll confides in his son he may not come home some night. If the trouble in the world continues he may be evacuated. The General will depend on James to take care of "Mom and the boys." He instructs James to drive them south to Richmond. The author reflects on the perceived feelings of fear his father has and the intimacy and trust he puts in him on their ride home. James feels a rare happiness at the opportunity to please his father and recognizes the loneliness in his father. Silence during their ride home seals the bond.

James and Joe accompany their father to Ramey Air Force Base in Puerto Rico. James and his father are golfing on the base golf course when a fleet of B-52 bombers land. The H-bomb-loaded planes return from global patrol and fly over the golfers on approach to landing. Twenty, eight-engine bombers fly within dozens of yards above them and make the ground shake as they land. Later that evening James and his father listen silently to other bombers take off and fly over their bungalow. The General shares with his son the belief that World War III is inevitable. He states that man uses every weapon he creates and that nuclear war is unavoidable. James agrees with his father and confides that he wants to be a priest. They sit silently together and his father nods in agreement.

James reflects on 1961. He remembers discussions about use of nuclear weapons in preemptive strikes on China and the Soviet Union. In 1993, declassified documents reveal those discussions. Americans are encouraged to build bomb shelters against Soviet fallout. The 1961 Burris Memorandum proposes using bomb shelters after a U.S. first strike. President Kennedy reverses nuclear thinking through speeches, the Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Robert McNamara struggles to reimpose civilian control on World War II generals with General Carroll's help. LeMay is a neighbor of the Carrolls and wants 2,400 missiles. McNamara caps the allowable number at 1,000. James receives a model B-52 bomber for his ROTC award. He recalls one reason he wins is that he wears his father's shoes shined by the General's orderlies.



He takes the model bomber to the seminary with him. The B-52 symbolizes to him the bond with his father and his motivation in fear and despair to turn towards God. By the time of his ordination in 1969, the bomber embodies all that divides James and his father. B-52 bombers carpet bomb and drop napalm on Vietnam by then. The author reflects on his father and their mutual confessions during earlier times alone. James recognizes his desire to enter seminary fills voids he perceives in those around him but not the void in himself. He believes a vocation is his sacrifice to deter war. James reflects in 1991, the B-52 bomber still flies and is relied on for military use. He believes B-52's utility and longevity discourages more destructive bombers. James recalls that by 1993, he no longer fears nuclear war since the 1960's war-mongers are held off in part by his father's efforts.

The author reflects on perceptions that he and his father give up worlds they love for peace. They are entwined in lives of the military and the priesthood. James forgoes military life to enter seminary when his father is in the Pentagon. His father never forgives himself for leaving seminary. Though he never asks him to enter seminary, James does so. He goes to the altar of God as his father does not and by that James finds joy to his youth.



Chapter 6, "A Religious Education"

Chapter 6, "A Religious Education" Summary and Analysis

James begins seminary training at St. Paul's College in 1963 and ends in 1969. He studies with the Paulist Fathers. The order is a one-hundred-year-old American religious group of three hundred priests. They focus on a defensive Catholic Church and a hostile American culture. Isaac Hecker forms the order to help immigrant Catholics adjust to an adopted country and minimize suspicions of the Roman Church. Paulists publish books and magazines, sponsor radio and television programs, preach, and provide chaplains to non-Catholic colleges. James chooses Paulists since the recruiter wears penny loafers.

Father Kelly is a young, informal Paulist priest. His open-hearted camaraderie reminds James of Air Force chaplains and is irresistible. James enters seminary mainly to please his parents. The Paulists oversee his transition to graduate seminarian whose first sermon proves he is the kind of priest that displeases Catholics such as his parents. Spiritual training begins in novitiate life as a monk. James feels out of place among the working-class Irish novices. Just a week earlier, he leaves his FBI job, meets President Kennedy and dates Lynda Bird Johnson on the vice-president's yacht. He feels on the inside track when the Vice-President tells him to call him Mr. Johnson. James compares his sacrifice to that of others who follow similar paths. He also recalls a night in New York City where he is unsuccessful at a last fling with a prostitute before beginning a life of celibacy. He feels his life ends when he enters seminary that as a child he first hears the word as cemetery.

Two months later, he joins fellow novices wearing black Cossacks on the edge of a lake to bet when it will freeze over. Patrick Hughes states he will skate across December eighth. They have no money or cigarettes, so they wager dessert. Patrick soon bets four months of dessert on skating across the lake. On December eighth they check the ice and Patrick puts on his skates. One throws a rock that breaks the ice. James steps on the ice and his foot goes through. He tells Patrick he cannot do it. Patrick ignores James and takes a running start to the lake. Ice cracks behind him but he skates all the way across the lake. Patrick's belief in himself convinces James to be his friend. Their friendship becomes a pillar of his life. James undergoes three related revolutions of interpersonal, religious and political change as a Paulist. Patrick is a first experience with male friendship. Seminary rules ban "particular friendships," but they thrive within suitable bounds of male intimacy.

His friends and associates think he can follow Patrick's example of self-confidence and risk-taking by skating on his own thin ice. James begins to think he can also. Paulists encourage him to write poems and stories in English class. His teachers propose and his superiors approve a summer writing workshop taught by Allen Tate in 1966, that changes James' life and leads to a weekly review of two poems. Tate's approval helps



James see himself as a writer. He asks Tate to autograph a book. Tate inscribes a reference to two vocations. James looks at him after reading the inscription. Tate says he can't have both. In 1974, the Paulist Press publishes his first book of poems. Tate's commendation on a first published book is as much a laying on of hands to James as a cardinal archbishop's. Paulists recognize a vocation to write removes James from community but still support and encourage him. Their support during difficult times reaffirms what Patrick began.

His second revolution is an initiation. Despite years of religious training as an altar boy, catechism and religion classes, James is biblically and theologically illiterate. He learns Catholic beliefs in scripture, events and characters are based on myth and fiction, not divine intervention. He is motivated to begin his own path of faith, and stunned Gospel accounts are not historical eyewitness accounts but beliefs of Christians years after Jesus. The Vatican erects barriers in the early twentieth century to block challenges from biblical studies. Some modernist Paulists are excommunicated and the founder is suspected of heresy. By mid-century, Pope Pius XII orders origins and results of history and sciences be considered, and Pope John XXIII confirms that notion and enables others to question.

The novices may not watch television but an exception is made in 1962, for Pope John's convocation of the Vatican Council. As they watch, James wants to tell fellow novices he was there, met and was kissed by Pope John XXIII. He keeps it secret as another of his guilty feelings about advantages he receives. James begins six years of seminary in Washington the next year. Council impact is beginning to be felt. Studies in philosophy and theology include works of liberal theologians. Seminarians read theologians Xavier Rynne and Hans Kung covertly to avoid authoritarian conflicts. James sneaks downtown to buy Kung's book. He admits breaking rules of poverty and obedience to the rector, who takes the book. He pleads unworthiness and is reassured he will be a good priest.

The author is resistant to authority. Three specific incidents stand out in his memory. The seminarians grow to hate the rector, change their reference to him and holler rude comments about him on their summer camping island. On another occasion James asks his permission to invite the president's daughter and an old friend to the Saul Alinsky seminary conference. The rector sneeringly asks the president of what and James replies the United States. Hans Kung's lecture in Washington transforms James' resistance into a resolution because he is faithful to John XXIII and embodies his vision for the Church.

Transformations encouraged by the Vatican Council are brought about by revolution in biblical studies. Prior to the Qumran *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the Word of God is unchangeable. James reads the Bible as a living thing for the first time. He sees scripture as addressed to him. He discovers the Bible is dangerous because we worship the golden calves of our nation and Church. The reformers reject the absolutism of Rome and Luther and in its place makes Scripture absolute. The Qumran discovery puts Scripture in historical context.



