

The Power and the Glory Study Guide

The Power and the Glory by Graham Greene

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Contents

The Power and the Glory Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Overview.....	4
About the Author.....	5
Plot Summary.....	6
Part 1, Chapter 1.....	7
Part 1, Chapter 2.....	9
Part 1, Chapter 3.....	11
Part 1, Chapter 4.....	13
Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 1 (through page 83).....	15
Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 2.....	18
Part 2, Chapter 2.....	20
Part 2, Chapter 3.....	22
Part 2, Chapter 4.....	24
Part 3, Chapter 1.....	26
Part 3, Chapter 2.....	29
Part 3, Chapter 3.....	30
Part 3, Chapter 4.....	33
Part 4.....	35
Characters.....	37
Objects/Places.....	41
Setting.....	43
Social Sensitivity.....	44
Techniques.....	46
Literary Qualities.....	47



[Themes..... 48](#)

[Style..... 52](#)

[Quotes..... 54](#)

[Adaptations..... 58](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 59](#)

[Essay Topics..... 60](#)

[Ideas for Reports and Papers..... 61](#)

[Literary Precedents..... 62](#)

[Further Study..... 63](#)

[Related Titles..... 64](#)

[Copyright Information..... 65](#)



Overview

The Power and the Glory chronicles the plight of a Catholic priest who, for eight years, has continued to say Mass and administer the sacraments, even though Mexico's revolutionary government has outlawed these practices.

Knowing that he will be executed if he is caught, the priest moves from village to village carrying on the work of the Church. He is relentlessly pursued by a nameless young lieutenant of police, a revolutionary who believes that the new government can help mitigate poverty; the lieutenant despises the Church for ministering to spiritual needs while ignoring poverty. The priest, however, believes that faith in the Church's teachings provides hope for the poor and oppressed. Because he considers himself a sinner, the priest empathizes with others who are weak, and feels compelled to fulfill his priestly duties despite the threat of execution. But the lieutenant sets traps for the priest by killing hostages in the villages where the priest has held Mass and by luring him with liquor. The inevitable confrontation between these two men brings the novel to a dramatic climax.

About the Author

Graham Greene was born October 2, 1904, at Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England, the fourth of six children. His exposure to books at an early age fueled his ambitions to travel and to write. After a troubled adolescence, during which he ran away from home and ended up in psychoanalysis, he enrolled at Oxford University, where he studied from 1922 to 1925 and wrote his only collection of poetry, *Babbling April* (1925). During that time, Vivien Dayrell-Browning, his future wife, wrote to him about an error concerning Catholic beliefs she had noticed in one of his film reviews; her letter triggered his examination of and eventual immersion in Catholic thought. Greene married Dayrell-Browning in 1927. He converted to Catholicism in 1926, and his religion greatly influenced his writing for the next twenty-five years. *The End of the Affair* (1951) marked his last novel written from a Catholic perspective.

After graduating from Oxford in 1925, Greene worked first in Nottingham as a reporter for the *Journal* and later as an editor for the *London Times*, a job he left in 1929 upon publication of his first novel, *The Man Within*. Intending to devote all of his time to writing, Greene soon realized that he could not support his wife and two children without a regular salary. He became a film critic but still managed to write a novel a year for the next six years. In 1938 he published *Brighton Rock*, his first novel with a strongly Catholic theme. He traveled to southern Mexico to learn about the repression of the Catholic church under the revolutionary government of General Lázaro Cárdenas, a trip that spawned both *The Lawless Roads* (1939) and *The Power and the Glory*.

Greene's World War II service with the British Secret Intelligence Service provided him with material for novels of intrigue and politics such as *The Ministry of Fear* (1943), *The Quiet American*, *Our Man in Havana*, *The Comedians* (1969) and *The Honorary Consul* (1973).

Greene has been a dedicated traveler all his life, consistently visiting parts of the world embroiled in turmoil and strife. Greene has documented his fascinating life in his travel books, his autobiographies—*A Sort of Life* (1971) and *Ways of Escape* (1980)—and his extensive diaries and correspondence.

As one of the most prolific, widely read, and critically acclaimed authors of the twentieth century, Greene has been considered time and again for the Nobel Prize for literature, but the very themes that have made him so popular—violence and religion—have also made him controversial, and the committee has stated publicly that it will never award him the prize. Although he is elderly, Greene continues to travel and publish regularly. He lives on the French Riviera, in Antibes, when he is not traveling.



Plot Summary

Religion has been outlawed in a rural Mexican state and priests are considered traitors. The priests that have not escaped have been hunted down and killed. One priest remains on the run, an unnamed man who is far from a perfect holy man. The priest has fathered a child with one of his congregates and is a drunk; he is desperately seeking redemption as he runs from the police lieutenant searching for him. With a price on his head he is helped by the faithful people in small villages. The priest has little hope of survival and tries to make peace with his life.

The novel tells the story of this priest, a sinner and a bad priest, but a faithful man and a true believer. He feels great guilt for the life he has led. He feels no regret for his greatest sin, fathering a child, however, as he has an enormous love for his daughter. Though he knows he is not fit to be a priest, he still feels a responsibility to minister to the people of the region. He knows he often fails but continues to try and fulfill his duties as best as he can. He knows that he is the last priest in the state and if he were to leave it would be as if God left.

The lieutenant that hunts him is also a good man who hates Catholicism and priests in particular. He feels that the church has been nothing but bad for the poor of the country and he believes his Communist government will be able to truly help the people. He has his own strict moral code to which he never adheres. However, this code allows him to randomly kill a man from each village the priest visits. This quickly makes the priest unwelcome in most villages and makes him even more destitute.

While he continues to run the priest meets lots of people. Including a truly pious woman in prison that is disgusted with the priest's actions. A young British girl that helps him hide from the police. And a homeless mestizo man the priest knows will turn him in for the reward money. He tries to loose the mestizo but the man keeps turning up.

When the priest is finally just minutes from safety he allows himself to be drawn back into the dangerous state by the mestizo man. He is called back to hear the confession of a murder. He knows this will lead to his certain capture and subsequent death, but he goes back anyway drawn by his duty as a priest to hear the sinner's confession. As expected he is captured and faces death. He knows he is not worthy to be called a martyr but when he is executed the very people that knew his true nature begin to repeat his story. They describe the priest as a hero, a true martyr and maybe even a saint. While the lieutenant believes he has captured the last priest in the last lines of the novel another arrives in the state, proving the church cannot die.



Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

Religion has been outlawed in a rural Mexican state and priests are considered traitors. The priests that have not escaped have been hunted down and killed. One priest remains on the run, an unnamed man who is far from a perfect holy man. The priest has fathered a child with one of his congregates and is a drunk who desperately seeks redemption as he runs from the police lieutenant searching for him. With a price on his head he is helped by the faithful citizens of small villages. The priest has little hope of survival and tries to make peace with his life.

