

Children of God: A Novel Study Guide

Children of God: A Novel by Mary Doria Russell

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Plot Summary

Children of God takes up the story of Emilio Sandoz as he heals from the ordeal that he suffers in Mary Doria Russell's first novel, *The Sparrow*. Emilio is shanghaied back to the planet Rakhat, where he had been mutilated and gang raped, because this serves the interests of Vatican and Jesuits. On Rakhat, he sees that the political situation has changed and he moves to ward off the extinction of the formerly dominant and tyrannical species.

Children of God follows Emilio Sandoz, a linguist and former Jesuit priest as he helps train a second mission to the planet Rakhat, where he had been mutilated and raped. The Vatican and the Jesuits desire this, and, when he refuses, they kidnap him. He leaves behind a beloved fiancée and her daughter and has to be sedated for much of the long flight. Towards the end of the voyage, Emilio emerges as the group leader, insisting that they learn from him every detail that might help ensure their survival and prevent a second tragedy. The time frame of this strand is 2060-62 on Earth and 2062-78 aboard the spacecraft *Giordano Bruno*.

Intertwined with this is the story of Sofia Mendes Quinn, the lone survivor of the mission of the *Stella Maris* still on Rakhat. She knows nothing about Emilio's torments or escape home (and he knows nothing about her). Sofia's story stretches from 2047 through 2078, when the *Bruno* arrives and the two story strands blend. Having inspired the Runa population to resist the Jana'ata, who breed, enslave, and consume them, Sofia hides in the Trucha Sai wilderness for the better part of forty years. Her autistic son Isaac wanders off in search of peace and music and Sofia hardens into a political leader. The Runa push the Jana'ata northward and bring them to the point of extinction. During this period, a revolution occurs among the royal Jana'ata that promises a more egalitarian state. The leaders of the two sides tragically both die in battle, leaving a power vacuum filled by civil war and famine. Some refugees in the N'Jarr Valley manage a life of peace among the species.

The *Bruno* mission arrives, expecting the status quo of forty years earlier to apply, and is appalled that the musical species will die out. They establish a reservation system for the Jana'ata and a strict prohibition of the eating of Runa flesh, hoping that in time an integrated society can evolve. Most of the Jesuits remain on Rakhat, but Emilio returns to Earth with a gifted Jana'ata musician who is prepared to share the mystery of God's Music with humankind. Emilio finds himself at last at peace with all that has befallen him.



Prelude and Chapters 1-4

Prelude and Chapters 1-4 Summary

When Emilio Sandoz paces nightly, wishing to die, Edward Behr reminds him that healing takes time and advises Vincenzo Giuliani, the Jesuit Father General, to go slowly with getting Emilio to confront his horrors. Chapter 1 sees Giuliani take Emilio to a family baptism that overwhelms him as he is befriended by four-year-old Celestina. Riding home, Vincenzo speaks of training men for a new mission to Rakhat and Emilio exchanges his linguistic skills for security, sound analysis systems, and a research assistant, but refuses to return to the planet. Later, Vincenzo resumes writing the Pope about Emilio's recovery, summarizing how he alone among eighteen voyagers survives and is unfairly treated by the media. Rakhat has two sentient species: the placid Runa and carnivorous Jana'ata. By misunderstanding the former's voluntary offering of their aged and children as meat, the Jesuits entangle themselves in local affairs and die, except for Emilio, who is calumniated by traders aboard a second ship, whose crew is also wiped out.

Chapter 2 finds Sofia Mendes Quinn on Rakhat in 2042, reflecting on the fate of her fellow crew members and how she nearly dies standing up to Jana'ata oppression of the Runa. Kanchay VaKashan takes her under his protection, leading survivors to sanctuary in the southern forest. Her upbringing as a Sephardic Jew and hardening as an orphan help her accept her fate without emotion. Kanchay explains to her the myths about the Runa first offering their babies to the Jana'ata to eat and they agree to disagree.

Back in Naples for Chapter 3, Emilio gets his own apartment and is determined to get past the nightmares, neuralgia, crying jags, and headaches. When Vincenzo brings a visitor over, Emilio assumes it is the research assistant he has requested and is dismissive. It turns out to be Gelasius III, the first modern African pope. Emilio pours out his heart, describing how God has abandoned him. The Pope insists that Emilio is chosen of God and insists that he return to Rakhat. Emilio refuses. Pope and Father General discuss reconciling historical differences, like one another's openness.

Chapter 4 returns to Rakhat, where Sofia uses her computer tablet to connect with the orbiting Stella Maris and read about childbirth and infant development. She argues with Djalao that the Runa must end their unjust subjugation, is brushed off, but hopes that the seeds have been planted. A great storm hits as Sofia goes into labor. Sofia names her son Isaac.

Prelude and Chapters 1-4 Analysis

The Prelude in two pages establishes that something traumatic has happened to Jesuit Fr. Emilio Sandoz, leaving him crippled, bitter, and perhaps suicidal. A Jesuit brother assigned to care for him tries to be supportive while the Father Superior of the powerful



order no longer gets up to check on him during nightmares. Fr. Vincenzo Giuliani shares Emilio's skepticism over how such sufferings reconcile with the idea of a loving God, introducing a major theme of the novel: theodicy.

Bro. Edward remains a significant character in Chapter 1, conflicting with the powerful Father Superior over how fast to push Emilio back into the world. Set on Earth in Naples, Italy, in September 2060, the chapter introduces Gina and Celestina Giuliani, relatives of the priest, who are destined to become major characters throughout the first half of the book. Her estranged husband's name comes up several times. He also, somewhat surprisingly, proves to be another central character.

The Giuliani family is rich and powerful, protected by Camorristi, a Mafia-like secret society, as the drive to and from the Giuliani family estate shows through security procedures. It is also mentioned when Emilio makes specific requests in return for his services training a second mission to Rakhat. He insists so emphatically that he will not return to the planet that it becomes inevitable that he will. Vincenzo stresses Emilio's indebtedness to the Order for his medical care after returning to Earth while agreeing to his demands to be set up independently and provided a linguistic assistant. Vincenzo insists that Emilio attend a family baptism, which adds flashbacks to his other nightmares and shows him and the four-year-old Celestina oddly bonding.

After Emilio is sedated, the author provides the reader with necessary background on the contents of *The Sparrow*, the novel preceding *Children of God*, by having Vincenzo write a long letter to the Pope summarizing the failure of the first mission to Rakhat and how Emilio has come to be scorned on Earth. The report is divided into two parts to help it be assimilated: a portion already written and the continuation, dealing with Rakhat sociology and Emilio's fate. Unless one has read *The Sparrow*, one must pay great attention to this summary in order to understand what follows.

Chapter 2 is set on Rakhat in 2042 Earth-relative. In Chapter 1 it is said that during the thirty-four-year voyage to and from Rakhat, Emilio ages only six years, thanks to Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The specific locale is Trucha Sai where Sofia Mendes survives, unbeknownst to anyone from the the *Stella Maris* crew. Chapters more or less alternate between an Earth setting as a second expedition is mounted, trained, and eventually sets off for Rakhat, and with Sofia's situation on Rakhat. Towards the end of the novel the two strands briefly meet, the new Jesuits discovering that relations between the two sentient species has reversed.

Sofia's tough growing up is sketched, leading to her somehow joining the *Stella Maris* expedition and marrying an Irishman Quinn who gets her pregnant before being killed. Sofia provides a character of strong faith who can counter the growing atheism of Emilio and doubt of other Jesuits. Her late father talks of God, declaring creation God but not perfect or fair, which fits in with the Runas' fatalistic outlook. A group of Runa take Sofia in after the massacre and Sofia's call to rebellion. It leaves her maimed for life and blind in her good eye. She cannot accept the myths whereby the Runa rationalize being preyed upon by the Juna'ata.



Chapter 3 returns to Naples, where Emilio, newly set up in his own apartment and determined to be independent, is in a surly mood when Vincenzo brings by a visitor, whom Emilio assumes is his research assistant. It is instead the new Pope, the first African in millennia and first convert to Catholicism. The Pope's mission is to get Emilio aboard the new mission, but Emilio refuses in absolute terms. He talks of building up a powerful spiritual life only to let God destroy it - for Emilio had not been a willing sufferer; he had fought the rapes with all his might and feels utterly debased. The Pope recalls Emilio as a young priest ministering in an African refugee camp. Leaving Emilio, the Pope and Vincenzo talk about ending the schism between the Vatican and the Jesuits. By the mid-twenty-first century there are married parish priests and birth control is at least being considered. This Pope wants the church to be ever-reforming, taking up one of the slogans of the Reformation. The reasons for the current rift are left vague. The chapter ends with the Pope insisting that Emilio be on the flight.

Chapter 4 again focuses on Sofia, still trying to convince the Runa of the need to throw off injustice and amazed at the naïveté of their fatal docility. She also reconnected with the orbiting ship, accessing the library for advice on birthing and child raising. She also downloads a Torah (the first five books of the Bible, the most sacred core for Jews). She hopes for a daughter, partly in order not to have to figure out how to circumcise a son. The Runa are amazed at how large human women become in the last two months of pregnancy and annoy her with analogies to exploding seed pods. They attend the birth, characteristically gathering around and discussing every aspect and option. Heavy rains lead Sofia towards naming the baby Noah should it be a boy, but she settles on Isaac, the biblical figure whose father leaves his homeland and whose mother bears only one son in old age.



Chapters 5-8

Chapters 5-8 Summary

Supaari VaGayjur is calm when Paramount Ljaat-sa Kitheri announces that he must sacrifice his newborn daughter because of a defective foot. Alone in his quarters, Supaari blames Emilio for his woes. As a merchant, Supaari had served as trade go-between for the strangers from H'earth and Hlavin Kitheri. When the humans unwittingly create chaos, Supaari preserves the survivors' lives and believes that he is helping despondent Emilio by placing him with the master poet Hlavin, in exchange for the rights to found a breeding line with Hlavin's sister Jholaa. A second mating is unthinkable, so all is lost.

Chapter 6 finds Emilio's old friend John Candotti visiting, hours after the Pope's troubling visit. Assigned as his linguistic assistant, John describes the physically powerful members of the new crew, already months in training. Besides John they are Frs. Danny Iron Horse (the father superior), Sean Fein, and Joseba Urizarbarrena. No longer able to live as a fraud, Emilio asks help signing his resignation from the Order and from the priesthood.

Chapter 7 returns to Inbrokar, where a Runa midwife shows Supaari his baby, who displays no deformity. Seething, Supaari kidnaps the baby but is seen by Hlavin's companion, Ira'il Vro. Hlavin claims that Supaari has murdered his entire family, but the blood is on Hlavin's hands. Chapter 8 adds background detail: Hlavin's Runa tutor, Selikat, tries to beat out of him the dangerous asking of Why? When she sees that he is bent on singing, she advises him to pursue it, which he does in exile and builds a fan base. His brothers allow it until they realize that he is calling for liberty. Invited to the birth celebration, Hlavin kills his extended family and becomes the 48th Paramount. He puts a price on Supaari, the child, and anyone who aids them.

Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Chapter 5 keeps the focus on Rakhat in 2046, examining the birth of a child who ought to have established a new line in the reigning Kitheri family. How Emilio comes to be imprisoned and raped is finally revealed, as are the details of genealogy on the planet. First and second born sons may marry and breed. Subsequent male children and all female children are back-ups in case of failure. Once the quota of grandchildren-heirs is met, the uncles and aunts are considered dangers to the dynasty. First and second sons alone are allowed to sing traditional songs and Hlavin Kitheri is a poet and singer. These songs, reaching Earth, had originally inspired the mission of the Stella Maris. As a boy, Hlavin entertains his sister Jholaa until he is exiled and then bargains her to the merchant Supaari, another third-born, who represents the humans as a bartering agent for exotic products. The alleged birth defect symbolizes the failure of an experiment in



social change. Supaari is expected to sacrifice the child in order to protect the gene pool in a public ceremony scheduled for the morning.

Chapter 6 introduces the characters who will make up the flight of the Giordano Bruno to Rakhat. They are already several months into their training and Emilio is to begin teaching them the planet's two languages: Ruanja and the more difficult K'San. Emilio is delighted that his old friend, John Candotti, is to be his research assistant. John describes the crew members, each a physically powerful man, NFL quality all, selected to be able to withstand any violence on the planet. The chapter is filled with light-hearted banter until Emilio cracks a joke about receiving sexual solicitations from male prisoners. He follows up by announcing that he can no longer stand being a priest and asks help in designing a device to enable him to sign his resignation papers. The chapters ahead will examine why he feels himself a fraud—having become an atheist—and his wrestling with the concept of redemptive suffering, which is specially emphasized by the Jesuits' rivals, the Order of Franciscans.

Chapter 7 shows how Supaari learns that Hlavin has invented the baby's deformity and, seething at the scorn that the aristocrats have always heaped on him, Supaari kidnaps her. The luxurious circumstances of Hlavin's exile at the Galatna Palace are filled in, along with details of the difficult birth. Runa evidently give birth as easily as they conceive, but Jana'ata endure as much agony as humans. Hlavin uses the abduction to murder his brothers, supposedly beloved sister, and father to clear the way for his own seizing power. He is said to revel in his blood-lust.

Rather than shifting actions on Earth, Chapter 8 provides background information on Hlavin Kitheri, including details on his upbringing as a third-born and exile to a place where other third-born nobles dissipate their useless lives. Some study to become professionals, but Hlavin is not an intellectual. Instead, he turns to music, which is the right of only first- and second-born sons and, indeed, is part of their daily routine. Hlavin's tutor disappears after advising him to follow his muse, suggesting that the Kitheris engage in eavesdropping. She knows that at her age she is soon to become meat in any case. Hlavin succeeds in music by inventing new forms that do not encroach on the dynastic privileges and by gathering an influential following of noble groupies. His brothers allow him to sing, seeing no danger to them. Calling the palace a seraglio deepens the Ottoman atmosphere surrounding the family. It is somewhat confusing how Hlavin loses his inspiration and regains it only after enjoying raping Emilio and then setting him free at Askama's request. At any rate, Hlavin begins to sing praises of freedom, even as he falls to the depths of debauchery. He is forbidden to sing but then allowed to return to Inbrokar for ceremonies surrounding the royal birth. He takes the bloody steps necessary to gather the reins of power.



Chapters 9-12

Chapters 9-12 Summary

By autumn, Emilio is taking care of himself and using the latest in voice recognition software to study radio data from Rakhat. He is interrupted when little Celestina brings him a guinea pig, her mother Gina apologizing. Emilio gently explains that he is too old to accept Celestina's marriage proposal and names his new pet, hopefully, Elizabeth after the Virgin Queen. Emilio explains that with no allowance for travel at near light speed, he is old enough for a Jesuit pension and that he is leaving the priesthood. Celestina embarrasses the adults by suggesting that they marry and Emilio specifies that the civilian clothes Gina agrees to buy for him not be black. Emilio connects with his new trainees mostly through cyberspace while he and Elizabeth contentedly make do on their own.

Chapter 10 returns to the storm-drenched Pon River on Rakhat, following Supaari, his daughter, and Paquarin in their flight south towards his home in Kirabai. Supaari intends to ask his mother to name the child, but the welcome he gets is disappointing, filled with ranting about cruel fate and mocking for his kindness towards the Runa. Hiring Kinsai as nursemaid, Supaari heads downriver at dawn and decides to name his daughter Ha'anala after the fearless human Anne Edwards. He breaks tradition by chanting to her.

Chapter 11 finds Danny in Naples worrying about the crew he leads in thorough training. Vincenzo assures him that he will deliver Emilio, who proves how invaluable he is by correcting the priests' interpretation of the first mission's records they are studying. Vincenzo believes that Emilio can overcome his psychological problems and that returning will be good for him. Every time it is brought up, however, Emilio refuses. The Order ties up Emilio's resignation in red tape until he refuses to work until released. He allows the team to dissociate from him now that he is an apostate. They decline but Danny indelicately observes that Emilio's emaciation might come from whatever infected a colleague on Rakhat. Emilio panics about Gina and Celestina. Reassured by the others, Emilio cheers up and agrees to learn how to cook more than rice and beans: Neapolitan macaroni and cheese. Later, Danny tells Vincenzo that Emilio is too fragile for the trip, but the Pope, convinced that Emilio is an object of Providence, insists that he be aboard.

Chapter 12 finds Supaari in Kashan Village, where Djalao has killed the bounty hunter whose coming Paquarin had lost her life warning about. Locals suggest that he become hasta'akala (total dependence on a sponsor) to escape persecution, but Supaari is unwilling to prey upon them or to endanger them. The Runa consensus is to send him to Trucha Sai.



Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Chapter 9 returns to Naples in the autumn of 2060, when Emilio is to begin training the next expedition in linguistics. He is taking pride in caring for himself and laughs to himself at being "Robolinguist" (p. 85) because of the advanced tools he has been provided to work around his disabilities. Chapter 9 reintroduces Gina and Celestina Giuliani, relatives of the Father General. Insistent but endearing little Celestina brings Emilio a guinea pig for a pet, a gift for her fiancé. Told that he is too old for her, Celestina later suggests that he and Gina marry. Besides offering yet another embarrassing situation for the adults to deal with (she insists on telling Emilio why he must put a towel in his lap when playing with Elizabeth the pig), this points to where the novel is leading: a love affair. The adults joke about Elizabeth's mother being named for the voluptuous Cleopatra and hope that naming this pet for the Virgin Queen of England will prove fortuitous. Their banter, upon second meeting, is nearly as carefree as is his joking with John, a lifelong friend. In the days that follow, Emilio also banter with the little rodent, which brightens his outlook. Russell's depiction of the guinea pig is astute and touching. Emilio tells Gina that he is leaving the priesthood and asks her to buy him some civilian clothes. Talk about his pension provides a means of adding detail about the current Vatican/Jesuit rift and the order's difficult legal and financial straight. Finally, Emilio is shown dealing with his new clerical students through cyberspace. They have been forewarned not to mother or analyze him. Note that Sofia, alive on Rakhat, is the author of the artificial intelligence programs that Emilio uses for training. The close bond that had existed between them is fully revealed only towards the end of the novel.

Chapter 10 finds Supaari, his daughter, whom he names Ha'anala after the fearless human Anne Edwards, and Paquarin as they flee, almost penniless, to his parents' home in Kirabai. Supaari finds his family and the villagers utterly benighted. Having over the years come to appreciate the Runa as caring individual, Supaari cannot stand watching them treated as slaves, serving up platters of meat carved from their slaughtered relatives. The locals, depicted as rednecks, feel oppressed and long for macho conflict. They complain about the government as the cause of their malaise and see no hope of improvement. Supaari is too disgusted to take part in the traditional evening songs, but later, after leaving Kirabai, sings to his daughter, which goes against tradition. He also breaks social norms on the barge by personally caring for his child.

Early in the chapter, which depicts the worst of the Jana'ata ways, Supaari recalls having been offended when Emilio had suggested resemblances between the Jana'ata and Runa and explained them by the former's "predator mimicry" (p. 95), allowing those that most resemble their prey to feast and thus to perpetuate their traits. He now admits that the Runa, by raising the Jana'ata young, have indeed tamed his species. This passage suggests that Supaari's relations with Emilio had not been entirely negative.

Chapter 11 displays the components of the pejorative adjective "Jesuitical": given to equivocation, intriguing, and sly. The Order ties up Emilio's resignation in red tape until he boycotts teaching. He remains a priest for life but cannot exercise priestly duties except in an emergency; a full canonical explanation of his situation is offered. The



chapter begins and ends with the Father General debating with the father superior of the upcoming mission to Rakhat. In between, Danny, in an incredible lapse, suggests to vulnerable Emilio that he might have brought back some debilitating disease.