James recalls his childhood training and the Church's position that Jesus is God. His divine nature precedes humanity. Thought about Jesus starts with humanity and Jesus' experience with John the Baptist is a new consciousness. Jesus becomes to James, for the first time, a man with whom he can identify. He sees Jesus as somebody aching to do what is right. He struggles with his mission as James does with his vocation. His core belief is Jesus calls God "Abba," "Daddy." His professor claims Jesus actually uses the word "Abba." Jesus understands himself through understanding his father. James struggles with father and understanding of himself when Daddy becomes Dad. James learns a faith message is trust as with Patrick on thin ice. His third revolution is political and most personal.

James' choice of the Paulists is serendipitous, since they publish books and magazines and provide chaplains to non-Catholic colleges. In addition, the Order is a good fit with his family's Irish-American, Catholic roots in Chicago. Girls, God and government keep James in conflict. A week before entering the novitiate James dates the Vice-President's daughter and just a week before the Pope recruits James, he tries unsuccessfully to have sex. A metaphor for James' life as a seminarian, poet, radical priest and author is provided by Patrick Hughes. He leaves cracking ice behind him but as long as he keeps skating, he doesn't fall in. James creates and skates on his own thin ice as a sometime priest and author. James learns Jesus understands who he is by understanding Himself in relation to his Father, which symbolizes James' search to understand Joseph Carroll, his father.



Chapter 7, "Capers in Chains"

Chapter 7, "Capers in Chains" Summary and Analysis

Morris Childs and his brother are 1930s, Chicago links that together, with his lawyer and sometime Kremlin boss, Stanley Levison, surface in Washington as Joe Carroll makes his national reputation in the early 1960s. John F. Kennedy asks Martin Luther King, Jr. into the Rose Garden to tell him Levison, King's adviser, is a one-time Communist Party official with ties to Moscow that risk civil-rights legislation in Congress. King agrees to sever contact but continues secret consultation. Robert F. Kennedy wiretaps his phone in 1963. James denies there is Communist influence in the early 1960s civil rights movement.

The civil rights movement begins James' breakdown in shared understanding with his father. He believes Joe Carroll embodies the motto of his FBI career, fidelity, bravery and integrity. General Carroll's career in the FBI and the Air Force reveal increasing levels of classified information and security issues about Martin Luther King, Jr. James is a boy in southern Alexandria and raised in confederate traditions. He is unaware of his own white supremacist bigotry until expelled for raising the Confederate flag to celebrate Robert E. Lee's birthday in the Washington Benedictine prep school. Segregation is not his belief but simply taken for granted as the way things are. James works as an FBI intern when Robert F. Kennedy speaks to the Justice Department interns. Kennedy professes a basic belief that integration should occur everywhere. Joe Carroll works for and with J. Edgar Hoover, an avowed segregationist. James meets Robert Kennedy in a receiving line and tells him he is entering seminary to become a Catholic priest. Kennedy encourages him saying priests are needed in the streets where the ministers already are.

Years later, James realizes Kennedy's comment is prophetic and a conscription. Robert Kennedy sends federal marshals instead of agents to protect James Meredith at Ole Miss because he does not trust the FBI. After the Ole Miss crisis, King makes a speech which claims FBI agents are white southerners influenced by the community. Medgar Evers is shot in 1963. James watches the ensuing Washington demonstration and Martin Luther King's speech on a television at Mount Paul with his fellow novices. James begins to reflect on slavery at the time. He recollects that slaves always seemed happy. The author later realizes that smiles are a brave front for broken hearts and remembers John Little's expression that he cut capers in chains. As he watches King's speech, James recognizes that King preaches the Word of God. James' eyes well up when remembering Pope John XXIII, Robert Kennedy and now Martin Luther King's call to vocation represented in the words "free at last."

James returns to Washington as a seminarian to study philosophy and theology. The FBI is resolved to bring down Martin Luther King while Joe and Mary Carroll become new initiates into Washington aristocracy. General Carroll completes his second year as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Months before they reunite, in September of



1963, General Carroll is appointed the only representative of all military agencies on the U.S. Intelligence Board. He sits on the Board with J. Edgar Hoover, his former boss, and the CIA chief. General Carroll's position with government secret affairs is enhanced when President Kennedy forms a separate DIA Office of Counterintelligence and Security for him. The General and Mary reunite with James at St. Paul's College and walk up Fourth Street to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Joe, dressed in a civilian blue suit and Mary are proud of their son who proudly wears the uniform of a Paulist seminarian. The General and his son are alone where Joe can smoke and James can ask about Martin Luther King. The General is displeased and replies curtly. This discussion results in Joe telling his son there are things James does not know about King and the General can't tell him. Subsequent conversations that year and the next become more intense until the General calls King the most notorious liar in America. Decades later, James reads an account of his father's conspiracy to destroy Martin Luther King, Jr.

Selma, Alabama in 1965, is the site of a notorious demonstration King leads for black voting rights. He wins a Nobel Prize and goes to Selma to bring to the attention of the federal government the issue of voting rights. From 1963 on, King is wiretapped and his sexual behavior replaces Communist infiltration as an issue. J. Edgar Hoover persecutes him and recruits Cardinal Spellman in an unsuccessful attempt to stop King from meeting the pope. The FBI sends a letter to Coretta Scott King revealing his affairs to discredit him. The letter is instigated by a friend of James' father and evidence is offered to the press by another family friend.

King returns to Selma on February 1, and is arrested. King returns again on March 9, to lead another demonstration in which a white minister is clubbed to death. The death of James Reeb, a Washington minister is a turning point in James' life. He joins a sympathy demonstration outside the White House and recalls his friend, Lynda Byrd, and her father, Mr. Johnson, who now lives there. A riot breaks out but is quickly subdued. James feels relieved to know his photograph is not taken but then feels self-contempt. The following evening President Johnson proposes the Voting Rights Bill. He ends his speech with "we shall overcome" and becomes an ally of King's. James organizes seminarian vigils and the President signs the bill with Martin Luther King, Jr. at his side.

The General learns about King's actions over time and calls him initially a Communist, then a degenerate and finally a radical who wants to overthrow the system. James is an organizer in 1968, of Washington demonstrations to march for economic justice, which King pursues after racial equality. James sees King once in person but King is the only public figure to which he is personally devoted. James withholds his feelings about King from his father to follow the spirit of cutting capers in chains. King is shot and Washington riots, but when James phones his father, the General implies King deserves it by saying "See."



Chapter 8, "Holy War"

Chapter 8, "Holy War" Summary and Analysis

James Carroll flashes back in this chapter to 1965, before Martin Luther King, Jr. is shot but after Pope John XXIII is dead. The new Pope Paul VI celebrates Mass October 4, 1965, at Yankee Stadium. Mary Carroll is delighted to be a personal guest of Cardinal Spellman and helps welcome the Pope. His Holiness addresses the United Nations for its twentieth-year celebration. He proclaims peace must guide the destiny of mankind and speaks in the name of the poor, the disinherited and those who hunger for justice. His speech stuns the President, Cardinal Spellman, General Carroll and others that promote the Vietnam War, provide information, and approve Operation Rolling Thunder. Mary Carroll does not realize his message of peace humiliates Spellman. A "Declaration of Conscience" is signed by hundreds that agree with the Pope and includes Martin Luther King, Dr. Spock, and many others, but the Berrigan brothers are the only two Catholics. A demonstration of 25,000 at the Washington Monument follows and the antiwar movement begins in 1965. Cardinal Spellman denounces the Berrigans for their involvement and confirms his support for the military. The Pope ends his UN speech with an upraised fist saying in French, war no more. James talks with his father after dinner at their home on Bolling. He asks what the General thinks about the Pope. His father replies that the Pope holds up an ideal, and they apply it in specific cases with information the Pope does not know. He nods towards General LeMay's house and recites his SAC motto, peace is our profession.