The novel opens with a dentist, Mr. Trench, walking outside his place of business in rural Mexico. The land is described as dusty and hot with buzzards flying overhead. Mr. Trench is heading down to the port and sees a large ship preparing to set sail. Mr. Trench passes the treasury building which was formally a church and sees a man selling mineral water, which he regrets is practically the only thing to drink in this prohibition state. Mr. Trench wanders around the port trying to avoid angry customers when he hears another man speaking English. The two men chat and the stranger mentions he is looking for a man named Lopez. Trench tells him Lopez was shot weeks ago when he was caught helping people flee the state. The stranger mentions he has some brandy so Trench invites him back to his house for a drink. The man says he is planning on sailing on the ship but Trench tells him it won't leave for hours, so they go back to Trench's house.

The two men begin drinking, Mr. Trench helping himself to the brandy. The man says this place was very nice when they still had God, before the Red Shirts came. As they are talking someone knocks on the door; it is a boy looking for a doctor. The boy thinks the stranger is a doctor and insists that he come with him to help his sick mother. The man tries to say no, telling the boy he has to catch a boat. Finally the man is convinced and leaves with the boy. As the man leaves Mr. Trench is lonely. He looks around and finds the man has left a book behind. He picks up the book and the cover is a novel, but as he opens it he is startled to find it is a Bible. He hides the book not wanting anyone to see it.

As the stranger walks down the dusty road with the boy he begins to feel hatred towards the child. He knows now he will never escape and in his mind he is praying to be caught soon.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

This chapter sets the scene of the novel in a poor rural Mexican state. Greene describes the place vividly as a deserted, hot, sad and lonely place. The political scene is also described. Religion and the Church have been outlawed; as Mr. Trench feels the



need to hide the Bible, it is apparent to the reader that being caught with a bible is a serious offense. Alcohol has also been outlawed. The mention of 'red shirts' indicates a Communist revolution is responsible for these new laws.

The stranger is introduced as the protagonist of the novel. It is hinted that he is a religious man, as he repeats a Latin phrase from the Catholic mass, 'ora pro nobis,' and leaves behind a Bible. The mention of a man named Lopez who was killed for helping undesirables escape suggests that this man may be an undesirable. He was hoping to escape on the ship leaving for Vera Cruz. It can be assumed that Lopez was the man getting him on this ship. As the ship leaves unusually on time at the end of the chapter it is apparent that had he been on it he would have been captured. The boy coming to retrieve the man may be a ruse, designed to save the man. The man obviously has been on the run, and he is exasperated, eager at the end of the chapter to be captured.



Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

The chapter opens in a police station and introduces a police lieutenant. As the man is sitting at his desk dealing with the prisoners the Chief of Police enters the office. He tells the lieutenant that the Governor has been on his case, that they suspect a priest is on the run in their state. The lieutenant is surprised to hear this, thinking the last priest was shot weeks ago. The Governor is very angry about the priest and wants him found and killed as soon as possible. The Chief says it will be difficult as the only picture they have of him is very old. He hangs the old picture on the wall next to a photo of an American wanted for bank robbery and murder in the United States.

The Chief tells the Lieutenant they believe the priest tried to escape to Vera Cruz but he did not catch the boat. He says the priest must be caught this month and that he suspects he may be heading to the town of Concepción, the home of his parish, or Carmen where he was born. The Lieutenant is excited about the hunt for the priest, for he has an intense hatred of priests and the church. He tells the Chief he will find the priest with his plan of taking a hostage from every town the priest visits. If the villagers do not give up the priest the hostage will be killed. The chief tells him to do whatever he needs to do.

As the Lieutenant walks home through the town he looks around and sees all the old symbols of the Church he has helped destroy. He hopes to wipe out all memories of the Church so the children will have no knowledge of it. He wants to rewrite history. He recalls the other priests he has pursued; he has shot five but several escaped including the bishop who is safely in Mexico City. One priest conformed to the Governor's law, renounced his faith and married his housekeeper. He is pleased most of all by this man, a living example to all of the weakness faith.

In another part of town a mother is reading to her children, two girls and a boy. She is telling them the story of a young Mexican boy named Juan, a very holy boy who grows up to be a martyr, killed honorably for his faith in Christ. The children are infatuated with the story and the girls ask if the man will become a saint, and their mother tells them he will one day. The children ask about Father José, the priest who married his housekeeper. The mother angrily tells them not to ever mention him, that he is despicable. They ask about the other priest, the one that stayed with them. One of the girls says he smelt funny. She says he is not a despicable man, but says nothing else about him, continuing with the story.

Later the mother is talking with her husband. She says the children were asking questions about the whiskey priest that stayed with him. She regrets helping him but her husband says if they hadn't, he would have been killed. She says the man could never be a martyr. The husband says they have been abandoned and they have to get on the



best they can, the priests have to do the same. He says the church is now the whiskey priest and Father José, if they don't like the church they have to leave it.

In yet another part of town the fat, sad Father José is sitting in his house reflecting on his poor life. He had been a priest for forty years and now was forced to marry his housekeeper. As he sits his wife nags him from the other room to come to bed but he ignores her. He is feeling sorry for himself as a sinner; he thinks with envy of the other priest who died. It was over so quickly for them yet his painful life continues. He wonders if he is even fit for hell after the life he has led, but he remembers the gift he has been given that no one can take away, the gift of turning bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. As his wife continues to call for him he continues to feel sorry for himself. He has lived in a state of sin for two years, unable to confess. Suddenly he hears a child's voice and looks up the see neighborhood children outside his window and they begin mocking him, as they do everyday.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

It is now clear that the man from the first chapter is a priest who is being hunted by the police. The young boy did come to save him and not to help his mother. The mother reading to her children was the boy's mother and they sheltered the priest in their home. She knows, however, that the priest was not a great man, she calls him a whiskey priest meaning he is a drunk. The family further explains the political situation. Since they are a religious family but are not able to publicly practice their religion, they do the best they can to keep up their faith and pass it on to their children. Even though religion has been outlawed it has not died, it has just gone underground. This family represents the average family in this Mexican state.

Father José at the end of the chapter is one example of a priest who has taken to road of renouncing his faith and being allowed to live. The unnamed priest has taken the other road. He keeps his faith but is constantly in danger of being captured and killed. These are the two priests in the story, both very flawed men with huge regrets, but both men with a true faith. They can be symbolic of priests to the extent that they are just men trying to live their lives in a faithful way, but the author is pointing out that they are not God, they are just men and sinners like everyone else. As the story continues there will be more opportunity to compare and contrast the two priests.



Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

A British man named Captain Fellows is in a canoe heading down a river toward the banana plantation on which he lives and works. As he enters his house he is not surprised to find his wife, Mrs. Fellows, sick in bed. He asks about their daughter, Coral. Mrs. Fellows tells him she is out with the policeman looking for someone. Captain Fellows is concerned and heads out to look for his daughter, but before he gets far she comes to him. She tells her father she wants him to speak with the policeman and get him to leave because she does not like the man.