Danny is so convincing that John is ready to write him up to the Father General, but it develops that the latter had set him up to test Emilio. Danny pleads that Emilio is too fragile to go on the mission. He is not needed and could be a liability. After a bit of argument, Vincenzo decrees "causa finita" (p. 111), a reference to St. Augustine's appeal to Roman authority in local conflicts. Danny grasps in this that Emilio is a pawn in the efforts of the Jesuits to come back into the Vatican's good graces. Vincenzo declares that he is depending on Danny being a son of a bitch to bring off the mission.

Chapter 12 finds the changed Supaari in Kashan Village, warned that he is not safe from bounty hunters, although Djalao has again appeared to kill one who has come from Kirabai. Another well-meaning Runa, Paquarin, loses her life, but is avenged. Supaari has heard of cases where Runa kill Jana'ata, but has never seen it in action. Djalao calls it balancing lives; it amounts to retribution, eye for an eye. Locals then suggest that Supaari become hasta'akala. This is the operation performed on Emilio and Marc Robichaux. In Marc's case it leads to rapid bleeding to death and in Emilio's to excruciating pain and the need to wear special braces in order to have any hand function. Clearly, for Jana'ata it is nearly painless but renders the victim harmless from the state's point of view. The Runa are willing to give their lives to feed Supaari, who would be unable to procure or eat food. As a city dweller, he has never known his meals as he would here. He worries about them that by feeding him they may fall short on their quotas to the government and endangering them if they are found harboring him. Finally, Supaari cannot be certain that the new ruler will not simply suspend what amounts to the biblical institution of sanctuary. The Runa consensus then is to send him to Trucha Sai, where the avidly anti-Jana'ata Sofia awaits.



Chapters 13-16

Chapters 13-16 Summary

For six months, Gina abides by Emilio's canceling the usual Friday visits with her and Celestina, who insists on knowing why. Emilio says only that he needs time. The family rallies to make Celestina's Christmas happy. Aunt Rosa, seventy-four years old, speaks her mind about Carlo's whoring, which Gina has always known about. He beats her only once before she files for divorce. Emilio cannot tell her that he fears having a deadly, communicable disease. He wonders why God has allowed his life to go as it has, abandoning and raping him? Emilio is ashamed to have failed the test, but Danny's words force him to face reality, to eat and exercise properly and deal with his headaches and nightmares. In April of 2061, Emilio comes to Gina to apologize and explain his self-quarantine. He stammers through an explanation of why celibacy is wrong for him but how the rapes have left his soul still bleeding. He is not ready for more than friendship. Gina falls in love; Emilio is released from pain. Life finds new balance, and by midsummer's eve Emilio is ready. They are comfortable undressing and making love. For discretion's sake, he leaves before dawn. Nightly, Gina's love makes Emilio whole.

Chapter 14 examines Sofia's life at Trucha Sai, 2042-6, participating in the Runa way of life in the deep, protective jungle. She records her observations and transmits them to the ship for eventual delivery to Earth. This keeps her sane. When Isaac is fifteen months old, contact ends, but Sofia does not know that another, UN-sponsored ship has arrived, found Emilio, and sent him back to Earth on automatic pilot. Sofia becomes a "connoisseur of loneliness" (p. 135). Isaac grows slowly and is remote from Sofia and lively Runa children. By age two he is as self-contained as a Zen master. Sofia hopes that the Runa do not realize how abnormal he is; like the Spartans they doubtless dispose of defective babies, offering them as veal to Jana'ata aristocrats. Given her own childhood, she is glad that Isaac is not too attached, should she die. When Isaac is four, Supaari and Ha'anala arrive and Sofia thanks God for sending a friend.

Supaari has thought her dead and had not searched for her. He feels terrible guilt, but she is glad to see him. Awkwardly using three languages, Supaari tries to make clear the impossibility of eating normally (Runa meat) among Runas. Sofia urges him to eat his provisions and they will work out a solution later. Although he goes aside to eat, all must know what he is doing. Sofia first sees Ha'anala and holds her, hearing about the aftermath of the riot at Kashan, how all but Meelo (Emilio) had been eaten. Marc has died during hasta'akala and other foreigners have sent Meelo to Earth. Telling the whole story is slow, including an admission of creating a market for celibates. Sofia gets caught up explaining inexplicable things like serving God through his people before asking what this means. Eventually the harm to Emilio (and perhaps others from the second crew) comes out, as Sofia reflects on the humans having meant no intentional harm. She looks back on her training with D.W. Yarbrough, which includes after-hours discussions about the nature of God and approves of D.W.'s policy of not proselytizing.



She wonders how he would deal with Supaari's questions. Should cultural sharing go both ways?

Next morning, Sofia finds Magellan still in orbit but silent, and reprograms its systems to locate any fellow humans on the planet. If she hears from none in six months, she will locate and steal their lander.

Chapter 15 shows Emilio and Gina agreeing to marry after her family vacation. Sorting his backlogged mail, she finds a note from Anne Edwards' lawyers in 2021, naming Emilio, the Quinns, and Sofia as beneficiaries of her real estate fortune. As the sole survivor, Emilio can pay off his debt to the Order and have enough to support a family. The powers, however, learn of the wedding and accelerate plans to put Emilio aboard the Giordano Bruno. Emilio accelerates language lessons to finish before the civil ceremony planned for 3 Sep. 2061.

Vincenzo arrives one night to make sure that none of the voyagers will shun Emilio for finding love. Danny is disgusted at the idea of abducting Emilio. It is arrogant and cruel. Vincenzo says that they must be pragmatic. He needs to believe that God has a higher purpose for Emilio and accepts that he plays the role of Judas if affecting a greater good: the restoration of peace between Papacy and Jesuits.

Danny visits Emilio to apologize for the sickness scare. Emilio accepts that he had needed to be pulled together, so the end justifies the means. Still, Emilio refuses to return to Rakhat; his divorce from God is not amicable. He tells Danny that the mission does not need him and changes the subject, asking for data dumps from the Stella Maris to find a final transmission that he suspects has not come through. He is amazed to hear a message recorded by Sofia, eighteen years ago. He is sure that she had perished.

In Chapter 16 Sofia argues against Supaari and Ha'anala accompanying her to Earth, but he insists that they have no future on Rakhat. He wants to apologize to Emilio, live among humans without shame, and learn their songs. Sofia notices that Isaac is parroting phrases and is surprised when he expresses an independent thought: "Supaari sings" (p. 165) and asks that Supaari sing for him. As Supaari offers the evening chant, Isaac harmonizes, his face alive for the first time. Sofia follows with the Hebrew Sh'ma, which Isaac also sings flawlessly.

Having located Magellan's lander near Kashan, Sofia broadcasts her intention to leave in fifteen days. The Runa understand her need to go home and provide trade goods and scientific specimens that will ensure that she and Supaari can live independently on Earth—provided they are not imprisoned. She thinks of seeing Emilio again and wonders why he has not come back for her quixotically. Could God be cruel enough to let them pass en route?



Chapters 13-16 Analysis

Chapter 13 examines an unintended outcome of Danny's shocking test of Emilio's stability. Fearful that he might carry a deadly pathogen, Emilio quarantines himself for six months, explaining the odd behavior to Gina only after he is sure he is well. During that time he takes care of himself physically, which, of course plays into Vincenzo's hands. Inner healing comes when he falls in love with Gina, telling her honestly about the obstacles he still faces. The beginning of their physical relationship is told tenderly and explicitly contrasted with the horrors he had endure—for which he blames God but also feels ashamed for failing his test. He counts himself with the suffering Hebrew prophet Jeremiah. Gina's painful and failed marriage to handsome, violent Carlo is filled in by Gina's recollections and the judgments of Carlo's sharp-tongued sassy aunt. Between her and the post-coital banter between Emilio and Gina, the chapter is rich in humor.

Chapter 14 swiftly chronicles the first four years of Isaac's life, with his mother considering him with awe but also consternation. She is sure that if the Runa knew he is abnormal they would sacrifice him, as do the Jana'ata their defective young and as did the ancient Spartans on Earth. The rationalization that meat is meat recurs several times as Supaari joins the camp and agonizes about what he will do, now that his meals are not "what" but "who."

Supaari's description of what befalls the other humans aboard the two ships allows Sofia an opportunity to reflect on her relationship with the Jesuit D.W. Yarbrough and how he had helped her appreciate her own Jewish heritage. He had forbidden proselytizing - trying to convert - the inhabitants of Rakhat, which had always been the Jesuits' forte; rather, they are to listen and learn from God's other children there. Sofia finds it odd that she - so unprepared to do so - is called on to explain God and various mysteries of Christianity which she ill understands herself. Note that several of the Jesuits had entertained thoughts that God could be simply a poetic form, but a poetic form they insist. This goes hand-in-hand with the rich theme of theodicy. If the God of the Torah is as he depicts himself, he is a tough character to confront as Abraham, Moses, and the prophets had. Catholics have learned to use intermediaries, as a common soldier does, going up the ranks, rather than confronting the general. It is more comfortable.

From Supaari's story of Emilio's survival and departure, Sofia gains hope that other humans have survived and that the vehicle by which they have reached the ground might carry her away. She resolves to signal a fair amount of time for survivors before seeking and stealing their lander. She begins growing proactive about survival.

Chapter 15 begins with Emilio and Gina planning to marry and finding that he is independently wealthy. Learning this, the joint powers of Vatican, Jesuits, and Camarro accelerate plans to put Emilio aboard the Giordano Bruno, owned by Gina's cruel ex-husband, Carlo, and being readied for flight. Danny objects to abducting Emilio, now that he has found love, but Vincenzo pleads pragmatism and talks again of God's higher



purpose. He admits that it will somehow restore peace between the Vatican and the Jesuits. He talks of Judas's role in salvation history and brings up Jesus's feeling abandoned by God on the cross. Danny says that by dying in just three hours, Jesus has it easy compared to all that Emilio has suffered for years. Vincenzo's faith has been greatly undermined and he needs to find meaning in Emilio's sufferings—which can come only on Rakhat. He refuses to believe that the once-ideal priest is truly an atheist.

When Danny visits Emilio to apologize for the sickness scare, Emilio nobly accepts the Jesuit premise that the end justifies the means, provided the end is sufficiently important. Still, Emilio refuses to return to Rakhat, strikingly describing his relationship to God as an unamicable divorce. He insists that the mission does not need him. Confused by Danny's warning not to trust any Giuliani, Emilio changes the subject. They examine data dumps from the Stella Maris and discover that Sofia has recorded an unheard message eighteen years earlier. Emilio is still not persuaded to return, but once he is forced to go, he looks forward to a reunion.

In Chapter 16, Sofia and Supaari argue about his and Ha'anala accompanying her to Earth, Sofia finally hearing in his points Ruth's pleas in the Bible. When Supaari mentions learning human songs, Isaac comes out of his shell and displays an ability to harmonize with the evening chants of both the Jana'ata and the Jews. There is a curious syncopation in the practices, which continues in later chapters, reinforcing the idea that God has children other than humans. The Runa understand Sofia's need to return home. She worries about xenophobic humans institutionalizing Isaac and the Jana'ata, but hopes a store of trade goods—the Runa being fine craftspeople—and scientific specimens will ensure their financial freedom. They also have a wealth of intellectual properties, provided copyright has survived. She wonders why Emilio has not sought her out, based on her transmissions, referencing Servantes' Don Quixote. Returning to the theme of theodicy, she hopes that God could not be cruel enough to let them pass one another in space.



Chapters 17-20

Chapters 17-20 Summary

Emilio wants to know how Gina has learned that Sofia is alive when Gina insists that he rescue her. Emilio argues that the chances of her being alive when the ship reaches Rakhat in seventeen years are slim, admits loving all of his colleagues, but insists on marrying Gina immediately. Cooling, they agree to stick to plans. Before going home, Emilio gives Gina access to his bank accounts. They stay in touch during the vacation, although Emilio is busy teaching K'San. When she returns, she finds Emilio gone and it is two years later before she learns why.

Chapter 18 opens four weeks into the Giordano Bruno's flight. Emilio has been drugged the whole time. Carlo advises him to stop sulking and accept that he is meant for greater things. Carlo had sent three men to capture Emilio, who had injured them before being beaten unconscious. He is beaten again when he tries to sabotage the navigation. Emilio is intent on dying rather than being used again, but Carlo uses John's life to gain his cooperation. John will otherwise die in ten minutes when the lander hanger is depressurized. If Emilio helps establish commerce, Carlo will also support a Runa rebellion already in progress against the Jana'ata.

Emilio enters the hanger to fetch a weeping John, who is so focused on the ghastly death he faces that he cannot pray. Emilio is then introduced to the ship's pilot, Franz Vanderhelst, and to Nico, who together had delivered his last beating. Emilio misses with a knife throw at Danny for having cost him Gina. Danny explains how Emilio's participation will benefit the Order, those needing birth control and social action programs, and help purge gangster priests. After refusing to absolve Danny, Emilio radios Gina.

In Chapter 19, Suukmel Chirot u Vaadai assures her husband Ambassador Ma Gurah Vaadai that Hlavin is interested in her, not their daughter, and argues that despite his morals he is breaking down stagnating social forms and bears study. He is engaged to Elli'nal VaPalkirn, an infant. This will ensure peace in the Triple Alliance until she comes of age. The ambassador insists that it is impossible for his wife to meet Hlavin but she, the key to his political success, insists that she will, nevertheless.

When the ambassador presents his credentials to Hlavin, they observe tedious ceremony before Hlavin invites him to his summer encampment, where has reestablished game hunting. The hunt, performed unclothed, is exhilarating and helps Ma understand Hlavin's ambition. He invites Hlavin to his embassy, indicating that his wife will be present. There Hlavin shuns protocol and talks about harmonics, disarming his enemies by attention. K'San has no word for the kind of cleansing revolution he intends, so he leans toward the poetic "sohraa," the stem for change, but charged with connotations of disaster and degeneration. Hlavin's poetry is destabilizing society and



the ruling castes resent change, but blaming foreigners and rooting out rebels is safe. Hlavin bides his time, singing of things innocuous.

Hlavin sends Suukmel many rich gifts, which she returns untouched, before sending Taksayu to deliver advice: accept wisdom and skill from those of lower station, revive the ancient custom of a third-born harem, and send to her the most musical child for fostering. Hlavin agrees to an alliance with this mind that equals his own, while desiring more than she will give.

Chapter 20 returns to Giordano Bruno in 2063, where Joseba eases Emilio's pain by using techniques learned as a youth on his one-handed terrorist uncle. They speak about his background and views on ecology. John, whom Vincenzo has sent because forgiveness is his forte, finds no one willing to talk about Danny's duplicity in kidnapping Emilio besides Frans, who considers the Catholic Church a fraud and has no firm thoughts on God. Frans talks about Abraham inventing God to impose meaning on chaos and later people finding comfort in this. The human condition is one of ignorance and anxiety, best cured by food and sex. Frans doubts that anyone will survive this mission but asks simple Nico to pray that if they do, someone will have discovered a cure for obesity.

Chapters 17-20 Analysis

Chapter 17 shows the end of Emilio and Gina's happiness. She has learned about Sofia and insists that he go on a rescue mission. He insists on marrying Gina immediately to prove that he loves her (and Celestina) only. Celestina is again the wise-cracking child who provides humor in a tense situation. Emilio and Gina are said to belong to races that look upon marital discord as sport. The three talk about how good family life will be, Emilio promising not to be like Carlo.

When Gina returns from vacation, however, Emilio has mysteriously disappeared and the Jesuit retreat house stands empty. Danny's mysterious warning against trusting Giulianis has proven accurate, although Emilio suspects him equally with Vincenzo of leaking word about Sofia. He wants to kill them both. The chapter ends with great pathos, saying that Gina and Emilio's unborn child will be two years old before Gina learns what has happened.

Chapter 18 shifts the focus from Naples to the Giordano Bruno. It introduces the crew members working under Carlo, who boasts of his grand plans to outdo his father in commerce. Carlo's abusive father nicknames him Cio-Cio-San from the opera *Madame Butterfly*, a detail that helps establish Carlo's inability ever to follow through on plans but also ties in the unintelligent thug Nico d'Angeli, who regularly breaks into arias. He has served as Emilio's nurse since helping to kidnap him along with the ship's captain. Emilio is being kept on a pleasant emotion-flattening drug. The ship is briefly described: a cored out asteroid well appointed and equipped, having learned from the problems that doomed its predecessor. The quality of food and drink aboard is heavily emphasized here and going forward.



To end Emilio's hostility, Carlo offers a classic carrot-and-stick. He will allow Emilio to radio Gina and will depressurize the hanger where Emilio's best friend, John, is imprisoned. Emilio has ten minutes to decide. Carlo also holds out the prospect of revenge against the Jana'ata in return for more proactive help. Emilio of course gives in and finds John weeping about the bloody death he faces. Unable to pray, he nevertheless sits away from sensitive equipment in order not to jeopardize others. Emilio most blames Danny and refuses his apology and explanation of the benefits that this treachery will bring to the church and society. In a post-Christian era, they ring rather hollow and even artificial. At any rate, Emilio has earned the right to send a short message to Gina and Celestina: "Taken by force. I think of you. Listen with your hearts" (p. 192). Carlo has assured him that she will find someone else. He had considered murdering them both to get Emilio's mind off them but decided that that would make him suicidal. A battle of wills lies ahead.

Chapter 19 introduces Suukmel Chirot u Vaadai and her husband, Ambassador Ma Gurah Vaadai, in Inbrokar to present his credentials to Hlavin. Ma is a stiff-necked moralist, condemning everything Hlavin is and has done. Suukmel, the behind-the-scenes key to Ma's political success, looks past all of this to the difficult social changes that he is affecting. Hlavin wants to see her and she wants to see him, despite her husband's objections. Ma is won over during an atavistic hunting trip. The meeting is not shown, but presumably occurs, and Hlavin begins showering Suukmel with lavish presents, which she rejects. She sends her maid to tell him what she is willing to do for him: raise a musically-inclined non-inheriting son. Hlavin accepts. Neither's motivation is particularly clear.

The chapter describes stifling court etiquette that Hlavin wants to sweep away and suggests that he intends a total, cleansing revolution but cannot risk moving too quickly. There is a long philological description about how to speak of something for which the language lacks words. Being a poet, Hlavin leans towards a poetic term designating change, but having unfortunate negative connotations. Hlavin's poetry is said to be destabilizing society and he moves to safer subjects. Shrewd Suukmel recognizes that he is still lauding change.

Chapter 20 is philosophical. It fills in Joseba's background and reveals simmering tensions in the crew. John needs to talk out his anger over Danny's duplicity in kidnapping Emilio. He is not satisfied by references to how St. Xavier is kidnapped to Japan by a pirate, adding a facet to the theodicy theme: can God validly use people simply as tools? Frans' background is also sketched. The Afrikaner has studied philosophy, considers the Catholic Church a fraud and postulates that Abraham simply invented God as a means of imposing meaning on chaos. Later believers accept this for the comfort factor. A gourmand, Frans takes comfort in food (sex being unavailable), but worries that his obesity will kill him unless a cure is found while he is away from Earth. Simple Nico emerges as pious and thoughtful, which will be developed going forward. Frans finds it odd playing "devil's advocate" to a Jesuit during John's deepening crisis of faith.



