

# **Poland Study Guide**

**Poland by James A. Michener**

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



# Contents

<a href="#">Poland 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="#">Chapter 1, pgs. 3-23.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2, pgs. 24-54.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3, pgs. 55-94.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4, pgs. 95-137.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5, pgs. 138-184.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6, pgs. 185-212.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6, pgs. 213-242.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6, pgs. 247-275.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7, pgs. 276-313.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7, pgs. 313-352.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 8, pgs. 353-399.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9, pgs. 400-433.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9, pgs. 432-471.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9, pgs. 471 - 507.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 10, pgs. 508-556.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">40</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>



# Plot Summary

The book opens in the fall of 1981, in the small village of Bukowo. It is the home of Janko Buk who is the leader of an agricultural policy protest movement. The Communist government agreed to hold discussions with the protesters in Bukowo. It is the location of the famous Bukowski palace where many Party dignitaries vacationed or met for meetings.

Thus begins the exciting story of Poland, which covers the history of Poland from the thirteenth century to 1981. The first and last chapters of the book are set in 1981 with the history of the nation in between. The story of Poland is the story of an ethnic people struggling to attain freedom and independence throughout their history. The nation has often faced invaders - the Tartars, Turks, Swedes, Germans and Russians. At one point Poland was completely partitioned and absorbed by the Germans, Russians and Austrians.

Poland had no national borders and no strong central government. Their king was hired from other countries because the magnates feared that a strong king with an inherited lineage would threaten their own autonomy. The magnates viewed the situation in terms of what was good for them was good for all of Poland. There was never an army that was able to defend the country until King Jan Sibelski. This is why Poland was always easy prey for invaders.

Michener tells the story of Poland in terms of three families. The Buks represent the peasantry; the Lubonskis represent the nobility; and the Bukowskis represent the gentry. The history of Poland is told in terms of the history of those three families as they appear in all parts of the books. Michener explains the history and problems of Poland in terms of these three families, which follows the pattern used in his other historical novels.

The historical novel is part fact and part fiction. Michener includes a section at the beginning of the book explaining which parts of each chapter are based on fact and which are based on fiction. He also includes a section describing the different groups of people in Poland.

Michener writes a very interesting and enjoyable book that the reader will find difficult to put down. But the book is well worth the time spent reading it, as the reader follows the main families from generation to generation. The reader watches their relative positions remain the same throughout the generations in addition to learning the fascinating history of the nation as it struggles to survive. The reader can see the changes that take place in the nation and in the people.



## Chapter 1, pgs. 3-23

### Chapter 1, pgs. 3-23 Summary

The book opens in the fall of 1981, in the small village of Bukowo. It is the home of Janko Buk, who is the leader of an agricultural policy protest movement. The Communist government agrees to hold discussions with the protesters in Bukowo. It is the location of the famous Bukowski palace where many Party dignitaries vacationed or met for meetings.

The Communist Party, including Minister of Agriculture, Szymon Bukowski, officials arrive at the palace. Since the protests threatened the nation's food supply, it was his job to deal with the situation, and he was determined to defeat the protesters and Janko Buk. Janko Buk and three other farmers also arrive at the palace for the meetings. The meeting begins with Buk and Bykowski finding they have a common ancestor. The farmers explain their complaints. They receive low prices for their output and have to pay high prices for their inputs. The farmers state their case to Bukowski in a strong manner for which he wasn't prepared. The farmers claim the government system isn't functioning. They can't get the supplies they need and some of their output is rotting in the ground while the city population is standing in long lines waiting for food. Much agricultural output is by passing the government system and used in barter transactions so the farmers can survive. They want a return to the old way of farming which they claim will lead to more output.

Bukowski says he understands their problems and finds himself defending the government position. His orders from Warsaw are to bring an end to the protest. He points out that living conditions in Poland are much better than in other countries in the Soviet bloc and the farmers agree. During the lunch break, they find that reporters from all over the world are covering the meeting. The reporters are more interested in Buk than Bukowski. After lunch, the farmers discuss the prospects of forming a farmers' union. Bukowski was under orders not to even discuss this possibility. Warsaw felt that this would give the farmers control over the food supply, which the government would not allow.

After Bukowski agrees to try to find spare parts for farm equipment, Buk tells Bukowski they want the Bishop of Gorka to attend the meetings the next day. After consulting with his superiors in Warsaw, Bukowski announces that the meetings are recessed for four weeks. After the meeting, Bukowski goes to Buk's home to meet Buk's mother, who he hasn't seen in more than forty years. They work out a deal to exchange books for food.

### Chapter 1, pgs. 3-23 Analysis

Bukowski is in Bukowo to meet with Janko Buk who is leading a farm protest movement. Bukowski views Buk as dangerous. The farmers' protest is not viewed in the



same way as the labor protest movement led by Lech Walesa and his Solidarity. Labor movements fit into the socialist scheme of things. Farmers protests did not.

The farmers, led by Buk, are protesting the low prices they receive for their outputs and the higher prices they have to pay for their inputs. The government keeps the price of food low to prevent riots among the population. The Polish government has to work out the relationship between urban and rural Poland in a time where the controls within Socialist states were beginning to change. The farmers point out the deficiencies in the state's central planning system which forces them to use the black market to survive. They want a return to individual farming which they claim would lead to greater output and better conditions for everyone.

The government of Poland does not want the Catholic Church involved in the meetings, but the farmers want the Bishop of Gorka to attend the next day. On orders from Warsaw, Bukowski suspends the meeting for four weeks. Bukowski meets with Buk's mother after the meeting. They are relatives, and he has not seen her for over forty years. He wants food to take back to Warsaw. Even government officials are affected by the food shortages and deal in the black market barter system that they publicly oppose.



## Chapter 2, pgs. 24-54

### Chapter 2, pgs. 24-54 Summary

This chapter opens with a discussion of the raids of Ghengis Khan in 1204 and his strategy of killing the leaders whenever he conquered an area. He met with fierce opposition from the Tartars and finally ordered the slaying of all adult Tartars. Among the survivors was a dwarf named Vuldai who were re-educated and became part of the Kahn fighting force. After Kahn's death, the Tartars were sent to conquer Poland, Hungary and Russia. They easily conquered Kiev and began their move on Poland. Vuldai and his men destroyed Polz. They reached the Vistula River in January 1241, where a boy named Jan observed them in the Forest of Szczek.

The village the Mongols were planning to attack was ruled by a knight named Krzysztof. Zygmunt was a liege of Krzysztof. He was supposed to protect the village of Bukowski in which the boy Jan lived. The boy ran to the village announcing the arrival of the Mongols. The smart people fled and hid. Those who stayed behind were killed and the village was destroyed. Krzysztof decides that those who were still alive would help defend Krakow. The boy, Jan, goes with them. When the Mongols approached Krakow, the duke fled. Krzysztof had seven hundred people barricade themselves in the church. They survived the attack and devastation of the city. Krzysztof and others decided to follow the Tartars to fight them.

The Tartars overran Poland in 1241. Krzysztof and his men went to Wroclaw to help defend that city. That city was ruled by Hedwig and her son Henry Pobożny, known as Henry the Pious. They engage the Tartars in a brief battle and are successful. Henry was killed in battle against the Tartars.

After the battle, Vuldai comments that the Tartars had never experienced such heavy losses. He wants to call off the campaign and return to Kiev. They decide Vuldai will return to Kiev with half the troops and the slaves and booty. Poland continued to be raided by the Tartars for years, as did neighboring countries.

Danuta and Moniczka, the mother and sister of Jan, escaped from Vuldai and returned to Bukow. Both had become pregnant by the Tartars. Bukowo was rebuilt as it would be every time it was destroyed.

### Chapter 2, pgs. 24-54 Analysis

Poland had no real defenses in the thirteenth century. It was relatively easy for the Tartars to march across Poland destroying and killing anything in their path. Most people fled and hid. Krzysztof was one of the few people interested in fighting and trying to restrain the Tartars. The Tartars never encountered the kind of resistance they did from the Poles under Krzysztof.



At this time in Poland, there was no movement toward a central government. The Poles opposed any leader who was strong enough to rule them. They preferred their personal freedom but did not implement the kind of government that would guarantee their freedom.