On Mary Carroll's return from meeting the Pope, she reminds her son that Cardinal Spellman is looking forward to ordaining him. She focuses on the event and is unaware the Pope and Cardinal disagree. The Pope uses Spellman's hospitality to humiliate him by attacking his President. Weeks later Paul VI ignores Spellman again to meet Martin Luther King, Jr. Ironically, the Pope and few others know of Spellman's intrigue. President Johnson and Secretary of Defense McNamara do not know that Spellman helped instigate the war.

Cardinal Spellman meets Ngo Dinh Diem in 1950, through his brother Ngo Dinh Thuc, a Roman Catholic bishop. Diem is a Catholic mystic and celibate living at a Maryknoll seminary in Ossining, New York. Spellman arranges a meeting with Diem and Dean Rusk, head of the Asia desk at the State Department in Washington. Catholics are less than ten per cent of the Vietnamese population but may present a line of attack between colonialism and Communism to solidify Western influence. By May of 1954, Diem benefits from Spellman's promotion of him to Eisenhower's Washington and Pius XII's Vatican. The U.S. Government recommends Diem as prime minister. He returns to Vietnam in June to be head of state, and his brother becomes archbishop of Saigon. In August Spellman declares his support for Diem's regime. Tom Dooley writes a book inferring that Vietnam is a Catholic country under Communist siege. Most Americans including McNamara believe the story. Diem rules Vietnam through his evil family and dispenses with a democratic approach preferring to believe he rules by the will of God.



Diem and his brother are killed in 1963, in a coup the Kennedy administration does not devise but covertly approves. When Kennedy is assassinated weeks later, Johnson takes over the administration and the war. Cardinal Spellman makes regular trips to Vietnam to issue "holy smokes" to thankful GIs in what the author suggests may be an attempt to absolve his guilt for the special responsibility he has for enabling the war.

On November 2, 1965, a Baltimore Quaker named Norman Morrison sets himself on fire under Robert McNamara's office window at the Pentagon. His stated purpose is to make them stop the war. The Secretary of Defense is stunned by the suicide and considers it a personal tragedy for himself according to McNamara's biographer. Joe Carroll's office is down the hall from McNamara's. James believes his father is aware of Morrison's death, though he never asks him because the General refers to war protesters as "kooks." The conflict between James and his father is limited to the civil rights movement. He believes his father is a good man, whose Vietnam War involvement is well-intended and must be right. A week later a Catholic Worker sets himself on fire saying he is anti-war and this is a religious act. Laporte's suicide sets in motion a conflict James experiences for years. He opposes all war and loves the U.S. Air Force. James' conflict intensifies when Daniel Berrigan eulogizes Laporte's death as a sacrifice so that others may live. Cardinal Spellman banishes Berrigan from New York. Catholics react with outrage to the Cardinal's action. Daniel Berrigan becomes a national hero. Spellman is forced to retrieve Berrigan from exile. James feels guilty that he does not protest Spellman's discipline of Berrigan.

The Carroll family gathers for Christmas dinner of turkey and trimmings. In 1965, James is a seminarian, Joe is well along on his Ph.D. in psychology, Brian is home from college and in love with the daughter of an Air Force colonel, Dennis is a senior in high school and Kevin is the youngest, just in high school. Mom and Dad Carroll sit at opposite ends of the table. An ever-present guest at their table since Berlin is a Red Telephone with its military man to alert the General of his call to an impending crisis. Joseph asks his son to say grace for the first time. James recites the rote blessing, elaborates on the prayer and then blurts out the question of what his father thought of the man dying at the Pentagon. Mary heads off discussion but Joseph says Jimmie deserves an answer. The General says protesting prolongs the war and does that answer the question. James agrees that answers the question. Dennis is a vegetarian and eats no turkey.

Their family dinners generally are confined to acceptable topics and kept under control by the intensity of Joseph Carroll's career self-certainties. No one may truly speak their mind at the Carrolls. The General allows no doubts or discussion that might challenge his positions. General Carroll is successful because he is politically astute and does not allow self doubt or sense of failure to intrude on his perceived duties and responsibilities. Joe Carroll is a general without military training and loyalty to a single service branch. He is a General, who politicians made and foisted on the Air Force. McNamara appoints him in 1961, as the first director of DIA because he can deal equitably with the brass in all branches. James does not know the extent of his direct experience with the war. The Tet Offensive in January 1968, provides proof every agency estimate undercounts the enemy and U.S. intelligence in Vietnam fails. James



sees that his father's sense of failure may erode his ability to remain confident influencing others. McNamara has Joe's confidence, but the generals do not. McNamara and General Carroll leave the Pentagon in 1969, but neither tries to influence the public that the war is futile nor challenge Nixon to stop the killing.

according to McNamara the Joint Chiefs in 1966 and 1967, make regular proposals to use full military power including nuclear weapons. General Carroll's DIA offers up analyses that the bombing is having no effect on Hanoi's ability to wage war. By August 1967, his boss, Secretary McNamara, is arguing with the Joint Chiefs about whether the war can be won at all. Westmoreland wants 200,000 troops added to the 525,000 already in Vietnam and the Chiefs want 400 more bombers to expand the air war. McNamara testifies that Carroll's DIA report shows the air campaign is not working. In a memo to President Johnson in May 1967, he warns that nuclear weapons might be recommended. The President agrees with the generals. McNamara resigns in November.

The day after McNamara's resignation Senator Eugene McCarthy declares his candidacy for president on an antiwar platform. In February the next year, Walter Cronkite declares the war will end in stalemate. Johnson realizes with Cronkite's position, he's lost the support of the average citizen. Johnson outpolls McCarthy in a primary by only six points. The President begins to reject escalation of the war and refuses any use of nuclear weapons. James writes a personal letter to thank "Mr. Johnson" for ending the war. He receives a printed acknowledgement from the White House. The generals' attempt to escalate the war is stopped by Johnson. The demonstration from the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon is a success, though few participants realize that. A major, behind the scenes factor, is loss of faith in a military solution McNamara conveyed to the President. McNamara sends a memo to the President recommending a halt to the bombing to negotiate. He recognizes the Vietnamese Communists will not surrender.

Just before McNamara's resignation in November, James has Thanksgiving dinner at Bolling for the last time. He thinks the General believes the war is good and defends Phil Berrigan from his father calling him a "kook." After Joe says that Berrigan being a priest makes the protests all the worse, the General gets up from the table and leaves. If James has any differences with his father, he must find another venue to address them. James tells his mother he won't be coming for Christmas. Several things happen after that to confirm James' new direction. He begins to work for the campaign of Eugene McCarthy, whom he considers a hero. James meets the Senator and tells him he is a seminarian. McCarthy assures him his vocation makes him especially valuable to the cause. Cardinal Spellman dies that week and James feels free at last. James calls his mother to offer consolation. She says now he'll never ordain him. Hours after Terence Cooke is installed to succeed Spellman, Martin Luther King is shot. The Berrigans raid a draft office to burn records with homemade napalm. Bobby Kennedy is murdered. Dennis Carroll renounces his student deferral and tells his father, who storms away in fury. Dennis leaves the house and the country as a draft exile. Brian Carroll graduates, marries Vickie, becomes an FBI agent and is assigned to track down draft dodgers.



Chapter 9, "The Imposition"

Chapter 9, "The Imposition" Summary and Analysis

James recalls the ordination ceremony when he and his fellow candidates lie prostrate on the cold stone floor of St. Paul the Apostle Church. They are being ordained. The boys' choir alternates singing with the congregation in the ceremony. This is a dream come true for his mother. Countless Air Force chaplains attend in full dress because James is a general's son. Cardinal Cooke asks candidates to promise to obey and respect him and his successors as he enfolds their hands. James remembers these Cardinals endorse war. He thinks if B-52s were to drop condoms instead of napalm, they would condemn war to obey papal teaching on birth control. James' silence continues except for his poems.