Chapters 21-24

Chapters 21-24 Summary

Chapter 21 jumps forward in time to 2078-85 to see what Danny learns at the end of his life, in the N'Jarr Valley. He accepts that crew members had been right to hate him for his role in kidnapping Emilio and recalls how, from his first reading of the Stella Maris logs, he had felt destined to go to Rakhat, somehow to redeem the Lakotas' tragic fate through saving the Jana'ata. His ally is the middle-aged widow Suukmel, who details Hlavin's consolidation of power through a web of Runa informants whose descendants fare better in return; by doing away with views on legacy that had held back commerce and the arts; and by ending the educational segregation of his young consorts, who bear him many children, both sexes of whom are allowed to sing. Hlavin returns to music and poetry and these flourish. By his twelfth year of ruling, Inbrokar is the most powerful political entity in Rakhat history and he is the undisputed regional ruler. From the start, however, refugees from the south flood in, fleeing the violent Runa revolution. Supaari might have been an asset to Hlavin's government, but such is not their joint fate.

Chapter 22 takes place on Rakhat in 2047. Patrols are near the lander site and cached trade goods, asking about Supaari and foreigners. Djalao serves as guide. Isaac sometimes uses real speech, but this opens him to outside menaces, particularly red light and the noise of Runa children playing. Sofia thinks he will be better off on the ship, free of surprises and surrounded by music. The journey begins like any foraging expedition, concealed in the trees, but as they enter the flat lands, the red light of the smallest sun wreaks havoc on Isaac's senses. Supaari rejects Sofia's idea of remaining with the children while she fetches the lander. As they advance, the sky looks somehow wrong. They discover that the lander has been vandalized and burned, along with every village that they have visited, as Hlavin proves his power to the nobles. Kanchay nearly kills Supaari for the brutality of his fellow Jana'ata, and Supaari wanders off, hoping to starve himself to death. Instead, he learns from watching parasites swarm over him that he is one with creation and he knows what he must do. Scavenging a meal and vowing never to eat Runa again, he returns to camp, determined to kill all parasites.

In Chapter 23 John proposes mutiny still Rakhat-bound in 2047, but Emilio assures him that no one will cooperate. Carlo overhears and agrees. Suddenly, the ship is thrown into chaos as it is hit by something. Everything is thrown to the outer walls by the G-forces of spin. Debris from the organic garden plugs the holes fore and aft that are drilled by a micrometeorite. Anything larger or off-center would have destroyed Giordano Bruno. Carlos orders everyone into pressure suits to do inspections, repairs, and clean-ups.

Chapter 24 examines Sofia's life at Trucha Sai in the period of 2047-2061, as she accomplishes her life's purpose, teaching the Runa about justice and providing power through access to abandoned human communications and data processing equipment.



These enable the Jana'ata to be tracked and cut off from food supplies. They retreat northward. Sofia does not look beyond what she is able to accomplish. She realizes that the traits that make her an excellent AI specialist also equip her as a teacher and, now that they are well-fed, the Runa make excellent pupils. She reminds herself that Isaac is better off here, where imperfections are tolerated. She learns to use the computer tablet as a non-threatening way of teaching Isaac to read and identify plants. He calls up files from Magellan's library. Sofia realizes that he is bright, but in a unique way, angelic but unable to deliver his message.

Sofia accepts it when Runa females get old enough to go off to fight the revolution—until Ha'anala's turn arrives. Sofia realizes that she is turning Ha'anala into a Jew, offering sacred stories alongside science lessons. Ha'anala surprises her by declaring that God lies: Adam and Eve do not die "on the day" that they taste knowledge of good and evil. This leads to fruitful discussions about degrees of honesty. Sofia radios reports to Supaari at the front. He rarely visits, lest his ferocity weaken. Sofia accepts that Supaari and Djalao are probably lovers.

The story jumps to Gayjur in 2082, as aged, nearly-blind Sofia talks with Danny, Sean, and John. She recalls Isaac at twenty to twenty-five, unable to bear the noise at Trucha Sai and overhearing Sofia's lessons to Ha'anala about DNA. These must have satisfied Isaac's need for order. Recalling Ha'anala's thoughts about the Hebrew God from whom nothing is hidden, Sofia wonders if all Runa children are that intuitive but repressed. She recalls discussions with Yarbrough, fifty to sixty years earlier about God being just poetry to live by and is sure that she has done right telling about Sodom and Gomorrah. Ha'anala had said that Abraham should have adopted the innocent babies.

Chapters 21-24 Analysis

Chapter 21 offers the first of many jumps forward in time to the end of Danny's life on Rakhat, covering event in the time period 2078-85. The shift is a bit jarring, but provides a convenient means of preparing the reader for what the crew of the ship face when they land in 2047. The cunning Lady Suukmel, heretofore a minor if colorful character, is in this later period a middle-aged widow. She is at first wary of this human who, apparently, remains behind when the others depart, but eventually finds common ground with him on the vital importance of the past for forming a positive future. She tells the inside story of Hlavin's revolutionary remaking of society, which begins liberating both Jana'ata and Runa from senseless regulations and a predator/prey relationship. Education is desegregated within Hlavin's own harem, commerce and the arts flourish and everything looks good for the future. The first installment ends, however, with ominous suggestions of rebellion in the south, led by Supaari. Suukmel laments that he could have done much for the Runa by serving within Hlavin's government. The things that had held him back under the old regime would now be to his advantage. Hlavin and Supaari's fates are intertwined, as will be seen in coming chapters.



The chapter also gives insights into why Danny is part of the mission and why he appears to remain on Rakhat to grow old and die. Danny reminisces about his ancestry, taking pride in the Lakotas' ability for a while to hold off the white soldiers sent to conquer the American West. He is also proud of being descended from the Jesuits' first convert among the Lakota. He is able to appreciate how the two spiritual traditions seek the same goal, each requiring sacrifice. Danny says that from his first reading of the Stella Maris logs, he had felt destined to go to Rakhat, somehow to redeem the Lakotas' tragic fate through saving the Jana'ata. Danny never understands the political, diplomatic, and other reasons for forcing Emilio to go along, but accepts the Pope's view that it is necessary simply because it is the Pope. He and Suukmel discuss such absolutes in both cultures. The Pope, an African, feels a special affinity with this Lakota priest. He tells Danny to think of sacrificing Emilio in terms of Abraham's dread offering of Isaac—and God's own in sacrificing Jesus. Danny finds this abhorrent but obeys and spends his last years repenting in the N'Jarr Valley. Note that during their conversation, Suukmel changes Danny's views on whether multiple reasons behind a given action make it suspect, but he maintains that he cannot be certain until God judges him.

Chapter 22 remains on Rakhat, but back in the familiar 2047 time frame. It abruptly ends Sofia's hopes of returning to Earth, for Hlavin is demonstrating his power to skeptics by destroying every place that Supaari and the foreigners have touched. Overcome by grief for his race, Kanchay attacks and nearly kills Supaari, blaming him for the brutality of his fellow Jana'ata. Far from denying collective guilt, Supaari wanders off to die. Instead, he understands that the Jana'ata are parasites who must be killed. The rebellion seems about to move into a new, more violent phase.

Russell also prepares for Isaac's leaving his mother and the refugee party. He is shown opening to outside menaces by beginning to use purposeful talk. He is also driven to distraction by red light and the noise of Runa children playing. Sofia hopes that he will be better off on the voyage home to Earth, free of surprises and surrounded by music, but this becomes impossible. Something will have to give.

Chapter 23 provides a change of pace. Giordano Bruno is struck by a micrometeorite and narrowly escapes the fate of many lost missions to Rakhat. The event is instantaneous and the physical effects of sudden loss of artificial gravity and the imparting of a spin to the modified meteor are described in bilious detail. Carlo gives crisp commands to get the situation under control and begin clean-up and repairs. At one point he invokes the name of James Lovell, commander of the ill-fated Apollo 13 flight to the moon. Carlo keeps up his macho role, but is clearly shaken. It further convinces him that God wants Emilio on Rakhat. He vows to endow a church if he returns safely. The full extent of the danger is discovered slowly, in the course of an inspection.

The chapter further describes Carlo's youth inside a mob family and his preference for Stoicism over compromised Christianity. Carlo quotes Epictetus and Seneca and models himself on Marcus Aurelius. He rejoices that his cruel father Domenico will be dead when he returns, but he will then have to deal financially with his sister Carmella. It is in the context of Carlo's struggle with his relatives that the Bruno's high quality



construction comes out, which partially explains its survival. The rest is pure fortune, which ought rarely to be tempted. Lost in the drama is the mutiny that John wants to foment. Carlo mocks him with references to the movie *Mutiny on the Bounty*. This is broadly but entertainingly handled.

Chapter 24 examines Sofia's life at Trucha Sai in the period 2047-2061 before jumping again to 2082. It shows her discovering her talent for teaching and how she organizes the Runa armies planet wide in their war of revolution against the Jana'ata. Note that the females do the fighting. In an opening dream sequence, she admits to Emilio that she loves him. This has not before been intimated, although Gina had intuited that he loves Sofia. Being a second time marooned, Sofia dedicates herself to teaching the Runa about justice and gives them the means of forming a coordinated army. Officers learn English as an unbreakable code, like Navaho during World War II. In a second reference to that conflict, she compares the Runa to the Jews surrounded in the Warsaw ghetto. She quotes a poem that talks of the Jews as "meat", which is defiant, insurgent, fighting, and in full cry. There is no copyright notice to suggest this is not Russell's invention, but it rings true to the situation. Sofia believes that this time it will not fail; the Runa will be triumphant.

The chapter shows the beginning of Isaac's withdrawal from his mother and society at Trucha Sai and his growing interest in music and DNA sequences. Her computer tablet becomes the center of his life and Ha'anala his only friend. Sofia has several conversations with her about biblical stories in which Ha'anala sees unorthodox but insightful twists. This carries forward into the closing scene in 2082, where Sofia is shown bent with age, nearly blind, with her mind often wandering away from topics at hand. Sean and John (at least) have not yet left for Earth. Sofia recalls discussions with Yarbrough, fifty to sixty years earlier, in which he wonders if God is no more than poetry to live by.



Chapters 25-28

Chapters 25-28 Summary

In 2065 aboard Bruno Emilio is withdrawn from Quell lest he grow psychotic. Sean, who sees the Divine Intelligence in chemistry, agrees to talk to him. They talk of Rakhat's deities and Orthodox Judaism counting lineage through the mother's ancestry before Sean insists on knowing why Emilio blames God rather than Satan for his misfortunes and demands that he, like Jesus, embrace suffering to find meaning. The deaths and rapes cannot be undone and Emilio will not live with Gina and her daughter. He must show God what he is made of. Danny keeps vigil during the forty-eight-hour withdrawal, during which Emilio engages in brutal mockery and moral rage. In the end, Emilio quotes Nietzsche and accepts that God uses everyone. John, who watches silently, comforts Danny that Emilio has accepted Danny's role and they make peace.

Chapter 26 returns to Rakhat in 2061, where the noise of camp is driving Isaac crazy. The constant change of nature also disorients him. Only his computer brings stability. Isaac is meticulous about examining his computer and centering it in his shelter precisely before donning his ragged prayer shawl for the evening chant and Sh'ma. Afterwards, Isaac plays selections from the Magellan's varied collection and is then able to study material in the on-line library. The village is happy whenever Ha'anala leads disruptive Isaac away. In her presence, Isaac speaks his first independent thought, a protest against constant talking. Isaac memorizes the base pairs in human DNA and sets them to music. One day Isaac announces that he is leaving. Puska, a hardened soldier, is sent to find him. She meets Ha'anala, already searching frantically. Ha'anala picks up Isaac's scent and signs of his foraging. When a storm wipes out all traces, they give up.

In Chapter 27, to forestall being marooned again on Rakhat, Emilio is training, unsuccessfully, to fly the lander, and is forcing everyone to study everything conceivably useful, warning that the first mission had misunderstood virtually everything. Emilio exercises strenuously to avoid dreams of a necropolis filled with those he loves and hates. On nights when he sees himself dead he does not scream, because then it is over. Carlo puts him under his and Nico's protection. Emilio tells John about his brutal childhood and how learning that he is a bastard is a relief. It makes pain endurable. Emilio feels responsible for the crew's survival on Rakhat; only his training will help. Parish experience has shown John that atheists are better able than believers in a loving God to accept tragedies. He prays that God will not show that Emilio is responsible for all the pain on Rakhat and that he will help them both.

In Chapter 28, Ha'anala again smells Isaac and continues tracking him alone, catching up the next day. He has found clarity and will not go back. Ha'anala understands. He is blistered from the suns and oozing, but enthralled by the singing of a mixed Jana'ata/Runa multitude nearby. Ha'anala is not ready for company, a view shared by Shetri Laaks, a Sti adept forced by his newly-widowed sister to serve as her guardian



and her nasty son Athaansi's regent. Other refugees have swollen their numbers. Laaks is ready to euthanize Isaac but agrees to treat his burns as his "sister" demands. Ta'ana realizes from the color of Ha'anala's eyes that she is a Kitheri and Athaansi wants to collect the bounty on her and the tailless monster. Instead, Ta'ana wants Athaansi to marry her; in such unsettled times, this could put him in contention for the throne. Isaac may be a useful hostage. Laaks remarks on Isaac's chanting and asks about the Sh'ma. He wonders how Isaac can master the Sti epic in one hearing. They lack common language to discuss genetic freaks. As a third, Laaks had never considered mating but finds Ha'anala attractive, although he misses much of her subtlety. Isaac wants to stay with people who sing and Ha'anala desires Laaks—if he will promise never to eat Runa. They mate and go to safety in the far north. Ha'anala leaves a secure message for Sofia on Magellan's systems: they have left the garden.

Chapters 25-28 Analysis

The action jumps abruptly forward to 2065 as the time comes for Emilio to withdraw from Quell. Emilio has always analyzed his own dreams, but never vomited or screamed during them. Sean's background is filled in. He bears the emotional scars of being half-orphaned when Irish Christians kill his Jewish father when the Second Coming fails to materialize in 2036, the second millennium of the Crucifixion. Sean comes to see the Divine Intelligence in chemistry, following the great Jesuit teacher Teilard de Chardin, whose attempts to reconcile science and religion towards the mid-twentieth century cause conflicts that are evidently healed by 2065. He volunteers to talk to Emilio.

Sean opens with a question about Ingwy, whom Emilio declares to be a personification of foresight or prophecy rather than a true goddess. Discussion of other deities leads to why Orthodox Judaism counts lineage through the mother's ancestry but the religion is controlled by men. It is not an idle change in subject: Emilio says that since the time of the Russian pogroms it has always served to legitimize children born of rape, like himself. Sean then steers the discussion to Emilio's blaming God rather than Satan for what happens to him on Rakhat. Emilio brushes it off with a facile quote from scripture: all is vanity. Sean challenges Emilio to think like the good priest and Jesuit he had been and, like Jesus, embrace suffering to find meaning. He claims that Job's passive solution does not suffice. Revealing that Quell has been cut off, Sean tells him that the deaths and rapes cannot be undone and Emilio will not live with Gina and her daughter. He must show God what he is made of.

Sean suggests that Danny, Emilio's betrayer, witness the withdrawal. Together they walk out the pain in the lander bay, first in silence and then accompanied by Emilio's brutal mockery and moral rage, honed by Jesuit training. Danny eventually falls asleep and hears Emilio speak enigmatically in Spanish Abraham and Job's words to God: "Here I am." The second day crawls in what seems a silent Vision Quest, part of the Indian tradition. Danny awakens the third morning to hear Emilio quote Nietzsche and accepting that God uses everyone. This concludes the discussion of theodicy. Leaving, Emilio



acknowledges to John that Danny has done what he must. John comforts Danny and they make peace. Danny doubts that Emilio has also made peace with him.

Chapter 26 returns to Rakhat in 2061 to show Isaac growing increasingly unable to endure Runa company, since they insist on discussing everything at length. He finds the impasto of sounds even worse than the color. Music alone slips effortlessly into his soul and comforts him, allowing him to study material in Magellan's on-line library. In Ha'anala's, presence Isaac speaks his first independent thought, a protest against constant talking. She keeps this, guiltily, from Sofia, who longs for Isaac to speak to her. Meanwhile, Sofia withdraws into work and talking about justice. Isaac sets about memorizing the base pairs in human DNA and sets them to music. One day Isaac announces to a drowsy Ha'anala that he is leaving. Puska, a hardened soldier, is sent to find him. Ha'anala, feeling guilty about letting him slip away, is already searching but suffers Jana'ata night-blindness. She is able, however, to pick up Isaac's scent. They are surprised that he has learned how to forage. When a storm wipes out all traces, they give up, dreading having to tell Sofia. Without introducing an Esau character and any element of trickery in Isaac, this suggests the situation in Gen. 25, when Abraham's beloved son runs away from his family.

Chapter 27 describes events aboard the Bruno in 2066-69, as the time for landing approaches. Emilio grows manic. Understandably, he does not want his safety to be in anyone else's control. Therefore, he virtually takes control of Bruno's routine, mercilessly drilling the non-Jesuits in Rakhat languages (heretofore a closely-guarded Jesuit monopoly) and everyone in every detail that he has gleaned about the planet to forestall making fatal mistakes as on the first mission. Although he has proven a hopeless pilot on that mission, he wears himself out flying simulated missions.

Carlo claims that Emilio operates out of understandable fear, but Emilio claims that it is because Carlo is a notorious quitter. Carlo's relationship with his father is again reviewed. Emilio finally reveals the content of his nightmares: a great city of the rotting dead. Gina is among them but not Celestina or his crew mates. Emilio is comforted when he sees himself among the dead. Vast numbers of Jana'ata and Runa are included, in changed bodies. Note that Hlavin and Supaari, his tormentors, and Sofia are not mentioned. Carlo puts Emilio under his and—more importantly—Nico's protection.

Emilio tells John about his drunken father beating him and his mother and his slow realization that he is a bastard. Learning the truth somehow makes the pain more bearable. He hopes that whatever Rakhat hold will do the same. John, the superlative pastor, reflects on his early parish experience, when a woman who has lost a child angrily rejects his pious sentiments. She insists that God has a lot to answer for. John reflects on how atheists are better able than believers in a loving God to accept that "shit happens" (p. 290). He hopes that God's answer is not that that Emilio's mistakes cause all the pain on Rakhat. John is still able to pray the rosary, while Emilio toughens up on his treadmill. He feels as though he may be going the extra mile mandated for Christians in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5.41). He reflects on this going forward.



In Chapter 28, Ha'anala finds Isaac, who is badly sunburned. They are taken in by a group of northern-bound refugees led by Shetri Laaks and his dominant sister Ta'ana.

The color of Ha'anala's eyes gives away her Kitheri ancestry, suggesting either she be turned in for bounty money or married for dynastic positioning. Laaks quickly falls for Ha'anala, who refuses to wear clothing and gives off strong pheromones. Her only condition is that he stop eating Runa. Isaac's amazing musical memory is also discussed. While delirious under treatment, Isaac declares that everyone must eat, implying no objection to slaughtering Runa. He also advises the newlyweds to walk away and live. Ha'anala defines herself as teacher and Isaac as messenger. The language gap among them is wide.