Captain Fellows goes to speak with the policeman who he learns is a lieutenant. The lieutenant tells Fellows he is looking for a priest wanted for treason. Fellows immediately loses interest when he hears the charge, telling the lieutenant he has not seen the priest, but he will report if he does. The lieutenant is satisfied and leaves. Captain Fellows turns to his daughter and she tells him she refused to let him search the plantation. The father asks why and she begins to tell him they had no right, but he interrupts her telling her it could have done no harm. Then the father realizes his daughter is not telling him something and he realizes the priest is in fact here. Coral says the priest is hiding in the barn. Captain Fellows is not happy and goes to speak with the priest.

Fellows enters the dark barn with a flashlight and spots the priest and tells him he has no business here. The priest says he understands and agrees to leave, but Fellows feels some sympathy for the man and tells him to wait until dark. He tells his daughter to bring the priest some food. The priest asks for brandy but Captain Fellows tells him he is breaking the law enough as it is. When Coral comes back with food she also brings a bottle of beer for the priest. She tells him the police have moved south so he should go north. The two talk to each other and Coral grows interested in the priest. She asks him why he doesn't just renounce his faith but the priest tells her that is impossible, it is out of his power. The girl tells the priest he can always come back here, that she will help him. She says she lost her faith in God when she was ten, but the priest thanks her and says he will pray for her.

The scene changes to a very rural village made up of just a few modest huts. The priest approaches an old man and asks him if he could spare a hammock for the night. The man responds there are no hammocks in this village but says the priest can lay down. The priest asks for some food but the man says there is no food in the village. They enter the old man's hut and the priest lays down. He learns the police were there yesterday. The old man says they have not seen a priest in over five years and asks if the priest will say mass and hear confession. The priest agrees to do so in the morning as he is now very tired. However, the old man insists that they do it now, for he is afraid the priest will be caught during the night. The priest reluctantly agrees and begins to hear the man's confession. He then goes to another hut and gets the others to come for



confession as well. The priest is tired and only wants to sleep but he forces himself to hear all the confessions, saying he is their servant.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

This chapter begins to show what the priest's life is like. He is constantly on the run and just able to stay ahead of the police. It seems inevitable that he will be caught. He manages to escape at the banana plantation only because the girl helps him. The people who hide him are taking a great risk as it is against the law and they are afraid of being caught. When the priest arrives at the small village he is exhausted, he only wants to sleep. The village is very poor as they do not even have food but the old man lets the priest sleep in his very modest bed, while he sleeps on the dirt floor. He is very insistent when asking the priests to hear confession and say mass. The priest only wants to sleep and says he will do so in the morning, but the old man is taking a great risk in helping the priest and insists on doing in right away. The old man is eager to see the priest as it has been so long and he doesn't want to wait until morning because he knows there is a chance the police might come back. When he sees the priest crying out of frustration he interprets it as the priest weeping for their sins.



Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Father José is walking through a cemetery and comes upon a funeral. A family is burying what is obviously a small child. They see Father José and beg him to say a prayer at the grave. Father José wants to help but he is scared, he knows if he does so the family will go home and tell their neighbors. If the authorities find out he is afraid he will get in trouble, lose his pension or even be killed for practicing his religion, which he has renounced. The family is desperate and pleads with the ex-priest to say just one prayer. Father José still refuses, apologizing but saying it is impossible and against the law. He gets a strange sense of pride at being treated as a priest again, treated with respect he has lost. He is tempted to say a quick prayer and starts to make the sign of the cross in the air, but the fear quickly comes back. He says he is a coward and tells the family to leave him alone. As he leaves the scene he knows he is in the grip of despair.

The scene changes and the mother is again reading to her children. She is continuing the story of Juan; the young boy has grown up and been ordained a priest. However, as she continues the story the children learn that President Calles is starting the anti-Catholic laws putting priests everywhere in danger. Her son is excited for he feels the death scene will be coming up soon. His mother is angry with him for only carrying about death and the boy snaps back that he does not believe a word of the story she has been telling them. The mother is furious and sends the boy to his father. He goes to the father and explains to him what has happened, that he doesn't believe the holy book. The father explains to him that the book is all they have left. He himself was a bad Catholic, but still he had the Church. Now that it is gone the stories are all they have. He says his mother is just angry that they have been deserted. As his father speaks the boy looks through the window at the soldier walking down the street.

The scene changes to the banana farm and Coral is having a school lesson with her mother. The mother feels sick so Coral goes outside. She realizes today is the day the bananas need to go down to the dock but her father has forgotten. She takes it upon herself to do the work and get one of the local workman to help her. As she does the grueling work she begins to feel like an adult with a sense of responsibility she has never felt before. When they finally get the work done she gives the barn one last look and sees the spot where the priest had slept; she notices a series of small crosses he drew on the wall. She could sense the priest's pain and feels today is a very memorable day.

The next scene takes place in a cantina and the lieutenant enters the building to speak with the Chief of Police. The lieutenant is worried about not finding the priest; he wants to enact his plan of taking and killing a hostage from each village. The Chief gives him permission to do so, saying the Governor wants the man caught. The lieutenant decides to start in Cóncepcion and Carmen where the priest is believed to be heading. As the lieutenant is walking back down the street a boy throws a bottle at him. The police



officer confronts the boy and speaks with him. The boy says he had just aimed improperly. The lieutenant then asks the boy if he would like to see his gun. The boy's eyes open wide with interest as he looks at the gun. The lieutenant looks at the boy and his friends now gathering around and thinks everything he is doing is for their sake. He doesn't want them to suffer, so he thinks to himself that he would start a massacre for their sake.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

The scene with Father José is in contrast to the one in the previous chapter with the main priest. While the main priest ministered to the people even when he was tired, Father José did not. He was not tired and could have easily said a short prayer for the dead child, but he did not. He handles his fear differently than the other priest. He is crippled by his fear, he knows what he is doing is wrong but he cannot bring himself to do the right thing. Both men are sinners and cannot be considered good priests, yet they still choose very different paths. The main priest of the story knows he is a bad priest but he does the best he can. Father José knows he is a bad priest yet does not do the best he can; instead, he refuses to help the people he is suppose to ministering to.

The young boy that gets angry with his mother is significant because the boy is starting to grow into a man. He is having ideas of his own and starting to question what his mother has always told him. This of course is a natural part of growth. HE is weighting what he has learned about religion at home with the soldiers he sees outside. He is beginning to have his own internal struggle that will eventually lead him on one of two paths. He will either choose religion or he will reject it. It is yet to be scene which path he will take.

The final scene with the lieutenant is his effort to counter the mother. He has a true belief in what he is doing. He is acting out of genuine concern for the children and wants to save them from the Church, which he considers evil. He does not snap at the child that throws a bottle at him, but instead tries to win him over by playing on a boy's natural curiosity of guns. He hopes to win him over and stop him from choosing the path toward religion.



Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 1 (through page 83)

Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 1 (through page 83) Summary

The priest is heading west on a mule towards his home. He has tried to change his appearance so he will not be easily recognized. As he heads home he thinks of the last time he was there. He had given into temptation, he knows he is a bad priest, a whiskey priest. Yet he feels confident that he will be welcomed as he enters the town. A woman spots him and after staring at him for a moment recognizes him. She tells the priest he looks like a common man because of his clothes. Without looking at her he asks with embarrassment about Brigetta and his heart jumps as he speaks her name. It has been six years since he last visited the village. The woman says Brigetta is as well as anyone.

As he enters the village he does not receive a warm welcome. Only a few people gather at a distance and look at him and no one comes to kiss his hand. Finally someone recognizes him and they greet him. The first thing they ask is how long he will be staying. He is unsure and begins to answer that he would like to stay for a few days, but the villagers are not fond of the idea. They suggest that perhaps he would be more comfortable further down the road. A woman speaks up and says he can stay at least for the night, and the priest promises to say a mass for them. The priest is confused, for he is not sure why the villagers are so scarred. They tell him about the police taking hostages. The police already took one hostage from Concepción and murdered a man named Pedro Montez. The priest is upset and surprised by this news. The priest says he will sleep for a few hours, wake early to hear confession and say mass and then leave before sunrise. The priest realizes there is now nowhere to be safe, no village where he will be welcome.

The priest follows the woman into her hut and he lays down on her bed. He feels very guilty for the death of the hostage, but he recalls that the Church has taught him it is every man's first duty to save their own soul. He believes that if he was gone it would be as if God was gone from this whole state. The woman, Maria, brings him some brandy and he asks about his daughter, Brigitta. When Maria tells him she was one of the children that he had seen in the village he is shocked that he did not recognize his own child. Maria calls Brigitta into the bedroom and the priest stares at her. He knows there was no love in her conception, but he feels an enormous love for the girl and wants to save her from everything. The father and daughter look at each other for a moment and exchange a few meaningless words, then the girl sticks out her tongue and runs away.

The next morning the priest heads confessions and says a quick mass. As he is preaching he sees a man slip in through the back door and whisper something to another man. The man comes and quietly tells the priest that the police are only a mile



away. The priest continues saying mass but he can feel the tension in the room; they want him to leave. When he finally finishes mass the police have arrived and have surrounded the village. The police call all the villagers outside and they line up, the priest included. The lieutenant is there and he instructs his men to search the huts but they find nothing. The lieutenant speaks to the villagers telling them to turn in the priest. He tells them the things the Church teaches are wrong. The lieutenant begins questioning each man and eventually he gets to the priest. The priest tells him he is laborer, married with a child. The lieutenant seems suspicious but eventually accepts his word, not realizing this is the priest. The lieutenant has questioned everyone and learns nothing so he tells the people he will take a hostage. The priest looks down at the ground, feeling guilt and hatred of the villagers. The lieutenant chooses a young boy as the hostage and the boy's mother screams. The priest tries to bargain with the lieutenant offering himself instead of the boy but the lieutenant refuses and the police leave with the boy.

Once the police are safely away the villagers turn to the priest and tell him to leave, encouraging him to go north. The priest first returns to Maria's house to gather his things. She confronts him and tells him he should turn himself in, that they don't want him anymore. The priest tells her he understands but it is not up to her or to him. She counters and tells him she knows he is a bad priest, she knows the life he has led. She tells him he will never be a martyr, that people will mock him. She goes on to say she thought he would be able to help their daughter, but he hasn't, he has done nothing for her. The priest tells Maria she is a good woman, and he will say a mass for their daughter. The priest leaves and starts to head out of town. As he is leaving he sees his daughter following him. He goes to her and she is obviously upset. The priest asks the girl what is wrong, and she says it is him. The other children laugh at her and she doesn't know exactly why, she doesn't understand that he is a priest. The girl knows the priest is leaving and she wants to know why. She only knows he is his father and she wants him to stay. The priest is heartbroken and realizes that it his job to save souls, and he prays to God to save this child. He knows he would do anything to save her. He tells the girl he loves her and that he is her father, then he kisses her and says goodbye.

Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 1 (through page 83)

Analysis

The priest realizes he is unwelcome. The villagers are afraid of being caught and the lieutenant's plan is working. There is now nowhere the priest can go.

The priest sees his daughter for the first time since she was an infant and he does not even recognize her. He feels an immediate overpowering love for her when he meets her. She is a constant reminder of his sin but he loves her none the less. The girl's mother is cordial with the priest and they obviously have a close relationship but there is no hint or pretense of love between them.

When the lieutenant comes to take a hostage the priest is faced with a serious problem. He knows the hostage will be killed and he can prevent it by coming forward but he



does not. He feels a responsibility as a representative of God and the Church but he is also scared. He does not want to die and he is not brave enough to turn himself into the lieutenant. It tells something of the villagers respect for him as a priest that they do not turn him in. The boy's mother could have easily saved her son by turning in the priest but she does not. This shows a very serious commitment and strong faith in the Church on her part. This suggests that even under the current conditions the people have a strong faith, suggesting that even under these terrible conditions the Church will never die. Even though the people have almost no opportunity to publicly practice their religion they do not lose faith. This is in contrast to the priest's love of his own child. He is called father by everyone but by his daughter. By choosing a life of being a father to all people he cannot be a father to his true child. However, he knows the love he feels for his daughter is what all parents feel and he knows it is the love God feels for all people.



Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 2

Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 2 Summary

The priest heads south, away from the safety of the north, following the police. He wants to get as far as possible from his daughter to protect her. He also knows he needs wine so he can say mass so he heads to Carmen, his hometown. After hours of walking he approaches the outskirts of a small town. He sees a mestizo man on a hammock and asks him if the police have been through this way. He learns that the police are not heading for Carmen but are going to a larger city. With this news the priest is encouraged to keep moving. As he is crossing a river he hears someone calling for him. He looks back and sees the mestizo man trying to get his attention but the priest ignores him. The man begins to follow him and eventually catches up to him. The mestizo man tells the priest he is going to Carmen too and suggests that they go together. The priest is suspicious of the man and does not talk much to him, hoping he will leave him alone, but the man continues to follow him, suggesting that they stop at a house before nightfall. The priest tries to resist him wanting to get to Carmen quickly. The man asks if he is a priest and the priest denies that he is. Now the priest is sure the mestizo man knows he is a priest and will turn him in for the reward money.