## Chapter 3, pgs. 55-94

### Chapter 3, pgs. 55-94 Summary

In 1381, eight-year-old Hedwig, or Jadwiga in Polish, inherited the Polish throne. At the age of thirteen, she married Jagiello of Lithuania who was thirty-five. They became a powerful dynasty. Jadwiga died at the age of twenty-six in 1399. King Jagiello was urged to wage war against the Teutonic Knights but first wanted more information about them. They decide to send Pawel and Janko as spies.

The Teutonic Knights are an order that was formed to provide medical services to Christian soldiers. The head of their order was Hermann von Salza, and they located in northern Poland in 1226. They created a new Prussia with imported Germans and then began to expand their kingdom. Their order grew as many knights from different countries affiliated with them.

As Pawel and Janko traveled, they talked to various people and learned about their treatment from the knights. They noticed they were being followed by a man identified as Graf Reudiger who was an enforcer for the amber monopoly. Reudiger made arrangements with a merchant for the two spies to buy six amber beads. As soon as Pawel and Janko walked out of the store, they were arrested for violating the amber laws and were taken to Marenburg. Pawel is told that the purposes of the interrogation is for a document they are preparing. The document contains lies about the king and says the Teutonic Knights must bring Christianity to Poland. Pawel refused to agree with the condemnation of Poland. A few days later he was freed by the Grand Master who allowed him to keep the amber beads.

The Grand Master and King Jagiello signed a temporary truce to avert the immediate outbreak of war. In preparation for the coming war, Pawel was sent to Kiev to arrange for support. The Tartars agreed to support Jagiello as long as there was looting. The Poles prepared for war during the months of the armistice and several days before the end, the armistice was extended.

When the battle did take place, the Teutonic Knights lost against the forces of King Jagiello. The battle was basically won by the Polish peasants. Pawel was knighted for his service and received a village as a gift of thanks. He eventually had Janko hanged for stealing a rabbit.

### Chapter 3, pgs. 55-94 Analysis

The Teutonic Knights, who began as an order for medical service, are invited to northern Poland to convert the barbarians. They established a new Prussia inhabited by German imports. They also control the amber monopoly. Pawel and Janko are sent there as spies and arrested for buying amber illegally, which was their plan. During the





interrogation of Pawel, the interrogators, Siegfried von Eschl and Priest Anton Grabener are more interested in the habits of King Jagiello.

The two sides did not want to negotiate a permanent truce but they did negotiate a nine-month truce that was extended. When the battle did take place, the Poles won; the battle was basically won by the peasants. They fought so fiercely because they were fighting for their own homeland and freedom.



## Chapter 4, pgs. 95-137

### Chapter 4, pgs. 95-137 Summary

Magistrate Cyprjan is holding a banquet for his daughter at Castle Gorka. Cyprjan owns a number of castles and estates but his wife, Zofia, preferred the Castle Gorka at Bukowo. Their daughter, Barbara, is to meet Ossolinski, a potential suitor. One of the town's workmen, Jan of the Beech Trees, is among those working on the grounds in preparation for the banquet. One of her Mniszech relatives helps Barbara dress for the banquet and places a necklace of six amber beads around her neck. After the dinner, Barbara and Roman Ossolinski talk, and he shows her his plans for building the grandest castle in Europe. She agrees to marry him. When Han gave his wife, Anulka, the package of meat from Cyprjan, she cried with happiness because they hadn't eaten meat in over a year. She immediately began cooking. The people of the village came from the wedding, as did many friends and relatives. The wedding began on a Wednesday and lasted for six days. Barbara was not included in any of the activities until she had to bake bread on Saturday and eat it with her beloved. On Monday, the wedding ceremony took place.

In 1648, the Cossacks began to revolt in the Ukrainian areas of Poland. Cyprjan, taking Jan of the Beech Trees and Lukasz, went to the area since he had land holdings there. His five estates had been destroyed and over half the population killed. Cyprjan left Lukasz and Jan to supervise the reconstruction of the estates and villages, but the Cossacks attacked again in 1649 before the rebuilding could be completed.

When the Polish parliament, called the Seym, met, they began discussing reforms for the peasants and townsmen and giving the king more power. The magnates were not happy about the proposals. Since it threatened their position, it threatened Poland to their way of thinking. Lukasz, who represented Cyprjan at the Seym, explains the changes to him and other magnates. Lukasz was ordered to object at the reforms and the meeting, which he did.

In July 1655, the Swedes invaded Poland and by the beginning of September, had overtaken the nation. When the Swedes reached Krzyztopor, the Ossolinskis decided to remain figuring they could withstand any siege. They did not know the Swedes had a new weapon - a cannon. The castle was overrun and destroyed and the Ossolinski's were all killed. Castle Gorka and Bukowo met the same fate. Cyprjan, Lukasz and Jan of the Beech Trees took a position at a monastery. One night they killed the Swedes and destroyed the cannon. Jan of the Beech Trees remarried Alusia. Lukasz was also remarried to a woman named Zosienka and Cyprjan married Halka. He stopped using the name Gorka and began using the name Lubonski.



## Chapter 4, pgs. 95-137 Analysis

The Polish customs for the wedding of the nobility are described in this chapter. Weddings are a very elaborate affair lasting six days with specific rituals to be followed. The marriage of Barbara and Roman unites two of the richest and noblest families in Poland.

The Cossack uprisings illustrates a basic weakness in Poland, where the nobility elected a foreigner as king. The king didn't really have any power and basically functioned as a manager. Each of the nobility, or magnates, had power in their own domain and didn't think in terms of all of Poland. They were concerned with their own freedom. There was no one entity in Poland strong enough to repel the Cossacks. The magnates didn't want reform in Poland. They wanted a weak king. A strong king and reforms for the peasants and townsmen would diminish their own power.



## Chapter 5, pgs. 138-184

### Chapter 5, pgs. 138-184 Summary

When Turkey and the Ottoman Empire began to expand in 1683, Germany, France, the Papal States, Hungary and Austria asked Poland for help. Jan Sobieski was an active king. He was successful in repelling the Turkish attacks and had developed a good army, known as the Polish hussars. This is why the European states were asking for help. An alliance was agreed to. Lubonski had at first opposed Sobieski but then supported him and agreed to go to Vienna which was threatened by the Turks. He takes the sixty-two year old Lukasz with him along with sixty-year-old Jan of the Beech Trees. Jan was too sick to go and sent his son Janko and Brat Pietor in his place.

Arriving in Vienna, Lubonski and his men examine the defensibility of the city. They assume Emperor Leopold will flee at the first threat. The Turkish attack began on July 15, by which time Lubonski's party had departed. Siebieski and his army began the march to Vienna on August 11, 1683. The almost-thirty-thousand men included Lubonski, Lukasz, Brat Peitor and Janko. They planned their military strategy along the way. The Polish army arrived in Vienna in September.

The commander of the Turks, Kara Mustafa was in a position when he had to win or he would die. This was the meaning of the green cord worn around his neck. The Grand Vizier felt Mustafa was wrong in coming to Vienna. When the battle began, it lasted for hours. Before nightfall, the Turks' Bulgarian slaves began looting the tents of the Turkish officers. Lubonski is killed in the attack but the Poles were victorious. Lukasz, now known as Luaksz Bukowski, had to get their captured booty, mostly horses, back to Bukowo. They were attacked by thieves along the way and five of the horses were stolen. They reached home with the remaining horses. As a result of the war, coffee and potatoes were brought home to Poland.

### Chapter 5, pgs. 138-184 Analysis

Lubonski is seventy-three years of age when the Turks threaten to conquer Europe. Sobieski asks him to undertake a dangerous mission by going to Vienna, which is under control of the Turks. He is also asked to lead his private army when the time comes. It doesn't dawn on Lubonski to refuse the king's request. He feels that what he is doing is for the good of Poland. This is the same Lubonski who opposed the reforms of the Seym that would have diminished his power and control by bettering the conditions of the townsmen and peasants.



## Chapter 6, pgs. 185-212

### Chapter 6, pgs. 185-212 Summary

The destiny of Poland changed under King Jan Sobieski. Poland would have a strong king that would not be elected or dominated by foreigners and would have a Sejm with properly elected members. The time is now in the 1750s.