Chapters 29-32

Chapters 29-32 Summary

Bruno in 2070-73 picks up new songs in the Kitheri style, whose words the crew cannot understand. Elated at completing a simulated landing and return, Emilio listens to the sumptuously chanted Mozart and isolates a key word, "sohrra." The song may express joy at breaking free. Emilio gives linguistic reasons for supposing that the singers are Jana'ata children rather than Runa, refuses to credit Hlavin with liberating the Runa or to forgive him anything. When colleagues suggest that this would redeem his sufferings, Emilio replies that he had been only able to scream while being raped, not to preach about rights. Nico brings Emilio a prized Genoa salami and asks forgiveness for the beatings. They speculate about what they face on the ground. Nico cannot see how someone who makes such beautiful music can be bad. He kisses Emilio's hand, pledging to die for him. Emilio knows that this means love and declares that he loves Nico in turn.

The story jumps to 2080 in the Gayjur, as Joseba talks about the children's emancipation chorale with Puska, by then a parliamentary elder. She recalls how Sofia's passive resistance turns to rebellion, as the government wipes out villages that shelter urban runaways and uses biological weapons. There are Runa traitors who continue serving Jana'ata until they are slain and eaten. In the end, Jana'ata cannot help being what they are genetically. Puska grows angry, recalling how Hlavin marches out with 200,000 troops, refusing terms, and forcing the Runa to fight. She does not know Ha'anala's fate when she reportedly goes to Inbrokar at the time of the deadly siege.

Chapter 30 is set in Inbrokar in 2072, as Hlavin in armor and a war party go out to meet an enormous rebel army. Suukmel looks forward to the death of Supaari and Sofia so that the rebels can retreat and the North be rebuilt. Supaari steps forward, unarmored—an insult to Hlavin. Puska wishes that the Jana'ata would free the Runa and avoid slaughter. Such state-level combat has not been practiced in generations. Hlavin is in better shape but smaller than Supaari. He is sad to kill someone who has also worked to change the world, even if only to avenge the past. He wonders who will sing of this battle. Supaari makes the first move but also takes the first staggering hit. They circle, attacking and growing weaker until Supaari makes a fatal mistake. As Supaari sinks to the ground, Sofia recalls his prophecy that he will die, having fought for the Runas' honor. As rain falls, armored Runa infantry massacre the Jana'ata, beginning with Hlavin. The two enemies are trampled, side-by-side. Suukmel wants to die, but the Runa drag her and Jana'ata infants to safety. Her twelve-year-old foster son Rukuei demands that she live for Hlavin's sake. Days later, Isaac approaches the refugees and Laaks acknowledges him as his brother-in-law. Rukuei tries to call Laaks out to fight, but he refuses. Suukmel steps in to proclaim them kin to accept hospitality. Isaac is pleased to learn that Rukuei is a singer and poet.



Chapter 31 continues with Rukuei longing to fight on but is blocked from becoming the Paramount Presumptive. Suukmel, pregnant and tired, tells him that he must make decisions and accept consequences, the first being to eat terrible food, kha'ani embryos, as a substitute for forbidden Runa flesh. Suukmel and Rukuei retreat to the mountains, where she tells him in private about the hidden family scandals. Ashamed and angry, he assaults Ha'anala and shares the suppressed truth. Ha'anala says that all must choose survival or revenge, and she chooses life. If Rukuei wants to fight, he should join Athnaasi's camp. Isaac declares that Rukuei's must learn and teach songs and promises to teach him one when he is ready. Years later, in 2084 aboard Bruno, Rukuei tells Emilio about learning Isaac's song and to trust his judgment about preserving what he can of his species' arts. Isaac has words for the music he has found. Rukuei vows to find the words.

In Chapter 32 Bruno enters orbit around Rakhat in 2078 and the crew sees a land covered by cities and plantations. Joseba declares it a catastrophe of population and industrial growth. All radio is in Ruanja and deals with commerce. There is no music. New vocabulary baffles Emilio. Sofia does not immediately answer hails and Emilio worries that she could be dead. He drives himself to work, fearing dreams of the necropolis, where the beloved dead are with a God who cannot be trusted. John awakens Emilio to say that Sofia has radioed. They weep, laugh, and joke together, but leave catching up to when the crew lands at Galatna, now Sofia's home.

Chapters 29-32 Analysis

Chapter 29 shows Bruno drawing closer to Rakhat and picking up songs that have taken the roundabout way through interstellar space. Broadcast on the surface of Rakhat, the songs are recorded on Magellan, encoded for transmission to Earth, where they are bargained over by Company and Order and eventually broadcast back to Bruno. Emilio notes dryly that had it been God's purpose for him to hear the songs, he would have heard them earlier on Earth and not had to be parted from Gina. He has been resisting listening to transmissions, as Hlavin's voice still upsets him. While still in the Kitheri style, these songs are different and the crew, despite its training, cannot understand them. Fortunately, Emilio completes a simulated landing and return and is willing to listen.

The crew debates the significance of the key word, "sohrra," and wonder if the Runa have been liberated. The high-pitched voices could be Runa, which itself would be revolutionary; recall that they are adverse to singing. Emilio believes that they are Jana'ata children. As he has several times when presented with reasons for considering himself somehow heroic on the first mission, Emilio talks darkly about trying only not to be raped rather than preaching to his captors. He shows little courage and no ministry.

The mystery of the music is settled when the story jumps to 2080 and Puska, now an elderly politician, tells Joseba about the children's emancipation chorale. She fills them in on how Sofia's passive resistance movement among the Runa turns violent when the government leaves them no alternative. Saddam Hussein's use of poison gas against



the Kurds is mentioned specifically to show how low Hlavin will sink. The epic battle when Hlavin leads 200,000 troops into battle is set up, and it is falsely intimated that Ha'anala may have perished in the siege of Inbrokar. Clearly the Jesuits are interviewing the surviving principals of the revolution before heading home.

Earlier, Nico repledges himself to Emilio's well-being and appears increasingly a likeable character not nearly as stupid as earlier suggested. Still, he is an innocent, assuring Emilio that his Genoa salami is made of pig, not Runa. Nico cannot see how someone who makes such beautiful music can be bad. Emilio recalls that the first mission had misconstrued everything. They have only bits and pieces of information that suggest something has changed on Rakhat.

Chapter 30 is set in Inbrokar in 2072, as Hlavin and Supaari meet in hand-to-hand combat in the ancient chivalric style. The forgotten art of staging such protocol is described at length. Suukmel and Taksayu observe from a wind tower in the Embassy, which is crowded with disgruntled refugees. Supaari steps forward without armor in a calculated insult to Hlavin. Hlavin kills Supaari as Supaari had known he would. He is in better shape. The combat, closely described, is more equal than Hlavin expects, and he salutes his foe who should have been his ally in transforming Rakhat. Rampaging troops kill Hlavin and any Jana'ata that cannot escape, leaving the two corpses trampled, side-by-side. Hlavin's twelve-year-old foster son Rukuei, brought up by Suukmel, returns to the story, itching to fight, but Suukmel demands that he behave. They join Laaks' refugees. Isaac also returns, bearded and maimed but otherwise naked and carrying a blue parasol, his old prayer shawl. He is pleased to learn that Rukuei is a singer and poet and insists that he join them, perhaps signaling peace. The Jana'ata are now entirely at the Runa's mercy.

Chapter 31 continues the action in the N'Jarr Valley as Rukuei rankles at being unable to continue the fight. As a concubine's child and a third, he cannot become the Paramount Presumptive, but there are also no challengers. The party rests, exhausted. Rukuei awakens, revolted by the mixture of races and tongues and the food that is thrust on him by a pregnant, naked female who proclaims that he looks like her daughter. She tells him that the world has changed and he must make decisions and accept consequences. Starving, he makes his first: to eat the terrible food, kha'ani embryos, which becomes the key to peace between the sentient species of Rakhat. Much more will be made of this switchover in chapters to come. Note the frequent references to Ha'anala's physical condition: undernourished while pregnant. This is building up to tragedy. She is restraining militant Rukuei. Cousin Athnaasi and his guerrilla band is camped three days away, feeding well on Runa, but destined to be wiped out. It looks as though Athnaasi's fate is to join them rather than accepting Isaac's prophecy that Rukuei's role is to learn and teach songs. A jump to the year 2084, however, shows Rukuei talking to Emilio en route home to Earth about learning Isaac's song. When they meet, Isaac has words for the music that he has "found," and Rukuei vows to find the words—and never regrets the effort.

In Chapter 32 Bruno reaches Rakhat in 2078 and ecologist Joseba sees catastrophe. All signs point to a liberation of the Runa. Failure to reach Sofia by radio puts Emilio in a



foul mood and he lashes out at religion being an invention. He then apologizes to John, whose faith he knows cannot be swayed but who should not have to endure such tirades. Emilio again dreams about the necropolis, where the beloved dead are with God—who is not to be trusted. Emilio decides that perhaps Supaari is right: it is a shame to waste good meat. When Sofia radios, they have a joyful reunion, joking charmingly about his wasting Kaddish (Jewish prayer for the dead) for her and his continued language acquisition; about his totally unnecessary, Quixotic mission to rescue her; about decaffeinated coffee; and about age. He sloughs off her remark that she has always loved him. That seems likely to have to be resolved. She summarizes events on Rakhat and lets slip that there has been a war and promises to give details when they land at Galatna, the place of his torture. She reassures him that Hlavin is long dead and Galatna, a museum, is her home. She tells him where to land and promises an escort. These arrangements over an open channel lead, of course, to complications.



Chapters 33-36

Chapters 33-36 Summary

Sofia thinks about lost youth, worthwhile wars, redeemed deaths, and Emilio returning. She wishes that Isaac and Ha'anala would. Isaac reads her daily messages on his tablet but never replies. This angers Ha'anala, who wants to see Sofia before she dies or returns to Earth with the newcomers. Meanwhile, the widow Suukmel no longer knows what deity rules her life. Together, they gather ka'ani eggsacks, while Ha'anala complains about losing three emissaries sent to her mother in Gayjur, who claims to forgive. Athnaasi's raids sow fear and extend the war. The well-fed Jana'ata females in his camp bear many babies, but in N'Jarr there are few. Ha'anala's daughter Sofi'ala is likely to survive childhood, but Ha'anala has lost two other babies. Suukmel recalls Ha'anala once talking about Jana'ata, Runa, and Humans being children of one God who sees no differences. The three must live together, whether God is just a song or real. Tiyat Va'agardi and Kajpin VaMasna plan to head south to capture a human. As Ha'anala goes into labor, she and Suukmel discuss using the humans as brokers between societies. Isaac tells them to bring back someone who sings. In 2085, Suukmel tells Sean that a prisoner ruse proves necessary. Talking about the situation, Sean sees an analogy to Jewish and Irish ancestors who nearly kill themselves off by bickering. There is no telling to whom God takes a liking.

Chapter 34 sees the humans land in October 2078. Sean drinks heavily before setting out and cuts ahead to be first out—to throw up heartily. They arrive at the most beautiful time of day and all are entranced. Emilio explains that the fragrant yasapa is brewed for tea and fermented for brandy. Carlo considers the marketing possibilities as he suffers an allergic reaction requiring CPR and epinephrine. They send him back to the Bruno, whose take-off Laaks' party witnesses. Four humans remain behind. They discuss how to get at least Nico, who is singing, to return with them. Three days later, when storms lift and Sofia's guides reach the landing site, it is empty and smells of blood. Only Emilio's GPS implant is functioning and shows him 240 km. away. Sofia is livid and, believing that renegades have taken them hostage, swears to recapture them and end the lawlessness.

Chapter 35 describes the meeting of crew members and four urban traders. Emilio freezes seeing Rukuei, not only a Jana'ata but also clearly a Kitheri. Emilio declares that they had come the first time to learn Rakhat's songs, but these had dealt only with enjoying irresistible force. Kajpin replies that the Runa now hold power and all is changed. Thrown to the ground and threatened, Rukuei swears that Isaac is not a hostage but an honored member of society. Kajpin talks about Gayjur's refusals to make peace. After interrogating their prisoners, Nico urges Emilio to go to Isaac, but he insists on awaiting Sofia's escort. Joseba assures Emilio that the Jana'ata have declined in numbers to the brink of extinction and in N'Jarr are starving because Runa meat is non-kosher. Joseba and Sean intend to go north. Nico reports that one Jana'ata has nightmares about a burning city, like Emilio, whom he sees in the dream. The humans



remove their GPS units to prevent being tracked by the Gayjur government, but to fulfill his promise to Carlo about protecting Emilio, Nico innocently pockets his unit.

Chapter 36 follows the travelers, wary of followers, to Inbrokar City. When Frans radios to demand what has happened to their GPS units and reveals that Sofia has sent out the army, Emilio tries to calm her by radio. When the fourth implant is destroyed, the humans realize that their position is known and the options are few. Emilio appeals to their friendship and asks time to work things out, but Sofia will not compromise. She curses Emilio for suggesting that he can bring her Isaac. They refugees reach the rubble of Inbrokar, where Rukuei recalls the day when thirty thousand perished on the battlefield and within years a civilization perished. Together, they collect fragments of bone and teeth for a symbolic cremation, and that night Rukuei sings mournfully. Laaks tells of his fears for Ha'anala and the baby and asks that the humans help to convince the Runa that they are no longer a danger. Emilio promises at least to plead for the innocent children. In the morning, Emilio demands that Carlo send down the manned lander with Danny, John, and a rifle and ammunition to feed the hungry and save an entire race. Carlo agrees.

Chapters 33-36 Analysis

Chapter 33 continues the action in 2078 as Sofia concludes arrangements with Frans and Carlo and is left alone with her thoughts. Happy that Emilio is returning, she wishes that Isaac and Ha'anala would. Ha'anala wants to see Sofia before she dies or returns to Earth with the newcomers, but Isaac refuses to go where people do not sing. He cannot conceive of people doing things out of mutual concern.

Meanwhile and rather jarringly, the widow Suukmel no longer knows what deity rules her life. Russell describes in detail the Jana'ata system of traditional nature gods, Ingwy and lesser gods of fate, and the gods of chaos, which in succession control her life and destiny. Ha'anala ignores Suukmel as she leaves Isaac's tent, furious, but they come together they gather ka'ani eggsacks. It is explained that these are a monotonous alternative to the banned Runa meat. The two females gather side-by-side, one taking precautions against attacks by adult ka'ani and the other ignoring them. There are other non-sentient sources of protein in the area, but these are more dangerous to procure.

Ha'anala reveals that while her mother claims to have "forgiven" her—Ha'anala is rather resentful of the presumption of wrong-doing—armed forces of some sort in Gayjur have killed three emissaries so far. Cousin Athnaasi's raids are sowing fear and extending the war. The well-fed Jana'ata females in Athaansi's camp bear many babies, but in N'Jarr there are few. As in the old regime, nutrition continues to be a way of controlling population. Suukmel recalls Ha'anala once talking about Jana'ata, Runa, and Humans being children of one God who sees no difference of race or rank. The species must succeed at living together, whether God is just a song or real. This picks up the thread of agnosticism that has more often been expressed by various Jesuits.



Two new characters, Tiyat Va'agardi and Kajpin VaMasna, a disillusioned soldier, are introduced, intending to head south from N'Jarr to abduct a human. As Ha'anala goes into labor, subtly indicated by lengthening groans, she and Suukmel discuss using the humans as brokers between societies. Laaks and Rukuei will accompany them, posing as prisoners if necessary. Isaac tells them to bring back someone who sings. Another jump forward to 2085 confirms that the ruse is needed. Meeting an ancient Runao who wants to die allows for contemplation of how the Jana'ata are like gods dethroned by indifference. Sean quotes Disraeli, "How odd of God / To choose the Jews" (p. 363) and figures that there is no telling to whom God will take a liking.

In Chapter 34 the humans finally land on Rakhat in October 2078. It opens with the broad comedy of the Irishman Sean drinking to steel himself for the descent and jumping out ahead of everyone to throw up. His first words are a lamentation over the waste of good liquor. The liquor theme continues as Carlo learns that locals prepare brandy from the fragrant yasapa bush. He sees commercial possibilities. Unfortunately, he is violently allergic and nearly dies. Emilio notes the irony that he of all people revives Carlo, his kidnapper.

Other would-be kidnappers watch as the lander takes Carlo back to safety in orbit. Hearing Nico sing as he cooks for those who remain behind, Laaks, Rukuei, Tiyat, and Kajpin discuss various means of getting at least Nico to return with them. The scene shifts abruptly to Carlo and Sofia radioing back and forth about evidence of foul play at the landing site. All had been equipped with subcutaneous GPS implants, all of which had been functioning properly, but only one is working currently, and it shows Emilio 240 km. northeastward. They surmise that the units have been cut out but somehow Emilio's is taken along. This accounts for blood at the landing site. Believing that renegades have taken the crew hostage, Sofia swears that her troops will get them back and end forever the lawlessness that has been plaguing them. Heretofore Sofia has not seemed to be in direct military command.

Chapter 35 looks back to explain how the GPS moves without detection and offers deeper understanding of the societal forces at work on Rakhat. Emilio guides the crew members through the etiquette of meeting what appears to be four Runa urban traders. He explains that the females often come forward first. When he recognizes in the two who hold back a relative of the dreaded Hlavin Kitheri, Emilio panics. Rukuei believes Emilio to be the son of the man whom his father had known. Emilio drolly acknowledges the special sense of the verb "to know" and says that he is the man himself. In a classic macho move, Joseba shoots a random froyil to warn against attacking. In the course of conversations, the humans hear that Runa now hold power and have changed everything that had menaced the first mission. When Isaac's name comes up, the humans smell a trap and act out another classic macho move: throwing Rukuei to the ground and putting the barrel of a gun in his mouth. Rukuei swears that Isaac is not a hostage but an honored member of their society. Kajpin tells of how they have tried to negotiate peace but been rebuffed with violence. Emilio wants not to believe that Isaac has found the music of the True Mind and to everyone's relief, goes off alone.



Several factors combine to convince him to accompany the party to N'Jarr. First, Joseba points to factors that show the the Jana'ata are at the brink of extinction. Second, the Jana'ata in N'Jarr are said to be starving because Runa meat is non-kosher. The word proves Sofia's influence in the South through Ha'anala. Laaks also calls his wife a rabbi. Finally, Nico reports that one Jana'ata has nightmares about a burning city, like Emilio, whom he sees in the dream. The humans cut out their GPS units to prevent being tracked, but Nico innocently pockets Emilio's, having promised Carlo always to protect him.

Chapter 36 follows the travelers to Inbrokar City and centers on the mystery of the silenced implants. The ground crew files routine reports with Bruno, avoiding having to lie by generalizing. When Frans demands what has happened to three GPS units, Emilio impresses Sean with how he handles Sofia over the radio, saying he will not play poker with him again. Danny, aboard Bruno, however, recalls Yarbrough's praise of Sofia's quickness of mind. Clearly a battle of wits is underway between two people who love one another. There is humor as the just-discovered fourth implant is destroyed. It is noticed in orbit and on the ground and the rash act gives away their position. The humans could turn themselves into the army and let the others escape. There might be time time to race to Inbrokar. The options are weighed at length. In the end they decide to make Sofia an offer that she cannot refuse—a reference to Marlon Brando in *The Godfather*—to bring Isaac back to her. Claiming that he is going the extra mile of whose from he had not earlier been sure, Emilio talks directly to Sofia, appealing to their friendship and asking time to work things out. Sofia stubbornly refuses to compromise and curses him for suggesting he can bring her Isaac.

