

# **The Comedians Study Guide**

## **The Comedians by Graham Greene**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">The Comedians Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Part 1 Chapter 1.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Part 2 Chapter 1.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Part 2 Chapter 2.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Part 2 Chapter 3.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Part 3 Chapter 1.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Part 3 Chapter 3.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">43</a>



## Plot Summary

The Medea, a Dutch ship traveling from the US to Port-au-Prince carries Mr.. Brown, Mr.. and Mr.s. Smith, and Major Jones among its passengers. They entertain themselves in various ways, mostly discussing their experiences. Mr.. Smith is a presidential candidate in the US 1948 elections. He wants to establish a vegetarian center in Port-au-Prince. Mr.. Brown returns from the US, where he unsuccessfully tried to sell his hotel in Haiti losing money due to the violent regime sparking fear in everyone, including tourists. Major Jones is on a secret business mission.

Mr.. Brown, the narrator, was born in Monte Carlo. His mother's last name was the Comtesse de Lascot-Villiers. She fled Monte Carlo when he was at the Society of Jesus Catholic school. He was expelled for putting during the mess a token into the collection bag instead of a coin. After leaving school he went to England and obtained work as a waiter. He kept working obtaining subsequent positions with mostly forged references until he received a postcard from Port-au-Prince in Haiti from his mother, who was inviting him to see her. Soon after his arrival she died leaving him Trianon Hotel. He immediately decided to make the hotel the most successful hotel in Port-au-Prince, although he managed to achieve that only for a short time.

The Captain receives various cable inquiries about Major Jones, who is arrested upon arrival in Haiti. When Mr.. Brown reaches his hotel he finds the Minister for Social Welfare, Mr.. Philipot dead near his swimming pool. The Minister chased away other guests that stayed in the hotel and then committed suicide. Mr.. and Mr.s. Smith arrive at the Trianon Hotel just when Mr.. Brown examines the dead body next to the pool. He manages to distract them from seeing the corpse, hiding it also from his lover, Martha, who follows Mr.. and Mr.s. Smith to the hotel. She is the wife of the South American ambassador, Mr.. Pineda.

When Mr.. Brown's friend, Doctor Magiot, arrives they dispose Philipot's body outside the city near the road. The next day Mr.. Smith inquires about Mr.. Jones's disappearance. They all go to the Secretary of State to find out about his whereabouts, but their intervention is unsuccessful. Finally they discover that Mr.. Jones is detained by the police. When they visit him he reveals that he got into trouble because of the wrong name on his letter of introduction he had with him. With their help he rectifies his mistake, giving them another letter of introduction to pass to the secret police the Tonton Macoute. They don't hear of him for a while. The next time Mr.. Brown's encounters with Mr.. Jones is in a brothel. Mr. Jones is seeing Mr. Brown's favorite prostitute while Captain Concasseur waits outside.

During Mr. Philipot's funeral, his coffin with his body is stolen. Mr. Smith who witnessed the incident with his wife and Mr. Brown inquire about it, discussing it with the Minister. He is offered a site for a vegetarian centre in exchange for bribes. Henri Philipot wants to take revenge for his uncle's death and starts looking for an arm supply. Mr. Brown directs him to see Mr. Jones. Following an attack on the police station Mr. Brown is



interrogated at his hotel. Mr. Smith, who intervenes on Mr. Brown's behalf, rescues him from being killed by the police.

Mr. Smith finally gives up on his mission and decides to leave Haiti. Mr. Brown receives an offer from Mr. Jones to become his partner in a deal with the government, but refuses to reveal its details until he receives Mr. Brown's agreement to join him. Mr. Brown, however, is reluctant to join him due to his suspicions about him.

Mr. Jones turns up at Mr. Brown's hotel in the middle of the night, as his deal fails. They seek help on the Medea that has just arrived in the port, but the police turns up during their meeting with the Captain. In the end, the Captain refuses to help them although he keeps his dealings with them secret from the police.

Mr. Brown takes Mr. Jones to the only place where Mr. Jones can find refuge: the South American embassy. Mr. and Mrs. Pineda accept Mr. Jones and they soon become friends. Their friendship evokes jealousy in Mr. Brown. He is envious of his lover spending time with Mr. Jones, who may stay there indefinitely. The government decides to replace Mr. Pineda upon finding out that Mr. Jones is hiding in his embassy. Before the replacement of Mr. Pineda is executed Mr. Brown arranges to get Mr. Jones away from the embassy by taking him to the rebels in the mountains led by Henri Philipot, who needs someone with an army experience. Although at the last minute Mr. Jones confesses that he has no such experience it is too late to go back and he proceeds with the plan to join the rebels. They travel to the place of meeting but they are late for the meeting with Henri Philipot and Joseph. The police find them the next day and are about to take them back to Port-au-Prince when Philipot and Joseph turn up killing the policemen. Both, Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones have to flee to the mountains. Mr. Brown crosses the Dominican border while Mr. Jones stays with the rebels, eventually getting killed during the clash with the Haitian army.



# Part 1 Chapter 1

## Part 1 Chapter 1 Summary

The Medea, a Dutch ship traveling from the US to Port-au-Prince carries Mr. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, and Major Jones among its passengers. They entertain themselves in various ways, mostly discussing their experiences. Mr. Smith is a presidential candidate in the US 1948 elections. He wants to establish a vegetarian center in Port-au-Prince. Mr. Brown returns from the US, where he unsuccessfully tried to sell his hotel in Haiti losing money due to the violent regime sparking fear in everyone, including tourists. Major Jones is on a secret business mission.

Mrs. Smith is compassionate towards black people. She and her husband support vegetarianism as a way of life that can lead to a more peaceful existence. They want to spread vegetarianism in Haiti because refraining from killing animals may also reduce the propensity to kill people. They have some support for their cause from societies such as theosophist or the Anti-Blood Sports League.

In the meantime, the captain of the ship receives a telegram inquiring about Mr. Jones due to suspicions about him. He inquires Mr. Brown about Mr. Jones, but he refuses to be an informer. Mr. Brown feels sympathetic towards Mr. Jones who shares with him his view on people that are either toffs or tarts. Toffs are settled and have a good job while tarts are alert adventurers who change places, but need toffs. Toffs are reasonable, intelligent, and have a character. Tarts are spontaneous, fast, and witty. While toffs have advantage of fortune and stability, tarts seem to enjoy life more. Sometimes tarts pretend to be toffs and vice versa. He considers Haiti to be a country of tarts. Tarts share affinity with those of a similar nature. He suspects that Mr. Brown is a tart pretending to be a toff.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones play poker sharing their experiences they had with the game. Mr. Jones can guess cards of his opponents, observing their reactions, and the way they handle cards. He employs his knowledge of psychology to see through the intentions of the players. Mr. Jones secures a modest win to buy cigarettes and drinks.

Mr. Smith is unaware of dangers in Haiti inviting the use of force. Only if driven by circumstances such as defending his wife would he resort to the violent behavior he opposes. The Haitian President, called Papa Doc or Baron Samedi hides from the public, while Cap Haitien is under martial law, making violence a common feature of life. Mr. Brown, entangled in his private affairs is forced to go back to Haiti, failing to sell his hotel. For him life seems more of a comedy, but as such it can quickly turn into tragedy, as laughter follow tears.

The captain warns the passengers to be in touch with their consulates because the rebels attacked through the Haitian border. He is then to proceed with his ship to Santo Domingo. Before approaching Haiti, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Jones stage a performance with an



orchestra. Mr. Jones recites his own poem called "the Warden's Patrol" only later claiming its authorship. At the end of the entire performance Mr. Fernandez breaks into tears for no apparent reason. Mrs. Smith comforts him, and they all join to sing Auld Lang Syne.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown exchange information about their occupations that are stated in their passports. They are both vague; Mr. Brown is to be a businessman while Mr. Jones is a company director.

## Part 1 Chapter 1 Analysis

When three characters, Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Smith meet on the Medea traveling to Haiti their lives become intertwined and never again the same. The name Medea, according to its origin symbolizes crimes of passions and revenge. It is also interconnected with a pursuit that ends nowhere, as it turns out to be the case for the characters. They are all on a mission, although Mr. Brown's mission is ending with the end of his hotel that used to be his only dream. He wanted to sell it to pursue his lover, Mr. Pineda's wife, Martha, even though his romance has always been troubled. Now he is also on the verge of bankruptcy. He suspects that Mr. Jones is a con, who tries to get an audience for his stories about his fake army adventures. Mr. Jones plays his role of Major Jones. His only ability though is to entertain and he does it well, gaining sympathy everywhere. Mr. Smith, on the other hand, appears and is genuine although he knows nothing about the country to which he is going. He is surprised that shooting occurs in Haiti, and has no idea about the Tonton Macoute. Mr. Brown realizes that his status may be more valuable than his money and invites him to his hotel.