In 1762, Catherine the Great became Empress of Russia. Poniatowski had dreams of marrying Catherine but was rebuffed. In August, he became Stanislaw August, King of Poland. Catherine then waited for Poland to fall apart so she could pick up the pieces that she wanted. Russia, Prussia and Austria did not like Poland's plan for a hereditary monarchy. They wanted to divide the nation, but Russia wanted a weak Poland to form a buffer between the three countries. Their plans were for the partition of Poland. Each of these three has some powerful Polish family in their service. They find out that all of them are paying the Janusz Radziwill family.

Most of the Polish people were not happy with the 1772 partition of Poland. The people of Bukowo were not unhappy under the Austrians. They served their count, Baron Lasharz Lubonski. Bukowo was in Austria and Castle Gorka was in Poland. Lubonski had estates in all four areas. He discusses the situation with his father-in-law, Janusz Radziwill, and says he will support Austria in any showdown.

In 1788, the Sejm began a session that lasted for four years. In May 1791, they presented a new constitution which was based on modern concepts, thus alarming Prussia and Russia. People in their countries would want the same kinds of freedom the Poles had. Russia wanted Poland partitioned and there is talk of Russia attacking Poland. When the Prussian armies attacked and won, the reform movement was over by 1793.

Tytus Bukowski sided with the reformers. He impressed Lubonski by his actions and formed a cavalry to help defend Warsaw. He was killed by the Prussians.

### Chapter 6, pgs. 185-212 Analysis

Poland faces problems from Russia, Prussia and Austria. None of them wants a strong Poland. Only Russia wants there to be some kind of Poland to act as a buffer between the three countries.

A partition was carried out in 1772. What remained as Poland held a four-year session of the Sejm which began in 1788 and resulted in a new constitution. This constitution was based on basic freedoms for the people and worried Prussia and Russia. The nobility did not want to see these kinds of freedoms or the people in their countries would want them. The reforms were eventually negated when Poland was attacked by Prussia.



## Chapter 6, pgs. 213-242

### Chapter 6, pgs. 213-242 Summary

Count Lubonski decides it is time that inheritor of the Bukowski estate to marry. Feliks was the son of Tytus who had been killed by the Poles. Lubonski also thinks his son, Roman, should marry. He tells the young men of the families they will visit and warns them about the Czartoryski and Zamoski families, who he considers dangerous. While they are traveling, they are to study the new Poland and the families and give him their opinions of the families' chances for survival. Lumbonski's wife tells them to pay particular attention to the Granicki family.

The men were in the Ukraine for Easter and were fascinated by the Ukranian Easter eggs. There were three days of dancing at Polz. From Polz, they went to Lancut. By this time Feliks and Roman were becoming friends. Feliks became close to Lumbomirska because the old woman spent weeks teaching him about Polish society. At Lancut, they discuss the American revolution and the Americans' experiment in government and decide that it couldn't last for long.

The group next went to Dulka near the Hungarian border to visit the Mniszech clan. The daughter wasn't there but they were entertained by the stories of Urszula.

### Chapter 6, pgs. 213-242 Analysis

Lubonski takes Roman, his son, and Feliks, the heir to the Lubonski fortune on a tour, meeting various families with marriageable daughters. The young men were to give Lubonski their opinions about the families and the new Poland and they were to find wives. They fancy themselves in love with someone at every stop. The party traveled around, meeting the various families. Roman and Feliks were entertained by the stories they hear.



## Chapter 6, pgs. 247-275

### Chapter 6, pgs. 247-275 Summary

The group leaves Dukla and heads to Niedzica. Elzbieta Mniszeck who they missed at Lancut, is at Niedzica castle and decides to hunt with them. Two men visit, Count von Starhemberg from Vienna and Baron Ottokar von Eschl of Prussia. They had business to discuss with Ignacy and Lubonski. Feliks tries to hear what the men are saying and knows it has something to do with government.

Roman and Feliks both compete for Elzbieta. When Feliks says he wants to marry her, she says she thinks her father prefers Roman. They interrupt the men's meeting so Feliks can ask Ignacy about marrying Elzbieta. At dinner, Ignacy announce that Elzbieta will marry Roman. The wedding will take place in Warsaw.

Feliks brought his man, Jan of the Beech Trees to Warsaw for the wedding. Along the way, they discussed the future of Poland. Feliks says he thinks Poland will be destroyed. In Warsaw, Lubomirska, talks with Feliks. He tells her of his love for Elzbieta and of what he heard discussed in the meeting of the four men. She says they have to find him a wife and that he won't be accepted by a magnate's family.

Jan of the Beech Trees tells Feliks that Kosciuszko is in Warsaw. He believes it is possible to defend Poland and his people were recruiting volunteers. Feliks thought of joining but had just married Eulalia, a marriage more or less arranged by Lubomirska. He talks to Lubonski about Kosciuszko, and Lubonski tells him he will probably be fighting against Kosciuszko.

In April 1794 in Bukowo, Jan of the Beech Trees brings news of a Kosciuszko victory against the Russians. Feliks and Jan joined Kosciuszko's forces while Lubonski supported the Russians. Jan of the Beech Trees is killed in battle. Kosciuszko is captured and escaped. Feliks went to Warsaw. Kosciuszko's troops lost the battle for Warsaw. Feliks survived by hiding in a cellar until the battle ended. He was then killed by the Russians.

In 1795, Poland "disappeared" having been divided among Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

### Chapter 6, pgs. 247-275 Analysis

Feliks has some time to think of the people they have met while at Niedzica Castle. This is the fourth place they have visited and the fourth time he has fallen in love. He is still young, only twenty-two years old. When he asks Elzbieta to marry him, she said her father prefers Roman, and later at dinner, Ignacy announces Elzbieta's engagement to Roman. Feliks feels betrayed and that he was used to attract a wife for Roman.



When Feliks talked to Lubomirsha about his love for Elzbieta, she tells him that with his status, he will never marry into a magnate family. He is disappointed and for some reason, listens to her and marries a woman to whom Elzbieta introduces him.

When trouble begins, Feliks fights on the side of Kosciuszko for freedom for the peasants. Lumbonski and the other magnates side with the Russians. Feliks may have sided with the peasants because he felt rejected by the magnates.

Russia, Prussia and Austria solve the problem of the Poles and freedom for the peasants by eliminating Poland. Each of the three countries absorbed parts of Poland.





## Chapter 7, pgs. 276-313

### Chapter 7, pgs. 276-313 Summary

Count Andrzej Lubonski arrives in Vienna in 1895. He is the Minister of Minorities. He is to meet with the Hungarian agitators. He meets with Wiktor Bukowski to learn more of the details of Pilic from the Banat. They make plans for the evening, then Lubonski goes to his house on Annagasse.

Lubonski meets with Pilic before the concert. Pilic complains about how the Hungarians treat the people of Banat and says Barat wants to be an independent nation. Lubonski says they will meet again after Christmas.

At the concert, Lubonski notices that Pilic is there. Bukowski points out the American ambassador in the box next to Emperor Franz Josef. Lubonski is a big fan of music. They all attend the receptions after the concert where there is more musical entertainment. There was an argument about the composers and Bukowski challenged Dr. Henzzler to a duel, feeling he had insulted Poland. The German departed without accepting. Bukowski sees the woman Krystyna again after the reception and they discuss music. He invites her to join him at the gala in which he will be riding.

After the gala, some comments are made about the partition of Poland. Bukowski refuses to comment because of his position at the ministry. He spend several days with Krystyna. A few days later he is summoned by Lumbonski who tells him about a secret police report on his activities. He learns they may declare him an enemy of the state because of the people with whom he has associated. Lumbonski's wife advises him to marry and settle down with a wife from a good family.

Bukowski had Krystyna accompany him to a party at the Lubonski's and asks her to marry him. Three men accompany her out of the room right before four policemen enter looking for the revolutionary, Krystyna Szprot.

### Chapter 7, pgs. 276-313 Analysis

Count Andrzej Lubonski is an official in the Austrian government. He is dealing with agitators from the provinces and was chosen for the position because the government believes a Pole would be more effective since parts of Poland were absorbed by Austria.