As they walk the mestizo man continues to refer to the priest as a priest, which the priest continues to deny. The mestizo continues to suggest that they stop at a small house he knows of for a rest. Finally the priest agrees against his better judgment. They two men find the hut and settle down. The priest is very suspicious of the mestizo man and forces himself to stay awake. As they sit in the dark the mestizo man asks the priest to say a prayer, telling the priest he is a good Christian, trying to get him to admit to being a priest. The priest feels that he is in the presence of Judas. The priest then notices that the mestizo man is ill, and he begins to feel sorry for him. He knows he is a very poor man with little hope in his life. They continue to sit in the dark and the priest begins to fall asleep, dreaming of his previous life before the trouble began. He dreams he is back among his congregation in a position of respect.

Then he is awake and back with the mestizo man. He begins to regret not turning himself in and feels that he was never good enough to be a priest. The priest sees the mestizo man shivering and offers him his shirt, but the man refuses saying he doesn't want anything from the priest if he does not trust him. The mestizo man continues to insist that the priest is a priest. He begins to confess to him telling him some terrible sins. The priest thinks to himself that he needs to get to Carmen; he wanders outside into the dark and looks for the mule. Finally he finds it and prepares to leave but before he can the mestizo man comes out and sees him. He accuses the priest of leaving him to die. The priest feels compassion for the man, remembering that he is a child of Christ. He knows the man intends to betray him for the reward money but agrees to take him along. They start out on the path towards Carmen.



The priest sees that the mestizo man is getting sicker, so he offers to let him ride on the mule. The mestizo man says he knows the priest thinks he will betray him, and he says a poor man has no choice. As they walk the priest again asks if he is a priest and the priest finally admits that he is. He knows he can now not go to Carmen. When they come to a fork in the road the mestizo man is very ill and can hardly move. The priest sends the mule with the mestizo man on down the road to Carmen while he takes another route. He tells the mestizo man that they will take care of him there. The man yells back at the priest that he is abandoning him, pleading with him to not leave him alone. Finally he yells back threateningly that he will not forget his face.

Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 2 Analysis

In the final part of this chapter the priest meets the man he knows will be his downfall. He immediately recognizes the man as a Judas. Judas was the apostle that turned Jesus over to the authorities. Jesus knew that he would be betrayed but he did not try and stop Judas. This is similar to the priest: he knows the mestizo man will turn him in, but he does not try to stop him. He has the opportunity to escape but keeps coming back to the man, even admitting that he is a priest. He feels compassion for the mestizo man. He knows he has no choice in life and will turn him in for the reward money. He knows the man is not evil but is just trying to live his life. He does not seem to feel any hatred for the man. He even offers the man the shirt off his back. This is part of the continuous symbolism of the Priest as a Christ-like figure. Despite the priest being an obvious sinner he is still leading a life similar to Jesus. The final scene foreshadows the future when the mestizo man says he will not forget his face, suggesting that he will turn in the priest if he sees him again.



Part 2, Chapter 2

Part 2, Chapter 2 Summary

The chapter opens in the unnamed capital city of the state. The priest is searching for a place to buy wine when he meets a beggar and offers to pay him for his help. As they walk down the street the priest sees the police and notices that they are walking with the mestizo man. He assumes he must be informing them. He tries to forget this for now as the beggar leads him to a hotel where they meet a man selling alcohol. The priest tells the man he wants to buy wine, but the man keeps offering him other things. When he insists on wine the man offers him one bottle plus a bottle of brandy. The priest agrees and pays the man with the last of his money. The seller insists that they have a drink together and opens the newly purchased bottle of wine. The priest is not happy about wasting the wine but agrees.

As they are drinking, the hotel owner comes in to announce that the Chief of Police is coming. To the priest's surprise the man invites him in. The Chief's face lights up at the sight of the alcohol and he sits down to join the drinkers. He helps himself to a glass of wine and the priest watches desperately as the level in the bottle quickly declines. As the Chief gets drunk he begins to tell the men about the hunt for the priest. He says the Governor takes this very seriously while he himself would just assume let the man go free. He says he himself wept when he had to watch the priest that baptized him shot and killed. The Chief continues to drink and the priest is silently horrified as he watches the man finish the bottle of wine. The priest says he must be going and leaves the room, taking with him the now half empty bottle of brandy.

The priest walks into the cantina and accidentally bumps into a man. He apologizes and looks at the man, when he realizes it is a red shirt. He is startled and frightened and backs away quickly, but as he does so the brandy bottle in his pocket hits the wall and makes a loud noise. The red shirt hears the noise and asks the priest what it is. He searches the priest and finds the brandy. The priest rushes out of the building but the red shirt follows him, calling his friends to follow. The priest runs desperately from the men now chasing him. As he runs he hears the mob chasing him grow, he runs and can think of only one place to hide. He reaches a door and bangs on it; it is the house of Father José. He pleads with Father José to hide him, but Father José refuses and tells him to go away. Father José threatens to call the police if the priest does not leave. Suddenly the police enter the home and find the priest. He knows it is the end and begins to say a prayer of contrition. The red shirts take him to the police station not knowing he is a priest, and he wonders when they will realize it. The police fine the priest five pesos, but the priest has no money. As the police try and decide what to do the lieutenant comes in and asks what is going on. The priest is terrified that the lieutenant will recognize him and prepares himself for the end. The lieutenant does not look at the priest, but just instructs his men to put him in jail and give him some work in the morning.



The priest is led into a cell. He knows his time is limited, that the mestizo man must be here and will recognize him. He fears this will be his last night, knowing that in the morning they will figure out who he is and kill him. As the priest enters the crowded jail cell he is confronted with the horrors of a Mexican prison. The policeman laughs as he slams the door behind him.

Part 2, Chapter 2 Analysis

The priest has to watch the Chief of Police drink down the wine he has bought for mass with the last of his money. This has to be heartbreaking for him as the wine is so important to him. It is ironic that it is the police chief that is drinking as alcohol is illegal in the province and the police are looking for the priest.

It is significant that the priest is caught by the clanking brandy bottle. It is one of his sins that gets him caught and possibly killed. It is his weakness for alcohol that does him in. As he goes into prison he loses all hope, feeling he has no hope of escaping at this point. Father José has again failed to live up to his duty as a priest. He has the opportunity to help the priest but he does not. Again he lets his fear control him, this is the main difference between the two priests in the story. They are both afraid of death, but the priest still tries to act as a priest while Father José does not.



Part 2, Chapter 3

Part 2, Chapter 3 Summary

The priest is standing in the dark prison cell waiting for his eyes to adjust to the light. He moves along the wall trying to find a place to sit down. He hears the pleasurable scream of a woman and realizes there is someone having sex in the room. He moves down the wall and finds himself in the back of the cell and finds a spot to sit. He talks to an old man he realizes is crazy. The man begins talking angrily about priests, blaming them for the misery in his life. The priest tells the man he is a priest, and in doing so gives up hope. He knows someone will overhear and turn him in, for these are poor people and they need money. There is silence around him as no one responds to his admission. Finally a woman asks him if the police know, and he tells her they do not, not yet. She is worried for the priest, and asks him if he is scared. He admits that he is. Another voice says that Christianity makes men into cowards. The priest responds, saying maybe the man is correct. He admits he is a bad priest and a bad man.