The entertainment concludes a final performance that is usually arranged at the end of the journey. Comedy for Mr. Brown can end in tears. Consequently the performance is interrupted with Mr. Fernandez bursting into tears, although no one knows why, thus laughter ends.

The Medea indicates the course that the characters choose. From this course they are unable to back away. It is clearly a no return course for Jones who embarks on this journey because of lack of other alternatives. His propensity to entertain makes him less insightful, as his grip on reality leads him straight into prison upon arrival.



## Chapter 2

### Chapter 2 Summary

Upon arrival Mr. Brown meets Petit Pierre, a well-connected journalist and Metis, with ties to the Tontons Macoute. He welcomes Mr. Brown with surprise and disdain in his usual manner.

Driving through the city Mr. Brown stops near the Columbus statue, seeing a car resembling that of his girlfriend Martha's. The car turns out to be hers. She also notices him in the end, surprised at his return. They make love and Brown returns with Martha to his hotel that has some sentimental value for him. The hotel is old-fashioned and built in a twentieth century style.

While she waits for him outside, he examines his property. Feeling in need of a home and a wife, he is disappointed with changes that occurred there during his absence. His cook, gardener, guests and brass paperweight are all missing. Instead, he finds Dr Philipot, the Minister for Social Welfare dead next to his swimming pool. His servant Joseph explains that Dr Philipot came and refused to go away despite being told to go to the mountains. Mr. Brown requests that Joseph fetches Dr Magiot, his friend and a local doctor, when he takes Martha back to town.

They are startled by the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, who enter expressing their satisfaction with the performance of the custom men. Along with them appears Martha. She wants to show them the pool and moves the lamp in the direction of the dead body just before Mr. Brown gets it off her hand, and moves it away towards the John Barrymore suite prepared for Mr. and Mrs. Smith. When Joseph appears he quickly asks him to take the Smiths to their room.

The lights flash, and Mr. Brown manages to get Martha away from the pool. Mr. Smith appears on the balcony asking for an additional blanket. He finally notices someone near the pool but Mr. Brown quickly explains that it is only a beggar. Dr Philipot is the official Mr. Smith was going to see in his matter. Mr. Brown turns off the lights while Martha remains with him. They kiss and agree to meet again.

After she leaves, Mr. Brown sits on the edge of the pool, awaiting Dr Magiot. Mr. Jones is detained by the customs for no apparent reason. Mr. Brown hears a drum beat near Kenscoff and a Voodoo tonelle. The usual sounds, though, are absent. He chases away a dog drawn to the blood of the dead body. His only consolation is that he has some guests, rekindled his affair with Martha, but most of all managed to stay alive.

### Chapter 2 Analysis

Mr. Brown faces complications as soon as he arrives at his hotel upon the discovery of the dead body of Dr Philipot, the Minister for Social Welfare. The hotel seems to be a



substitute for home and wife that he never had. He has developed a sentiment towards this place that he associates with his mother while being a source of pride. Petit Pierre is engaged in role-playing. He moves quickly, smiles, and laughs. On one hand he is involved with the Tontons Macoute while maintaining solidarity with other people.

Mr. Brown manages to hide from Mr. and Mrs. Smith the dead Minister near his swimming pool. They remain convinced that it was a beggar. He wants to spare Martha the details of his discovery in the meantime.

Despite changes that occurred in Brown's absence, he finds some aspects of his previous life the same. It includes his mistress Martha, who remained faithful to him despite his expectations to the contrary. The contrast between his past life in the hotel full of people and life and the current emptiness seems daunting. The dead body near the pool seems to be a premonition of the end of an era. The menace of the current regime professing trouble even further destroys his hope for better outcomes. He knows that his run down business cannot survive for too long, and is as dead as the body that he finds inside. The drums nearby are new. The tragedy of the body of the government official can only be a sign of the worst things to come.





# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Mr. Brown's resume reflects his life's uncertainties. He was born in Monte Carlo in 1906. He never met his father although claims that his parents were British. His mother was either French or a Monegasque. He assumes that his name is Brown. His mother's name at the time of her death was the Comtesse de Lascot-Villiers. She left without paying his school bills when he was at the Society of Jesus School in Monte Carlo. Nevertheless the school decided to keep him because he seemed to have a lot of potential. He was good at Latin although he only remembered one line: 'Exegi monumentum aere perennius...', a phrase by Horace meaning: "I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze" (Greene, p. 65, 1966). He remembered this line especially after inheriting his hotel that inspired him to make it the best hotel in the Caribbean. His dream was only short-lived.

His career of an hotelier was unexpected. He displayed good acting abilities but the intensity of his training turned him into a rebel. One day he managed to get to Casino while wearing a make up, and win three hundred pounds. He lost there his virginity with the wife of a director of the Banque de l'Indochine. He was expelled from the school when throwing into the mess collection bag a token instead of a coin. In a forged letter from his nonexistent uncle in England, he was offered employment and left after assuring to repay all outstanding debts. He goes to England and becomes a waiter in a French restaurant.

He obtains various positions through forged references, advising educational publishers or supervising the style of propaganda to Vichy territory in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. Some jobs on his resume are missing. He finally decides to give up his career to sell imitations of paintings. Upon receiving a letter from his sick mother he sells his art gallery and flies to Port-au-Prince. He finds her at the Trianon Hotel. He also meets Marcel, a black man, Petit Pierre, and Dr Magiot, who informs him that his mother had a heart attack. Dr Magiot knows that she would not survive another attack.

Mr. Brown learns from his mother that she owns the hotel while Marcel, her lover owns one third of the hotel. She inherited her title from her former husband, the count. She became the owner of the hotel after her employer, Monsieur Dechaux assigned her such title to avoid taxes. She was older than him and left the hotel in her will but he died in a car accident. The will needed to be changed. After having sex with Marcel for the last time she died the next day. Mr. Brown inherited sixty-five hotel shares, and decided to buy out Marcel. The remaining shareowners were Doctor Magiot and a lawyer.

While Marcel was still mourning Mr. Brown secured a loan from the bank manager to repay Marcel's shares. Marcel accepted it but lost most of the money in the casino. Mr.



Brown was also there that night meeting Martha Pineda, the wife of the South American ambassador. Marcel came back to Trianon Hotel, rented a room, and hanged himself.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

Mr. Brown's current life is interwoven with his past. His uncertain past reflects his equally uncertain life. Certain elements in his life retain its holes. He never knew his father and barely knew his mother. His unpredictable life finally led him to meet his dying mother. The new adventure of running a hotel coincided with meeting Martha Pineda, the wife of the South American ambassador. The relationship that failed to deliver any successful resolution was yet another complication in the life that was to be doomed forever by the cruel regime of Papa Doc. Even Mr. Brown's desperate attempt to get rid of the property was too late, with little hope of delivering a sale. He is doomed to witness the demise of the country he chose to live in as well as his own. He was unable to free himself of the burden. As much as he finds the charm of the city appealing, it sucks him in like a vortex inside. His love affair seems insufficient to recompense for the fear and boredom otherwise. With the decline of the standard of life, utilities, such as telephone ceasing to function, Mr. Brown starts to move away from life and its concerns. He leaves politics and hopes to leave his hotel behind. Despite his determination he finds himself missing his love that finally compels him to go back.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Dr Magiot arrives to examine Dr Philipot. They empty his pockets to avoid any implications of his connection with Mr. Brown. In one of his pockets they find Mr. Brown's missing paperweight. They carry his body to Dr Magiot's car and travel out of town. They then drive off the road and remove Dr Philipot from the car.

The following morning Mr. and Mrs. Smith discuss their affairs with Mr. Brown. Mr. Smith has a letter of introduction to the Minister of Social Welfare, Dr Philipot with whom he is to discuss a new vegetarian center. Mr. Brown suggests finding out beforehand about any changes that may have occurred. They want the center to be presentable so that the President can open it. Mr. Brown warns them that the President is afraid to leave his place, but they disbelieve him. Mr. Jones appears to be missing.

Petit Pierre arrives with the newspaper containing his article about the new guests and Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown inquires about Mr. Philipot, but Petit Pierre knows only that he is traveling in the north. Pierre asks about Mr. Jones who claims to be Mr. Smith's friend. He has been arrested for the allegedly incriminating contents of his baggage. Mr. Brown suspects that Pierre gathers information about Mr. Jones. Mr. Brown knows nothing about him, and Pierre suggests how to clarify the matter. He thinks it would be wise to talk to the chief of police rather than engaging the government that doesn't accept protests from foreigners.

Mr. Brown with Mr. and Mrs. Smith go to see a charge, who tells them that he also received a telegram cautioning him about Mr. Jones. He can only initiate a formal inquiry, as in Haiti people can be easily arrested on the street for no reason. Mr. Brown has to try other ways of helping Mr. Jones. He is unsure about the new role he is playing.