The author flashes back to his recent experience with Allen Tate in Tennessee. During the preceding summer, he interns as a pastoral counselor in Atlanta. He visits Allen Tate, who is retired and living in Sewanee, Tennessee. He recalls Tate's warning about vocations as priest and poet. James recalls the "soft middle" he is accused of having and reflects on it as the reason for his eventual departure from the priesthood. He plans to tell Tate that James is not becoming the priest his natural father wants him to be but the poet his "Father" in the word proposes. James' appointment with Tate is interrupted by a personal tragedy the night before. One of Tate's new-born twins dies and Tate is mourning. Ironically James is needed by Tate more now as a priest than as the poet he came to profess. A local Catholic priest won't bury Michael because Tate is a divorced Catholic. Despite a personal struggle of faith and conversion to Catholicism, Tate is rejected and his son buried by the Protestant church. James feels Tate's approval as a priest and promises to pray for Michael at Mass.

The Cardinal ritually anoints James' hands and wraps them in linen bands that are given to his mother. By that act James receives sacramental power to turn bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Cardinal greets the new priest with the comment he hears James is to be an Air Force chaplain. Ritual requires a newly-ordained priest perform his first priestly blessing on his parents. He blesses his mother at the altar and imposes his hands on her head. She grasps his hands and kisses them before leaving the altar. James' father kneels next to her and James reflects on what will come in the near future. As he blesses his father and lays hands on his head, Joe Carroll convulses and silently sobs. James becomes the priest Joseph Carroll walked away from. Nixon is in office and plans to escalate the Vietnam War, a plan that James and Joseph have conflicts about. James believes these and other compromising events of his life cause the anguish he shows at the altar. His father staggers from the altar to his pew with his face hidden. James goes on blessing relatives and others. He reflects on the priesthood that he is just beginning to understand and learn to appreciate. He is happy because he is what he wishes to be. His mother sees him fulfill a dream she wants for him. Joseph's colleagues honor his son's ordination.



Chapter 10, "A Priest Forever"

Chapter 10, "A Priest Forever" Summary and Analysis

James is ordained in 1969, and assigned to the campus ministry at Boston University. Students at the university are notoriously anti-war, and Father Carroll has an opportunity to more freely express his sentiments than in any previous environment. He initiates the calls to action of Pope John XXIII, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Eugene McCarthy. The Catholic Student Center, also called the Newman Center, is his pastoral assignment. He allows a health food restaurant in the basement, which he names "Hedgeschool" for the Irish resistance and claims surprise when it becomes a left-wing organizing center. He offers draft counseling, underground contact and helps conscripts avoid the FBI and emigrate to Canada. Brian Carroll is an FBI agent assigned to track down draft dodgers while Father Carroll helps them leave the country in opposition to his father and brother. Father Daniel Berrigan is an infamous target of J. Edgar Hoover. Berrigan regularly appears and avoids capture through the underground network. Despite James' belief in Berrigan, he tells the Cavett Show producer he does not know him. Regardless he is approved to present Berrigan's point of view and agrees to appear. Father Carroll has misgivings that the real purpose is to create a sensation because of his father, General Carroll.

The day of the Cavett show appearance is disconcerting because the police raid the Newman House. He is further disturbed when he finds out the comic Jack Klugman is the host in place of Dick Cavett. Father Carroll considers the subject of his appearance a solemn matter and is afraid that Klugman will make light of it. Father James does not wear a Roman collar, preferring a black turtleneck. His fears are confirmed when Klugman asks about his dog collar. James retorts by asking Klugman whether it's all priests he wants to insult or just him. The audience responds positively and James takes the opportunity to move the discussion to the more serious comments about the anti-war movement. After Father James' comments, Klugman is silent except to announce a break and the show ends with music. James speaks with his mother the next day. She criticizes his appearance and tells him not to embarrass his father and Brian. She refuses to recognize that the war may embarrass James. When James asks what if they embarrass him, she hangs up.

Philip Berrigan is in jail in Pennsylvania and smuggles letters to a radical nun through another inmate, who is an FBI plant. Dan Berrigan's hiding place is found through the letters and he is arrested. He is indicted and put on trial with the Harrisburg Eight. Father James testifies as a priest on another matter in Harrisburg and reads his poems at an outdoor rally that evening. An apparent derelict approaches him. James tries to avoid him, but the derelict follows James, who recognizes Brian when he whispers "If you don't tell your friends about me, I won't tell mine about you." James reflects on his childhood that taught him to be obedient, polite and good and now feels that he is defiant, angry and irreverent. He recognizes several experiences in which he gets in



trouble with his family, his cardinal and others in the peace movement that the FBI tries to convince him to betray.

James is arrested by the Air Force for protesting Igloo White at Hansom Air Force Base, but General Carroll does not find out. In March 1971, James and Brian again cross paths with James' efforts to organize a citizens' tribunal to indict J. Edgar Hoover for FBI abuses. Daniel Ellsberg is one of the witnesses to testify against illegal conduct of the war. Later Ellsberg becomes famous for leaking the Pentagon Papers. General Carroll is chairman of a Washington dinner to honor Hoover. He asks Father James to offer the benediction. James sees the request as an attempt by his father to reach out and redeem their relationship and his priesthood after their rifts. James sees the impossible situation he is in. He tells his father he can't and General Carroll never asks him anything again. James has no one to confide in. He cannot talk to his friends on the left who encourage him to exploit the opportunity and consider him a traitor for refusing. Dennis is out of the country. His other brother, Brian, though an FBI agent, would understand the ironies and complexity of their situation. Skating on metaphoric thin ice he defies his family, his cardinal and compatriots in the peace movement.

In 1972, Father Carroll joins two dozen other clergy to visit congressman and senators to urge cutting off funds for the war. After visiting congressional offices, they meet at the rotunda where Hoover is lying in state in a flag-draped coffin. William Sloane Coffin claims if Hoover spends the night in the Capitol so can they. The assembled protestors sit down in the rotunda and refuse to leave at closing. The D.C. police viciously arrest and take them into custody. They keep them in repugnant conditions overnight. James reflects on his confidence in the peace movement and heroes' feet of clay. The Berrigans are heroes until he finds out Philip secretly marries a nun and James feels betrayed. Patrick Hughes tells James he is marrying and James feels abandoned on thin ice. James sees a coming collapse of liberal Catholicism. Coffin is in the next cell singing passages from the Messiah and inmates in the other cell join him in singing. When James is released the next day, he calls home to offer his mother and father condolences that Hoover died. She answers and tells him they know why he is there and this time he hurt his father. She says James disgraces him and doesn't want to talk to him, again.

Father James perceives his responsibility at the Newman Center is to find and offer what belief in Jesus Christ entails. He is the priest assigned in 1969, to St. Jerome's Chapel located next to the Center. James believes the chapel is a better fit for cloistered nuns than college students. His remodeling project begins with removing the pews and formal altar. Stations of the Cross are replaced with a mural and the stained glass windows are modernized. A student builds a simple oak table around which to celebrate the Mass. James is awakened in the middle of the night by a phone call telling him St. Jerome's is on fire. He arrives at the site to find the chapel burned to the ground by an arsonist. He sees the burning of the chapel as a metaphor of all that is going on with the Catholic Church itself.