Amidst the blackened rubble of Inbrokar whose outlines Emilio recalls, Rukuei recalls the day when he was twelve years old that thirty thousand perished on the battlefield and how within years a civilization perished. The extent of the slaughter had not hitherto been revealed. Together the three species collect fragments of bone and teeth for cremation. There are too many to find them all. Laaks talks of his fears for Ha'anala and the baby during the approaching delivery and tells how the herbs that he administers to save her life during the last one causes the baby to be stillborn. Emilio recalls the death of children, bringing them to parity. That Ha'anala must come to tragedy is growing obvious. Laaks also begs for the humans to act as intermediaries with the Runa to convince them that the surviving Jan'ata no longer pose a threat. Emilio's promise to plead for the innocent children echoes Ha'anala's views on Sodom and Gomorrah; Abraham should have adopted the innocent babies. When he makes his demands of Carlo, Emilio claims to be obeying "First Principles" by requesting a rifle and ammunition, suggesting that feeding the hungry has priority over any philosophy or psychology. In so doing, they will save an entire race.



Chapters 37-39 and Coda

Chapters 37-39 and Coda Summary

Ha'anala dreams about her two dead children. Her husband is due home that day and as labor begins, a festive crowd gathers. The lander arrives full of game to cook and serve. Ha'anala is delighted to see humans and hear tales, but as her contractions weaken, she knows that she will die. She directs that the children be raised by Sofia and, overhearing Laaks arguing about something, asks Emilio to save her baby once she dies. They comfort her for nine hours, before Ha'anala breathes her last and Emilio performs a Cesarean and gives the stillborn CPR, refusing to let God claim it. He then sits beside Ha'anala's corpse, weeping for all of the losses he has known and whispering repeatedly, "God."

The priests awaken Emilio to report that thirty thousand troops are headed for them. The Jana'atas' fate is probably hopeless, no matter what they do. Most flee in small groups. The priests conclude that Carlo has sold them out, gathering a cargo of yasapa brandy to flee. Emilio tells gleefully that it tastes like soap. Suukmel stands by Ha'anala's pyre, determined to confront Sofia. Emilio plans to go south to head her off.

In Chapter 38, Emilio and Nico encounter Isaac en route to a meeting with his mother. Isaac insists that Sofia must come to him. They spot the army as a fierce storm threatens. Sofia assumes that Isaac is a hostage and bait to capture her. She calls Emilio arrogant for thinking that in weeks he knows Rakhat better than she, and declares that the Jana'ata deserve extinction. God has used her to achieve the Runas' freedom. Sofia regrets nothing. When Emilio argues that the time for eye for an eye is past, Sofia slaps him hard. She insists that some sins cannot be absolved.

Emilio tells of returning to Rakhat as Carlo's prisoner and of leaving the priesthood because Hlavin and Supaari have taught him to hate. He accuses Sofia of walling herself off and tells of delivering Ha'anala's baby. He calls her the Jana'ata Moses. For Emilio only this baby's life matters, no matter how it turns out. They agree that God, evidently, is not through with Emilio.

While Emilio sleeps, Nico tells Sofia about Emilio's nightmares, Isaac's desire to see her, and widespread suffering. When Emilio awakens, Sofia reports is willing to arrange safe passage for a delegation to meet with the Parliament of Elders. Those like Djalao who remember the past will be difficult to convince. Contemplating her life and work, Sofia regrets nothing.

Chapter 39 finds Danny in December climbing around N'Jarr Valley, happy to be alone. A political solution comes to him suddenly. He has Frans try the brandy, which convinces Carlo to bargain. Danny organizes Jana'ata reservations as preferential to extinction. The Runa will hunt game in exchange for coffee and domestication of some species will begin. Danny announces that Emilio and Nico are taking Rukuei home to



Earth. Emilio learns that Isaac's sublime singing represents the harmonization of the three species DNA sequences (three notes for each of the four chemical bases). This produces God's Music - for which the Jesuits had originally come to Rakhat. No one but Isaac could have discovered it and now Emilio must share it with others. Emilio wants to believe again.

The Coda takes place in 2096. Believers, skeptics, atheists, and agnostics are divided over the DNA music. Emilio often thinks about how humans are biologically programmed to impose meaning, but the arts are nonetheless a miracle. Halfway home, his nightmares end and he spends his time teaching Rukuei English and preparing him for what might happen. When they dock at the Shimatsu Orbital Hotel, Emilio receives a handwritten note from long-dead Vincenzo. Patras Yalamber Tamang is their host during months of quarantine. Carlo is arrested and his cargo embargoed. Emilio receives news from Rakhat and that Gina had remarried but died a year ago. Emilio visits her grave and meets his daughter, Ariana Fiore. Ariana tells him that Celestina is a drama queen who has married four times. Gina dies declaring that God has much to explain. Emilio cannot resist holding his grandson Tommasso.

Chapters 37-39 and Coda Analysis

Chapter 37 describes birth practices among high-bred and ordinary Jana'ata, as Ha'anala's time comes. It is customary for festive crowds to gather; only the Runa remain beyond the polite greetings, however. The lander arrives full of food, which will help the refugees, but comes too late for Ha'anala. She listens to Emilio's characterization of each of his colleagues, told in terms that these creatures can understand. It is rather masterfully done. Ha'anala knows that she will die and overrides her husband's and the Jesuits' fears of attempting a Cesarean section. None is trained in it. Nevertheless, Ha'anala is determined that Laaks ought not to lose them both. There are charming scenes as Emilio tells her stories and Nico sings to her. When the time comes and it appears that the baby is stillborn, Emilio defies God, performing CRP until the little one breathes and cries. He is disoriented. Later, sitting beside the shell of what had been Ha'anala, he whispers repeatedly, "God." There is no indication in context of what he intends by this. Word comes down from Bruno that Sofia's massive army—bigger than Alexander the Great's—is heading directly towards the refugees. Suukmel and Emilio plan to confront Sofia. In a final touch of humor, Emilio reveals that the brandy that Carlo is packing into Bruno for the trip home and a fortune tastes like soap. He has neglected to mention this and will use it going forward. The Jesuits share a hardy laugh. Note that Emilio characterizes this action as another attempt by Carlo to back out of something before he loses.

In Chapter 38 Emilio and Nico go out to confront Sofia, whom Emilio finds wrinkled and bent by age but instantly brings to mind the words of Song of Songs 6, which Sephardic Jews sing during Sabbath services and at Passover. Emilio has a hard time convincing her that Isaac is not bait to capture her or that the Jana'ata have changed and do not deserve extinction. In declaring outdated the *lex talionis* ("eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth," Dt. 19.21), Emilio stands with Jesus (Mt. 5), without making explicit the Christian



connection. This is his second reference to the Sermon on the Mount. The two debate vigorously whether there is such a thing as unforgivable sins. Sofia speaks strikingly about the Runa being treated as "labor first, livestock in the end" (p. 410). Emilio tells of his own sins and of having to leave the priesthood when he realizes that he is full of hate over what has happened to him on Rakhat. Emilio has his own choice quote: Hlavin had taken one look at him and was happy to have "something new to fuck" (p. 412). Emilio has grown tired of it. This marks a major psychological milestone.

Sofia softens, hearing about Ha'anala's death and, before that, of her laboring to form a peaceful society out of three races. Emilio attributes this to her upbringing by Sofia and suggests that Ha'anala is the Jana'ata Moses, who has purified her people during forty years wandering in the desert. This chapter, highly-charged with religious imagery, ends with Emilio declaring it immaterial whether God exists; only Ha'anala's baby's life matters. He adds parenthetically that if God does exist, his actions show him to be foolish and cruel. Sofia believes that God may not be through with Emilio, even if Emilio claims to be through with God. Emilio admits the possibility that this baby might turn out a monster whom history would wish had died at birth—in which case Emilio will be a villain—and it could be just some poor clown, unworthy of such efforts. One thinks instantly of the great mass murderers, Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot.

The chapter ends charmingly with Nico talking to Sofia in his innocent, simplistic way. She believes that he is mentally retarded, but he hits on the basic points, reinforcing Emilio's sophisticated argument. Sofia claims that she is not in charge, but merely influential among the Runa Elders. Those who have suffered at the hands of the Jana'ata (notably Djialao) will be hard to convince. Sofia is satisfied with what she has done on Rakhat.

Chapter 39 finds Danny in December 2078 formulating plans to make peace on Rakhat, forcing Carlo into an economic bargain that will benefit everyone and establishing a reservation for the Jana'ata. His experience and the lack of bureaucracy that plagues the disastrous U.S. program—Danny is proud to be Canadian—will help improve chances of success. At any rate, isolation is better than extinction and in time passions may subside and allow Ha'anala's experiment in integration to succeed. Danny receives this plan by revelation, as St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, conceives his Spiritual Exercises. This is perhaps too subtly invoked by a reference to the River Cardoner at Manresa. Danny also decides that Emilio and Nico will take Rukuei home to Earth. There is discussion of the wisdom of this move, but Rukuei, being sterilized, cannot help build the Jana'ata stock and Isaac encourages him

The high point of the chapter is Isaac's sublime singing. They discuss how everyone with autism is a unique experiment, and consider some of the feelings that accompany the condition. Isaac is no more able to feel lonely than he is to grow a tail. Isaac reveals the basis for God's Music, which he believes no one else could have discovered and which now must be shared with humanity. It is the harmony of the three species DNA bases set to music. Emilio wants once again to believe. John thinks that they are, like Moses, seeing God's backside in Ex. 33: God allows creatures not to see his intentions but allows them to discover him in what he has done. Emilio thanks John for everything.



The final Coda, a technical term for the concluding part of a musical composition or an argument, begins in Earth orbit in 2096. Emilio considers how humans have always differed over the signs and wonders that accompany the birth of every religion. His nightmares have ended and he has prepared Rukuei as best he can. News from Rakhat and from Earth are recapitulated. This includes Sofia and Gina's deaths. The novel concludes with Emilio visiting Gina's grave on the Day of the Dead, whose rituals in Naples are described. Emilio's biological daughter, Ariana Fiore, recognizes him. She tells him how Gina dies, declaring that God has much to explain. This seems altogether fitting. Emilio, who had at the beginning balked having to interact with young Celestina at the baptism, cannot resist holding his grandson Tommasso. This provides a final proof of his healing.



Characters

Emilio José Sandoz

With high cheek bones, slicked-back black-and-silver hair, and a trimmed conquistador goatee, Emilio is the novel's protagonist. A Taino Indian born in a Puerto Rican slum, he is treated brutally as a child because he is born while his legal father is in prison for drug trafficking. He becomes a linguist and a Jesuit priest and conceives the idea of a mission to the planet Rakhat when music is detected emanating from there. Emilio innocently believes that the mission is inspired by God. Emilio is the only member to return to Earth alive and is closely examined about the mission. The press declares him a cannibal and child-killer, based on biased reports from Rakhat.

As the novel opens, Emilio is around eighty years old, but thirty-four years traveling at near light-speed, during which he ages only six years, makes him functionally forty-six. His seminary classmate, Vincenzo Giuliani, is now seventy-nine and the Father General of the Order of Jesus. On Rakhat the tendons of Emilio's hands are removed to render his fingers double their length - and useless. This exempts him from prosecution for sedition there. On his return to earth, suffering scurvy and emaciated, he is fitted with bioactive braces. Following an inquisition about the failed mission, Emilio resigns from the Jesuits and from the Catholic priesthood, but agrees to train new explorers in the languages of Rakhat.

Emilio adamantly refuses to return to where he has been enslaved and repeatedly gang raped, an experience that convinces him that God is a cruel joke. Emilio withstands direct appeals from the charismatic Pope Gelasius III and Fr. Vincenzo, his benefactor during his long and painful recuperation in Milan, Italy. On the eve of being married to neighbor Gina Giuliani, Emilio is kidnapped by her cruel, ambitious ex-husband, Carlo, and kept drugged for the first half of the flight to Rakhat aboard the Giordano Bruno. Towards the end of the long flight, Emilio teaches the local languages to the non-Jesuits aboard and assumes de facto leadership of the landing party.

Emilio makes contact with Sofia Mendes Quinn, whom he had presumed to be dead (as she had him). They reminisce and confess loving one another, but differ sharply about local politics. Sofia thinks it prideful for Emilio to think he understands in weeks what she has lived for forty years. Emilio tries to talk Sofia out of sending thousands of her Runa troops in to exterminate the remnants of the Jana'ata population. The Jesuits had assumed that they would lead a liberation of the Runa, but now must struggle to prevent a genocide. Emilio proves an effective leader on the ground and works hard.

The father general in charge of the mission orders him to return home aboard the Bruno, taking along a music Jana'ata to share with humanity God's Music. By the time they leave, Emilio is wanting to believe again in God, but still holds that God has much to answer for. Emilio believes that he has gone the extra mile required of believers. In Earth orbit, Emilio learns that Gina has married and only recently died. Visiting her



grave in Naples, Emilio meets his biological daughter and grandson, whom he cannot resist holding. His nightmares and phobias are gone.

Sofia (Fia) Mendes Quinn

A lay member of the first Jesuit expedition to planet Rakhat, Sofia Mendes marries a tall, homely, kind Irish Catholic astronomer, Jimmy Quinn, even as death is claiming most of the crew members. Sofia authors the AI (artificial intelligence) language instruction program that her companions use to learn Ruanja and K'San and on which Emilio Sandoz bases his instruction of the second Jesuit mission. Sofia is a Jew, originally from Istanbul where she is taught the Sephardic tradition by her parents but is then forced to support herself by prostitution when orphaned during the Turkish civil war. She arrives on Rakhat immune to emotion, particularly love, which requires payment in grief, and only once breaks down, when she dreams that her unborn child has been harmed.

During her training with D.W. Yarbrough, Sofia has long discussions about the nature of God and approves of D.W.'s policy of not proselytizing. Believing that the Jana'ata are massacring innocent Runa rather than laying claim to a food source legal according to planetary custom, Sofia arises as a Joan of Arc figure, calling for the majority Runa to revolt. Her motto is "We are many. They are few" (Chap. 2, p. 23). As a Jew, she naturally identifies with the underdog. She personally saves Puska VaKashan, whose father leads the survivors into hiding.

Sofia goes to Trucha Sai one-eyed and scarred for life but does not miscarry, as everyone fears she will. Sofia believes that all other crew members have been killed and only late in life learns that Emilio survived and was shipped back to Earth only to return against his will to Rakhat. In the interim, she gives birth in 2042 to an autistic son whom she names Isaac and raises in the traditions of Sephardic Judaism. Learning from Supaari that Emilio has returned to Earth and the Magellan remains in orbit, Sofia decides to find its lander and go home. She argues against Supaari and his daughter Ha'anala accompanying her to Earth, but Supaari insists that they have no future on Rakhat. When they find the lander sacked and burned, hope of leaving Rakhat vanishes.

Sofia becomes a respected power broker among the Runa when Emilio returns to Rakhat. They confess their ancient love for one another but conflict sharply over local politics. Sofia thinks it prideful for Emilio to think he understands in weeks what she has lived for forty years. She is convinced that Ha'anala, who in childhood had been virtually her adoptive child and Isaac's close companion, has kidnapped her unfortunate son. Eventually she agrees to throw her support behind truce talks and establishment of reservations for the Jana'ata. When Emilio reaches Earth, he learns that Sofia has died of old age.



Hlavin Kitheri

A Jana'ata prince on the planet Rakhat, Hlavin is the Reshtar of Galatna ("reshtar" designating "spare," the third-born son, forbidden to breed; most are neutered and live empty lives of pleasure). Hlavin and sister Jholaa merely exist in case older brothers Dherai and Bhansaar fail to have children, but Hlavin knows them both to be more intelligent and adept than their privileged brothers. Hlavin's Runa tutor, Selikat, teaches him the Jana'ata epic myths that justify the social system and beats him whenever he asks Why? Hlavin alone in the household pays attention to Jholaa, but when the dynasty is secure he is exiled to Gayjur to endure his nephews' safety.

From Galatna Palace, Hlavin broadcasts songs to his sister, creating utterly new chants. He defies the tradition that restricts singing to the first and second sons, studies all aspects of musical theory and practice, and becomes a renowned musician and composer. This places him at mortal risk, but his brothers consider him harmless. As Hlavin attracts protégés, music dies within his own soul and is revived only when he is introduced to spices brought from H'earth, courtesy of an ambitious Jana'ata tradesman, Supaari VaGayjur, and the sexual enjoyment of an earthling, protagonist Emilio Sandoz. Hlavin shares Emilio with his fellow poets and begins producing revolutionary music.

When a Runa interpreter, Askama, requests that Emilio be released from bondage, Hlavin realizes that Jana'ata society is based on demeaning inequality and looks for ways to change this through music. Soon he is silenced. Word comes that Supaari has married his sister Jholaa and Hlavin is allowed to return to Inbrokar for the event. After Supaari runs away with the newborn baby, Ha'anala, whom Hlavin plots to kill, Hlavin kills the entire Kitheri family and assumes the Paramountcy, blaming the massacre on the fugitive Supaari, upon whose head he puts a price. Note that Hlavin has extraordinary lavender eyes, which he passes on to his descendants; this eye color helps to identify them.

Later, Hlavin learns of an extraordinary Jana'ata female, Suukmel Chiro u Vaadai, for whom he lusts, but she agrees only to advise him and to foster a child for him. Hlavin's first decrees are non-controversial: he reinstates tournaments in the arts and sciences for trivial prizes. These, however, create a competence-based hierarchy parallel to the hereditary one and lowers discontent. Hlavin recruits men of talent, imagination, and energy, who become a loyal cadre. Trained in the the law, he can find precedents for almost anything and uses accidents to get around remaining obstacles. By controlling the timing of investitures, inspecting ledgers, and foreclosures, Hlavin expands revenues from taxation and manipulates loyalties. When Hlavin meets Supaari in hand-to-hand combat, he kills the fugitive but the Runa tear him to pieces, throwing the dynasty into confusion.



Askama

A young Runa female on the planet Rakhat, Askama is the daughter of Manuzhai and a translator. She finds protagonist Emilio Sandoz in Hlavin Kitheri's seraglio, the victim of repeated serial rape, and alerts the crew of Magellan, who affect his release. Askama shares the fate of Jephthah's daughter in the Bible, being killed by Emilio as fulfillment of his vow to kill the next person he sees. Thereafter, Emilio suffers nightmares and is unable to be among children. Three years later, Manuzhai suggests that the Runa of Kashan offer themselves so the fugitive Supaari VaGayjal can become hasta'kala and thus beyond government persecution.

Br. Edward Behr, S.J.

The Jesuit brother charged with caring for protagonist Emilio Sandoz during his recovery from the physical and emotional wounds that he suffers on the planet Rakhat, Edward gets up to check on Emilio every night when bad dreams set him to pacing his cell. The Father General of the Order, who lives downstairs, no longer bothers to respond. Edward consoles Emilio that healing from trauma such as he has suffered takes time. Edward is asthmatic.

Fr. John Candotti, S.J.

A member of the second Jesuit expedition to the planet Rakhat, John is protagonist Emilio Sandoz's closest friend aboard the Giordano Bruno. This makes him the perfect foil for Carlo Giuliani to blackmail Emilio into cooperating, by threatening otherwise to kill John by putting him out an airlock. John moves away from the delicate landers in order not to damage them when his body explodes in the vacuum. For the first time, he finds himself unable to pray.

Before the mission, John is a seminary admonitor from Chicago. He has a Roman nose and balding head, making him look like a sundial. He is summoned to Italy during the inquisition into Emilio's disastrous first mission to Rakhat and then returns to become his research assistant. John is fluent in Magyar (Hungarian) since childhood and also speaks English, Spanish, and some Latin. The old friends joke together naturally, although Emilio resents John's mothering attitude. John's great gift as a priest is to forgive. If he dies on Rakhat, John wants to be buried in Chicago in order to remain involved in Democratic Party politics.