When Mr. Smith finds out that Mr. Jones was detained, he is furious and they all go to see the Secretary of State. Mr. Brown convinces the Secretary to meet Mr. Smith as the former presidential candidate just when the Secretary is to leave for the United Nations to protest against the Dominican Republic rebels being allegedly supplied with American guns. Mr. Smith tries to offer a bail for Mr. Jones, but Haiti adheres to the Napoleonic Code and doesn't recognize bails. The secretary accepts a bribe from them disguised as financial compensation for any damage that Mr. Jones could have made, but promises no results, especially if the president is involved.

They are allowed to see Mr. Jones at the police station. They find him in a cell. He is sitting on a bucket turned upside down, next to a straw-mattress with plasters on his face with his arm bandaged. They are told by the police that he fought to resist arrest. According to Mr. Jones, the police arrested him as soon as he reached the Customs without charging him. Mr. Jones suspects that he received a wrong introduction in



Leopoldville. He asks for a paper and a pen, writes something in French, and hands it for the sergeant to hand it in to the appropriate person. Mr. Brown notices that the paper from Mr. Jones is addressed to one of the Tontons Macoute officers.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Mr. Brown with the help of Doctor Magiot manages to dispose of Philipot's body. Mr. Smith is adamant about the pursuit of his mission to spread vegetarianism in Haiti, unaware of the urgency of the basic needs that the country is facing. He seems to be oblivious to the signs of horror evident in everyday life, such as the fear of President himself to go on the street, lack of telephone communication, curfews, or turning off the lights in town. The lack of basic freedom rights troubling an average citizen deters any inclinations towards vegetarian diet that cannot provide solutions to immediate problems. Mr. Brown admires Mr. Smith's idealism that blinds him to other factors pervading Haiti, such as lack of tourists who avoid this part of the world. The government fabricates appearances, pretending to diminish illiteracy in certain parts of the country.

Mr. Brown cynically observes that the parts where the government wants to eradicate lack of education are prone to natural disaster that can help in this matter in real terms. There is little truth in reporting news that serves political means whenever is convenient, such as reporting that the rebels were caught with American arms. Equally, troublesome people or politicians are discarded without any scruples. Journalists are used to gather information for the government while fabricating stories that serve the government to maintain its control.

Mr. Brown assumes now the role of a responsible businessman, who tries to take care of his guests and a fellow countryman. He realizes that his act cannot be too absurd and he must be careful that his play is not too exaggerated. They are allowed to see Mr. Jones after bribing the Secretary of the State. Despite reaffirming the superiority of the regime, this bribe allows Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith to check on Mr. Jones in prison.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

While Mr. Smith composes an article for his hometown journal Joseph announces that Dr Philipot's body has been found. Those who were associated with him took refuge in the Venezuelan Embassy. Sneering at Papa Doc's medical qualifications in his presence caused his fall from grace. Mr. Brown is invited to see Martha at the embassy, as her son is ill.

Mr. Smith learns from Joseph that Philipot's body was discovered by a woman searched by the police. Mr. Brown peruses Mr. Smith's articles about his efforts to establish a vegetarian center. He warns him to delete any references to Philipot because of censorship in Haiti. Upon finding out about Mr. Philipot's suicide Mr. Smith wants to send his wife flowers. Joseph appears announcing that Dr Philipot's funeral procession has been halted near the hotel. Mr. and Mrs. Smith run outside to join the procession. Mr. Brown follows them. Mrs. Philipot is standing in front of the hearse, protesting against the militia barricading the road, and forcing her to return to the city. Mr. Smith thinks it is a mistake and offers help.

Four men arrive in an old Cadillac and start smashing the glass of the hearse. When Mrs. Smith attacks one of them she is thrown aside. Her husband is ready to defend her just as Mr. Brown gets him away. The men take the coffin to their car despite Madame Philipot's protests, drive away and then return. One of the policemen questions Mr. Brown about Mr. Smith, his servant Joseph, and his hotel. Joseph suspects that the president is after his minister's body to do Voodoo work on him.

Mr. Smith analyses the incident that he intends to include in his article, but upon considering the consequences of publishing it he decides not to send it until he returns safely with his wife to the US.

Mr. Brown appears the same evening at the embassy to see Martha. The ambassador greets him mentioning that the father of his German wife committed suicide in Germany. Mr. Hamit, a Syrian hotel owner and Philipot's nephew, Henri appear. They comment on the incident with Philipot's coffin and refugees seeking asylum. Mr. Brown questions the roles they all play, doubting Mr. Jones's identity. Martha pretends indifference towards Brown, but gets angry when hearing the comment about comedians. For her, her life of taking care of her son is real. Her feelings are also real. She invites Mr. Brown to see her son. He would like to have sex with her, but they argue and instead decide to meet later.

Mr. Brown leaves, ending up visiting a brothel run by Mere Catherine. The brothel is also visited by the secret police, the Tonton Macoute. Other customers left when seeing them. He meets the same man he met earlier at the police station, who earlier took Philipot's coffin, Captain Concasseur. Concasseur is there with a foreign visitor, who is



seeing Mr. Brown's favorite prostitute, Tin Tin. Mr. Brown changes his mind about having sex with her now, especially after talking with Concasseur about violence in Haiti. The important guest that visits his prostitute comes out turning out to be Mr. Jones. Tin Tin follows him, admitting she like Mr. Jones, because he makes her laugh.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

As Mr. Smith begins to experience Duvelier's regime, he becomes more attuned to the life in Haiti. He discusses censorship in Haiti with Mr. Brown when upon the noises outside he joins the funeral procession. Mr. Philipot's body is stolen by the secret police and his wife is assaulted as she tries to defend Mrs. Philipot. Even though they are not Haitian and such assault could normally be investigated, there is nothing Mr. Smith can do.

Mr. Brown is to embark on another role he has to play when going to see Martha at the embassy, where he also meets Henri Philipot and Hamit. He realizes that Mr. Jones may be playing the same game he is, when assuming the role of the French waiter in the past or a French poet. He has to pretend all the time that he has no close relations with Martha knowing that Hamit is aware of their affair.

The ambassador is not opposing role-playing but the type of the role one is playing. For him the sense of style or the quality of the role may be justifying a profession. Martha, on the other hand, has the sense of virtue and goodness about her through her attachment to her child. She considers affection and love as greater than sin, as virtue is insufficient to be an excuse. As she writes in her letter to Mr. Brown engaging in jealousy and revenge leads to becoming lost which is worse, because it is wrong. Making mistakes can be excused. For her, error is not wrong if it is surpassed by love.



# Part 2 Chapter 1

## Part 2 Chapter 1 Summary

Mr. Smith is determined to unravel the mystery of Mr. Philipot's death even though no one is able to provide any answer as to what happened to him or his body. Even the new Secretary for Social Welfare whom both Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown meet to discuss the project of the vegetarian centre offers no explanation. Mr. Philipot could have been killed as he failed to provide water to certain areas that could have sparked the revenge of the victims. His funeral procession was to be arrested because his coffin was filled with bricks instead of his body. Fearing to endanger his cause Mr. Smith resorts to focus only on his own matter, the vegetarian centre. He discusses the center that would also have a restaurant, library, a lecture-hall, and kitchen with the Minister. Later, a cinema, theater with free educational books would be added. The Minister agrees on such site if there is equal contribution from the US to build the site. It would then be refundable on completion. He wants to show Mr. Smith sites that could be used for the center. Mr. Brown knows that refunds would most likely never eventuate once the financial contribution is made.

Mr. Brown doesn't see Martha for some time due to his argument with her and her son's illness. She visits him in his hotel. The presence of Mr. and Ms Smith chases them away from the hotel, and they make love near the swimming pool discussing their beliefs or lack of them.

Mr. Smith travels with Mr. Brown and the Minister to Duvalierville that is to resemble Brasilia on completion where the vegetarian centre can be erected. Upon their arrival they find only four houses in an empty place. They barely resemble Brasilia. No one is working there, and only a justice of peace is seating on a chair while a beggar appears with no legs, moving only with his arms. As the Minister shows the site, the beggar takes out a wooden statuette. The Minister orders to get the statuette, claiming that he is not a beggar but an artist. He wants to offer the statuette to Mr. Smith who insists on paying for it even if the Minister wants to ignore the beggar. Finally Mr. Smith hands the beggar a bunch of dollar-bills only to be taken away by the justice peace as soon as they all drive away.

On their way back the Minister discusses bribing. Mr. Smith finally announces that he wants to reconsider the project. He comes to terms with the reality of life in Haiti where corruption and crime is rampant.

At the hotel Mr. Smith's optimism takes over, and he decides to reconsider the project discussing it with his wife. Mr. Brown finds the British charge waiting for him. He is going on leave but is still curious about Mr. Jones's involvement with the government, his escape from the Congo, and his inquiries about the asylum in the British embassy. When he leaves Henri Philipot appears announcing that he went to see Mr. Jones, as suggested by Mr. Brown, to inquire about the Bren guns. Mr. Jones responded that he





has already a deal with the government involving weapons and can only be interested if Philipot has anything better to propose. Philipot has only to offer his idealism as part of his fight for a better future.