Dennis returns to the United States as a draft fugitive. James recommends he appeal to the draft board for conscientious objector status. Dennis agrees that he needs an



attorney to do so and tells James he is going to ask their father. James is angry because he thinks this will hurt and aggravate their father more. James is surprised when General Carroll agrees to do so and appears with Dennis for his hearing. Dennis receives his CO status. The next Christmas Father James overhears the General talking to a World War II veteran priest at St. Paul's College. Joseph Carroll tells the priest that the change Dennis underwent from the way they were brought up may be necessary for human beings to survive this century.

In January 1973, Father James turns thirty; Lyndon Johnson dies, and the Vietnam War is ending. Father James continues to have struggles with his vocation and decides to spend the summer on retreat in the Holy Land to reconsider his vocation. The calls to action he believes his priesthood is meant to support are either bearing fruit or proving infertile. All his heroes with their missions have died, been murdered, become disgraced or begun to change. He lives at a monastery located between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. He visits tourist spots in the Holy Land and is disheartened until he meets Father Benoit. The aged French Dominican priest takes him to a Russian Orthodox convent to show him a stone Jesus of Nazareth stepped on. That experience confirms him in his faith. His commitment to the priesthood fits the Vietnam War from 1969 through 1977. James is finished with what he feels he became a priest to do. When he leaves Israel at the end of the summer in 1973, Father James Carroll accepts his decision to leave the priesthood. One year later he meets with his parents in Washington to begin laicization. When he tells Joseph and Mary Carroll he is leaving the priesthood, his mother gets up from the table and says she expected this. He tells Joseph the reason is to have a life like his father's with a loving wife and children. Joseph tells his son they'll only grow up and break your heart and does not understand why James wants a life like his.



Chapter 11, "The Last Word"

Chapter 11, "The Last Word" Summary and Analysis

James fondly recalls the intimate moments spent in automobiles riding alone with his father as a child growing up. He recalls trips in the green Studebaker on the way to Mass as an altar boy, in the Crown Victoria listening to him whistle "Beautiful Dreamer" on the way to the football field, in the Air Force staff car in Frankfurt and the Lincoln in Washington. The tune he whistles symbolizes a utopian world he may believe in beyond the real he lives. James recalls with horror the last time in 1980, when his father drives Mary, James and his new wife and baby to Brian's for an Easter egg hunt. The seventy-year-old Joe Carroll shows signs of Alzheimer's that is not diagnosed, but apparent in his angry reactions to James' offer to drive. Suspicion is confirmed in 1982, when he thanks James for dedicating a novel to him and denounces the dedication because of a headline.

Father Carroll is asked to confess serious violations that would justify their dispensation to be released from his vows. James writes in 1975, that he appreciates his life as a priest and confesses to choosing to live as a writer and not as a celibate religious. He finds a letter of reference dated 1976, in his file from a Paulist friend that confirms his dedication and fidelity as a priest. The letter also confirms that he is compelled to criticize authority in their support of the Vietnam War. He gets no reply from the Church for two years and decides to marry Lexa. Rules of the Church require excommunication for that. Joseph rejects him and his fiancée and boycotts their wedding. Guilt from his presumed "spoiled priest" curse from his marriage to Mary transfers to James' early marriage to Lexa.

James' mother concludes Joseph is sick and his family experience phases of Alzheimer's as Joseph goes through them. They find out about his continuous repetition of "Oh boy" and the compulsion to put things in one's mouth. Joe Carroll hoards cigarettes after he no longer smokes and has difficulty communicating. Joe is no longer able to speak and or write. Mary takes care of Joe at home until he is moved to a nursing home, where she visits him daily. To maintain dignity she insists the staff call him "General," but they call him "Joe, Oh Boy" or "General Diet" behind her back. He no longer recognizes anyone, not even himself. A new staff member gives him paper and a crayon that Mary says he no longer uses but surprisingly, he begins to form letters starting with an M. For several days the General fills pages of construction paper with the word Mary in crayon. The last word he ever writes before lapsing into a coma in 1991, is "Mary."

James Carroll reflects on life as seminarian and priest. He recalls Patrick Hughes and the fact that Patrick leaves the priesthood before James. Patrick continues to celebrate Mass as a priest but James does not. Marianne asks James to preach the eulogy at Patrick's funeral in 1980. Ten years after leaving the priesthood, James baptizes Jenny, his new-born, dying daughter and realizes the gift she gives him to be a real priest. The



Carrolls take turns watching their father, Joseph, when he lapses into a coma at the nursing home in January 1991. Joseph pulls a feeding tube from his nose. James thinks he opens his eyes and says something. James confirms with Dennis that if there is the possibility that Joseph is still conscious, they must continue to feed him under the doctrine of the Catholic Church. James returns to Boston while Kevin, Dennis and their mother stay with Joseph. Two nights later, Joseph dies, ironically, with his son Dennis, the draft dodger at his bedside. Mary had reserved a grave at Arlington Cemetery a year earlier for him. The family attends his requiem Mass at a nearby chapel. Joe is a psychology professor caring for the disabled; Dennis is a USAID health official; Kevin is a social worker, and Brian is an FBI agent continuing the work of his father. The funeral is in 1991, when the Gulf War creates a feeling of doom and foreboding, similar to that which James recalls with his father about the future. James realizes tragically that he and his father break each other's heart.



Characters

Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll

Mary Morrissey Carroll

Dennis Carroll

Brian Carroll

Kevin Carroll

General Edwin Chess

Daniel and Philip Berrigan

General Curtis LeMay

J. Edgar Hoover

Joseph Carroll, Jr.

Eugenio Pacelli

Francis Cardinal Spellman

Pope John XXIII

Robert J. McNamara

Patrick Hughes

Allen Tate

Hans Kung



Martin Luther King, Jr.

Attorney General Robert Kennedy

Pope Paul VI

Senator Eugene McCarthy

Lexa Carroll



Objects/Places

The Chapel

Our Lady of Perpetual Help is the name Catholics call the little white church shared by the Catholics, Jews and Protestants that also worship there. Non-Catholics refer to it as the Chapel. It is located on the east bank of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C, and is base chapel for personnel at Bolling Air Force Base. Father Carroll celebrates his first Mass and preaches his first sermon as a priest traditionally at his parent's parish. Hosts for the occasion are General Joseph F. and Mary Carroll. Father James Carroll uses this venue to express his opinion of the Vietnam War and the Generals that perpetrate it.

Model B-52 Bomber

James receives a stainless-steel, model B-52 bomber as a prize for the Outstanding Air Force ROTC Cadet award at Georgetown University. He takes it with him to seminary. The model B-52 symbolizes his feelings about the military, his father's Air Force career and war. Actual B-52 bombers fly over the golf course on landing approach to Ramey AFB where General Carroll and James would watch them in silence. Joseph shares his concern World War III is inevitable. James confides in his father a desire to be a priest. While in seminary James' anti-war feelings develop, and he throws the model B-52 into a swamp.

Irish Bridgeport

Irish Bridgeport is a Chicago ward bordered by the stockyards and called "Back of the Yards." Joseph returns from twelve years at seminary to his "old neighborhood," where he meets Mary. He works the stockyards where workers never get the stench of the place out of their skins. He works days as a steamfitter's helper and meat seller and studies law at night. Joseph attends Loyola Law School, a blue-collar night school, and graduates *summa cum laude* after six years of study. Joseph believes the FBI is a ticket out of Chicago, but, ironically, his first assignment is back to Chicago's Irish Bridgeport.

J. Edgar's Office

The window of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI office can be seen from the street. Joseph reports directly to the head of the FBI. Mary points to "J. Edgar's office" while giving tours to her children and friends and relatives from Bridgeport.



Department of War Building (The Pentagon)

The Pentagon is completed on January 15, 1943, which the author considers significant because it precedes his birth by three days. The Department of War Building comprises five distinct pentagonal structures arranged concentrically around a five acre open court. Five-sided rings are joined by ten spokelike corridors five stories high above ground with two stories below ground and ramps to wheel cabinets on. Joseph works there in 1947.