The man says it is better to believe God does not exist. The priest responds by asking if they believed the Governor did not exist would they not be in prison. The man says that is ridiculous. The woman speaks again saying the priest is a martyr, but the priest denies it again saying he is a bad man. He tells the woman he is a whiskey priest and he is in a state of moral sin. He asks the woman why she is here and she says it is for having a holy book in her house. He tells her he has not repented for his sin and does not want to. He tells her that sins have so much beauty in them, that that is something Satan carried down with him. The woman is disgusted with the priest and says she will write the bishop when she gets out. She says the sooner he is dead the better, that he will never be a martyr. The priest does not care; he knows it is the end for him. He continues to speak with the prisoners, wondering which one will turn him in.

The priest lays against the wall listening to the sounds of the prison while he drifts in and out of sleep. He has no real hope of escape. He is just waiting for the morning when he knows he will be discovered. As the morning approaches he begins to say his farewell to the world. Finally he hears someone yell his name. He goes out and speaks with the policeman. He is ordered to clean out the prison cells. He begins the work, assuming that he will be discovered before he is finished. As he is working suddenly he sees some of the hostages that have been taken from the villages. They look at each other but say nothing; the priest says a silent prayer for them. As the priest comes to the last cell he sees the mestizo man inside. He enters and speaks with him. The mestizo man says he is a guest in the prison that and he is working with the police to find the priest. The mestizo man is very drunk, for the police have given him beer. The priest speaks with the man and plants an idea in his head. He makes the man realize that if he turns him in now he will be kicked out of the prison, and be on the street again; he tells him not trust the police. He says there is also the red shirt that caught him with the brandy who may claim the reward. The mestizo decides not to turn in the priest now, but



to continue living as a guest in the prison where he is allowed to drink beer and be out of the elements.

The priest then finishes cleaning the cells and reports to the policeman. He is taken into the Chief's office but sees the lieutenant sitting at the desk. He faces the lieutenant and asks for permission to leave. The lieutenant questions him and stares at him. The priest is afraid he will recognize him from Carmen. The lieutenant does stare at him and seems like he has something to say, but he says nothing and finally agrees to let the priest go. Before the priest leaves the lieutenant puts his hand in his pockets and pulls out five pesos and gives them to the priest. The priest tells the lieutenant he is a good man and walks out of the office and leaves the police station.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Analysis

This is one of the central and most significant chapters of the book. The priest begins a sort of confession, while not to a priest he is admitting his sins. He believes he will be dead soon and he wants to confess his sins. He does not have access to a priest to be officially absolved but is doing the best he can by confessing to whoever is available. The priest also tries to minister to the people in the prison. When one says he does not believe in God the priest addresses it. He makes the argument that if they did not believe the governor did not exist would they not be in prison. He is trying to make the man understand that even if he believes God does not exist it will not change his situation. Men have free will and they have to make their own decision; if God exists or not the man still has to live a good life.

The priest also addresses sin. He says there is a lot of beauty in sin, which is why sin is so enjoyable. He also says there is so much pity in everyone. This is because he believes this life is full of suffering, it is the next life in heaven that all people should strive for. It is nearly impossible to have a happy life on earth, so people should focus on getting into heaven. This of course is very difficult as sin is so tempting. The woman does not understand this and is disgusted with the priest. She tells him he will never be a martyr. She is one of the many people to tell him this. Despite being a sinner the priest is introspective and is grappling with real issues. Instead of just focusing on his sin he is trying to overcome it and is striving to be a good man. Just because he is a priest does not mean he is a saint. He does have a true belief and is doing his best to be a good man; he often fails but he always tries.

The final scene of this section when the lieutenant faces the priest is very interesting. He gives the man money and obviously feels pity for him. This is in the lieutenant's character because he does have a genuine compassion for the poor. He believes he is helping the poor by irradiating the Church. The priest and the lieutenant have very similar goals they just have very different beliefs in how to achieve the goal. The priest recognizes the compassion in the lieutenant and calls him a good man.



Part 2, Chapter 4

Part 2, Chapter 4 Summary

The priest returns to the banana plantation looking for the young girl, Coral, that offered to help him. He figures because she is a foreigner the police will not hurt her, and she is the only one that can help him. It took him a week to reach the banana plantation and when he does he finds their home abandoned. The only living thing is a starving dog. The priest enters the empty house and the dog follows. He has not eaten in days but finds no food. Finally he finds an old bone with a scrap of meat left on it. He fights off the dog for it and eats the rotten meat hungrily. He feels guilty for eating the whole thing and throws the bone to the dog. The priest searches the house but finds little. He comes across a book and notices the handwriting of Coral inside. Eventually he leaves the plantation and heads for the mountains toward the safety of the north.

He walks for miles and it begins to storm. Eventually he gets to a large field and sees a row of huts. He runs to them but finds them mostly empty, except for a large pile of maize. He sits down in the shelter of the hut and feels very alone. Finally he senses someone moving outside. He investigates and sees an Indian woman moving about. He calls out to her but she is frightened and runs away. After some time she returns and the priest watches her. It is apparent that she wants to get at something in one of the huts. The priest knows that the only thing there is maize so he suspects she must have hidden something in the pile of maize. As he enters the hut and puts his hand into the pile he feels a face. It is the body of a child, and the woman comes in hysterical. He realizes the boy must be her son. The priest asks the woman what happened, but she does not speak his language, responding only, "Americano." The priest sees that the boy has been shot three times and he realizes it must have been the fugitive American murderer.

The priest calls for water but there is nothing he can do. The boy is dead. He tells the woman that he is a priest and she understands the word; she leans forward and kisses his hand. He gets on his knees and prays with the woman. He tries to talk with the woman but she only knows a few words. She says the name of the banana plantation and the priest worries that the murder may have been there. He worries that perhaps he has killed Coral or her family. The woman tries to get something across to the priest and finally he understands she wants to bury her child. She is saying the word church but he does not know where he could find one in this area. The rain is now falling heavily and the priest has twenty miles to get to the border and safety. The two sit in the hut with the dead boy and wait. Finally the priest leaves the hut and the woman follows carrying the body of her dead son.