During the concert Bukowski thinks about the fact that he is a Pole yet he has seen little of Poland. At the reception after the concert, Bukowki feels that a German has insulted Poland and challenges him to a duel. Feelings of nationalism are becoming intense in the Austrian empire among the different ethnic groups. This was evident in Lubonski's meeting with Pilic where Pilic talked about an independent Poland at Benat.



Bukowski begins to spend time with the pianist Krystyna Szprot. She is intensely nationalistic and is considered a revolutionary by the government. He does not know she is wanted by the police when he asks her to marry him. She apparently used his quarters as a hiding place.



## Chapter 7, pgs. 313-352

### Chapter 7, pgs. 313-352 Summary

The secret police investigated Bukowski and thought he was worth watching because he was capable of being duped. He also became popular with marriageable women, one of whom was Marjorie Trilling, the daughter of the American ambassador. When Bukowski returns home, he finds a letter from Krystyna asking him to join her in Paris. Lubonski obtains a copy of the letter from the secret police and sends Bukowski to Bukowo for several months. Janko Buk will accompany him.

On the train Buk meets a Czech who has been dismissed from his job for supporting a revolutionary, and they talk during the trip. Buk decides to court a village woman named Jadwiga, who becomes pregnant by Bukowski. Bukowski is called back to Vienna and takes Buk with him.

In Vienna, Bukowski resumes courting Marjorie. He learns that her father is very wealthy and she is the sole heir. Lubonski arranges for a trip to the Bukowo area for the Trillings that they hope will result in the engagement of Marjorie and Wiktor. Then word comes from Bukowo of trouble with Jadwiga. Janko Buk says he will marry Jadwiga if Bukowski will give him a cottage and land.

The trip begins for the Lubonskis, Trillings and Bukowski. They make numerous stops along the way, and there were parties and concerts. The wedding is to be held at the church in Zamosc where the Lubonskis were married, which is in Russian Poland. Jadwiga and Buk accompany them. After the wedding, they all return to Bukowo. On an outing to the ruins of Krzyztopoz, Marjorie's father says she can have as much money as she needs to rebuilt Bukowski's castle at Bukowo.

Marjorie learns Bukowski is the father of Jadwiga's baby and how the Buks came to own the land and cottage. Katarzyna Zamoyska tells her not to worry about it. Marjorie accepts her advice and busies herself with trying to learn Polish.

Marjorie and Bukowski bought a house in Warsaw, and Marjorie purchased artwork for the house. They returned to Vienna in fall and Bukowski resigned his position at the ministry.

### Chapter 7, pgs. 313-352 Analysis

Bukowski courts and marries the wealthy Marjorie Trilling after a tour through Poland arranged by the Lubonski's. Marjorie is enchanted by what she sees in rural Poland and tries to learn the language and history. Bukowski now has access to the money of the wealthy Trilling family. He quits his job at the ministry but tells Marjorie, who wants to return to Warsaw or Bukowo, that they will spend most of their time in Vienna because that is where things happen. He doesn't say what things. One night at the Lubonski's,

Bukowski sees maps showing the four partitions of Poland and learns that Lubonski also dreams of a united Poland.



## Chapter 8, pgs. 353-399

### Chapter 8, pgs. 353-399 Summary

Poland was reunited in 1918 after World War I. Lubonski moved back to Gorka and functioned as an adviser to the Polish government. Lubonski believes Poland would always face a threat from Germany and Russia if they didn't unite with a neighboring country. About ten percent of the population were Jews who formed the basis for a middle class that was missing in Poland.

The Bukowski's, like the Lubonski's, sold their Vienna holding and lived in Poland. Bukowski spent a great deal of time traveling with his wife. He lived off her fortune, which could only be obtained in monthly payments.

Marjorie organizes a gala of Polish music. One of the pianists who arrives to perform is Krystyna Szprot. Also in attendance is Prime Minister Paderewski. After dinner, Lubonski and Bukowski talks to the representative of Lithuania and the Ukraine about the possibility of a union. In response to the statement that the Polish magnates only want to protect their estates and power, Lubonski pulls out his maps and begins his presentation. They will continue the discussions at Brest-Litovsk.

Bukowski's cousin, Mirosława Bukowska, announces she is going to marry Seweryn Buk, and Bukowski protests. They will build a house on the Buk family land and use the name Bukowski. Soon after, Mirosława and Jadwiga propose that Wiktor hire Seweryn as a manager to improve the output of the lands. They want a salary for Seweryn and a house befitting his position as manager.

The Lithuanians and Poles soon began a war with the Russian Communists. Seweryn's younger brother, Jan, fought for the Lithuanians. Seweryn and others in the village are not opposed to all the new ideas of the Russians. When Warsaw is threatened, Bukowski went to help with the defense. Mirosława wouldn't allow Seweryn to go, but the younger brother, Benedykt, was sent. Bukowski was given a commission.

While the battle is forming at Warsaw, the Russians present their terms for peace at Brest-Litovsk. When the Poles beat the Russians at Warsaw, Lubonski knew he had little chance of convincing the Ukrainians and Lithuanians to form a union. They both wanted independence, so there was no union. On the way home, Lubonski collapses.

### Chapter 8, pgs. 353-399 Analysis

Poland is united in 1918 after World War I, but Lubonski and others feel the nation will not survive without a union with the Ukraine and Lithuania. Both Germany and Russia would try to absorb Poland. Lubonski wasn't wrong. War soon broke out with Lithuania and Poland fighting the Russian Communists. Since the Poles won the battle of Warsaw, there was no way Lubonski could persuade the Lithuanians and Ukrainians to



form the union. Such a union might have given all three nations a better chance of to change what was to come.

When Miroslawa Bukowska announces she will marry Seweryn Buk, and Bukowski opposes the marriage. Miroslawa tells him that he can't stop them. It is a new Poland and things are different. They also plan to use the name Bukowski. Then Jedwiga and Miroslawa negotiate a manager's job for Seweryn with a salary and house. Jedwiga wants to get the best deal she can for her and Bukowski's son and she isn't afraid to ask.



## Chapter 9, pgs. 400-433

### Chapter 9, pgs. 400-433 Summary

The Poles successfully repelled the Russians during the 1921-1939 period. They united the population that had been part of three different countries under a reasonable government. They were making progress toward become a leading European country when Hitler invaded on September 1, 1939. Szymon Bukowski, son of Miroslawa and Seweryn, escaped arrest. Six people were shot, including Miroslawa. The next day six more people were killed. The third day, one hundred-sixty-nine names were announced. Each time there was any action against the Nazis, six people would be shot.

Bukowo was one of seventeen towns under the auspices of SS Major Konrad Krumpf. It was his duty to find Szymon. He went to see Majorie Bukowski, now a sixty-seven-year-old widow. She does not know where Szymon is and says her thirty-nine year old son is in Krakow. The Nazi plans for Poland includes mass exterminations.

When Jadwiga Bukowski hid her quern from the Nazis, they found it, destroyed it and hanged her. Her grandson is twenty years old at the time. His wife Biruta also hid a quern.

Krumpf believes Szymon is still in the area and in communication with the people. He decides to establish his residence in Bukowo at the Bukowski castle and moved in with Marjorie and her son. Krumpf who kept note cards on the population had Ludwik Bukowski and Walerian Lubonski pegged to be cultivated for future use.

Szymon came to Jan for food. He tells Jan that all their names are on a list and they either fight or die. Szymon wanted him to join the partisans to work as a courier. They need Beruta to supply food and both agreed. Jan's code name was Stork.

The Nazis eventually capture Szymon. He is almost beaten to death for information and is scheduled for execution the next day. Instead, he is sent to Under the Clock in Lublin in February 1942.

Jan is in Krakow when he learns of Szymon's arrest. The underground wants him to lead the partisan group in the Forest of Szczek. Infiltrators tell Krumpf that Jan was caught in a Gestapo raid. Beruta was in charge of the farm as the Stork Commando group carried out acts of sabotage against the Nazis.

Szymon and his cellmate Professor Tomczyk undergo brutal beatings by the Gestapo. Eventually they are taken for trial. Both are sentenced to a concentration camp. Szymon was assigned to drive a truck with the bodies of those killed in the gas chambers.