As a parish priest in Chicago, John is known as a soft touch in confession, skilled at helping people see what they have done wrong and getting beyond regret to feel good about themselves again. Father General Vincenzo Giuliani claims that this gift is why he is being sent on the mission, and John assumes that he is meant to forgive Fr. Daniel Iron Horse, the mission's Father Superior who colludes in Emilio's kidnapping. John is outraged at Giuliani and the Pope but has only Danny to take it out on. Celebrating daily Mass brings no comfort. Emilio is distant towards him. Fr. Joseba Urizarbarrena advises



him to consider how God has used Jesuits in the past as tools, while Fr. Sean Fein and Danny both tell him to mind his own business. Considering Nico retarded and Carlo dangerous, John has only Capt. Frans Vanderhelst to consult.

Like most members of the mission, John lives out his life on Rakhat. When Isaac Quinn discovers God's Music, John appreciates its importance instantly. Before returning to Earth, Emilio thanks John for everything he has done, saying he could not have survived without him.

Suukmel Chirot u Vaadai

The wife of Ma Gurah Vaadai, Ambassador of Mala Njer to the Kitheri court at Inbrokar on the planet Rakhat, Suukmel becomes the object of affection of the dictator Hlavin Kitheri, but agrees only to advise him and foster a child for him. Using her Runa maid, Taksayu, to gather information, Suukmel over sixteen years of marriage proves herself the power behind her husband's career. She argues that whatever his morals, Hlavin is making progress and bears watching. When Hlavin and Supaari both die in hand-to-hand combat, and Suukmel is also widowed, she makes her way to the the N'Jarr Valley where the Jana'ata have sworn no longer to eat Runa flesh. Many are on the brink of starvation.

After protagonist Emilio Sandoz returns to Earth and revolutionary leader Sofia Mendes Quinn dies, Suukmel remains in the N'Jarr Valley with Ha'anala's children and Isaac Quinn and allies herself, warily at first, with Fr. Daniel Iron Horse, S.J., in saving Jana'ata civilization from extinction. Suukmel is already middle-aged and much respected. They take long walks together, talking about power and corruption. She opposes those who find change dangerous and who condemn all of Hlavin Kitheri's efforts to remove power from the hands of incompetents. She tells Danny the full history of Hlavins' early reign.

Nico d'Angeli

A Camorra (Mafia) bodyguard in the service of Carlo Giuliani, Nico is a simple-minded lover of operatic music and has a fine, albeit untrained voice. He accompanies the second Jesuit expedition to Rakhat aboard the Giordano Bruno, twice beating protagonist Emilio Sandoz unconscious when he resists Carlo, but later becomes Emilio's sworn protector. Nico is discounted as retarded, but remarks sagely, overhearing a conversation, that one hears God better when frightened because one listens more attentively. As the book progresses, Nico becomes less and less a thug. He prays the Hail Mary twice a day as the sisters have taught him. He prides himself on being named after the angels. The agnostic Captain Frans Vanderhelst asks for Nico's prayers that by the time Bruno returns to Earth there will be a cure for obesity. Frans' use of Schrödinger's analogy of cats in a box to God goes over Nico's head. In the end, Nico accompanies Carlo and Emilio back to Earth.



Djalao VaKashan

A tall, powerful young Runa who survives the massacre at Kashan, Djalao rallies the people behind the pregnant and wounded human Sofia Mendes Quinn, who raises the banner of rebellion against Jana'ata tyranny. Djalao dispatches runners to warn other villages about marauding Jana'ata patrols. Djalao preaches that the Runa cannot simply abandon the cities and homes that they have built in order to escape Jana'ata tyranny. Djalao becomes a life-long partisan fighter and in old age is an obstacle to peace negotiations.

Fr. Sean Fein, S.J.

A member of the second Jesuit expedition to the planet Rakhat, Sean is the mission's chemist, charged with studying and bringing back Rakhati nanotechnology. His father David is Jewish and his mother Maura is a member of the revolutionary Sinn Fein party in Ireland. Sean is enormous, like all members of the second mission, and morose to the point that the father superior considers him a pain in the ass, but acknowledges that poetry dwells in his soul. Sean believes that parish clergy are now allowed to marry as a lesser evil to ordaining women. He believes that celibacy requires a firm sense that God uses it to serve others without exclusion—and also misses the days when "pointless self-denial" had been a major part of Catholicism (Chap. 15, p. 154).

Sean is nine years old when he is orphaned as disappointed Christians firebomb the lone Jewish house in retribution for Christ's failure to return on the second millennium of his crucifixion. Sean comes to enjoy the "divine lunacy" (Chap. 25, p. 264) of God creating free will. He is a teenager when the two missions go to Rakhat and twenty-two when Emilio Sandoz returns, entangled in scandal and tragedy. Sean becomes a chemist and a priest and admires the mechanics of create a biosphere. With Teilhard de Chardin he sees glimpses of the Divine Intelligence in the sea of matter. Enlisting Sean for the Bruno mission, the Father General acknowledges Sean's love of chemistry as order and beauty and tells him that on Rakhat God will teach him something to learn and pass on.

On Rakhat, Sean contemplates how his Jewish and Irish ancestors had so often nearly killed themselves off by bickering. He quotes Disraeli, "How odd of God / To choose the Jews" (Chap. 33, p. 363) and figures that there is no telling to whom God will take a liking. Afraid of flying, Sean drinks a bottle of Jameson's whiskey before setting out in the lander and is so panicked upon landing that he cuts ahead of the rest of the party and throws up heartily for several minutes. His first words lament the waste of good liquor. Sean lives out his life on Rakhat.

Pope Gelasius III / Kalingemala Lopore

The first African-born pope in modern times, Gelasius III (name before his coronation: Kalingemala Lopore) dresses as a common priest and drives his own Fiat to Naples to



meet protagonist Emilio Sandoz and try to convince him to return to the planet Rakhat. In his sixties, tall, ebony, thin, with an arresting face, Gelasius is the son of a Dodoth herder. He recalls Emilio in the Gikuyu refugee camp feeding his family and burying his youngest sister. He remembers him afterwards and for decades prays for him. Emilio pours out his feelings that God has betrayed and abandoned him on Rakhat and allowed so many children to perish. Citing Jeremiah's sufferings, Gelasius insists that Emilio is beloved of God and will see the difference that he has made when he returns to Rakhat. Emilio insists that he will not. Over lunch, the Jesuit Father General, Vincenzo Giuliani, gains new respect for Gelasius, who is shrewdly and wisely bringing change to the papacy and in particular wants to end the rift with the Order of Jesus. Gelasius is firmly against abortion but open to birth control and wants to see progress on unity. The church must continually reform itself. On the subject of Rakhat, the Pope sees a sign of Providence in the fact that of six ships sent to Rakhat over forty years, only those associated with Emilio have make it there.

Carlo Giuliani

A member of Milan's Mafia-like Camorra family, Carlo is a playboy who abandons his wife Gina and their infant daughter Celestina to take a male lover. Carlo's colorful aged aunt condemns his whoring and believes that Gina is better off without him. Carlo must constantly look over his shoulder for his unpampered sister Carmella, a fine businesswoman with ambitions to head the family. Carlo looks to gain fame and fortune on the planet Rakhat, funding the costly mission of the Giordano Bruno. He denies that it is out of jealousy that he kidnaps protagonist Emilio Sandoz for the expedition, which begins when Gina's divorce is finalized and Emilio is on the verge of marrying her.

Carlo claims to have spared Emilio a boring life with Gina and compares the ill treatment that each receives from their fathers. Carlo's father nicknames him Cio-Cio-San, the flitting title character in Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*. Carlo brags of his intelligence but admits he has never been able to be anyone's follower. He should have been a Renaissance prince. After seeing relatives killed in vendettas, he models his life not on Christ but on the Stoicism of the great Caesar, Marcus Aurelius.

When a micrometeorite hits the Bruno in interstellar space, Carlo proves an efficient crisis manager but admits that their survival is a miracle and vows to endow a church with treasures from the voyage. Towards the end of the voyage, he allows Emilio to take control of the crew, teaching them all that they might need to survive on Rakhat. Emilio charges that this is simply another case of Carlo's quitting before he fails at any give enterprise. On Rakhat, Carlo suffers anaphylactic shock from an indigenous plant and, ironically, Emilio administers the CPR that saves him. Carlo is forced to take shelter in Bruno in orbit. From there, he arranges to load all of the local brandy he can to return to Earth and make a fortune. When he is told that it tastes like soap, he dejectedly agrees to barter honestly with the natives. He returns home with Emilio and a Jana'ata singer but is arrested upon reaching Earth orbit and his cargo is impounded.



Gina Damiano Giuliani and Celestina

A beautiful middle-aged woman in Milan, Italy, Gina is divorced from playboy Carlo Giuliani and lives with their precocious daughter Celestina near the home of ex-Jesuit linguist Emilio Sandoz. She has the looks of a Renaissance angel with big brown eyes and dark curls. Keeping up with daughter Celestina gives her a tired look, however. She meets handsome Carlo while working for the gynecologist to whom he brings his mistress for an abortion. She is mesmerized by his good looks and charm but know he is a rat before marrying him. After one beating she files for divorce.

Gina helps Emilio recover from the physical and mental agony of his first voyage to Rakhat, which enables him to instruct members of a second expedition to speak the languages of that planet. Gina is engaged to Emilio but is on vacation when he is kidnapped by her ex Carlo and rocketed towards Rakhat. She learns only years later what has happened, meanwhile bearing Emilio's daughter, Ariana, before she dies in an epidemic just before he returns to earth. Visiting Gina's grave on the Day of the Dead, Emilio meets the grown Ariana with her baby son and learns about his lover's life and death.

Fr. Vincenzo Giuliani, S.J.

The Father General of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), Vincenzo is also a member of the crime syndicate family that controls Milan, Italy. He is born to wealth and power and trained in history and politics. As the novel opens he is a young seventy-nine, charged with convincing protagonist Emilio Sandoz to confront the the severe physical and mental problems that stem from his torture and rape on the planet Rakhat.

Vincenzo arranges a second Jesuit mission to the planet, recruiting Jesuits and laymen large enough to play on an NFL team. He wants nothing like what has befallen skimpy Emilio to be repeated. Vincenzo looks for this return mission to help end the rift between his order and the Vatican. He admires the open mind of the new Pope Gelasius III, whom he brings to Emilio's apartment to recruit him for the mission. They refuse to take Emilio's refusal seriously and end up kidnapping him.

Vincenzo confesses to Fr. Daniel Iron Horse, the mission's father superior, that his job is very hard and in old age he harbors doubts. He had envied Emilio's calling and cannot imagine bearing the pain that he has. He denies the Emilio is an atheist as Emilio claims. Vincenzo wonders if God enjoys watching human suffering as a voyeur. Vincenzo needs to believe that God has a higher purpose for Emilio. Dying, Vincenzo leaves a cynical, hand-written note for Emilio, explaining that it is easier to obtain forgiveness than permission.



Hana'ala

The daughter of Supaari VaGayjur and Jholaa Kitheri, Hana'ala is declared defective at birth and is scheduled to be ritually killed to preserve the purity of the bloodline. Her father, however, discovers the lie and spirits her away. Declared fugitives with a price on their head, they are sheltered by the Jana'ata and Runa who live together peaceably in Trucha Sai. Hana'ala becomes the autistic human Isaac Quinn's only friend. When Isaac cannot stand the chaos of communal life, they go off into the wilderness together. Hana'ala names her first daughter Sofi'ala in honor of Isaac's mother, Sofia Mendes Quinn who, nevertheless, believes that Hana'ala is holding Isaac captive.

After the heartbreaking death of two babies, one frail and the other stillborn, Hana'ala has a difficult fourth pregnancy, being near starvation. She dies in childbirth after asking protagonist Emilio Sandoz to deliver the baby after she dies. Her husband objects, but Emilio does as he is asked, using CPR to bring the baby to life. Hearing of Ha'anala's Moses-like ministry to the Jana'ata and her tragic death, Sofia softens her determination to eliminate all Jana'ata and they are gathered in a reservation in N'Jarr Valley.

Rukuei Hlavin

The first-born of Hlavin Kitheri's children to members of his harem of third-borns, Rukuei is neutered at birth and given to Lady Suukmel Chirot u Vaadai to raise at the Mala Njeri embassy. After his father dies at the Battle of Inbrokar, Rukuei, who inherits his father's armor, longs to continue the fight, but his mother restrains him. The autistic Isaac Quinn recruits Rukuei to put words to his music, which is inspired by the harmonies of human, Jana'ata, and Runa DNA sequences. Unable to contribute to rebuilding the Jana'ata gene pool, Rukuei accompanies protagonist Emilio Sandoz to Earth, studying English en route and learning what circumstances he might meet as a lone alien. His fate on Earth is not revealed.

Fr. Daniel Beauvais Iron Horse, S.J.

The father superior of the second Jesuit expedition to the planet Rakhat, Danny is a mixture of Lakota (Sioux), French, and Swedish, but mostly identifies with his Indian heritage and despises racial comments. He grows up in Winnipeg, Canada, to have a large Swedish body. Assuming that he has an Indian's intolerance of alcohol, he carefully limits his consumption. Danny's speech is characterized by addressing everyone as "Ace." A political scientist destined for leadership in the Order, Danny leaves a full professorship at the Gregorian University to go to Rakhat.

As linguistic training begins in Naples, Italy, under the brilliant but apostate Emilio Sandoz, Danny observes that Emilio's emaciation might stem from whatever sickened D. W. Yarbrough on the first mission. What appears to be a lapse in sensitivity is a test of Emilio's emotional stability and causes him to withdrawn from his fiancée Gina Giuliani and her daughter Celestina and work hard to improve his physical condition.



Feeling guilty, Danny quotes to the Father General St. Theresa's saying that, given the way he treats his friends, it is no wonder that God has so few. Danny perceives that Emilio's participation in the mission is the price of the Vatican lifting the Suppression of the Jesuits and is disgusted at the idea of abducting.

After ordering Emilio to return to Earth after the mission, Danny remains to set up a reservation to facilitate the survival of the Jana'ata. He believes that by learning from the errors of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (he is proud to be Canadian) a workable system can develop and argues that anything is better than genocide. Lucid to the end, he contemplates whether he has been wrong about everything. He accepts that crew members had been right to hate him for his role in kidnapping Emilio. From his youth he had taken pride in being descended from the great warrior tribes of the American plains and of the first Christian convert of the legendary Jesuit missionary, Pierre-Jean De Smet. Like most Lakota, Danny had reconciled Christianity with the Native Wakan Tanka (Great Mystery).

From his first reading of the logs of the *Stella Maris*, he had felt destined to go to Rakhat. He alone appreciates Jana'ata culture and fears for its survival. Helping them could somehow redeem the Lakotas' tragic fate. The Pope, an African, tells Danny to think of sacrificing Emilio in terms of Abraham's dread offering of Isaac—and God's own in sacrificing Jesus. It is an abhorrent idea, but Danny accepts it because of its source. He does not understand the political, diplomatic, and practical reasons behind it, but accepts that Emilio is part of God's greater plan. Growing old on Rakhat, Danny contemplates God's two great gifts to humanity—time and language—and prays constantly to understand what has happened on Rakhat between the two Jesuit missions. His wary ally is the widow Suukmel Chirot u Vaadai. Their relationship is based on accepting the past as alive and important for the future. He recalls his paternal grandmother's tales, which he has crosschecked with scholars' research.

Kanchay VaKashan

A Runa widowed at the massacre of Kashan, Kanchay takes the lead in getting surviving males and their offspring to sanctuary in the southern forests of Trucha Sai. Because she is wounded while saving his daughter Puska, Kanchay carries pregnant Sofia Mendes Quinn on his wounded back and makes sure she is eating on the long march. His philosophy is summed up: "Rain falls on everyone; lightning strikes some" (Chap. 2, p. 25). He explains to Sofia that Runa wear ribbons on their arms to prevent departed loved ones' ghosts from being distracted from where they should be. He also explains the Jana'ata rationale for the massacre, recounting the foundational myths of how the Runa first offer their children to be eaten as part of the duty of hospitality to strangers. Kanchay claims that the Jana'ata are now tamed: they eat only the old and infirm. He refuses to be led into rebellion by Sofia. When Hlavin Kitheri burns the southern towns visited by rebels to prove his power, Kanchay blames Supaari for the brutal acts of his fellow Jana'ata and nearly kills him.



Jholaa Kitheri u Darjan

The fourth-born sister of Hlavin Kitheri, Jholaa is rather implausibly married to a third-born merchant, Supaari VaGayjur, as part of her brother's plans to produce a new breeding line for the family. Jholaa has led a sheltered life in the palace and is innocent of all matters sexual, having never even seen Runa breed. She catches enough of the ritual words at her wedding to realize that she is being married, but is then shocked to find herself deflowered in front of everyone. She appears to bring fine physical traits to the bloodline, but hates the fetus from the start and vows that it will die rather than live an empty life like her own. Her husband realizes that a second mating is unlikely and grows depressed over her signs of insanity. The most memorable event of her childhood comes at age ten when, with help from her nurse, Srokan, Jholaa stays up past third sunset to see the moon—a feat horrifying for Jana'ata, who suffer extreme night blindness. Jholaa resents Hlavin's being exiled to Galatna Palace near Gayjur and in a fit of anger kills Srokan and her relatives, believing that Srokan's tales about foreign lands are lies. This leaves no one to warn Jholaa about what to expect at her wedding. Jholaa, with the rest of her family, is slaughtered by Hlavin, and the murders are blamed on her fugitive husband.

Ljaat-sa Kitheri

The 47th Paramount of the Most Noble Patrimony of Inbrokar, Ljaat-sa announces to the despised merchant, Supaari VaGayjur, the news that his newborn daughter is defective and must be destroyed. Ljaat-sa had seen commercial value in allowing the disgraceful third-born Kitheri, Hlavin, to establish a new breeding line. Ljaat and all of his relatives are murdered by Hlavin Kitheri to bring him to the throne and the crimes are blamed on Supaari, who becomes a wanted fugitive.

Shetri Laaks and Athaansi

A quiet apothecary specializing in the Sti canon, Laaks is only vaguely aware of the Runa revolt in southern Rakhat when his sister Ta'ana Laaks u Erat and family arrive seeking refuge. Both her husband and her brother Nra'il have been killed, leaving her with no adult male chaperon to travel north. She declares that Laaks is her son Athaansi's regent during his training. Athaansi is a conceited young stud, who his mother orders silent. Laaks is under the influence of a sacred drug and is functioning poorly as the band sets out. Other Jana'ata widows, their children, and Runa servants join the refugees. Hunger grows. On the tenth day they meet and take in the badly sunburned Isaac Mendes Quinn and Ha'anala. Laaks is ready to euthanize Isaac but agrees to treat his burns. Ta'ana realizes from the color of Ha'anala's eyes that she is a Kitheri and Athaansi wants to collect the bounty on her and the tailless monster. Instead Ta'ana wants Athaansi to marry her; in such unsettled times, this could put him in contention for the throne. Isaac may be a useful hostage. Athaansi becomes a ruthless guerrilla fighter, whose strikes invite massive retribution on Runa villages. After the



Jesuits broker a peace between the races, Athaansi remains aloof, and after his death his followers continue to cause problems.