Mr. Smith decides to give his vegetarian project one more go after discussing it with his wife. They all have dinner with Mr. Magiot at the hotel next Saturday night. They discuss lawlessness in Haiti, where the only law is the Tonton Macoute. The state Catholic religion virtually doesn't exist there with the Archbishop in exile. Communism as propaganda is forbidden, but the work of Lenin and Marx are accepted as a philosophical view.

## Part 2 Chapter 1 Analysis

Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown meet the new Minister for Social Welfare. Mr. Smith inquires about Mr. Philipot's death concerned about the conflict he and his wife experienced with the police when witnessing his funeral procession. He inquires the Minister about the incident but he explains only that the procession has been interrupted because the coffin was filled with stones rather than the body. Mr. Smith is so optimistic that he fails to see that the Minister is corrupt.

The Minister justifies Mr. Philipot's suicide as caused by his inability to manage work, corruption, and his tyranny against people. Mr. Smith finds it hard to believe that the Minister for Social Welfare could be a tyrant, and the Minister is unable to prove it. His death, however, can always be explained. He is still officially presumed to be missing although it is assumed that he has been killed. As there is a political plot involved, the crime is not investigated. The Minister has no obligation to explain anything and informs Mr. Smith in the end that inquiries about Mr. Philipot's death will take time. While the matter is unfinished, uncertain, and unresolved, no one is able to interfere.

Despite the Minister's corruption Mr. Smith decides to have one more attempt at his center. The utter poverty touches him as equally as lack of any believes or faith, except for Voodoo. He learns more about the situation in Haiti during the dinner at the hotel with Dr Magiot. The only faith that Doctor Magiot has is in the future of communism. He considers fighting as less important than one's belief. For him dying means little unless one has faith.





## Part 2 Chapter 2

### Part 2 Chapter 2 Summary

Mr. Brown agrees to take Joseph to a secret Voodoo ceremony that is held near Kenscoff. It is the only occasion when Mr. Brown attends such ceremony that he regards as distasteful. He watches with disdain the chanting and prayers mixed with summons to a god. A priest appears towards the climax with a trussed cock. He puts its head into his mouth and crunches it, smearing the blood onto the floor covered with ash patterns.

Mr. Brown notices Mr. Henri Philipot among the crowd, who disappears soon after the ritual with the cock begins. A corpse in a white sheet is brought and laid next to the fire. The priest puts the corpse into the flames and then removes it. The ritual is repeated with other corpses as well. He watches Joseph accepting a red scarf and a machete from the priest which he then starts swinging around. After Mr. Philipot returns Joseph drinks some spirit from the bottle he holds in his hand, approaches him, and catches him by his hair. In the end, Joseph forces Mr. Philipot to drink the spirit turns around, and faints. Three men along with Philipot carry Joseph out. After the ceremony is finished Mr. Brown waits for Joseph but he disappears somewhere. Mr. Brown drives back home alone. At four o'clock in the morning Captain Concasseur arrives.

Concasseur threatens Mr. Brown with the gun pointed at him. Earlier that day two policemen were killed during the shooting at the police station while other policemen fled. Mr. Philipot was identified as one of the attackers. Concasseur wants to know about Mr. Philipot's connection with Mr. Jones, but Mr. Brown denies any knowledge of it. Concasseur threatens to kill Mr. Brown, who struggles to maintain his calm. The policemen try to force Mr. Brown to confess by grabbing the chair from underneath him and kicking him on the shin. Mr. Brown admits he went with Joseph to a Voodoo ceremony, where he saw Mr. Philipot, who then left. He is about to be struck down and urinates when Mrs. Smith appears demanding a warrant in broken French. She orders that the policemen give her their guns. While Captain Concasseur tries to remember where he has seen her before, she tells him he should leave as he hasn't found anything. Only when she announces that she is going to get her husband, they leave.

Mr. Brown receives a letter of apology for the incident from Mr. Jones who threatens to break off his relations with the Tontons Macoute for attacking his friend while personally insulting him in this way. He invites him for a drink but Mr. Brown doesn't attend.

Later, during Martha's visit they hear two shots fired. Two men taken out of prison have been killed in retaliation for the attack on the police station. Mr. Smith decides to leave after he meets the Minister for Social Welfare again who outlines him how the project for the vegetarian centre can be completed even without money through deception, including deceiving workers, and corruption.



## Part 2 Chapter 2 Analysis

Mr. Brown is skeptical about attending the Voodoo ceremony with Joseph, one of the participants. Mr. Brown already abandoned one faith. He considers another faith equally pointless. He remains unmoved by the ceremony that he finds cruel and distasteful. Uninspired by the superstition Mr. Brown returns to his hotel only to find that the Tontons Macoute want to investigate him in connection with the attack on the police station. He is also skeptical about the effectiveness of the rebellion Philipot and Joseph want to organize. Philipot's idealism that is apparent in his poetry can be insufficient to deliver results. He may inspire, but it may be not enough to fight the criminal regime.

Both Martha and Mr. Brown learnt in their lives that action could be dangerous. Her father became a war criminal and died while his mother received a resistance-medal for her engagement in fighting the government. Mr. Brown faces the discovery of his affair with Martha by Mr. and Mrs. Smith who has seen them both walking out of the hotel. His assumptions turn out to be the effect of his perpetual guilt. It is the internal struggle that keeps him in the relationship as well. His doomed life exacerbates his doomed relationship. Mr. Smith finally gives up on his mission hearing shots on the street, and facing the outright corruption of the government.



## Part 2 Chapter 3

### Part 2 Chapter 3 Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Smith abandon their mission of spreading a vegetarian lifestyle in Haiti. On the way to the airport they make their final charity gesture, giving away coins to beggars. Mr. Smith throws the content of his wife's bag on the street, but the money attracts everyone not just beggars. A fight erupts where those more able start beating those who have no legs or arms. Mr. Brown takes quickly Mr. Smith into the car. He notices Mr. Jones and Hamit watching the scene. One is lost while the other bewildered looking at the incident.

After taking the Smiths to the airport Mr. Brown decides to see Mr. Jones after all. Upon reaching his house they discuss Mr. Jones's past realizing they both didn't know their fathers. Mr. Jones has a deal with the Haitian government. He also met Henri Philipot who wants to fight Papa Doc. Mr. Jones would join him but such involvement is likely to ruin his financial scheme with the government. Mr. Jones wants Mr. Brown to be a partner in his deal, offering him a quarter of million of dollars. Before agreeing Mr. Brown wants to know the details, but Mr. Jones asks for his consent first. Reluctant to join, even when reminded that his hotel is already a failure, Mr. Brown leaves without an answer. Instead of home he goes to the casino to escape the emptiness of his own place.

In the casino he has a few drinks when someone calls him Mr. Jones by mistake. It is the purser from the Medea. They go back to the Medea exchanging news about the passengers. The purser invites Mr. Brown for a drink, but he refuses, afraid to remain later on the ship. A policeman in front of the ship watches them both, but the purser claims he is a friend.

They talk about Mr. Jones who was to be a Libra and display artistic talents. The purser seems sympathetic towards him and invites them both next time.

### Part 2 Chapter 3 Analysis

Mr. Brown experiences time and time again the good will and big heart of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, who want to see the inhabitants of Haiti benefit from their visit in one way or the other. They decide to offer beggars on the street a bag full of coins. Again their good intentions go astray when the fight erupts on the street over the money. Instead of getting money people get hurt in an unscrupulous street combat. Whoever is stronger gets the money. Even Mr. Smith himself becomes endangered and has to be quickly saved by Mr. Brown, who gets him into the car and then takes him with his wife to the airport. Mr. Smith's presence already led to various inquiries and the Tontons Macoutes want him to leave as soon as he can.



Mr. Brown decides to meet Mr. Jones after failing to see him for a drink earlier. Mr. Jones makes a few discoveries that astonish him on one hand while arise awe as well. Both Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown have little knowledge of their families. They both never met their father. It makes them both feel a certain sentiment towards Mr. Smith as a father figure although Mr. Brown wants to disassociate himself from any connection he may have with Mr. Jones. He is equally amazed to hear that Mr. Jones, despite being a rogue also has dreams. His disdain for his schemes turns into a certain sympathy. He realizes that Mr. Jones is boastful. This discovery allows him later to set up a perfect trap for him.



# Part 3 Chapter 1

## Part 3 Chapter 1 Summary

After Mr. Brown returns from the Medea Mr. Jones appears in the middle of the night, drenched in the rain with a parcel under his coat. Once inside the hotel, he tells Mr. Brown that his deal failed through and he has to leave immediately to avoid investigation by Concasseur. Mr. Brown suggests that he may find refuge on the Medea that is currently in port.