They walk for thirty hours in silence with nothing to eat but sugar. They had seen no one on their hike into the mountains. They reach a clearing full of crosses. He knows it is the work of the faithful Indians in the area. The woman goes down on her knees and prays in front of a cross, holding her child up to the wood. The priest watches the scene and



finds himself hoping for the child to come alive but he does not. The priest tells the woman they need to move on but she does not listen. The priest moves on searching for shelter, freezing in the cold rain. He becomes afraid that the American is watching him, and then thinks of the old woman. He goes back to find the woman but she is not there; she has left the body of her son in front of the cross. He sees the last lump of sugar by the boy's mouth, as if she was still hoping for some miracle. He takes the sugar and eats it. He feels totally alone and wants to give up. He is freezing and fears the weather will kill him, but he moves on continuing for hours into the mountains toward the north, toward safety. As he walks in the freezing rain the priest begins to pray. Finally he sees a man walking towards him, he goes to him and they confront each other. The man has a gun and asks the priest where he has come from. The priest tells him his name and says he will be no trouble, he is just moving on. The man is shocked to hear that he is a priest. The priest begins to run and comes out of the forest to a large white building. The man catches up with the priest and calls him, with concern in his voice. The priest is scared but the man tells him he is safe here, he tells him this is their church. The priest is exhausted and can hardly understand what is happening as the man tells him it is an honor to have a priest in their town. The priest just sits down against the wall of the church and falls fast asleep.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Analysis

Despite everything that has happened to the priest he still does his best to do his duties. When he meets the Indian woman he takes the time to help her and pray with her. He may not be happy about doing it but he still does it. He has a great desire to escape but he still takes the time to minister to the needy woman. When the priest watches the young woman prostrating in front of the cross obviously praying for a miracle he does not look down on her. He also is hoping for a miracle looking for signs of life in the dead boy.

It is unclear what happened at the banana plantation but it is suggested that Coral or the other Fellows may have been killed by the fugitive Yankee. The final scene finds the priest at a church; it appears that he may have made it to safety.



Part 3, Chapter 1

Part 3, Chapter 1 Summary

The priest wakes in the morning at the home of a German brother and sister, the Lehrs. The priest has been there for three days recovering from his journey. The priest hopes to get to the town of Las Casa where he will be safe. The town still has churches and even universities. The Lehrs tell him that it will take four to six days for him to walk there. As they are talking the Lehrs tell the priest that they are Lutheran. They don't approve of all the luxury of the Catholic Church. At first the priest is a little shocked, as he has lived anything but a luxurious life in the past few years. He starts to protest but stops, thinking of the life he used to lead as a pastor and realizes maybe Mr. Lehr is right. Mr. Lehr also says he doesn't like all the rules of the Catholic Church, all the fasting and no fish on Fridays. The priest says it is necessary to create discipline in people so they don't end up lazy, like himself. He compares it to an army training soldiers for battle. Discipline is necessary to create character. The priest leads a comfortable life with the Lehrs; he sleeps in a bed and takes nice baths. He begins to feel guilty for this decadence while so many others like his daughter are suffering.

Later the priest visits the local village and he is treated with great respect; the people all kneel and kiss his hand. He agrees to say mass and hear confession for the people. There are also many children to be baptized. The priest negotiates a price for his services, one and a half pesos for each baptism and confession. He calculates that when he is done he will make one hundred and sixty pesos, a great deal of wealth after all the years of poverty. Even after hiring a guide and mules for the walk to Las Casas he will have enough money to be very comfortable. So the priest goes to a cantina and negotiates a price for several bottles of sacramental wine. The owner is happy to extend the priest credit for the wine. The father has a drink with the owner and begins to feel comfortable. The man tells him he will be able to say mass everyday in Las Casas. As the priest drinks more he tells the man to let the people know he will only charge one peso each for the baptisms. The man responds by trying to lower the price even more.

The next day the priest spends hours hearing confessions from the villagers. As he listens to person after person confessing their sins and leaving refreshed with a clear conscience, he is reminded how he does not have this luxury. He cannot talk to a priest and confess his own sins. He does not have the opportunity to be absolved. He looks forward to getting to Las Casa, where he can see another priest and be absolved himself.

The next day the priest hires a guide and two mules and prepares for the walk to Las Casas. First he will say mass in Mr. Lehr's barn. The barn is set up nicely even featuring an altar stone. For the first time in years there is no fear that the police will arrive to interrupt the service. As the priest prepares to take the elements he is again reminded of his own sin. He is very anxious to arrive in Las Casas so he can confess. However, not for the first time he worries that he cannot be absolved. He knows he does not truly



regret his sin of conceiving his child. He does not know how he can confess if he loves the result of his sin.

Later when the mass is finished the priest prepares to leave. When he leaves the Lehr's home he walks out to the mules and the guide and as he approaches he sees a second man standing there. As he gets closer he sees it is the mestizo man. He asks if he has brought the soldiers with him. The mestizo man says he has not, but that he has come on an errand of mercy. He says he has found the Yankee and he is dying. He claims the Yankee is a Catholic and needs a priest to hear his confession before he dies. The priest says he cannot help, then turns to the guide and starts down the road to Las Casas. The mestizo man follows, playing on the priest's conscience, saying he cannot refuse a dying man confession. The priest says he is no fool—he knows the mestizo man intends to bring him to the police. The mestizo man denies this, but the priest does not believe him. To prove his story the mestizo man holds up a piece of paper. On one side part of an essay is written in a child's hand. The mestizo man tells him to turn it over and on the other side is one phrase 'for Christ's sake, father...' The paper leaves no doubt in the priest's mind. The mestizo man then tells the priest that he was there when the Yankee was shot. He had taken an Indian boy hostage but the police shot both of them.

The priest says he still believes the Mestizo man is trying to trap him and he does not trust him; but he is sure that the Yankee is dying. He thinks of the deserted banana station and the dead Indian boy. He knows he is trapped but he feels an odd sense of peace, having never really thought he would escape. The priest asks how long it will take to get to the Yankee and the mestizo man tells him it is four or five hours away. The priest turns his mule around and heads back towards the town and toward the Yankee. As he passes back through the small town he sees the man who sold him the wine. He stops and gives the man all his remaining money, telling him to pass it out to the needy. The mestizo man is confused, telling him that to do that he will need the money. The priest, though, says it is conscience money. The priest, the guide and the mestizo man then head toward the dying Yankee.

Part 3, Chapter 1 Analysis

When the priest hears the many confessions of the villagers he feels envious of them. They can leave the confessional with a clear conscience and feel renewed. The priest, however, cannot do this, not only because he does not have access to a priest but also because he is internally conflicted by his sins. He certainly feels remorse for his drinking but not for his most serious sin, breaking his vow of chastity. He feels so much love for his daughter that it is impossible for him to feel guilt for the sin that created her. This is one of the central themes of the book, closely connected to the priest's search for redemption. Redemption is not easy for him and he is often not sure what to do, but he never loses faith and constantly continues the struggle.

When the priest sees the mestizo man he does not seem to be terribly upset. He has to know that this means the end for him. He knows the man is working with the police and



if he has found him chances are the police cannot be far behind. He knows the mestizo man is motivated by the reward money, and he has to be trying to led him to the police. Never the less he follows him, knowing full well that it will mean his capture and his death. The priest has no doubt that the mestizo man is his Judas and he goes willingly into death. The priest has a good chance of escaping if he follows the guide to Las Casas, but he chooses to go with the mestizo man. This is an example of the priest being Christ-like. This is similar to the relationship between Jesus and Judas. Jesus knows Judas will betray him but still allows it to happen.