Paquarin

A Runa nursemaid serving in the Kitheri compound in Inbrokar on the planet Rakhat, Paquarin summons Supaari VaGayjur to see his supposedly deformed newborn daughter before her life is ritually terminated. Seeing that there is no deformity, Supaari kidnaps the baby, taking Paquarin along as far as Kirabai. She is there paid off and replaced but continues her service by using her own money to send word to Supaari that a bounty hunters is en route to Kashan. For this, Paquarin is eliminated.

Fr. Marc Robichaux,S.J.

A member of the first Jesuit expedition to Rakhat aboard the Stella Maris, Robichaux is captured together with Emilio Sandoz. Purchased by the merchant Supaari VaGayjur, both undergo hasta'akala, whereby the tendons of their hands are severed between the bones, lengthening the fingers and rendering them incapable of supplying one's own needs. Marc bleeds to death and is thus spared the repeated rape suffered by Emilio.

Isaac Mendes Quinn

The autistic son of Sofia Mendes Quinn and her husband Jimmy Quinn, who dies before the birth in 2042, Isaac cannot stand the chaos in which he is raised among the Runa of the planet Rakhat as they evade the Juna'ata, who hunt them for their meat. Isaac is obsessed with an antique hand-held computer and the sounds of music in his head. Isaac sometimes uses real speech, but this opens him to outside menaces, particularly red light and the noise of Runa children playing. Sofia thinks he will be better off returning to Earth aboard a ship free of surprises and surrounded by music. Heading for the lander, Isaac for the first time finds himself exposed to the unfiltered red light of the smallest sun, which wreaks havoc with his senses. Hearing the Sh'ma chanted gradually calms him.

As he matures, Isaac runs away to live a solitary life with Ha'anala, daughter of the fugitive Juna'ata merchant Supaari, who is raised among the rebel Runa. He refuses his mother's pleas to return to her because he cannot stand the tumult. By assigning notes to the four components of DNA, and harmonizing human, Runa, and Juna'ata strands, Isaac discovers God's music, which he teaches to Rukuei and encourages him to carry it to Earth.

Selikat

Hlavin Kitheri's Runa tutor Selikat teaches him the Jana'ata epic myths that justify the social system and regularly beats him whenever he asks Why? She does not want him



to share the fate of the freethinkers. Seeing a dangerous warp in Hlavin's mind, Selikat encourages him to pursue music, which is illegal for reshtars (third born sons). Overheard, Selikat is taken away for this advice and vanishes. Already over fifty years of age, she likely is slaughtered for her stringy meat.

Supaari VaGayjur

An ambitious Jana'ata merchant on the planet Rakhat, Supaari of Gayjur is the prime spokesman during the planet's first contact with humans, detailed in *The Sparrow*. He gains the visiting Jesuits' trust, grossly misinforms protagonist Emilio Sandoz about the planet's sociology, and ultimately is responsible for the maiming of Emilio's hands and his suffering repeated gang rapes. Supaari is introduced in *Children of God* receiving without reaction news from the Paramount of Inbrokar that his new-born daughter has a defective foot and must be, by his own hand, sacrificed next morning. Supaari, however, discovers that the baby is not deformed and abducts her, naming her Ha'anala after the human Dr. Anne Edwards.

The two become fugitives among the Runa, where Supaari feels more at home than among the Jana'ata aristocracy who snub him. When brother-in-law Hlavin Kitheri murders the entire clan to seize power, he blames the atrocity on Supaari and places a price on his head. Supaari swears "hasta'akala" (total dependence) on the rebel Runa of Kashan village, with whom he has long served as their broker with merchants in the city of Inbrokar. The VaKashani love Supaari so much that they are willing to die to feed him and Ha'anala, but Supaari vows never to eat Runa meat again.

When fellow refuge at Trucha Sai, Sofia Mendes Quinn, learns that the spacecraft Magellan remains in orbit around Rakhat and decides to take its lander and fly home, she argues against Supaari and Ha'anala accompanying her, but he insists that they have no future on Rakhat. Sofia argues that non-sentient meat sources abound on the planet, but he claims to be too slow to catch these. When Hlavin Kitheri burns the southern towns visited by rebels to prove his power, Kanchay blames Supaari for the brutal acts of his fellow Jana'ata and nearly kills him. Supaari leads the Runa forces that surround Inbrokar City when Hlavin refuses overtures of peace. Older and in worse physical condition, Supaari puts up a surprisingly good fight but is slain. The Runa then kill Hlavin and some 30,000 and leave the city in ruins. Ha'anala joins the refugees in N'Jarr Valley.

Taksaya

Lady Suukmel Chirot u Vaadai's maid, Taksaya performs the intelligence gathering that makes Suukmel the power behind her husband, the Ambassador. Later, Taksaya serves as Suukmel's personal envoy to Hlavin Kitheri and further evolves into a companion or ally. She is with Suukmel at the fatal confrontation between Hlavin and Supaari.



Fr. Joseba Gastainazatorre Urizarbarrena, S.J. (José Alfab

A member of the second Jesuit mission to the planet Rakhat, Joseba is an ecologist. Protagonist Emilio Sandoz had requested a speaker of Euskara (Basque), but Joseba knows only a few curse words in his ancestral tongue. It has too many consonants for him. He claims to have wanted as a child to be a terrorist (or freedom fighter), like both of his grandmothers in the ETA. From helping relieve the residual pain that his uncle suffers after losing a hand to a bomb, Joseba knows how to help Emilio's pain. An avid hunter as a youth, he studies ecology in college, which by then is a study in degradation. Hating the way that homo sapiens are destroying the planet, he switches his major to virology and, hating the thought of burdening the world with children, he breaks off his relationship with a woman, who nonetheless helps him see that humans are more than bacteria. He turns to the Jesuits. Joseba agrees with a magazine article that the world should be run by women with little children, as they have the greatest vested interest in the future. On Rakhat, Joseba helps hunt game to sustain the carnivorous Jana'ata as they refrain from eating sentient Runa. Like most of the crew, Joseba ends his life on Rakhat.

Frans Vanderhelst

The captain of the Giodano Bruno, the Jesuits' second expedition to the planet Rakhat, Frans is a heavy-drinking Dutch Reformed agnostic from Johannesburg, South Africa. He studies philosophy at Blomfontein, but this offers no jobs, so he signs on with the Camorra (Neapolitan Mafia) to pilot spaceships, a lucrative business. He considers the Catholic Church a fraud and has no firm thoughts on God. He suggests that Abraham might have simply invented God to impose meaning on chaos, and later people find comfort in this. The human condition is one of ignorance and anxiety, which most cure by food and sex. Frans' use of Schrödinger's analogy of cats in a box to God escapes simple Nico. Frans asks Nico to pray for a miracle that they may return from this mission. He confides that he is obese because eating the the Afrikaner national sport and spaceflight has upset his DNA. He has fought it and is frightened that it will shorten his life. He hopes that someone will find a cure while he is traveling near the speed of light and not aging.

Ira'il Vro

A first-born Jana'ata noble on the planet Rakhat, Ira'il is outranked by the powerful Kitheris. He witnesses Supaari VaGayjur kidnap his doomed daughter from the Kitheri compound in Inbrokar City and informs Hlavin Kitheri, whom he accompanies from his Galatna Palace exile in order to attend the birth. Ira'il greatly admires Hlavin's singing and verse, having no musical talent himself and existing on the fringes of the artistic community. He is flattered to be invited to the event. Hlavin reveals to Ira'il that Supaari



has killed his two older brothers who stand in his way to power, before adding Ira'il to the list of victims of the massacre that he orders.

Fr. D. W. Yarbrough, S.J.

A member of the first Jesuit mission to Rakhat, D.W. is a Texan and retired Marine squadron commander. During the long training period he becomes friends with a young Jew, Sofia Mendes, whose beauty contrasts sharply with his homeliness. D.W. admires Judaism on its own merits and is able to dispense Sofia's prejudice against things Catholic. Using military analogies, he explains the normal human need for intermediaries with a power as transcendent as God—whereas the children of Abraham confront him face-to-face. Pride in tradition and belief in action over words guarantee that there are no such things as ex-Jews, Catholics, Texans, or Marines. D.W. decrees that the Jesuits are going to Rakhat not to preach but to listen to God's other children. D.W. pictures the God of the Torah as cranky and uncanny and some days believes in him wholeheartedly, but is also tolerant of those who see him strictly as a poetic idea. He warns Sofia to be forgiving and generous.



Objects/Places

Galatna Palace

A pleasure palace located above the city of Gayjur by the ocean on the planet Rakhat, Galatna houses reshtars—third and subsequent sons of minor royal families who by birth order are excluded from official roles. Hlavin Kitheri when exiled there to protect his nephews from any dynastic ambition that he might illegally harbor, outranks them all. The reshtars lead a boring existence, marked by monstrous banquets, violent games, and debased sex with a harem of Runa and Jana'ata third-born females. While not avoiding the debauchery, Hlavin wants more. He composes new chants and broadcasts them to his sister Jholaa in Inbrokar. He obtains the services of protagonist Emilio Sandoz and shares him as a sexual plaything with his companions. Emilio thus identifies Galatna exclusively with horrors, but many reshtars spend their time there in continued education and become professionals in various fields. When Hlavin slaughters his relatives and takes over governing, Galatna is turned into a museum. Later, Sofia Mendes Quinn retires to Galatna.

Giordano Bruno

The spacecraft aboard which the second Jesuit mission to Rakhat flies, the Giordano Bruno is named by owner Carlo Giuliani after a priest from Florence, Italy, burned at the stake in 1600 after proposing that stars besides the sun have habitable planets. The highly-automated vessel is a large meteor, carefully bored out and provided with top-flight crew quarters, which are shielded against cosmic radiation. All systems are triple-redundant and Bruno carries two automated landers, lest anyone be stranded on Rakhat, as happened with the Stella Maris and Magellan. The asteroid's exterior is treated with self-sealing foam. The cost is enormous but pays off when Bruno survives a collision with a micrometeorite that bores holes in-line fore and aft. Signs of severe structural bending are found on inspection and the starboard sensor panel is knocked out. Debris from the Wolverton tank, which provides air filtration and foodstuffs, seals the holes. Anything larger or off-center would have destroyed the ship. Owner Carlo Giuliani believes that this is such a miracle that it proves the Pope and Fr. Vincenzo Giuliani right in shanghaiing Emilio Sandoz. God surely wants him back on Rakhat. Bruno is piloted by Frans Vanderhelst and the expedition's father superior is Fr. Daniel Iron Horse, S.J.

Inbrokar

The central kingdom in the Triple Alliance (alongside Mala Njer and Palkirn) on the planet Rakhat, Inbrokar is also the name of a prosperous, crowded, jumbled capital city. Both are controlled by the Kitheri family as a patrimony, headed by a Paramount. The architecturally impressive Kitheri Palace dominates the city. Under the rule of the



usurper Hlavin Kitheri, it achieves a level of wealth and power unprecedented on the planet. Inbrokar occupies the central third of the planet's largest continent. Inbrokar is left in ruins after Hlavin meets Supaari VaGayjur in hand-to-hand combat outside the walls and slays him. Runa troops then attack the surviving Jana'ata, covering the fields with 30,000 dead. Years later humans, Jana'ata, and Runa gather bone fragments for a symbolic cremation, signifying the intention of the three species to live in harmony.

Jana'ata

One of the two sentient species on the planet Rakhat, the Singers of Rakhat bear a superficial resemblance to the more numerous Runa—both look like kangaroos—but are carnivorous, with prehensile feet and savage clawed three-fingered hands. All Jana'ata suffer night blindness, but their keen sense of smell to some extent compensates. They breed Runa to serve as domestics and, once grown too old, as food. Referred to as djanada by the Runa when emphasizing their aggressive traits, the the Jana'ata speak a complex, ancient, semi-sacred tongue, K'San, value stability and stewardship, and strictly limit their and the Runas' population size. Only the two eldest sons may marry and reproduce; the rest are either neutered or allowed to associate with Runa concubines. They are referred to as "thirds."

Encouraged by the Jesuits of the first expedition to Rakhat, the Runa rebel against the Jana'ata and by the second mission have pushed them to the brink of extinction. Fr. Daniel Iron Horse, a Canadian Indian, establishes a reservation in the N'Jarr Valley to preserve them and institutes hunting of non-sentient species until domestication can get under way. A small guerrilla band resists peace efforts, but it appears at the end of the novel as if the Jana'ata will survive.

Kashan

The cliffside Runa village on the planet Rakhat where humans first establish contact, Kashan (whose inhabitants are called VaKashani) appears to be a backwater of a greater civilization and the Jesuits decide to concentrate their efforts there. Marooned, the visitors establish agriculture to feed themselves, which the Runa imitate, angering the Jana'ata, who control their diet to control reproduction. When patrols come to cull old and deformed Runa for food, Sofia Mendes Quinn calls for revolt and young villager Djalao rallies others behind Sofia and Kanchay VaKashan rallies surviving males to take everyone else into hiding in the southern forests at Trucha Sai. After his escape from Inbrokar and frustrating visit to his hometown, Kirabai, Supaari VaGayjur brings his daughter to Kashan, a day's travel south along the Pon River. The locals immediately warn him that he is a wanted man and not safe in Kashan. A bounty hunter has already arrived.



Kirabai

A village in the Pon River system on the planet Rakhat, Kirabai is home to the merchant Supaari VaGayjur before he leaves to earn his modest fortune among the Kitheri. When his newborn baby daughter faces elimination for non-existing defects, Supaari runs home with her to the dilapidated, lethargic town, an important trading center for inland harvesters and crafts. His parents, hostlers, offer a sharp welcome and complain of local politics and how their brat children have ruined them. When Supaari's elder brothers arrive, they are as intense and petty. Word comes from Inbrokar about the fugitives being wanted hours after they sail toward Kashan. Paquarin pays to get word to Supaari in time.

Magellan

A spacecraft operated by the U.N.-sponsored Contact Consortium, Magellan follows the ill-fated Jesuit-run Stella Maris to the planet Rakhat and, when it arrives, sends back lurid tales meant to discredit the Society of Jesus before its own crew disappears without a trace. Magellan remains in orbit around Rakhat and its lander is intact on the surface until the only survivor of the Stella Maris seeks to return home. Runa troops ransack and burn the lander but the communications equipment of the mother ship remains intact.

Milan, Italy

Milan is the Italian city in which most of the early Earthbound action of the novel takes place. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) has a center there, where protagonist Emilio Sandoz lives and undergoes expensive rehabilitation for physical and mental wounds suffered during a mission to the planet Rakhat. He agrees to train a second crew in the languages of that planet but refuses to accompany it. He is on the verge of marrying when he is shanghaied for the mission. At the end of the novel, Emilio returns to Milan to visit the grave of his intended bride and meets his biological daughter and grandson.

N'Jarr Valley

The N'Jarr Valley is a remote section of the planet Rakhat to which the starving Jana'ata take refuge from Runa bent on genocide.

Rakhat

A planet orbiting the three stars of Alpha Centauri, some 4.1 light years from Earth, Rakhat is the goal of an expedition by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) from which only Fr. Emilio Sandoz returns, badly injured physically and mentally. Rakhat has an Earth-like ecology and only two sentient species, the majority Runa, who are placid, artistic, and



strictly vegetarian; and the Jana'ata, famed for song, but who dine exclusively on Runa flesh. The Jana'ata keep their slaves underfed in order to control population size. When the Runa learn agriculture from the Jesuits, who plant gardens for their own sustenance, the Jana'ata systematically destroy the gardens and the missionaries. Sofia Mendes Quinn, a Jewish lay member of the mission, challenges the Runa to rise against their masters and becomes their Joan of Arc. To redeem themselves, the Jesuits return to Rakhat to help the Runa throw off their slavery, not knowing that the tables have turned. Rakhat is on the verge of losing music as the Jana'ata draw close to extinction. The Runa find music offensive. The rebels control everything south of Mo'arl, forcing Jana'ata northward. A pocket of Jana'ata live near starvation in the N'Jarr Valley. Most of the political power is held by Inbrokar, the central kingdom in the Triple Alliance (alongside Mala Njer and Palkirn) until the decisive battle that ends in the deaths of the rulers of both sides and a great slaughter of Jana'ata.

Runa

One of the two sentient species on the planet Rakhat, Runa physically resemble kangaroos. They are placid, sociable, and strictly vegetarian. Their hands have double thumbs and they are capable of exquisite handicrafts. The word Runa signifies "people" in their tongue, Ruanja. Individual are called Runao. The Jesuits who first encounter Runa doubt that they are sufficiently intelligent to have made contact with Earth, particularly because that contact consists of choral music and the Runa appear afraid of song. It takes the Jesuits a long time to realize that the Runa are essentially the Jana'atas' domestic animals, their breeding controlled through diet. Elderly and sub-standard infants among the Runa are voluntarily given to the Jana'ata as food through regular culling. The Jesuits fail to realize that the sacrifice is voluntarily and lead a rebellion to save Runa children from culling. By the time a second mission arrives, the Runa have thrown off the Jana'ata yoke and brought them to the brink of extinction.

Society of Jesus (Jesuits, S.J.)

A Roman Catholic religious order founded in 1534 by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuits are accurately depicted in the novel as highly disciplined and strongly dedicated to education, radical social activism, and missionary work. Thus, detecting music from a planet orbiting the Alpha Centauri cluster, the Jesuits mount a mission independent of the United Nations, which fails when it is involved in politics on Rakhat. Only Fr. Emilio Sandoz returns alive, destroyed physically, mentally, and spiritually. Having lost his faith in God, Emilio resigns from the order and the priesthood but agrees to teach the languages of Rakhat to members of a second Jesuit mission. When he refuses to accompany them to the site of his torture, Emilio is kidnapped with the collusion of Pope Gelasius III and Father General of the Society, Vincenzo Giuliani. The father superior of the Giordano Bruno mission, Fr. Daniel Iron Horse, throughout the flight feels guilty of having to trick Emilio. They debate the classic Jesuit argument that the ends justify the means.



The novel shows the Jesuits more at odds with the Papacy than ever in its history - they having been suppressed throughout the Catholic world in the eighteenth century but re-established in 1814. Things have again gotten tense by the mid-twenty-first century and the Pope and Father General agree to use the second Rakhat mission to end the enmity. How this will help is not clarified, but it is suggested that the Vatican and Jesuits can reconcile such divisive issues as birth control and abortion, the Jesuits being more pragmatic than the Vatican. The current rift begins in the 1960s when stubborn, uncompromising men head both institutions. A third of the bishops had refused to read the Bill of Suppression and lawsuits over property continue one hundred years later. In some regions, "Loyola's Company" has incorporated as a multinational corporation. The Order pays over \$1.6 million for Emilio's medical care and is nearly bankrupt. There are no provisions in the retirement plan for the contraction of time during space travel, so Emilio is eligible for his pension.

Stella Maris

The interstellar spacecraft aboard which the first Jesuit mission to the planet Rakhat flies, the Stella Maris eventually returns home with but one survivor out of eight crew members: Emilio Sandoz. Alan Pace dies soon after landing. Fr. D. W. Yarborough, the Jesuit Superior, falls sick but survives for eighteen months, thanks to the doctoring of Anne Edwards. Both are then killed. Sofia Mendes marries Jimmy Quinn who is killed, but she remains on Rakhat for forty years. Emilio's charm, skill, and stamina get the mission off to a good start, but the Jana'ata are insulted by the institution of agriculture at Kashan Village and massacre all of the Jesuits except Emilio and Marc Robichaux, the mission's naturalist, who are taken prisoner. Robichaux bleeds to death while undergoing the operation that leaves Emilio crippled before he is found by the crew of a follow-up commercial mission, the Magellan, and is sent back to Earth alone.