Mr. Jones admits he failed to realize he had insufficient time to orchestrate his scheme. Captain Concasseur traveled to Miami to check the details of the deal and discovered that the deal was fake. Mr. Brown knows that similar such arm deals previously failed. Nevertheless, he agrees to help him. They are to seek refuge at the British embassy as their last resource.

They travel to the Medea and meet the captain of the ship. He is suspicious about Mr. Jones's credentials, demanding his travel documents. In view of previous inquiries about Mr. Jones the captain is reluctant to help him, suggesting that he goes to the British embassy. The captain rejects any offers from him fearing for his family and his career. He would only take Mr. Jones on board if he were to hand him over to the police in Philadelphia. Mr. Jones agrees at first on the deal, but then changes his mind. They consider seeking help from other embassies, when they hear the steps outside that can only be that of police. Mr. Jones hides in the toilet just as a policeman with golden teeth enters, recognizing Mr. Brown, and interrogating him about his presence on the ship. The captain is furious with the policeman carrying his gun on the ship that is part of the Dutch territory. The policeman is confused at first but insists on searching for a criminal, most likely hiding there. The captain threatens to throw the policeman into the harbor if he refuses to hand his gun refusing to answer any questions if he keeps his gun. Finally the policeman agrees.

The policeman inquires about Mr. Jones. The captain assures him that there is no such passenger on the ship and certainly not on the list which he presents to him. Mr. Jones's name is not there just as passengers with no exit visa cannot board his ship. The policeman suggests that Mr. Jones may be hiding there without his knowledge, but the captain assures him that if he finds Mr. Jones he will throw him out of the ship. The policeman concludes that Mr. Jones must've gone to the British embassy and leaves. The captain demands that Mr. Jones leaves. If he finds him hiding on the ship he will throw him out. As there is a policeman waiting outside the ship who can see them they have to find another way to leave.

They decide to dress Mr. Jones as a woman. He shaves his mustache that strangely adds to his credibility as a military man. It is not the first time that Mr. Jones has to assume a female appearance. They manage to leave without any problems and without being followed.



They find themselves stranded in the city. Mr. Jones has only an introduction to the Venezuelan embassy that is heavily guarded. They drive around the empty city until Mr. Brown decides to take Mr. Jones to Mr. and Mrs. Pineda.

Mr. Pineda is shocked seeing Mr. Brown in his embassy in the middle of the night. He is relieved when he learns that the reason for his visit is Mr. Jones seeking refuge. Mr. Pineda introduces Mr. Jones to his wife, Martha. Upon seeing Mr. Jones she bursts into laughter. Her laughter turns into tears. Mr. Brown returns to his empty hotel. A policeman waiting in front of the building questions him, and then searches his car when Mr. Brown refuses to give him any answers.

## Part 3 Chapter 1 Analysis

The deal that Mr. Jones has in mind is never executed as Mr. Jones's scheme is discovered. His only choice is to run away. His only refuge becomes Mr. Brown's hotel, where he arrives in the middle of the night. They decide to try the Medea, but the police are already after Mr. Jones and arrive just when they discuss Mr. Jones's escape plan. He is in a familiar territory when he has to dress up as a woman to be able to pass through the police guards outside the ship. He also has to shave his mustache, which amazingly makes him more believable in terms of role enacting. It is also not the first time he disguises himself as someone else.

When Mr. Brown appears with Mr. Jones in front of Mr. Pineda in his South American embassy, he receives a warm welcome from her husband. Martha's reaction upon seeing Mr. Jones is laughter. Her laughter though turns into tears. For Mr. Brown her reaction unravels sympathy towards Mr. Jones, and such sympathy may end in betrayal. He is jealous of Mr. Jones's ability to make people like him. It is the same kind of laughter he was able to arouse in Tin Tin, a prostitute they both knew.

Mr. Brown begins to feel loneliness as people around him disappear. His supplies end and he feels not the same in the absence of Joseph, who hasn't returned after the Voodoo ceremony. Mr. Brown feels a strange attachment to this town despite its terror. He considers it more of a home than Monte Carlo, where he was born, but which never represented to him any value. Even though he could choose any place in the world he found attachment here. Now he can see also here emptiness growing around him.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

Mr. Brown retains only one maid and a gardener in his hotel. In the absence of guests his cook left for the Venezuelan Embassy. He manages to meet Martha more often although it leads to more quarrels. They discuss subjects such as faith that is irrelevant to Mr. Brown despite his Jesuit upbringing. His ideals mean nothing to him and perhaps he has become nothing with his hotel failure. Martha suggests that perhaps he was meant to be a priest. He knows that his sexual desires preclude any theological inclinations. He regrets his lack of beliefs, such as that of Mr. Magiot in communism.

He is preoccupied about Martha and her time spent with Mr. Jones, who teaches her now how to play gin rummy. Mr. Jones also manages to win the sympathy of her son Angel as well as their dog, whom Mr. Brown despises. It also turns out that Mr. Jones made up a name for the dog to which the dog for the first time responds. When Mr. Brown delves into the reasons why they all like Jones so much, Martha responds that he makes her laugh. Mr. Brown already heard it from Tin Tin, a prostitute in a brothel, and it makes him worried. Mr. Jones may stay in the embassy indefinitely, as the Haitian secret police considers him now to be a criminal and won't give him a safe passage to any embassy. He embellished his story about his involvement in the arms trade, saying that he tried to sabotage a supply of arms. Mr. Brown is furious about the sympathy he has gained from Martha and Luis, suspecting that he may sleep with Martha. Martha responds that Mr. Brown classifies people according to the roles he gives them through his assumptions about them, just like a Berkelyan as well as her own father.

Dr Magiot visits Mr. Brown, being now one of the few doctors still remaining in Haiti. He informs Mr. Brown that Henri Philipot needs Mr. Jones to help him manage the rebels. He also shares with him his view on his communist beliefs that seem more effective to him than the American aid. His communist beliefs may be instigated by the poverty in Haiti. He despises the good relationship maintained between the Haitian government and American politicians. Dr Magiot disappears upon hearing footsteps.

Mr. Brown finds Petit Pierre climbing up the kitchen steps. He warns Mr. Brown about Mr. Jones, who presents danger now as Captain Concasseur wants to get back at him for getting into trouble in Miami. When Mr. Brown informs him that Mr. Jones is staying in the embassy Petit Pierre announces that Mr. Pineda may be moved to another country. The President communicated to his government that he is no longer well perceived.

Mr. Brown leaves for the embassy to warn Martha. She thinks the news about her husband's transfer is only rumors. Mr. Jones would have to be kept also by other ambassadors that follow. Mr. Brown takes advantage of the situation while talking to Mr. Jones, trapping him into making a commitment to join the resistance movement.



He then discusses with Dr Magiot how to smuggle Mr. Jones to the mountains. Dr Magiot is to contact Henri Philipot to arrange smuggling Mr. Jones into the mountains while Mr. Brown is to get a pass to travel to Les Cayes. The only way Mr. Brown can get Mr. Jones safely to Les Cayes is if it rains, because police doesn't patrol the streets in such weather.

Martha is concerned about the scheme Mr. Brown devised about Mr. Jones questioning Mr. Brown's motives. He also has reservations about his trip that involves traveling two hundred kilometers through mud and potholes without jeep. He hates the regime, but mostly doesn't trust Martha.

Mr. Brown receives a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Smith who stopped in Santo Domingo where Mr. Fernandez shows them tourist attractions. Mr. Fernandez broke on the ship due to his mother's cancer. The danger of her death has been averted now as Mrs. Smith converted her to a vegetarian diet that cured her.

Hamit's body is recovered from the sewer and the whole town is struck by fear. Doctor Magiot invites Mr. Brown for dinner, where they discuss the details of smuggling Mr. Jones to the mountains. He will take Mr. Jones from the embassy and leave in the cemetery near Les Cayes where Philipot is to wait for them three nights. Doctor Magiot would warn Mr. Brown if anything would go wrong. He will treat Mr. Jones for mumps that requires isolation. Once alone in his room, no one will notice his disappearance.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

In the absence of guests, staff and friends Mr. Brown can spend more time with Martha. They spend time talking about their parents. For Mr. Brown faith is only a perception. Their different religious backgrounds are insignificant to Mr. Brown, who has no faith or religion. He considers them to be absolutes that he cannot engage in, as it would not allow him to keep different masks for different roles he plays. He has no commitment and no personal attachment. He recognizes no theology, as his only theology is sex. For this reason Mr. Jones's presence in Martha's vicinity is threatening. He fears that his ability to gain sympathy may incline her to have sex also with him. He knows that Mr. Jones is capable of inventing any story that would gain him friends. Martha accuses him of assigning roles that allow for classification where people act and behave as expected. He keeps persisting though in his course of action. He is adamant about getting rid of Mr. Jones as far away as he can.