Beautiful Dreamer

Joseph Carroll compulsively whistles the song "Beautiful Dreamer" as he drives around in his car. He whistles the tune as an apparent escape after Joe junior is struck with polio. Joseph believes it's his own pride after experiencing success in Washington that causes his son's disease. Joseph and Mary together believe his polio is the result of an Irish curse against the spoiled priest and family. Whistling the tune relieves his anxiety.

Priory School

Before the Carroll family lives in Germany, James attends high school at a Benedictine monastery. The school is small and rigorous for the would-be intellectual elite and is run by English monks on a British model. Joe junior attends the same school before James. Joe is a good student, but James hates the school and sees pictures of the pope hanging everywhere.

Wiesbaden

Wiesbaden is a German spa town between the Taunus Mountains and the Rhine. The Carroll family lives in Wiesbaden, Germany when Joseph is chief of staff of the Air Force in Europe. The General is in charge of pilots, warplanes and nuclear weapons.

Eagle Club

The Eagle Club is a requisitioned mansion in downtown Wiesbaden. It was used as Queen Victoria's residence and Eisenhower's headquarters in 1945. In 1958, it is used as a servicemen's bar and music joint where Elvis Presley is thought to hang out. James and friends spend Saturday nights there hoping to see Presley, even though high school kids normally couldn't get in. The general's son sees Elvis there once and quickly leaves.



United States Air Force Academy

The United States Air Force Academy is a military school in Denver, Colorado, which trains officers in the Air Force. James Carroll considers becoming a candidate for the Academy as an alternative career path after high school. His grades are inadequate for competitive admission, but he has a good chance of acceptance since he is an Air Force general's son.

Ramey Air Force Base

Ramey AFB is a strategic air command (SAC) base in Puerto Rico equipped with a golf course on a remote bluff overlooking the Caribbean. Ramey is a destination favored by military brass for rest and relaxation (R&R). One-third of the nation's B-52 bomber fleet is airborne from this base at all times. Here at Ramey, the General shares with his son, James, the belief that World War III is inevitable. He states that man uses every weapon he creates and nuclear war is unavoidable. James agrees with his father and confides that he wants to be a priest. They sit silently together and his father nods in agreement.

Burris Memorandum

The Burris Memorandum dated July 20, 1961, is a summary of meetings to discuss if the United States should launch unprovoked nuclear attacks on China and Soviet Union targets to preempt retaliation. Memorandum suggests two weeks are needed to remain in bomb shelters after a first strike for citizens to be safe from fallout. President Kennedy reverses nuclear thinking with speeches, a Test Ban Treaty and a Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Robert McNamara and General Carroll struggle to reimpose civilian control over World War II generals who want 2,400 missiles that McNamara caps at 1,000 allowable.

Paulist Fathers

Paulist Fathers are a small, relatively-new Roman Catholic American order of less than three hundred priests. The order is known for efforts to bridge gaps between a defensive Church and hostile American culture. It is established for over one hundred years since formed by Catholic convert, Isaac Heckler. Paulists are characterized by undivided love of Catholic Church and America. Their mission undercuts the rigid triumphalism of the Church as a perfect society with nothing to learn from the broader culture. Paulists run Mount Paul novitiate in the Picatinny Mountains of New Jersey. James spends one year there as a novice before entering St. Paul's College where he studies for the priesthood.



Selma, Alabama

Selma is the county seat of Dallas County, Alabama with over fifteen-thousand eligible black citizens but only 156 are registered to vote. Selma is a 1964, site of civil rights campaigns to register voters. Martin Luther King Jr. leads a demonstration there.

Yankee Stadium

Yankee Stadium is the name of a baseball stadium in New York City where the New York Yankees play and other large outdoor events are held. The newly-installed Pope VI visits Yankee Stadium in 1965. on his trip to speak at the United Nations' twenty-year anniversary. Mary Carroll is asked by Spellman to welcome the Pope at the stadium.

Oil-Stained Linen Bands

Bands of linen cloth are wrapped around a newly-ordained priest's oiled hands at ordination. Bands are given to the priest's mother as a religious memento for her to keep, so, according to the tradition, she is recognized in heaven as the mother of a priest.

Boston University

Boston University is a college in Boston, Massachusetts where Father James Carroll is assigned to be chaplain in 1969. The University is reputed to be one of the capitals of the student anti-war movement in the 1960s.

Catholic Student Center

The Catholic Student Center at Boston University is also known as the Newman House. Father Carroll is assigned to it as chaplain where he suggests the name "Hedgeschool" after Irish resistance to a health food restaurant in the basement. Hedgeschool becomes popular as a left-wing organizing center for radicals, Jews, feminists and others.

Dick Cavett Show

The *Dick Cavett Show* is a television talk show hosted by Dick Cavett. Father Carroll substitutes for Berrigan on the show although Father Carroll does not know Berrigan. Jack Klugman hosts for Cavett and ridicules the priest. Father Carroll interrupts the interview to discuss a police raid at Boston University. James's mother claims James embarrasses his father and brother Brian.



St. Jerome's Chapel

St. Jerome's Chapel is the chapel Father James inherits at Boston University as chaplain. The chapel occupies first floor of a Back Bay mansion next to the Newman Center. The chapel has pews, grim Stations of the Cross and a formal altar. Father Carroll discards the old furnishings and modernizes its decor. St. Jerome's Chapel is destroyed by arson.

Tantur

Tantur is a monastery in Israel between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Father Carroll stays at the monastery for a summer-long retreat to reconsider his life as a Roman Catholic priest.



Themes

Father and Son Conflicts

James and his father have three areas of contention and conflict they cannot resolve; Roman Catholicism, civil rights and the Vietnam War. The child and young adult James is a devoted son and tries to follow in his father's footsteps by becoming either a priest or Air Force officer. He comes to a compromise by choosing to become an Air Force chaplain. Later reflection reveals he enters the seminary to please his parents and perhaps mitigate the Irish Catholic curse of Joseph's spoiled priesthood.

During James' youth, seminary attendance and priesthood, three popes with diverse points of view lead the Roman Catholic Church. Ironically James' attempt to please his father and mother by becoming a priest displeases them from their mutual deference to three consecutive popes with conflicting teachings. Pius XII is a stiff traditionalist that denies personal conscience and sees WWI and II the same as Joseph Carroll and Cardinal Spellman see it. John XXIII is an open-minded pope that recruits James and convenes Vatican II. Pope Paul VI is a peace-maker during the Vietnam period. Conflict between father and son is intertwined with the Church, civil and individual rights, war, sex and family.

James' involvement in civil rights marks the beginning of overt conflict with his father. James believes his father embodies the FBI motto of fidelity, bravery and integrity. Joe's idealism blinds him to the corrupt actions of J. Edgar Hoover, the avowed segregationist. James asks his father's opinion of Martin Luther King, Jr., but Joseph stops discussion by saying there are things James doesn't know about King that Joseph can't tell him. Subsequent conversations are countered by the General naming King a Communist, a degenerate or a radical that wants to overthrow the system and the most notorious liar in America. When King is assassinated and Washington is rioting, James' father comments, "see." Decades later James reads that Joseph Carroll conspired to destroy Martin Luther King, Jr.

Initially their conflict is limited to the civil rights movement. General Carroll is founding director of the Defense Intelligence Agency in charge of enemy counts and evaluating targets in Vietnam. James believes his father's Vietnam War involvement is well-intended and therefore must be right. When the family gathers for dinner, they discuss acceptable topics under the control of Joseph Carroll's intense career self-certainties. He does not allow any difference of opinion. The General calls war protesters "kooks," so war is not acceptable table talk. When James blurts out a question about war protesters Joseph states protesting prolongs war and does that answer his question. James defends Phil Berrigan from being called a "kook" by saying he's a priest but Joseph retorts that that fact just makes it worse.