Trucha Sai

A remote refuge in the southern forests of Rakhat to which the Runa resort whenever the Jana'ata smell too much blood and begin hunting them, Trucha Sai in the Ruanja language means "Forget Us" (Chap. 2, p. 24). After the massacre at Kashan, precipitated by Sofia Menez Quinn, the Runa head for Trucha Sai, led by Kanchay VaKashan. More refugees arrive from all over Inbrokar Province. Sofia's attempt to reach the ancient lander and fly home to Earth fails when it is found burned and looted, and she returns to Trucha Sai.



Themes

Religion

Religion fills Mary Doria Russell's novel *Children of God*. The book features two protagonists on separate worlds. Emilio Sandoz is a self-described apostate Roman Catholic priest on the verge of marrying when he is kidnapped by Jesuits with the Pope's approval and sent back to the planet where he has been mutilated and raped. The other is a Sephardic Jew who survives as a young orphan on Earth as a prostitute and then on the planet Rakhat for forty years living among hunted Runa refugees and a few Jana'ata, who have sworn off eating Runa. Sofia Mendes Quinn names her autistic son Isaac and chants the Sh'ma every evening, largely to calm him. As she shares Bible stories with the natives, Sofia is amused that she comes closer to proselytizing than the Jesuits, who forswear it on Rakhat. Isaac's constant companion is a Jana'ata girl, Ha'anala, who grows up to be a Moses figure among the refugees and is called rabbi. Judaism fares well in the novel, being admired by several Jesuits on its own merits and, through the doomed Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto in World War II, serving as an inspiration for the Runa uprising. It is natural for Sofia as a Jew to side with underdogs.

The traditional deities of Rakhat are surveyed rather perfunctorily in terms of the expected nature gods and personifications of various moods. The only detailed description is of a wealthy Jana'ata whose life is controlled by various gods in various periods; it appears to be a typical pattern. First- and second-born Jana'ata males have an obligation to chant an intricate hymn at evening, which Isaac is able to match perfectly. Sofia follows it with the Sh'ma. There is a certain syncretism to the ritual songs which offend neither community. In the end, Isaac discovers the three species' DNA sequences God's Music. It is notable that Russell mentions by name the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, who writes about God and creation meeting at the Omega Point.

The Catholics are shown in disarray. The Jesuits have for nearly a century been under a papal Bull of Suppression, which has created schism and many legal troubles. The new Pope, an African convert to Catholicism, is determined to end it and is willing to compromise. He openly subscribes to the Protestant rallying call of an ever-reforming church. Parish clergy are already allowed to marry. The novel consistently wrestles with whether or not the goal justifies the means mentality is moral or effective. The chief victim, Emilio, supposes that the size of the goal must determine that.

The individual Jesuits chosen for the two missions to Rakhat—both the deceased ones whom Emilio and Sofia recall and the one whom Emilio trains and is forced to join—seem enlightened with few fundamentalist tendencies and varying degrees of shaken faith. Only the father superior on the second mission feels a real calling to go to Rakhat, largely based on his Lakota Indian heritage; he wants to see a doomed culture preserved. Emilio had originally felt God inspiring the first mission, but cannot see why he is needed to suffer more going again and resents having been made to suffer without his permission on the first. He denies any redemptive power in suffering. One Jesuit is



disgusted by the kidnapping plot but cooperates because the Pope decrees it. The only truly pious crew member is a layman, Nico, who is considered mentally retarded but understands profound truths. The captain is a Dutch Reformed who predictably considers the Catholic Church a fraud but who also accepts that Abraham may have invented the concept of God to impose meaning on chaos and later people, finding comfort in this, perpetuate it. Although agnostic, the captain requests Nico's prayers. Emilio doubts that God exists but insists that if he does he has much to answer for—rather than daring to judge.

Music

Music runs through Mary Doria Russell's novel *Children of God*. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) travel to the planet Rakhat orbiting the stars of Alpha Centauri because their astronomers detect sophisticated music. The fathers find that it is created by the minority sentient population, the Jana'ata and sets them apart from the majority Runa, who find music painful to the ears. The Jana'ata, however, do not lend themselves to romantic visions; they breed the Runa to serve them as domestics for a lifetime and then become their foodstuffs. The official music is cultic, a kind of evensong exalting the foundational myths. Only first- and second-born sons are allowed to take part; females are excluded.

This changes with Hlavin Kitheri, a third-born royal son whose Runa tutor Selikat encourages him to study music when she cannot beat out of him the desire to sing. Exiled to Galatna Palace in Gayjur to prevent him from threatening his elder brothers or their sons, Hlavin creates utterly new chants, which he broadcasts to his sister. He brings in masters to study all aspects of musical theory and practice, and becomes a renowned musician and composer. This places him at mortal risk, but his brothers deem him harmless. As Hlavin attracts protégés, music dies within his soul and is revived only when he is introduced to spices brought from Earth and the sexual enjoyment of an earthling, protagonist Emilio Sandoz. Hlavin shares Emilio with his fellow poets and begins producing revolutionary music. Following the bloody coup that gives him dictatorial powers, music becomes even more egalitarian. Some of this new music reaches the crew of the *Giordano Bruno*, bringing a second expedition of Jesuits to the planet. Emilio is relieved to hear that it is no longer Hlavin singing, but the Kitheri touch is still there, although the high voices singing harmony could be Runa or even females.

At the same time, hidden in the South of Rakhat, an autistic Jew, Isaac Quinn, finds peace only in music. Light and the ordinary sounds of village life upset him. He memorizes the DNA sequences of humans, Jana'ata, and Runa, assigns notes to each base and species, filters out discords, and harmonizes the rest to produce "God's Music." One of the Jesuits recognizes instantly that this is what Isaac sings. He leaves it to Hlavin Kitheri's illegitimate son Rukuei to put words to the music and take it to Earth to share it with humanity. The DNA music reaches Earth before them, and believers, skeptics, atheists, and agnostics are divided over it. Emilio muses about how humans are biologically programmed to impose meaning, but the arts are nonetheless a miracle.



Genocide

Genocide haunts Mary Doria Russell's *Children of God*, but for most of the novel it is based on a false understanding of a shocking behavior involving the two sentient species on the planet Rakhat. A Jesuit mission arrives from Earth, having heard music and expecting high civilizations. They perceive that the Jana'ata are massacring innocent Runa rather than laying claim to a food source that is altogether legal according to planetary custom. Many aged Runa volunteer to become food once their working days are over and are shocked at the thought of wasting good meat. A Jew, Sofia Mendes Quinn, naturally identifying with the underdog, rises up as a Joan of Arc figure to call on the Runa to revolt. Her motto is "We are many. They are few" (Chap. 2, p. 23). Sofia compares the Runa to the Jews surrounded in the Warsaw ghetto and quotes a poem that talks of the Jews as "meat", which is defiant, insurgent, fighting, and in full cry. When a friend explains to her the myths about how the Runa first offer their babies to starving Jana'ata out of obligation to travelers, she still will not accept it. A civil war develops in which the Runa drive the Jana'ata into the North and the N'Jarr Valley, where they slowly starve to death. Thousands more are killed in wars and guerrilla actions.

A second Jesuit mission arrives, led by Fr. Daniel Iron Horse. From his first reading of the logs of the *Stella Maris*, Danny had felt destined to go to Rakhat. He alone appreciates Jana'ata culture and fears for its survival, for it parallels the history of his own people, the Lakota Sioux of the American Great Plains. Those who are not killed bravely fighting the U.S. Army are herded onto reservations where they drink themselves to death. When it is determined that the Jana'ata breeding stock has fallen below the minimum for the species to survive, Danny sets up a reservation, which he intends to be free of the errors of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (he is proud to be Canadian) and argues that anything is better than genocide. It is particularly important to save the Jana'ata musical tradition, which is what had first attracted the Jesuit's attention. The Runa, now in charge, are loath to believe that the Jana'ata now consider their flesh taboo—non-kosher—and have learned to stomach easily obtained protein sources that are unable to reason. The Jesuits help them hunt for non-sentient game and are working on domesticating some species. Hopes are that in time the species will be able to live together as has proved possible in smaller refugee situations.



Style

Point of View

Children of God is told in the third person past tense by an anonymous, omniscient narrator, who is fully sympathetic to the long-suffering, cantankerous protagonist, Emilio Sandoz, without downplaying his character faults. His immense sufferings have made him resign from the priesthood and from the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and lose all faith in God. Emilio nearly finds happiness with a woman and her child before being kidnapped for a return trip to the planet Rakhat, where he had been tortured.

A second thread follows the forty years that the only other survivor of that first expedition spends on Rakhat, living in hiding from liberated Runa who want to kill all Jana'ata as revenge for generations of being enslaved and serving as food. She brings up an autistic son among the noisy but caring Runa. There she is reunited with an old Jana'ata friend, Suupari, and his daughter Ha'anala. Ha'anala goes off to live among other refugees in a community where the species seek to live in harmony.

Sofia turns into a bitter, close-minded, and politically important old woman. This is one of the few cases in which a character becomes one-dimensional. Contrast this with Hlavin Kitheri, an enlightened ruler who strives to end the blind traditions that ossify society and guarantee stagnation. His debauched past—including the rape of Emilio and killing the relatives that stand in his way—keeps him from being a sympathetic character, but his musical gifts are not only recognized but exalted. Mary Doria Russell keeps all of these factors balanced and in tension as she deals with racial prejudices and the raw realities of the survival of species.

When the second Jesuit mission arrives to find conditions on Rakhat completely reversed from what they expect, the crew rallies to try to prevent the extinction of the Jana'ata, finally settling on a reservation system. The economic greed of the ship's owner is thwarted, but even Carlo is not demonized. The novel is filled with a large cast of characters, each of whom in turn is filled out and allowed to speak in distinct voices. This provides a variety of perspectives. Russell finds bits of humor at regular intervals to lighten the gloomy situations on Earth, aboard the Bruno, and on Rakhat. In the end, it appears that Emilio ends his fight with God, even though he acknowledges that God has a lot for which to answer.

Setting

Children of God opens in Naples, Italy, in 2060-62, as the Vatican and the Order of Jesus (Jesuits) conspire to send protagonist Emilio Sandoz back to the planet Rakhat in the Alpha Centauri system to redeem the mistakes made by an earlier mission, of which he is the soul survivor. Emilio agrees to train a new team but not to go along, so he is kidnapped. He and his trainees then spend some sixteen years aboard an asteroid



bored and fitted out to serve as a first-class interstellar spacecraft, the Giordano Bruno. The highlight of the trip is an impact with a micrometeorite, which nearly destroys them.

Parallel with this action, the novel also follows the lone survivor of the first expedition, Sofia Mendes Quinn, on the planet Rakhat in 2047-87. Sofia provokes the revolution of the placid Runa population against their masters, the Jana'ata. She is wounded and widowed, and spends much of the time in hiding in the dense forests of Trucha Sai. Her autistic song wanders off into the desert, where he discovers the secret of God's Music. Much of the action involves palace intrigues in Inbrokar City in central Rakhat. A bloody battle is fought there and the city is left in ruins.

The novel provides glimpses of the noble sons' seraglio at Galatna Palace in the city of Gayjur, which after the revolution becomes Sofia's home. Life in several smaller villages is depicted during the time of troubles that accompanies the Runa rebellion. The old guard Jana'ata are steadily driven north as the Runa control the south. A small enclave of refugees settles in the N'Jarr Valley and are driven to the point of starvation.

The novel ends with the Jesuits trying to effect peace in the N'Jarr Valley. Emilio and one Jana'ata musician return to earth aboard the Bruno and are shown living in quarantine aboard an orbiting hotel. Emilio returns to Naples to visit his lost lover's grave and in the cemetery meets his biological daughter and grandson.

Language and Meaning

Children of God reveals author Mary Doria Russell's training in cultural, social, and biological anthropology before turning to the writing of fiction. Russell deals with the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) sending a second mission to the planet Rakhat to make up for the debacle of their first mission from which only Emilio Sandoz returns alive. The second mission aims at liberating the majority population on Rakhat, which is bred for service and food by the master race. In the interim, the revolution has already taken place and the masters are an endangered species. Much of the novel describes this Earth-like world and its Earth-like social problems.

Because the Jesuits are involved, the novel is filled with linguistics and casuistry. The long-time conflict between the order and the Papacy have come to a head and the leaders of both Catholic institutions are anxious for reconciliation. Emilio is a linguist and a priest who loses his faith in God on Rakhat. There is much discussion of theodicy: why a benevolent God would permit evil to exist. Emilio goes beyond this to wonder if he has simply accepted human myths too readily, and some of his Jesuit brothers are also shaken. A Jew, Sofia Mendes Quinn, stranded on Rakhat by the first mission and thought to be dead, quietly shares her faith with the natives of Rakhat, bringing some into the fold in ways that the Jesuits had not thought possible.

The languages of Rakhat, K'San, a high literary tongue spoken by the master race, the Jana'ata, and Ruanja, the patois of the enslaved majority, the Runa, play a major role. Rarely are whole phrases quoted in these tongues, but the passive structure of Ruanja



permeates dialog in English. "Sipaj" opens most statements; late in the novel it is explained that this means "Hear me." The reader gets used to Va- being prefixed to place names to designate whence characters come. Names of plant and animal species, geographical landmarks, and cultural institutions are generally left to the reader to picture with minimal explanation or description. Among the polyglot humans, liberal amounts of Latin, Italian, Spanish, Irish, Lakota Indian, and snippets of Hebrew are included in the text. Most are readily understood in context, but Russell does not coddle readers who might speak only English.

Structure

Children of God takes up the story of Emilio Sandoz as he heals from the ordeal that he suffers in Mary Doria Russell's first novel, *The Sparrow*. The novel consists of a two-page Prelude followed by thirty-nine numbered chapters and a Coda. The chapter titles indicate where the action centers and the time-frame covered. Generally, action alternates between the planets Earth and Rakhat, with Emilio Sandoz and Sofia Mendes Quinn the respective foci of attention. In the final chapters the two strands are reunited.

The structure is complex but only occasionally confusing. The story is told in a present-time of 2060-62 on Earth, primarily in Naples, Italy, and then aboard the spacecraft *Giordano Bruno* outward bound to the planet Rakhat in 2062-78. Parallel with this, the novel traces the experiences of the sole human who survives on Rakhat from an earlier expedition of the spacecraft *Stella Maris*. These experiences range from 2047 and stretch through 2078, when the *Bruno* arrives. The earthbound story is one of intrigue, as the Vatican and Jesuit Order for political reasons conspire to send Emilio back to the place of his torture. Aboard the *Bruno*, the anguished linguist works to prepare the crew for whatever they may find.

Beginning in chapter twenty-one, normal pattern is interrupted by jumps forward in time to 2078-85 as Daniel Iron Horse and other crew members who remain on Rakhat learn from the now-aged participants in the social and political restructuring of Rakhat reflect on events. These provide the reader necessary perspective to understand what the Jesuits find when they land and try to effect the salvation of the endangered Jana'ata and keep their music from going extinct.

The Coda brings Emilio home to earth and ties up loose ends on both planets. Emilio learns of his lover's death, meets the biological daughter he had not known he conceives before being kidnapped for the mission, and finds himself at last at peace with all that has befallen him.

Quotes

" 'But if I am simply a deluded ape who took a lot of old folktales far too seriously then I brought all this on myself and my companions. The problem with atheism, I find, under these circumstances, is that I have no one to despise but myself. If, however, I choose to believe that God is vicious, then at least I have the solace of hating God.'" Prelude, p. 5

"She leaned forward and spoke with conviction and urgency, believing that at long last she had found someone who could see that the Runa need not collude in their own subjugation. 'You are more than meat. You have the right to stand up and say, Never again! They have claws and custom on their side. You have numbers and—' Justice, she'd meant to say, but there was no word in Ruanja for justice, or for fairness, or for equity." Chap. 4, p. 43

"In view of how the mating had turned out, Supaari was inclined to wish he'd never known any of them—Sandoz, the Reshtar, Jholaal. Fool: this is what comes of change, Supaari told himself. Move a pebble, risk a landslide." Chap. 5, p. 52

"He now held legal right to take the part of Eldest, but on this evening, Supaari was as silent as the Runa domestics cowering in the kitchen. I will sing again, he promised himself. Not here not among these benighted, spiteful fools. But somewhere, I will sing again." Chap. 10, p. 101

"She might have wished for some golden mean between Carlo's endlessly inventive eloquence and the strict, unexpansive silence of Emilio Sandoz. But in the end, she decided to play by Emilio's rules, even if she didn't quite know what they were. There didn't seem to be any other choice, apart from forgetting him altogether. And that, Gina found, was evidently not an option." Chap. 13, p. 124

"He sat down in front of the communications equipment and considered for a while what he would say. 'Fucked again,' came to mind, but the message would arrive when Celestina was still very young, and he rejected the remark as too vulgar.

"He settled on eleven words. 'Taken by force,' he said. 'I think of you. Listen with your hearts.'" Chap. 18, p. 192

"'Fear corrupts, not power,' she countered. 'Powerlessness debases. Power can be used to good effect or ill, but no one is improved by weakness,' she told him. 'The powerful can more easily cultivate longsightedness. They can be patient—even generous—in the face of opposition, knowing that they will prevail eventually. They do not feel that their lives are futile, because they have reason to believe that their plans will become reality.'" Chap. 21, p. 220

"They would remember later that the impact sounded like a rifle shot.

"There was a single unresonant bang, followed by an instant of utter silence in total darkness, and then the shouts and cries throughout the ship of men tumbling blindly



when the engines cut out and they lost the gravity provided by acceleration." Chap. 23, p. 242

"Emilio rolled his eyes. 'Religion—the wishful thinking of an ape that talks! You know what I think?' he asked rhetorically, trying to distract himself from yet another death. 'Random shit happens, and we turn it into stories and call it sacred scripture—'" Chap. 32, p. 347

"John stood just beyond the door, ready to clean the baby and take it to the father, but when he saw what Nico carried, the steam rising wispily from its fine, damp fur, he threw back his head and cried, 'Stillborn!' Nico burst into tears, and there was a great howl from the others that fell away when Sandoz lurched like a madman through the doorway and whispered in direct address, in denial and defiance, 'God, no. Not this time.'" Chap. 37, pp. 399-400

"She sat, and looked up, her head tilted almost coyly, waiting for him. Delicate as a wren, with her small spare hands in her lap, she had in repose a skeletal purity: elegant and fleshless and still. 'Thou art beautiful,' he thought, 'comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.'" Chap. 38, p. 409

" 'I didn't compose it. I discovered it.' Isaac turned and, with evident difficulty, looked for a full second into Emilio's eyes before breaking contact. 'Adenine, cytosine, guanine, thymine: four bases.' A pause. 'I gave the four bases three notes each, one for each species. Twelve notes.'" Chap. 39, p. 426



Topics for Discussion

Why does Emilio Sandoz have such a phobia about infants? How is this overcome?

In what ways is Ha'anala a Moses figure?

What roles does music play in the novel?

How does the philosophy that the ends justifies the means figure in this novel? What pain does it cause and in the final analysis, does it prove true?

How do the Runa contribute to their tragic situation? Does their revolution, like so many revolutions, transform the victims into victimizers?

Does Hlavin Kitheri have redeeming qualities? How do they balance his sins?

What does the novel say about imperialism, however well-meaning and planned?