His encounter with Doctor Magiot, who visits him later that day further asserts a sense of loneliness, as he finds out that his other friend Hamit is also missing. Dr Magiot opposes help from the American government that supports the Haitian government as long as it is not communist, supplying it with information through the CIA while supporting opposing movements. Dr Magiot suspects that even communists are needed to maintain the pretense of a free world, and hopes that this is the reason why he still survives. He suspects that he may end up being executed as well.





Mr. Brown, as ever, remains unattached, uninvolved, and indifferent. He talks about politics and admires Doctor Magiot, but never allows himself for any deeper engagement. Even communists, as Doctor Magiot concludes, are needed to maintain the pretense of a free world.

Mr. Brown finally finds his way to get rid of Mr. Jones. He suggests that he could join the rebels in the mountains to teach them about weapons and tactics. With Hamit found dead the circle friends becomes even smaller.



## Part 3 Chapter 3

### Part 3 Chapter 3 Summary

Mr. Brown receives a note from Martha that Mr. Jones fell sick. Such message is designed also for the police while letting know Mr. Brown that everything is ready. The day before his trip Captain Concasseur comes to warn Mr. Brown that he will watch him. Mr. Brown inspects his empty hotel devoid of paintings and jewelry. His mother's love letters to Marcel that remain suggest that Marcel's love was real.

He travels to the South American embassy to pick up Mr. Jones. Martha is concerned about Mr. Jones's safety making Mr. Brown even more jealous. He finds Mr. Jones in his room ready to go with clothes and gumboots. The rain starts pouring down.

Martha is suspicious about Mr. Brown's motives behind his trip. Upon their departure she spitefully blurts out that she had sex with Mr. Jones. Mr. Brown believes her.

As they drive in the ceasing rain, he starts questioning Mr. Jones about his relationship with Martha. Mr. Jones admits that he slept with Martha and even enjoyed it. Mr. Brown tries to remain calm just as his car breaks down on the bumpy road. They are as far from Les Cayes as they are from Port-au-Prince with no means to recover their broken car. The distance to Les Cayes appears to be about two kilometers, so they decide to walk. When they reach the cemetery the rain stops. Mr. Jones admits he never slept with Martha just as they reach the hut where they were to meet with the resistance group. They are two hours late. Mr. Jones has to wait till the following day, while Mr. Brown decides to spend there the night as well.

During their conversation at night Mr. Jones confesses that he has never led the army before, heading only an entertainment unit near the Burmese border. He was rejected from the army because of his flat feet. He was hired to manage a cinema, and was in contact with the E.N.S.A. (the Entertainments National Service Association) that provided entertainment to the army. He also invented the story about his ability to smell the water. It is now too late to go back. Mr. Jones wants Mr. Brown to keep it all-secret. He was born in Assam. His father who planted tea left his half-Indian mother before Mr. Jones was born. He went to Europe after the war, and found himself in trouble. They both share similar upbringing and approach to life.

At dawn Mr. Brown parts with Mr. Jones. As he approaches the street he finds Captain Concasseur waiting there in his jeep, asking about Major Jones. Mr. Brown explains that his car broke down and he knows nothing about Mr. Jones. Captain Concasseur suddenly points the gun at someone behind Mr. Brown. It is Mr. Jones who followed him to hand him the remainder of whisky. Concasseur asks them to get into the jeep. Once they are inside the car the shots are fired. Philipot and Joseph suddenly appear killing Concasseur and his chauffeur. Mr. Jones runs into the hut where they previously slept



where he vomits. Mr. Brown finds him there kneeling as in prayer. It was the first time Mr. Jones has seen a dead man.

## Part 3 Chapter 3 Analysis

Mr. Brown is to take Mr. Jones to the mountains to join the rebels as planned. He has a premonition that he is never going to see the place again. He inspects empty rooms, walls without paintings, reminiscing former good times. There has been no trace of his mother there, including jewelry. He kept the postcard his mother sent to him as well as the postcard that she forwarded to her lover Marcel. Her words written there confirm the connection that exists between them. They both enact roles and they both pretend. She knows that Marcel detected an actress in her, but she thinks that such role allows her to escape and survive. It is the only way to remain alive. Marcel, though, really died for her. For him his love was real.

Mr. Jones's act is slowly coming to an end as he confesses to Mr. Brown, away from the embassy, his lack of military abilities and no knowledge of weapons or arms. It is too late to go back and Mr. Jones decides to accept his new leadership role among the rebels. He has to stop pretending.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Mr. Brown has to hide in the mountains along with Mr. Jones and other insurgents after two policemen are killed near their car. He crosses the Dominican border while Mr. Jones remains with the rebels so that they can take over Port-au-Prince. Upon getting to Santo Domingo Mr. Brown intends to seek help from the British consulate. On the way he encounters Mr. Smith who insists on helping him in exchange for Mr. Brown's help in Haiti.

In a sports car arranged by Mr. Fernandez Mr. Brown travels to see Mr. Shuyler Wilson about a catering position. He has a personal introduction for him from Mr. Smith. During his interview, Mr. Wilson expresses his dislike for propaganda and vegetarian diet. When Mr. Brown mentions that he received help from the insurgents Mr. Wilson classifies him as a communist, and refuses him work. Mr. Brown is irritated saying that insurgents become communists when they are made so.

He returns to the Ambassador Hotel to see Mr. Smith happy to see less poverty there than in Haiti. Mr. Smith is appalled that Mr. Brown was refused a job. He insists on giving him one thousand dollar loan, but Mr. Brown refuses, rejecting also his offer to mortgage the Trianon Hotel. Mr. Brown applies for another position with his referral. Mr. Smith thinks he should become a partner in Mr. Fernandez's undertaking business. He invites him to dinner with Martha Pineda, whose husband was transferred to Lima.

Mr. Brown wants to secure his work first and travels to Monte Cristi. He is stopped when he reaches Pedro Santana. The lieutenant explains that there is an exchange of fire on the other side of the border, suggesting that he should go back to Elias Pinas. Mr. Brown decides to wait for the conditions to change. After some time the men who crossed the Haitian border appear. At the end of the trail is Philipot. The group carries two dead bodies. One of them is Joseph. Philipot informs Mr. Brown that they ran out of ammunition. He has a broken arm and only recognizes Mr. Brown when he offers him a ride. Philipot is offered a camp for his soldiers in a former lunatic asylum.

Philipot relates that Mr. Jones was unable to walk in the end as his feet gave out. He thought he was a great man, taught them a lot, but most of all made them laugh. He regarded him to be a good leader although he couldn't shoot well. He died during an ambush, where he was to keep the attacking soldiers off until Philipot with his men reach the road. Mr. Jones was to follow them later but he never did. He mentioned earlier that his heart was only in Haiti. Mr. Brown realizes that the cable to the captain from Philadelphia about Mr. Jones indicated that he committed serious offenses that prevented him from going back.

Mr. Brown meets Martha after the mess they both attend for Joseph and other dead men. Her husband is transferred to Lima. Their affair ends despite her assurance that



she has never betrayed Mr. Brown. She informs him that Doctor Magiot was shot by the Tontos Macout. Later Mr. Brown receives a letter from him relating that he anticipated his own murder, conveying his love for Mr. Brown as the son of the woman he loved, and advising him not to abandon his faith completely.

After Mr. Brown has dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Smith he dreams of Mr. Jones lying down and complaining that he is tired of his performances. His death is also part of his role, although he wants to deliver a comic line at the end of his performance, conveying that he didn't mean his actions to happen. Mr. Fernandez wakes Mr. Brown to inform him about his first assignment in his position as a mortician.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Mr. Brown finds himself in Santo Domingo, forced to cross the border after staying with the rebels. He realizes that this role is not for him. In Santo Domingo he is about to ask for help from the British embassy when he meets Mr. Smith who wants to help him. He offers him help in finding a job. Although he fails to get the first position he applies for, he ends up joining an undertaking business with Mr. Fernandez. Hence his new role begins. These roles differ from the roles that he thought were designed for him. Martha perceived him as someone who missed on being a priest despite his inability to get involved, love, and commit. He has no goals or failures or anything he would die for.

Mr. Jones's role had to end as part of his act. Mr. Brown reflects on their destinies, pondering over his own fate. For those who have no faith such faith is a temptation that is turned down because it represents a false security. They admire those who have believes. They themselves have no fidelity to a cause, but this deficiency makes them strangely more committed to both good and evil, to those who wrong as well to those who are unable to care, to life itself. Such life embraces everything.

Mr. Jones for the last time appears in Mr. Brown's dream. It is in his part to die. He wants to deliver one last line at the end of his performance to the audience that it was not his intention to fight.