Father James uses the traditional first sermon at his father's parish to publicly announce his opposition to war and, in effect, renounce his father's career and his own privileged



upbringing. James' silent conflict with his father reaches a breaking point that drives him to embarrass General Carroll in front of generals and other military personnel assembled. Years later General Carroll asks Father James to offer the benediction at a Washington dinner to honor Hoover. James believes his father's request reaches out to redeem their relationship and his priesthood. James prefers not offending his anti-war friends, so he tells his father he can not offer the benediction. Joseph never asks him for anything again. James tells his father he is leaving the priesthood to have a life like his father's with a loving wife and children. Joseph tells James his children will only grow up and break James' heart

Catholic Popes and the Carroll Family

Joseph Carroll becomes an adult during Pacelli's regime. Pius XII, the name Pacelli assumes upon ascension to the papacy, is a brooding, austere, authoritarian pope and former apostolic delegate to Berlin. He admires the Germans but proves an ally against atheistic communism by excommunicating communists throughout the world. Pope Pius XII confirms Catholic Just War theory, despite the probable death of millions in a nuclear exchange. This pope denies American Catholics their citizens' right of conscientious objection. Pius XII symbolizes an aloof, judgmental, unforgiving God that confirms Joseph's sense of guilt and stiff, unwavering morality. Joseph feels guilty for leaving seminary after twelve years. His guilt worsens by marrying Mary and falling under the Irish Catholic curse of a spoiled priest. Pope Pius XII is a "god-fearing" model of unforgiving righteousness Joseph believes in and teaches his sons. Joseph and Pope Pius XII believe morality is black and white, "good guys and bad guys." Joseph builds a career seeking redemption by chasing "bad guys" whether they are crooks, commies or cowards.

The Carrolls have children at the two-year intervals appropriate to Roman Catholic birth control by the rhythm method. Pope John XXIII replaces Pius XII and questions his predecessor's denial of conscientious objection and American military strategy. John also encourages dialogue with Marxists and convenes an Ecumenical Council. Joseph's friend, Cardinal Spellman, hates this new pope and says he should sell bananas. Pope John XXIII recruits James to be a priest and Joseph is pleased.

Roncalli, who assumes the name John XXIII, changes Pacelli's black and white morality to shades of gray. The distinction between "good guys and bad guys" blurs with John XXIII's dialogue with communists. He disputes Catholic Just War theory and accepts the right to conscientious objection. This stance, in essence supports principled war protesters that Joseph calls cowards. General Carroll's targeted commies and cowards, war-making and his career are under challenge. At least he has a son that is becoming a priest to alleviate his curse as a spoiled priest. Unfortunately for Joseph, James believes in Pope John XXIII's vision of a revitalized Catholic Church.

Montini, the new Pope Paul VI visits New York in 1965. to speak at the UN. The Pope proclaims peace must guide mankind and speaks for the poor, the disinherited and those who hunger for justice. He ends with an upraised fist saying in French, "War no



more." Mary Carroll is invited by Cardinal Spellman to welcome the Pope. James asks what his father thinks about the Pope. Joseph replies that he (Joseph) holds an ideal based on information the Pope does not know and states General LeMay's SAC motto, "peace is our profession."

James Carroll and His Heroes

James' childhood heroes on Air Force bases are his father's fellow generals. James is a would-be flyboy on the side of anyone in blue. He worships warmonger General Curtis LeMay in the early sixties. He is an Air Force Academy cadet prospect because he is a general's son. General Chess is chief of chaplains modeling an alternative career path. Caddying for his father and the chaplain on a golf course lets James envision himself and his father as priests. At Georgetown University he wins the Outstanding Air Force ROTC Cadet award and a prize stainless-steel model B-52 bomber. James enters seminary to become an Air Force chaplain with General Chess' help. Ten years later Father Carroll celebrates his first Mass with his father attending. Major General Edwin Chess presents Father Carroll saying he is on our side. James is no longer on their side and the words make him feel naked. He avoids his father's look because his sermon betrays their shared experiences.

James meets Spellman in 1958, while at war with himself sexually. He is conflicted by the renunciation of sexual intimacy required to embrace the spiritual power he thinks Spellman embodies. Cardinal Spellman's power comes from friendship with Pius XII, and he is friend and hero to GIs, Presidents, J. Edgar Hoover and James. James meets Pope John XXIII, and is conscripted to become a priest. During the Carroll family audience, the Pope takes James' shoulders in his hands and seems to know and share his secret. James meets Robert F. Kennedy and says he will enter the seminary. Kennedy says priests are needed in the streets to support civil rights where the Protestant ministers already are.

In his novitiate year, James watches Martin Luther King, Jr. on television with fellow novices. James realizes King preaches the Word of God. He recalls Pope John XXIII, Robert Kennedy and now King's call to vocation in the words "free at last." James is in seminary when the Berrigans become anti-war heroes. He throws his B-52 bomber ROTC prize in the swamp behind the seminary, which symbolizes his break with heroes of the past. James meets anti-war candidate Eugene McCarthy as a seminarian and McCarthy assures James that James' vocation makes him specially valuable to the anti-war cause. James meets Alan Tate at a 1966, program and begins to see himself as a writer. Tate inscribes a reference to his conflicting vocations that the Paulists confirm. Tate's commendation in 1974, on his first book is as much a laying on of hands to Father James as the cardinal archbishop's.



Style

Perspective

James is the second of five sons born in the 1940s, to Joseph and Mary Carroll. Joseph is promoted from successful FBI Agent to instant Air Force General via political intrigue. He is not traditional military nor his sons normal "military brats," since they live on Air Force Bases in mansions or on Generals' Row. James accepts his life of privilege in Germany where he is "the General's son." He is fawned over by his father's friends and connections who are generals, Cardinals and a Pope and urged choose the Air Force or seminary for a career. He tells his father that he'll be the priest you never were and that may be his underlying point of view.

Ironically James doesn't compete with Joseph junior, the first son who has polio, but with Joseph senior the spoiled priest. When James is Father James Carroll, he opposes beliefs his father has and succeeds in. Joseph entered seminary to escape his hardscrabble teen years then escapes the celibacy of priesthood in his early twenties to become an overachieving stockyard worker with a law degree and wife. James enters seminary to escape sexual temptations, please his parents and redeem his father's priesthood at about the same age Joseph departed seminary decades earlier.

Between 1962 and 1969, James changes from future Air Force chaplain proud to follow his father's footsteps to civil rights champion, anti-war activist and devotee of Pope John XXIII's renewed Catholic Church. Joseph tries to ruin Martin Luther King, Jr., finds targets in the Vietnam War and supports Pope Pius XII's traditional Roman Catholicism. James may not speak about differences with his father. James decides to leave celibacy in 1975, and he marries Lexa in 1977, before his dispensation in 1979. Joseph boycotts his wedding since James is a spoiled priest, too. James Carroll's work is an apparent apology to explain and perhaps expunge conflict and guilt with parents, church, sex, war and the author himself. James cannot confide in his father once they differ over the civil rights movement. James honors Joseph's life despite differences and is sad that they break each other's heart. Sons and fathers often conflict by nature, so this work speaks to many fathers and sons. Readers whose father is alive may receive a wakeup call. James puts conflicts and differences in perspective for those whose father is deceased. This history of a modern writer and military family is timely for continuing struggles with peace and war.