## Chapter 9, pgs. 400-433 Analysis

This chapter begins to tie together the pieces of the first chapter. When the Nazi occupation forces arrived in Bukowo, Szymon Bukowski was to be shot but escaped to the forest. Jadwig Bukowski was hanged for hiding a quern. Szymon avoided the Nazis by hiding in the forest and forming a partisan group. He persuaded his cousin, Janko Buk and his wife, Beruta, to work for the partisans. Both knew of the danger but wanted to help Poland regain its freedom knowing that the Nazis wanted to eliminate the Polish population and nation. Janko didn't hate the Nazis; he just wanted them out of Poland. After Szymon's arrest, Janko became the leader of the partisan group and lived in the forest.

When Jan asks Beruta to ask the other women to supply food, she refuses. There are too many spies and informers for her to trust her own neighbors. This is the kind of fear the Nazis instilled in the population.





## Chapter 9, pgs. 432-471

### Chapter 9, pgs. 432-471 Summary

Szyom is assigned to Field Four at Majdanek. He knew the Nazis never intended for him or any of the prisoners to survive. Everything about the concentration camp was designed to bring on death as soon as possible. When Himmler visited the camp, Himmler was very impressed with the design and sufficiency.

Szymon managed to get himself off the death truck duty by saying he was a shoemaker. He was re-assigned to the shoe repair shop. Even though Tomczak was given the toughest physical work, he managed to survive. At night, he would lecture the men who liked to listen to him. The Germans accused him of preaching lies about the Reich, and he was brought for questioning. Tomczak agreed with everything the interrogator said and was hanged.

Beruta organized a secret school for the children since the Nazis would not allow them to be educated. One day she approaches Marjorie to ask for food for the children. Marjorie says she is watched too closely by Krumpf's men. In Bukowo, when Jan talks to Beruta about asking Ludwik for help, she says they suspect Ludwik of being a collaborator. She says they shouldn't trust Marjorie either because Krumpf lives in her home. A few days later Marjorie suggests that Beruta talk to Count Lubonski.

Lubonski says he won't have anything to do with the partisan. As Beruta is leaving, he tells her there is wheat and slaughtered pigs in the barn. Eventually, she goes into the forests to find the partisans and found a group of men who took her to her husband.

Szymon was eventually sent to work at a factory. Since many prisoners worked in the factories, they found ways to sabotage the armaments and many were shot on the spot. After a while Szymon was returned to the camps and his strength diminished; then he was returned to the factory where he received a good lunch every day.

Since the men of Stork Commando had more food, they began to carry out more daring raids. They dynamited a Krakow electrical power plant and returned safely to their forest. The partisans from Bukowo were not suspected, but there was a general crackdown. Beruta was questioned and beaten but she refused to answer.

One night at dinner, Marjorie learns that Goring wants some of her art treasures. The rest of their art treasures are to be stored in Paris. Ludwik had made the arrangements for the train to Paris. Marjorie begins to suspect her son of being an informer. She talks to Ludwik later. She thinks the Germans will be defeated and is fearful of the Russians. Ludwik tells her that Krumpf has Ludwik slated for a position in the new Poland and that he is safe.

When Krumpf is absent, Marjorie goes through his files, recording the names of the traitors. She gives the list to Beruta and others.



## Chapter 9, pgs. 432-471 Analysis

This section is a grim description of the reality of concentration camp life, where the whole design of the camp and routine is geared to cause death as quickly as possible. Szymon and Tomczyk are assigned to the same barrack. They try to advise one another on how to behave in order to survive as long as possible. They also try to boost one another's morale. When Tomczyk is killed, Szymon has no one to talk to that he can trust and must fend for himself.

Beruta continues to help the Stork Commandos and at Jan's request, approaches Marjorie about supplying food. She sends Beruta to Lubonski who arranges to leave the food in a barn. When Marjorie learns about Krumpf's filing system, she records the name of the traitors and gives the list to Beruta, right before Marjorie dies.

Marjorie wonders if her son has sold out to the Nazis but doesn't find his name among the cards with the names of the traitors. Did Ludwik make a deal with the Nazis with his mother's art treasures or was he just making the best of the situation?



## Chapter 9, pgs. 471 - 507

### Chapter 9, pgs. 471 - 507 Summary

Jan Buk had at first sided with the Russians but began to question that when he learned of their plans for farm management and outlawing the Catholic Church. The Germans decided to locate their weapons testing facility near Bukowo. This resulted in many people and new buildings in Bukowo and made the area a battleground. Many of the Poles in the area were evacuated.

The overseer of the project is Falk von Eschl. He was not a Nazi but was effective. He made his headquarters at Lybonskis Castle Gorka. While he resided there, he noticed the food thefts at the barn. He began to suspect Lubonski of supporting the partisans. One of the woodsmen passed the word to the Stork Commandos that the barn was being watched.

Von Eschl talks to Krumpf about Lubonski and learns about the note cards, which he considered dangerous. He made Krumpf burn them. Von Eschl found that eight of the forty-three traitors had died in mysterious circumstances.

A Polish officer and English scientist parachuted into the area to meet with Buk. Buk's unit's assignment is to learn what is taking place in the restricted area. They think it is a new dangerous weapon. The group watched and photographed the site for five weeks. One day they saw a test of the V2 rocket. When one went off course and crashed into the Vistula River, the Stork Commandos retrieve it. Before burying the parts they had disassembled, they photographed them.

At Majdanck, Bukowski was approaching the end of his usefulness to the Nazis. He thought a lot about food. A new group of arrivals told him that Poles were being eliminated from Zamosc and repopulated with Germans. Just as he was becoming very weak, he was assigned to the shoe repair shop.

As the Russians approached Bukowo, Krumpf devotes his attention to moving the art treasures to Paris. Just as Bukowski and Krumpf were boarding the train, Von Eschl said he wouldn't allow the train to depart. A letter from Goering changed his mind.

Syzmon manages to escape from Majdanck and joins Jan's Stork Commandos. He uses the name Chalubinski and wants the commandos to destroy a German village. They destroy a village. The Stork Commandos did manage to get the drawings and the V2 parts to Lubonski who hid them. They had a stolen German staff car and forged documents. Jan drove Lubonski to a hidden airfield. When the plans arrived, Lubonski left with the parts and arrived safely in London. That night he talks on the BBC about his experience. He also gives the names of Nazis and their crimes.



The Russians began the liberation of Poland, and Bukowski enrolled in courses at the university at Lublin and stayed at the home of Tomczyk's widow. The German did not destroy the Castle Gorka when they retreated.

The Stork Commandos returned to their villages. The Russians arrived with a list of names of people to be arrested. Jan's was on it for accepting a medal from the Polish government in exile. He was sent to Siberia and never heard from again.

## **Chapter 9, pgs. 471 - 507 Analysis**

Bukowo is selected as the site for the secret V2 Rocket testing facility. The Stork Group is assigned to find out what is happening at the facility. When they see a missile launched and go off course into the Vistula River, they hide it before the Germans can find it. They take it apart, photograph the pieces and pass the information to the Allies. Their efforts and willingness to take risks helped give the Allies an advantage and saved many lives.

Things in Bukowo changed for everyone. When Von Eschl took up residence at Lubonski's castle, he learned about the food in the barn. Lubonski became suspected of supporting the partisans. Krumpf is trying to get himself and the art treasures out of Bukowo before the arrival of the Russians. Von Eschl considers Krumpf to be an inept bumbling fool. Krumpf had his own way in the area before Von Eschl arrived. Now Von Eschl is watching over him.

Buk has worked for the Allies throughout the entire war and received a medal for delivering the V2 rocket to London. When the Russians liberated Bukowo, Buk was arrested for accepting a medal from a reactionary government and sent to a Siberia from which he never returned. Ideology came into play as the end of the war approached.



## Chapter 10, pgs. 508-556

### Chapter 10, pgs. 508-556 Summary

Janko Buk became famous during the four week recess of the talks. He was allowed to fly to Tokyo for a television interview and is coached by the Polish government for the interview. From Tokyo he went to New York for interviews and then to Detroit. Buk visited American farms owned by Poles and is amazed at how easy it is for them to obtain spare parts. He is invited to lunch at the White House. Back in New York, he met with scholars, diplomats and businessmen to discuss the situation in Poland. When Buk leaves New York, he goes to the Vatican to meet the Pope. From Rome he went to Vienna where he met with Polish refugees living at a camp. He learned how and why they left Poland—they left because there was no hope.