# Characters

## Brown

Brown, in his late fifties, was born in Monte Carlo in 1906. He is currently without a country, without parents and family. He inherited a hotel from his mother. Prosperous at first he bankrupted with the change of the government and the rule of the dictator Francois Duvalier "Papa Doc" who brings chaos and destruction. In his teenage years he has lost his Catholic faith. He is now detached, cynical, and faithless.

He didn't know his father and spent most of his life surviving on his own. Survival was all he knew, and he had to achieve it by any means he could.

His attempts to sell his hotel have been unsuccessful. He returns to Haiti to reunite with his lover Martha, a wife of the South American ambassador, Pineda. In the end he just wants to be able to take care of his hotel while hoping for some successful resolution to his doomed business prospects as well as relationship. He remains uninvolved, detached, and bored. He is preoccupied with control in his relationship. Impulsive and distrustful with Martha, he becomes driven by jealousy in his relationship with her. He is indifferent to what happens to Jones when he joins he rebels as long as he can separate him from Martha. This distrust eventually ruins his relationship with Martha who accuses him of classifying people into various roles. She calls him a Berkeleyan and thinks that he should have been a priest. He knows that he is only a comedian who takes on various roles to survive. He has no commitment to a cause or faith, but he is has deep commitment to life involving both good and evil.

## William Abel Smith

Mr. Smith travels to Haiti along with Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones on the Medea. He was a presidential candidate in 1948 US elections. He is now on a mission to introduce vegetarian diet in Haiti with a personal introduction to the Minister of Social Welfare. He thinks vegetarianism is the way of life that is free of passions. He detests violence although he would use it if he needed to defend his wife. As he himself describes it, he has a great love for colored people. He often combines his vacations with various missions, such as freedom riding in Nashville. He thinks that poverty can be reduced through freedom and vegetarian diet that frees people from passions and harmful acids. It has to be a true vegetarian diet though that doesn't include fertilized eggs. He considers his movement as progressive and hence he also has opponents. He is an idealist, generous, and has a big heart. He is unaware of shooting, rats, or troubles in Haiti, and has faith in the inner qualities of people. He has courage and doesn't give up easily.

Mr. Smith doesn't drink alcohol and the strongest drink he and his wife had was Coca-Cola. Loyal to his wife he always tries to avoid speaking ill of other people despite



various attempts by Mr. Brown to induce a cynical attitude in him, considered by Mr. Smith to cheap. He is health conscious and takes Yeastrol for yeast infections. His optimism and faith in the goodness of people leads to a similar attitude about the effectiveness of law.

## H. J. Jones

Jones along with Mr. and Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Brown travels to Haiti, where he is arrested. He is a British expatriate who escapes from his fraudulent past. He is small with black eyes, tidy in his dressing but out of place, in a suit that is designed more for office than travel. He has a black mustache, speaks with slang and has a particular view on people that he describes as either 'toffs' or 'tarts'. 'Toffs' are stable, with good career and character, while 'tarts' live from day to day, need to be constantly on alert and are witty. Insisting that other people call him Major Jones, he considers himself to be a tart who senses other tarts. He outsmarts his opponents in poker with various psychological and behavioral tricks. Along with his entertaining abilities he is boastful but vague when asked more specific questions, while being superficial about life in general.

Almost everything about him is fake and embassies and other governments around the world search for him. Despite his inability to do anything he makes everyone laugh. He makes an impression of being honest finding admirers and people who like him everywhere, equally among prostitutes as well as rebels.

His character is absurd as are other foreign characters of Brown and Smith. Although he wants to benefit and make money most of all, he has a sense of friendship. He recognizes the value of the relationship more than Brown, offering Mr. and Mrs. Pineda a gift that he inscribes with his name, spending time with her son, showing attention even to their dog. It turns out that he was rejected from the army because of his flat feet. His only connection with the army is being in charge of an entertainment unit.

## Martha Pineda

Martha is the wife of the South American ambassador, Mr. Pineda. She is in love with Brown. Her mother came to South America after her father was hanged in Germany for his crimes. She is protestant but more so faithless. She is devoted to her son Angel but she considers husbands as the necessary evil. Mr. Brown became attracted to her because of a certain quality that seems to be beyond our reach as well as certain innocence. Such innocence is inspired by her devotion to her child. She is not a comedian, because she is honest about her feelings she has for her child and towards Mr. Brown that she considers real.

Even though she betrays her husband she is faithful to Mr. Brown. She acknowledges that people have both good and bad in them but she thinks that people should stand above all this to show love and affection. If jealousy, distrust, and revenge takes over they fail as human beings. She considers wrong to be in failure rather than a mistake. Everybody can err but if one can rise above this he can be saved. Despite her sincerity



she also can take on various roles. She is able to maintain the role of a faithful wife in front of her husband even if he may suspect her love affair. Along with Mr. Brown she considers action as dangerous that represents also a comedian aspect she has in her. She is not pretentious but her sincerity can be viewed as preaching. Mr. Brown concludes that her feelings must have been real towards him after all.

## **Dr. Magiot**

Dr. Magiot is a local physician who used to be Mr. Brown's mother's lover. He opposes the Haitian regime and adheres to communism. He believes in the future of communism but not communism itself although he admires Marx. He is killed by the Tontons Macoute. It is not through martyrdom that one can reach its goals but through faith. He believes that faith is stronger than life itself and one should not abandon it entirely. For him his conviction makes his life worth living.

## **Mrs. Smith**

Mr. Smith's wife has a knack for languages. She has a basic knowledge of Finnish, French, and German. Loyal to her husband, she attacks anyone that would oppose her. As he says himself, "She has the heart of a tigress when roused" (Green 1966, p. 139).

## **Petit Pierre**

Petit Pierre is a Metisse journalist with broad connections and a peculiar behavioral habits, moving quickly and laughing at every opportunity. He is always gay and always tries to elicit information even if everyone is aware of that.

## **Luis Pineda**

Luis Pineda is an ambassador with appearance of superiority, stout, and fond of everything that is his. He has all items stamped with his initials, including the bands around his cigars with polished hair as part of expression of pride about all his possessions.

## **Dr. Philipot**

Dr. Philipot was Secretary for Social Welfare with good intentions to improve the town, building a water-pump, who suicides in the Hotel Trianon. There is a water pump built with his name printed on it.





## Angel

Angel is Martha Pineda's son. He is fat, has his father's brown eyes, and likes bonbons. Most of all, he is despised by Brown because of his intrusive nature while he always notices too much.

## Captain Concasseur

Mr. Concasseur is the head of the Tonton Macoutes, the Haitian Military Police. He is always wearing black glasses. His advantage is that one can never see him blink.



# Objects/Places

## Haiti

Medea has been bound for Port-au-Prince in Haiti on its way from Philadelphia and New York.

## Medea

A cargo-ship of the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company that traveled to Haiti being for the main characters a point of no return.

## Hotel Trianon

Hotel Trianon is neither classical nor luxurious, built in the twentieth century fashion. It has towers, balconies and wooden fretwork-decorations. It appears to be out of fairy tales.

## Monte Carlo

The place where Mr. Brown was born.

## the Tontons Macoutes

Secret police in Haiti.

## Santo Domingo

Medea was bound for Santo Domingo that borders with Haiti.

## Burma

Mr. Jones was to be dropped in Burma behind the Jap lines for the purpose of making a diversion.

## Columbus stone

A rendezvous spot in Port-au-Prince, where Mr. Brown and Martha were meeting.

## **Kenscoff**

Near Kenscoff Voodoo ceremonies marked with drum beating were performed.

## **Nashville**

Mr. Smith was hit by a white police officer in Nashville, giving him a black eye.



# Themes

## Religion and faith

Despite his Catholic upbringing Brown has no religious faith that he abandoned already during his youth. His loss of faith coincides with the loss of his virginity. Catholic faith is seen by Brown as one of the concepts that can be interchanged. Such concepts can be exchanged even for lack of faith. There is no limit to concepts that like balls can be thrown away. He considers those who believe as lucky. His lack of vocation indicates lack of conviction and lack of involvement, but not commitment. Brown, despite his inability to believe, displays deeper commitment to life itself. He regards it as believing not just in one part of the world, as one view, but its entirety. He is equally attached to those who err and to those who are indifferent. Although Dr Magiot perceived him as indifferent, he was committed to both good and evil, to life itself.

Haiti as a land of evil offered no hope of salvation. There was no faith in Catholic religion for religious ideals failed. Religion failed to provide answers to the tormented population who lived on the verge of starvation.

Catholic religion is ultimately seen as something distant, untouchable, and unrealistic. It provides no answer to the horror of poverty, death or the terror of the regime. There is no theology in survival. Greene's outlook on the effects and consequences of religion are nihilistic and lacking the meaning.