Tone

This autobiography sketches James' life in retrospect from birth to seminary, priesthood and laicization to his father, Joseph's, death in 1991. His subjective narrative is written from the point of view of James Carroll. He is sympathetic and understanding of his own action and thoughts and as much as possible to those of his father. James never considers his father anything but a man of good will, who believes in achieving the task



at hand. James tries to illustrate why and how he and Joseph differed in opinion. James is proud of his father but disagrees profoundly with his professional action. The tone of this work may sadden the reader. This is the story of a highly-dedicated man and his son's struggle to come to terms with their life and values. James as a young man begins on the path that would make any father proud. They seem to walk as one when he goes to seminary. A sad irony and tragedy of their time is that the Church they both seek to serve changes and that causes a cascade of conflict through their lives. When Pius XII, the austere, principled pope, is replaced by John XXIII's open arms to all, Joseph's influence erodes. Joseph is an old school pro at chasing cowards, crooks and commies, but James is a recruit of the new popes that preach communication, peace and civil rights.

Structure

The format of the book comprises eleven chapters with titles that specify certain points of view, periods or understanding in James Carroll's life. An autobiographical approach gives the author a forum to express his feelings and conflicts with the other characters and events in his life. Frequent use of flashback and flash forward techniques cause some confusion in maintaining a coherent timeline from one section to the next. The author uses a dense, convoluted writing style that requires a certain amount of prior knowledge or rereading for complete understanding. Symbolism is used, and, when combined with the traditions and rituals of the Catholic Church, may add confusion. Events that occur historically may appear out of context or actual timeline for dramatic effect. The book begins with the figurative death of the relationship between the author and his father when James' voices a public denunciation of his father's military career and colleagues. The last chapter describes Joseph's actual death and funeral. The book is written and published in the mid 1990s, but events before the 1940s, may be unfamiliar or unknown to a current generation of readers.



Quotes

"In a day when our society is so disjointed," he said to his fellow generals, "it is a great joy to know that Father Carroll is on our side." Chapter 1, p. 8

"The hand of Yahweh was laid on me, and he carried me away and set me down in the middle of a valley, a valley full of bones. He made me walk up and down among them. There were vast quantities of these bones on the ground the whole length of the valley; and they were quite dried up." Chapter 1, p. 10

"Roger "Terrible" Touhy was a notorious bank robber, kidnapper, and killer in gangland Chicago, but he was also the key to my father's fate and then, of course, to mine." Chapter 2, p. 16

"That same year, my father returned to Bridgeport, a twenty-four-year-old disgrace to his parents, his five sisters, and to the parish that had sponsored him. After a dozen years in the archdiocesan seminary, preparing to be a priest since the age of twelve, he'd committed the sacrilege of quitting. He did so on the eve of his ordination to the diaconate, shortly before taking the lifelong vow of celibacy." Chapter 2, p. 19

"Our father would give us the motto *Pro Deo et Patria*, yet he was less the one who initiated Joe and me into the holy mysteries of Washington than our mother. Later our brothers were initiated too." Chapter 3, p. 33

"A mere eight years after finishing night school, quitting the stockyards, and marrying her - he who, in growing up, had never crossed paths with a soldier or sailor much less an officer, never served a day in uniform, never saw a moment's service overseas, and had hardly even been in an airplane - he had become an instant brigadier general in the United States Air Force. At age thirty-seven, he was the youngest general in America." Chapter 3, p. 39

"Silencing what little dissent there was, as for example from Dorothy Day's ragtag band of Catholic Workers, Pius XII declared in 1956 that "a Catholic citizen cannot invoke his own conscience in order to refuse to serve" in a legitimately declared war. That absolute repudiation of conscientious objection reinforced the U.S. government's, and depriving them of the appeal to religion that Quakers and Mennonites had, sealed the fate of many Catholic boys. Like his colleagues in the Bureau and the Pentagon, my father welcomed the pope's statement, I'm sure. As an American he believed in the right of conscientious objection, but as a Catholic he accepted the subjugation of conscience." Chapter 4, p. 51

"At one point, after an intimate and, by me, wholly unauthorized conversation with my parents, Cardinal Spellman put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'When you're ordained, Jimmy, it will be, God willing, by me.'" Chapter 4, p. 73



"At Ramey that night, swirling his whiskey, Dad said, 'Man has never created a weapon and not used it.' An irrefutable fact; on this subject my father's authority was absolute. 'The nuclear war is inevitable.'" Chapter 5, p. 86

"'I know,' I said, feeling the pull of his fatalism, a sickness that even now curdles the juices in my throat. 'That is why,' I continued, aware of my words as a declaration, 'I want to be a priest. I want to be a priest, Dad.'" Chapter 5, p. 86

"When I looked up at him, he said sadly, 'You can't have both, you know.'" Chapter 6, p. 107

"The Paulists as a group, in other words, finally gave me a version of the affirmation that had begun with Patrick - that I could do no wrong. It was not literally true, of course, as we all knew. But what a relief to find in their tested support a way to let go of the much older, deeper feeling - one derived not, perhaps from parents or brothers but from the pulse of my own heart, the true effect in me, I'd long since concluded, of the doctrine of original sin. This feeling - that if it was *my* act or *my* desire, it *had* to be wrong." Chapter 6, p. 108

"He clasped my forearm warmly, an affirmation I longed for. He said, 'What a great time to be a priest! Then he said that priests are urgently needed in the streets, where the ministers already are.'" Chapter 7, p. 131

"When my father came to the phone, I sensed that he too was staggered. But all he could bring himself to say to me was 'See?'" Chapter 7, p. 156

"It is peace which must guide the destinies of peoples and all mankind." Chapter 8, p. 158

"'Peace is our Profession,' Dad said, citing LeMay's SAC motto." Chapter 8, p. 162

"It was during a Christmas visit to Vietnam that he made his famous statement of faith, 'My country right or wrong.'" Chapter 8, p. 169

"I do not know if he meant to, but my straight-arrow father, bound by a need to say only what he saw, and had in fact ended his career by striking a blow against the nuclear madness. I believe his unsung act contributed in some small way to the momentum that had led in 1972 to the ABM Treaty with the Soviet Union, the beginning of the end of the arms race." Chapter 9, p. 219

"My ordination to the priesthood meant so much to all these others. What did it mean to me?" Chapter 9, p. 221

"'You've disgraced your father. He says he doesn't want to talk to you again, and I don't blame him.' 'Can't he tell me himself, Mom?' 'No,' she answered sharply. 'He can't.'" Chapter 10, p. 241



"Opposition to the war had formed the spine of my priesthood. What would define it once peace came?" Chapter 10, p. 249

"'Children?' Now his eyes flashed. I glimpsed the full force of his feeling. Yes. Hatred, sure enough. 'Why would you want children?' he said. 'They would only grow up and break your heart.'" Chapter 10, p. 254

"'Well you can stay nervous,' he said. And I did. It became physically dangerous to push him further. Here we were, driving south toward Richmond after all. But instead of Moscow threatening us, it was he." Chapter 11, p. 257

"The next day, my mother arrived at the nursing home with an entire box of crayons and a large pad of construction paper. She sat beside my otherwise uncomprehending father as he filled page after page with the one word 'Mary.' This went on for some days until, having forgotten again and once more in the grip of hyperorality, he put the crayon in his mouth. But my mother had her pages, his last word, and the absolute treasure of her life." Chapter 11, p. 263



Topics for Discussion

Specify and discuss three reasons James Carroll decides to become a priest.

Compare and contrast the lives of Joseph Carroll and his son James Carroll.

Compare and contrast the lives and careers of James Carroll and his four brothers; Joseph, Dennis, Brian and Kevin.

Discuss how Joe junior's polio affects the Carroll family relationships and lifestyle.

Discuss how James' life violates the rules of his upbringing as an Irish Catholic son.

Identify and explain how each brother develops a career in relation to their father.

Identify and specify at least three ways in which Cardinal Spellman influences U.S. military decisions.

Identify and explain the causes for James' departure from the priesthood.

List and explain three ways in which Hans Kung has an impact on James Carroll.