The meetings with Bukowski resume. Bukowski announces that they will not tolerate infiltrators into the farm movement or people trying to cause trouble between Russia and Poland. He also says not to be deceived by the availability of goods in America. They will have a depression and everything will change. It is not the capitalists that have the solutions, it is the socialist states. Bukowski maintained his hard line against the formation of a farmer's union.

They met with the Bishop of Gorka. The group decides to find a Polish solution to their problem and one that is within the confines of Communist doctrine.

Janko eats lunch at home and finds that his mother has taken his revolver. Chalubinski is the man who sent her husband to Siberia and she planned to kill him. Jan takes the revolver from her and tells Beruta to kill Chalubinski with words, since the farm women would be speaking at the afternoon session. Speaking at the session Beruta reveals what Chalubinski did to her husband and questions the socialist system and how it has made Poland poorer.

Bukowski says they cannot allow a farmer's union but proposes a farmer's advisory council with Buk as its head, but Buk refuses. After the session, Buk tells the press that the idea of a farmer's union is dead.

After the session, Bukowski and Bishop Barski discuss their concentration camp experiences. They talk about the lies that haunt them. Both have scars that will never heal. Bukowski says they will make concessions to the farmers but will not allow the unions. He wants the bishop to make the announcement. The priest views Poland's situation as being the same as it was in 1791. If they try to improve their situation, they have Germany and Russia waiting to destroy them.

Syzmon stops at Jan's cottage to ask Beruta to marry him and she does.



## Chapter 10, pgs. 508-556 Analysis

This chapter is a continuation of the chapter and the talks between the government and the farmers. Buk is amazed by what happens as he flies to Japan and the United States for interviews. He becomes an overnight celebrity and does not understand why. Buk does not understand that he is challenging the entire socialist system. To form a farmer's union is to have the farmers control the food supply, and Buk comes to understand that no government will allow such a thing.

Buk learns from his traveling experience. He sees Poland in comparison to other nations for the first time. He is not really trying to cause trouble or overthrow the socialist state. He is just interested in improving conditions in his own country.

The meetings at Bukowo open many old wounds. Bukowski, the Bishop and Bertua. Bukowski and the Bishop discuss the scars they carry from their concentration camp days, just as other concentration camp survivors carry scars.

The ending of the book is a surprise with Syzmon marrying Bertua.



# Characters

## Janko Buk

Janko Buk is a thirty-six-year-old farmer who led the farmer's protest movement in Poland. He is from the town of Bukowo and is the spokesman for the farmers of southwest Poland. As a result of labor gains in the cities by Solidarity, prices were higher, but the government kept the prices of food low to prevent civil unrest. As a result, the farmers were being hurt. Janko and his movement wanted a return to individual farming and an end to the black market and barter.

The grandmother of Janko was the great-grandmother of Bukowski. After the first day of meetings, Bukowski accompanied Buk to his home to meet Buk's wife and visit Buk's mother, whom he hadn't seen in forty years. The Buk's agreed to give Bukowski food in exchange for books.

As a result of the meetings, Buk becomes an overnight celebrity. He is flown to Japan and the United States for interviews. He talks with Polish farmers in Michigan and has lunch at the White House. He meets the Pope at the Vatican and talks to Polish refugees in Austria. He doesn't understand why he becomes so famous, and why the farmers' demands challenge the socialist state. When Bukowski offers him a position as the head of a farmers' advisory bureau, he refuses the position, preferring to remain on his farm.

## Szymon Bukowski

Szymon Bukowski is the Polish Minister of Agriculture. He was from the village of Bukowo where he lived until he was fifteen years old. His parents were from an agricultural background. In school, he organized Communist movements and after World War II, helped rebuilt Poland. He was a devout Communist without religious beliefs. Bukowski had worked his way up through the ranks of the Party and had been the Minister of Housing before taking over the agricultural position.

Bukowski resisted the Nazis during the occupation. His great-grandmother is killed for resisting the Nazis. This woman was also the grandmother of Janko Buk. After the meeting, Bukowski went home with Buk to talk to Buk's mother, whom he hadn't seen since the Nazi occupation. He arranged to exchange books for food with her.

As the son of Miroslawa, Szymon was slated for execution with his mother when the Nazis came to Bukowo, but he hid. Jan's family occasionally gave him food. He is eventually captured by the Nazis in February 1942 and taken to Under the Clock in Lublin. He is eventually sent to a concentration camp. Bukowski carries scars of his concentration camp days just as other concentration camp survivors do. He discusses them with the bishop, who was also in a concentration camp. In the end, he marries Beruta.



## Count Andrzej Lubonski

Count Andrzej Lubonski is Minister of Minorities in 1895. He is one of the wealthiest men in Austrian Poland. He has a house at 22 Annagasse that has been in his family for over a century. He is married to Katarzyna who is from the wealthy Zamoyski family. Lubonski is a member of the imperial cabinet and a great fan of music. He is instrumental in arranging the marriage of Bukowski to Marjorie Trilling. Lubonski is sixty-eight years old and a widower when Poland is united in 1918, after World War I. He moves back to Gorka and works as an adviser for the Polish government. His task is to form an alliance between Poland and another country to avoid problems with Germany and Russia. Lubonski has a son, Walerian, who is thirty-one years old in 1919.

Lubonski tries to convince the Lithuanians and Ukrainians that the only way all three nations can survive is if they form a union. When Poland and Lithuania are attacked by Communist Russia, they fight back. The Russian troops are fighting in Warsaw when the Russians present their stiff peace terms at Brest-Litovsk. The Poles lose the battle and Warsaw, and any chance of a union ends. Lubonski collapses and dies on the way home.

## Wiktor Bukowski

Wiktor Bukowski works in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1895. He serves as an aid to Count Andrzej Lubonski. He speaks German, French and some English. As a child, he lived in Bukowo. He now lives in Vienna and is attended by his servant Buk. Bukowski was not wealthy but lived well on the income from his estate and his job at the ministry. Bukowski becomes romantically involved with Krystyba Szprot, who turns out to be a revolutionary wanted by the secret police. Bukowski favors a united Poland and independence but doesn't voice his views because of his position at the ministry. Lubonski arranges for a tour of Poland for the Lubonski's, Trilling's and Bukowski. During the tour, Bukowski marries the wealthy Marjorie Trilling. Using her father's money, they renovate the castle in Bukowo and buy a house in Warsaw. When they return to Vienna, he quits his job at the ministry. Bukowski is fifty years old when Poland is re-united. The Bukowskis have a son, Ludwik who is nineteen in 1919. Bukowski fights in the defense of Warsaw against the Russians. Bukowski dies several years before the Nazi occupation of Poland.

## Janko Buk

Janko Buk is the second son of Janko and Jadwiga. He inherits the family property and marries Beruta. He was twenty years old at the time of the Nazi occupation of Poland. His cousin Syzmon was a partisan leader and asked Jan and Beruta to help and they did. Jan functioned as a courier until Syzmon was arrested. Jan became the leader of the partisan group known as the Stork Commandos. When the V2 Rocket family was built near Bukowo, the Stork Commandos managed to retrieve the rocket. Jan used a stolen German staff car and forged documents to drive Lubonski to a secret airfield





where Lubonski and the rocket parts were flown to England. The British awarded him a medal for this. When the Russians liberated Bukowo, he was arrested and sent to Siberia for receiving the medal from the exiled Polish government. He never returned.

## Lukasz

Lukasz served under Cyprjan and helped Cyprjan in his various causes and fights. He and his wife Danosia lived in the little castle where he had a collection of animals for which he was famous. He was a low level knight. When Cyprjan's Ukrainian estates were destroyed by the Cossacks, Lukasz stayed in the Ukrainian to oversee the construction of the estates. He represented Cyprjan in the Sejm and voted the way he was told. When the Swedes overran Poland, Lukasz helped fight them. He was one of the group that destroyed the cannon. Danusia was killed during the destruction of Bukowo. He then married Zosienka and had two children with her. When Lubonski was sent to Vienna in 1863, the sixty-two-year-old Lukasz accompanied him.