## Parody

The parody of characters is in their desperation yet lack of commitment. They all have to end up in Haiti, but at the same time they all have to leave. Through their lack of faith they become meaningless and insignificant, but this is the way they survive. They all enact roles that are mostly fatal. Although it was not up to Brown to travel to Haiti, he becomes attached to this place only by chance. It was his mother's final destination. He has to undertake roles that make his life more and more meaningless. The more he acts, the more he moves away from the real life. He finally loses his hotel, his friends, and his lover.

Performances lead to other performances and the comedy of life continues. Only those who are careful can remain alive. One cannot exaggerate or become discovered. Mr Jones's role leads him death. His role becomes real and he is unable to undo the past. When he finds himself joining the rebels he knows there is no return just as there was not return on the ship that brought him to Haiti.

The comic pathos gives the only sense of life as it is a device that assures survival but one must be careful not to exaggerate or allow others discover the bluff.



As comedy leads to laughter and laughter leads to tears all comedic performances end tragically. Mr Jones whose ability to make everyone laugh is the best comedian, although his bluff is always discovered. It is his part to die. Mr Brown who assigns roles to others is unable to raise beyond his envy, revenge, and jealousy that lead him into trouble.

## Good and evil

Haiti represents the land of hell, where terror is rampant and no person knows what can happen the next minute. People are killed without law for no reason and even without provocation. Poverty, chaos and lack of spirit represent a nihilistic view of reality, where nothing matters. The evil of terror permeates throughout lives that become disintegrated. There are no values, no faith, and sense of right. The sin becomes part of survival. The sin permeates people's lives. Such sin would normally be condemned. Here it becomes survival. The guilt of sin leads to further perpetuation. Mr. Brown is only free of his desire for a Martha after leaving Haiti. His love affair is part of the overall terror of Haiti.

The evil is both mystique and realistic. It can appear out of nowhere, anytime, but it is real. The regime is in itself doomed, and the only way of survival is to enforce control. Such regime eventually leads to failure. Such failure is not in ceasing to believe but in inability to see beyond sin, mistakes, and disappointments. It is engaging in envy, terror and revenge that is failure. The evil ultimately is the failure of humanity itself.

# Style

## Point of View

Greene shows the characters that he met when traveling to Haiti in a story that he invented. Due to his Catholic upbringing many of his novels include remarks that reflect his personal attitude towards this and other religions. It is through travel to Haiti that Greene became acquainted with its charm as equally as with people with whom he shared experiences. It is through opening up to such experiences that the adventurous spirit of Mr Brown is conveyed. He writes in a way that is more functional than literary. His realism and simplicity seem to be good tools in keeping the reader's attention. Visual sensitivity and descriptive imagery inspired many filmmakers.

His characters are sent to unravel what is most important to them through their damnation and salvation. They are individuals that face internal and external struggles. At the same time they seem to be suspended, devoid of roots, family and morals. The good and evil is as realistic as the reality of life. Internal struggles seem to be driven by Catholic influence. He provides various left-wing perspectives, although those who assume such views are doomed. Other characters are also doomed, but they manage to escape. Their escape is only possible because they enact their roles that change. As long as they are not real they can survive. Those that are real face death and horror.

Greene is critical of American approach to the neighboring countries, being only concerned about what is most important for America regardless of the consequences. He is a skillful parodist engaging in serious matters that provoke realities that verge on absurd.

## Setting

The Comedians are set in Haiti during the regime of Francois Duvalier regime called Papa Doc. It conveys unrealistic expectations of its main characters, who seem to be insignificant, while their only destination remains the land of terror. It is the land of evil, poverty, and police. The setting that perpetuates injustice is as doomed as it is disillusioned. Everything is not what it seems, yet it is real. The secret police chases enemy that is unknown even to them. Such enemy can be America and it can be anyone else who threatens their existence. The corrupt government engages in corrupt deals, and kills anyone who stands in its way.

The setting becomes more and more desolate as the main characters' lives disintegrate into nothingness. There is no hope in Haiti with its growing isolation. The place becomes also deprived of meaning that can drive the characters. They all get lost in their grievances, jealousies, and lack of faith. They don't search. They know that there is no definite answer that would provide a solution. There is no answer to the terror of Haiti, it is the reality of the world. The only solution to such terror is life that can justify sin.



Such settings attract only pretenders who have nothing to lose but to enact their roles. Its growing emptiness, lack of hope, and gradual disintegration creates a, surrealistic environment, where anything and everything can happen. These settings are not only meaningless, they also kill. From the very beginning, Philipot's suicide and continuing terror lead to the disintegration of life, death, and departure. All the main characters have to leave, as they had to come to a place that requires a different kind of commitment.

## Language and Meaning

Greene's language is understated, touching the reader through irony while engaging in imaginative imagery. He uses little profound metaphors while being economical and wry. His writing is clear and in many cases forthright. At times dispassionate, he uses insights that are both realistic and sentimental. He conveys both naive and calculative speculations of the narrator, making him skillfully human in his mistakes when attempting to fulfill his ideals through depravity and lack of believes.

The irony that pervades most of the work shows a country that is disintegrating into madness. In the same way, the portrayal of lives slowly disintegrating has both sardonic taste and deep penetration of human psychic.

The absurdity of characters that unravel their only skill, the ability to survive, makes them almost unreal. They are forever hiding from anything that is real to allow them a sense of denial. Involvement is real and may require sacrifice. Such sacrifice is made by Doctor Magiot, who is killed for his beliefs and by Jones, who makes such sacrifice accidentally. He has to die for he has nowhere else to hide. The horror displayed by the regime is real with its consequences and effects. Its absurdity turns those who are part of such regime into constant escapees through various roles that allow survival. Along with realism, he achieved suspense and sophisticated plots. There is no superficiality conveyed through language, while characters with their emotional problems are interesting and intelligent.

## Structure

The structure underpins the main driving motive of the characters that is survival. While first and foremost the action is concerned with the presence because it is the presence that matters most in survival. The story begins when the main action interlaces the most important characters on their journey that is going to change their lives forever. Their destination begins on the ship although it is not the beginning of their story. Mr. Brown's personality has been shaped long before he embarked on the ship. When we encounter him in his most current predicament we have an opportunity to get to know his equally adventurous past. Through the insight of Mr. Brown we are led into the lives of other characters. Some are more revealed than others. We learn little about Mr. Jones's past dealings that become as shady as Mr. Jones himself. Mr. Brown is the only character, who is revealed entirely. Perhaps because he is also the main narrator. He is also the



only character that is aware of the roles assigned. He is even accused of assigning such roles to others without consideration for the independent nature that drives these characters. As in survival, we are constantly in the present time as such time is most important. The story seems to be going back and forth through action and revelation, as if one attempted to catch the other. The drama of the characters is first endured, while only later actions become clarified as it also often happens in life that is based on adventure and survival. People are spurred into actions through regimes, their mistakes, or simply circumstances, having later to find out how to get through and what is most important.



## Quotes

There is a point of no return, unremarked at the time, in most lives. Part 1, ch. 1 p. 9

Cynicism is cheap - you can buy at any Monoprix store - it's built into all poor-quality goods" p. P. 1, ch. 1, p. 23

"I laughed till the tears came". p. 34

"I suppose those of us who spend a large part of our lives in dissembling, whether to a woman, to a partner, even to our own selves, begin to smell each other out." p. 43.

"... for one uses a little truth whenever one can" p. 43

"For writers it is always said that the first twenty years of life contain the whole experience—the rest is observation, but I think it is equally true of all of us." p. 67.

"In this island the Catholic prayer is very apt - "The devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour".p. 102

"One Hitler is sufficient experience for one lifetime" p. 102

We mustn't complain too much of being comedians—it's an honourable profession. If only we could be good ones the world might gain at least a sense of style. We have failed—that's all. We are bad comedians, we aren't bad men. P. 1 ch. 5, p. 145

I have often noticed that a bribe...has that effect - it changes a relation. The man who offers a bribe gives away a little of his own importance; the bribe once accepted, he becomes the inferior, like a man who has paid for a woman.

"There are those who belong by their birth inextricably to a country, who even when they leave it feel the tie" p. 242

"The rootless have experienced, like all the others, the temptation of sharing the security of a religious creed or a political faith, and for some reason we have turned the temptation down." p. 304

"We are the faithless; we admire the dedicate, the Doctor Magiots and the Mr Smiths for their courage and their integrity, for their fidelity to a cause, but through timidity, or through lack of sufficient zest, we find ourselves the only ones truly committed-committed to the whole world of evil and of good, to the wise and to the foolish, to the indifferent and to the mistaken." p. 304

"Violence can be the expression of love, indifference never. One is an imperfection of charity, the other the perfection of egoism. " p. 309.

"There is always an alternative to the faith we lose" p. 312

## Topics for Discussion

What is the significance of the point of no return in the Comedians?

What is the meaning of comedians?

What is the meaning of faith and religion?

In what way are the main characters similar and different?

Why Doctor Magiot believes in the future of communism?

Where is parody in the Comedians?

What does bring the main characters together?