## Cyprjan of Gorka

Cyprjan of Gorka is the inhabitant of the Borka Castle in the 1600s. He is a wealthy landowner and magnate, or member of the nobility. When reforms are proposed in the Polish parliament to better the conditions of the townsmen and peasants, he opposes them. After he remarried, he used the name Lubonski. He had his own private army, and during the Turkish threat in 1683, King Jan Sobieski asked him for his help. Lubonski was seventy-three years old when Sobieski asked him to go to Vienna. Lubonski also marched with the King's forces to Vienna and fought against the Turks. He was killed in the battle.

## Ludwik Bukowski

Ludwik Bukowski is the son of Wiktor and Marjorie. He is nineteen in 1919 and was in Paris where he was supposed to be studying at the Sorbonne. He was more interested in art than in politics. At the time of the Nazi occupation of Poland, he is thirty-three, unmarried and living with his mother. Ludwik makes arrangements for Goring to receive some of his mother's art treasures and the rest to be shipped to Paris. He tells Marjorie that Krumpf has promised him a position in the new government of Poland. After his mother's death, he and Krumpf leave Bukowo with the art treasures.

## Walerian Lubonski

Walerian Lubonski is the son of Andrzej Lubonski. He is thirty-one in 1919 and is heir to the family title and wealth. He is in London studying English and government. Walerian is fifty-four at the time of the Nazi occupation and has a son at Oxford University in England. When Bertua comes to ask for food for the partisans, they make arrangements



for where the good will be left for them. When the V2 Rocket parts have to be delivered to the English, it is Lubonski who flies them to London.

## **Jan of the Beech Trees**

Jan of the Beech Trees was a peasant who lived in Bukowo in the 1600s with his wife, Anulka. They were poor and rarely had meat to eat. He was loyal to Cyprian and went to the Ukrainian area with Cyprian. Lukasz remained there to over see the construction of the destroyed estates. Jan fought against the Swedes with Cyprian and Lukasz. His wife was killed in a raid by the Swedes and he married Alusia. He accompanies Lubonski and Lukasz to Vienna in 1783.

## **Krystyna Szprot**

Krystyna Szprot is a musician who meets Wiktor Bukowski at a reception in 1895. She is a Polish nationalist from Warsaw, where she can't live because the Russian police won't permit it. Krystyna is considered a revolutionary by the government. She flees to Paris and asks Wiktor to join her there. In 1919, she is invited to a Polish music gala at the home of the Bukowski's.

## **Krzysztof of Gorka**

Krzysztof was a knight who lived in the Castle Gorka when the Mongols arrived in the thirteenth century. He and his wife are illiterate and live in very meager conditions. He is a Christian who is loyal to his duke. Krzysztof is called Gorka or Red Head. He is forty-eight when the Mongols attack Bukowo. After the destruction of Bukowo, he goes to Krakow to help defend the city.

## **Janko Buk**

In 1895, Jako Buk is a peasant from Bukowski and is the personal servant to Wiktor Bukowski.. When Bukowski impregnates the peasant girl, Jadwiga, Janko marries her in exchange for a cottage and land. They have three children. He raised Bukowki's son, Seweryn, as his own.

## **Jan Sobieski**

Jan Sobieski was king of Poland in 1683 when the Turks were threatening to overrun Europe. He was a strong king who had developed a strong army called the Polish Hussars. When five European nations asked Poland to lead the fight against the Turks, Sobieski agreed.

## **Janko**

Janko is the youngest son of Jan of the Beech Trees. He is with Lubonski in Vienna and with the Polish army when it engages the Turks at Vienna.



# Objects/Places

## **Bukowo**

Bukowo is a small farming village located on the Vistula River in central Poland.

## **Krakow**

Krakow is a major city in southern Poland.

## **Wroclaw**

Wroclaw is a city on the Oder River in southeast Poland.

## **Kiev**

Kiev is a city in Russia located to the west of Poland.

## **Vienna**

Vienna is the capital of Austria and located southwest of Poland.

## **Warsaw**

Warsaw is the capital of Poland.

## **Polz**

Polz is a town in the Ukraine which was part of Russia.

## **Dulka**

Dukla is a Polish town near the Hungarian border.

## **Zamosc**

Zamosc is a village in Russian Poland.



## **Brest-Litovsk**

Brest-Litovsk is a town on the Polish-Soviet Union border.

## **Majdanck**

Majdanck was a Nazi concentration camp in Poland.

## **Tokyo**

Tokyo is the capital of Japan where Buk is flown for interviews.

## **Detroit**

Detroit is a city in Michigan where Buk visits the Polish community and a Polish owned farm.

## **New York**

New York City is where Buk went for television interviews and meetings with diplomats, scholars and businessmen.



# Themes

## Nationalism

One of the dominant themes of the book is nationalism. It is not only the nationalism of the Poles throughout their history, but also the nationalism of the other ethnic groups in the country. The Poles and other peoples in the area have strong ties to their history and culture yet have been subject to foreign domination at various periods in their history. Poland has been subject to the invasions and rule of the Tartars, Swedes, Germans and Russians. They had no strong leader throughout most of their history since the Polish kings were foreigners who were hired by the magnates. The magnates didn't want to see their power diminished by a strong government of any kind. The magnates wanted to maintain their power and control and could only do this through decentralized government. The people of Poland and of the Ukraine and Lithuania wanted to be free of foreign rule and to have their own countries, but this did not happen through many periods of history. The Poles always managed to expel the invaders and rebuild their country as evidenced by Bukowo, which is rebuilt after every invasion. The Poles always remained Poles and true to their cultural identity, even in the period prior to World War I when Poland didn't acutely exist. This is why nationalism is one of the most dominant themes of the book.

## Ethnic Heritage

Another dominant theme of the book is the preservation of ethnic heritage and culture. The Poles always remained Poles and loyal to Poland, not matter who ruled them. The same is true of other peoples who were conquered and forced to live under foreign rule. They never lost their cultural identity throughout all of the invasions and years of foreign rule. Even when Poland didn't exist, having been totally absorbed by Austria, Germany and Russia, the Poles maintained their ethnicity and culture. Over the centuries, the Poles have been ruled by the Tartars, Swedes, Germans, Russians and Austrians, yet they never accepted the cultural identity of any of the foreign countries. The Poles tried to fit in but maintained their culture and customs, and as soon as the foreigners were expelled, they rebuilt their society every time. It is cultural identity that breeds nationalism, and this is true of the Poles, and other people in the area. The Poles always wanted their own independent country, where they could build a society based on their own cultural identity. Cultural identity is formed by the customs and traditions of a people which unites them as a nation. The people of Poland returned to and rebuilt their own culture any time a foreign ruler was expelled. This is what Tomczyk kept telling the prisoners in the concentration camp.

## Class Structure

A third dominant theme of the book is the class or societal structure of Polish society. It was more or less rigid with little change in relative structure or position or relationships over the centuries. For the most part, there was a wealthy class and a peasant class without any middle class throughout most of Polish history. The formation of a middle class did not begin until the arrival of the Jews. They basically performed this function in Polish society.

Michener basically tells the story of Poland in terms of three representative families that are followed from the thirteenth century through modern times. These are the Lubonskis which represent the wealthy nobility and landowners with estates and land holdings all over Poland and in many other countries. The second group are the Bukowskis which represent the petty nobility. They are not as wealthy as the magnates. At the lowest level of Polish society were the peasants, represented by the Buk family. In the socialist society, the Lubolnskis and Bukowskis were the government bureaucrats and the Buks were the farmers. The society wasn't as classless as they wanted it to be.

# Style

## Point of View

Poland, by James Michener, is written in the third person point of view. The narrator is the author, Michener. The use of the third person allows the author to provide the details and historical background that is required for the reader's knowledge and information. Since Poland is an historical novel, Michener provides all the exciting details and background of the rich history of Poland, from the thirteenth century to 1981. This is the advantage of the third person narrative and is particularly advantageous in a historical novel that combines fact with fiction—a format in which Michener excels. The author concentrates on three families, each representative of a different class, and follows them through the different periods in Polish history. A section at the beginning of the book gives a chapter-by-chapter description of which parts of each chapter are fact and which are fiction. This allows the reader to learn the major points of Polish history. The third person point of view works well for the novel and for Michener's style of writing. It allows him to tell the fictionalized story and to also present the relevant parts of history.

## Setting

Most of the setting of the book is in and around Poland, but there are other cities where the action occurs. Much of the action of the novel takes place in the small farming village of Bukowo along the Vistula River in central Poland. This is the area from which all three representative families originate. As the characters of the novel move around, they go to other cities such as Krakow, Wroclaw, Warsaw, Polz, Dulka, Zamosc and Brest-Litovsk. Many of the magnates, such as Lubonski, have estates or lands in these different places. There are also scenes in Kiev where the Mongols had a base. Vienna, Austria is a setting for the action of the novel in the different time periods. Lubonski and others lived in Austria when Poland was part of the Austrian Empire. The concentration camp at Majdanek in Poland is also a setting when Bukowski was imprisoned there.

After Buk begins meeting with Bukowski in Bukowo, he becomes internationally famous and travels to Japan, the United States, the Vatican and Austria, so various locations in these countries function as a setting for the action. He meets with Polish farmers in Michigan and scholars, businessmen and diplomats in New York City. In Austria he visits a camp of Polish refugees.

## Language and Meaning

The language and meaning of the novel are clear and easy to read. For the most part, the book is written in everyday English that most readers should have no trouble reading or understanding. There are some foreign words and terms used in the book. These give the book ambiance and realism but are not necessary to the reader's understanding of the novel.





The novel is relatively fast reading in spite of its length. Like all Michener novels, it is wordy due to the amount of detail and background that the author presents, such as the scene at the concert in Vienna and all the details about the music and composer. For the most part, the details and background are interesting and a learning experience for the reader. The language and Michener's style of writing contribute to the richness of the novel and the reading experience of the reader. The reader will appreciate Michener's style and manner of writing and come away from the novel feeling happy to have experienced the book.

## Structure

The structure of the novel is designed to provide the reader with the most information. The body of the novel consists of ten chapters. The first and last chapters are set in modern times concentrating on the meetings of the Polish government as the government deals with the issue of social conditions and liberalization. The other eight chapters cover various periods in Polish history, beginning with the Tartar invasions in the thirteenth century. They also cover the invasions of the Swedes, Germans and Russians. Michener provides some analysis of the political and historical situations leading to the various events in Polish history.

Poland is an historical novel, which means it is a blend of fact and fiction. Michener provides a section at the beginning of the book called "Explanation." In this section, he provides a chapter-by-chapter list of which events and characters are historical and which are fiction. This section is very useful to the reader. There is also a section titled "The People of Poland," which provides a description of the different groups of people in the society of Poland and which characters belong to each group.

The overall structure of the novel contributes to the nature and readability of the book.



## Quotes

"In a small Polish farm community, during the fall planting season of 1981, events occurred which electrified the world, sending reverberations of magnitude to capitals as diverse as Washington, Peking and especially Moscow." (Chapter 1, pg. 3)

"Then they would have before them a prize which would justify the manifold dangers of their wild invasion: Golden Krakow would stand awaiting them, with the most beautiful women in Europe to be ravaged, the richest churches to be looted and the finest shops to be emptied and then burned. Krakow was a magnet powerful enough to draw invaders more than two thousand miles, and Vuldai's dark eyes glowed when he visualized it." (Chapter 2, pg. 27)

"From these talks, conducted with such frankness, Kazimir deduced that as long as Poland and Germany existed, each would fear the other: Germany would always suspect that indefensible Poland would be a pathway whereby Russian power, when it coalesced, would attempt to invade the German states; and Poland would always fear that its western border would be invaded by Germans whenever they saw an opportunity to use Poland as a buffer against the east." (Chapter 3, pg. 93)

"They were defending their freedom to neutralize the king; they were defending their freedom to keep the newly built towns subservient to their country areas; they were defending most strongly their freedom to keep their peasants in a state of perpetual serfdom as opposed to the liberties which were being grudgingly won in the western parts of Europe; and they were doing everything reactionary within their power to preserve the advantages they had against the legitimate aspirations of the growing gentry. The Golden Freedom which the magnates defended with every bit of chicanery and power they commanded was the freedom of the few to oppress the many, the freedom of a few grasping magnates to prevent a strong king from arising." (Chapter 4, pg. 119)

"Germany, France, the Papal States, Hungary and, most of all, Austria pleaded with the Poles for help: 'Without your assistance, and soon, Europe will be overrun by the most terrible menace that has ever threatened it. Please, please, spring to our assistance. Lead the great crusade which alone can save us.'" (Chapter 5, pg. 138)

"The salient facts about the partition were that Russia gained a geographical entrance to the heart of Poland, Prussia picked up a few points of great strategic importance, while Austria, which had no sought partition in the first place, acquired a large helping of the best lands and the most productive people." (Chapter 6, pg. 197)

"Placing his hands over the map as if the tour were already completed, he said: 'I want you to accomplish three things on this trip. Study the new Poland to estimate its chances for survival. Study the old families to determine which of them will survive. And find yourselves wives.'" (Chapter 6, pg. 213)



"I think Poland will be destroyed by her protectors. I think that in these days, when we're building a fine new state marked by real freedom and not the Golden Freedom of a few, we will be engulfed by a new deluge and erased forever." (Chapter 6, pg. 255)

"And since he, Wiktor Bukowski, might conceivably be such a minister one day, he, too, must refuse to countenance such talk. 'It has been agreed among the powers that Poland should be divided, and you must admit that of the three parts, the Austrian is much the best-governed, thanks principally to patriots like Lubonski.'" (Chapter 7, pg. 308)

"He wanted to be in Poland, to be a part of Poland, to see his land once more united as in the old days. He was, in brief, one of the thousands of Poles homesick for a way of life that had vanished, and responding to that seductive sequence of nostalgic chords, he seriously considered chucking everything and heading for Paris." (Chapter 7, pg. 316)

"In 1918, at the close of what was then called the Great War, Poland reappeared on the map of Europe after an enforced absence of one hundred and twenty-three years. Various parts that had been stolen by Russia, Austria and Germany were reassembled by the victorious Allies, and with throbbing excitement an old-new nation resumed its stumbling heroic course through history." (Chapter 8, pg. 353)

"How cruel are the repetitions of history. Toward the close of the eighteenth century autocratic Russia, Prussia and Austria could not tolerate liberal Poland on their borders and united to obliterate her. In the middle of the twentieth century Nazi Germany and Communist Russia looked askance at the surprising progress of a free Poland and maneuvered to complete a new dismemberment." (Chapter 9, pg. 400)

"And she began to count up the strange happenings at Bukowo - the capture of young Syzmon Bukowski, the beating of Biruta Buk, the executions of the women grinding illegal wheat - and she saw that in every instance the clever identifications by the Nazis would be understandable if they had within the Polish community someone who was feeding them information. Could it really have been her son?" (Chapter 9, pg. 467)

"There are among the occupying forces many fine Germans who have helped us Poles and I want to give them assurances. I shall not recite your names because to do so would hurt you with the monsters who give you orders, but you will be able to identify yourselves, and just as I promised the others I will not die until I have helped bring them to the gallows, I now promise you that I will travel to any court in the world to testify that you were men of integrity and honor and compassion. You will come to no harm." (Chapter 9, pps. 498-499)

"Because you've become an important man in the world, Janko. You represent something exciting and new. And I must say, Janko, you handle yourself well. All Poland's proud of their farm boy." (Chapter 10, pg. 511)



## Topics for Discussion

What is the reason for Bukowski's meeting with Buk? Do the farmers have a legitimate gripe? What is the position of the Communist Polish government regarding the farmer's movement?

In the 1500s and 1600s, what kind of government did Poland have that made it so susceptible to attack?

When the Polish Sejm formed a new constitution in 1791, what happened and why? Why were other nations concerned?

Who is Kosciuszko? Why was he such a threat to the magnates of Poland and the neighboring countries? What was the outcome of his uprising?

What role did Szymon Bukowski and Janko Buk play during the Nazi occupation of Poland?

Andrzej Lubonski predicted the Poles would have problems with both the Germans and the Russians. Were his predictions accurate? Why didn't the Ukraine and Lithuania want a union with Poland? Do you think things would have been any different if they had formed a union?

What is the result of the meetings between the farmers and Bukowski? Why is the ending of the book a surprise?