Part 3, Chapter 2

Part 3, Chapter 2 Summary

The group comes to a clearing where they can see a group of Indian huts in the distance. The mestizo man says the Yankee is there and that it will take them at least an hour to reach the huts. The priest tells the guide to take the mules and go home, for he will not need them anymore. The mestizo man acts concerned and asks how the priest intends to get back. The priest says he does not need to think about that, for he will not be leaving the same way. The priest continues on with the mestizo man following. They stop and the priest takes out a bottle of wine and they share a drink. He asks the mestizo man if they will let him see the Yankee. Without thinking the man says of course they will, and then realizes he has been caught in a lie, that he should not have said anything. The priest now knows for sure the police are waiting for him. They continue on towards the huts and an hour later they approach them.

As the mestizo man leads the way to the hut housing the Yankee he looks around anxiously as if he is expecting something to happen. The priest wonders if they will shoot him from afar. He wishes the police would hurry up and show themselves. The mestizo man shows the priest into the hut with the American. The priest enters and sees the man lying in a bed of straw, clearly on the verge of death. The priest kneels close to the man and asks him how long it has been since his last confession. The man tells the priest to leave, but the priest insists on hearing the confession, telling the man he has come a long way. The Yankee tells the priest to get out of there and that he does not want to confess. The Yankee tries to give the priest his gun and then his knife but the priest will not take them; he wants the man to confess before he dies. The Yankee refuses to confess, just trying to get the priest to take the knife. Instead, the priest whispers a prayer over the man.

Part 3, Chapter 2 Analysis

Throughout the hike the priest knows the mestizo man is leading him into a trap. He constantly refers to this while the mestizo man continues to put on a charade pretending he does not know what the priest is talking about. As they approach the huts the priest is prepared for the worst. He is surprised when nothing happens as he continues to get closer. When he finally reaches the Yankee the man does not even want to confess. He is very close to death but seems to feel regret for helping lure the priest here. He wants the priest to fight his way out and try and kill the policemen.



Part 3, Chapter 3

Part 3, Chapter 3 Summary

The priest hears the lieutenant's voice outside the hut, asking if he is finished. The priest comes out and thanks the policeman for letting him see the dying man. The lieutenant says he is not a barbarian. He says he did not believe the priest would ever return, to which the priest says even a coward has a sense of duty. The priest asks if he will be shot now, but the lieutenant says there will have to be a trial first. The priest is disheartened to learn he will have to return all the way back to the capital before he can be killed.

Suddenly it starts to rain so the priest and the lieutenant enter the hut with the now dead Yankee. The priest tells the man he has seen him twice before and he explains to him the occasions. The lieutenant is surprised to learn the priest has a child and the priest says it is true that he is indeed a bad priest. The lieutenant tells the priest he lost two men searching for him. He says the American was not worth two lives, he did no real harm, suggesting that the priest did. The priest takes out a pack of cards and shows the lieutenant a trick. He says he use to do the trick for children at his church, at the mention of this the lieutenant becomes angry and puts his hand on his gun. He is obviously thinking of shooting the priest now, after being reminded of his own childhood and his own experience with priests. However, he does not shoot the priest, but just tells him it is all a trick, all the teaching of the Church. He says the church takes money from the poor and only helps itself. The priest tells the lieutenant he is right, but also wrong. The two men start a conversation about their beliefs.

The lieutenant says he is only listening to the priest because there is no hope of him escaping. The lieutenant tells the priest he is a danger that is why they will kill him, but he has nothing against him as a man. The priest understands it is God the police are against, and he knows he is a man is not worth fighting. The lieutenant says it is the ideas he is against. He says the Church has never done anything for the people of Mexico, that they were poor when the Church came to Mexico and they are still poor. As the lieutenant continues to list his grievances with the Church the priest is thinking. He knows it will take about two days to walk back to the capital, then another day in prison. He decides that perhaps he will be dead in three days, he is afraid of the pain.

The lieutenant is still speaking, saying he has ideas too. They will not let the people suffer, they will help the people. The priest asks what happens next, once no one is suffering. The lieutenant says death, and death is inevitable. The priest agrees, telling the policeman they agree on a lot of things, but he says the world is unhappy whether you are rich or poor; he is more concerned with what comes after this world.

The priest says the biggest difference between the two men is that the lieutenant's beliefs will only work if his party is full of good men. The party will always have some bad men. If there are bad men their ends can never be achieved, the corrupt will not



help the poor; but even though the priest is a bad man he can still be a priest, still put the body and blood of Christ into the poor peoples' mouths. The lieutenant asks the priest why he stayed, considering he is such a bad priest. The priest says at first he wanted to wait and see if things got better, and then the time went so fast. He never really made a decision to stay, it just happened, and before he knew it he was the last priest left in the whole state. He says then pride took over. He was proud of being the only priest around, the people were good to him, and they treated him with respect. This ride was what controlled him. The lieutenant then says he will be a martyr, at least he has that—but the priest says he cannot be a martyr, not after the life he has led.

Then the storm is over and the lieutenant instructs his men to prepare a horse for the priest. The priest leaves the hut and sees the mestizo man. The man asks the priest for his blessing. The priest tells him he cannot sell a blessing, that God will still know what he has done. He tells the man to go home and pray. The mestizo man says he will pray for the priest. As the priest is led away on the horse he looks back and sees the mestizo man watching him. He waves to the man and feels a grudge toward him. He expected nothing else of the man.

As the men continue on the path it becomes dark. The priest and the lieutenant continue their talk. The lieutenant says he had to shoot three hostages, and it made him hate the priest. The priest says there is one thing he has never understood about men like the lieutenant. That they proclaim to hate the rich and love the poor, yet they want to bring up their children to be rich. The priest says if he hates someone he wouldn't want his children to be like them. The lieutenant tries to say this is just twisting his ideas but the priest interrupts him, saying the Church has always told the rich it will be hard for them to get into heaven, and that the poor are blessed. However, he says this does not mean we should give the poor power, it is better to let them die in the dirt and wake in heaven. The lieutenant says he hates to see someone in pain, he doesn't want them to have to wait until heaven to stop suffering. The priest says he is not as dishonest as the lieutenant thinks. He has always told his people that they are in danger of damnation if death catches them unaware. He says he truly believes the word of God, and everything he has tried to teach. He is not trying to fool anyone. He says he knows if there is a single man in this state who is damned, then he is damned as well, and he would not want in any other way.

The men finally reach the outskirts of the capital. The lieutenant tells the priest he is not a bad man and asks if there is anything he can do for him. The priest says there is one thing: he wants to confess before he is put to death. The lieutenant says there are no other priests but the priest says there is Father José. The lieutenant says he will try and arrange it. As they come into the town a young boy sees them and asks the lieutenant if they have caught the priest. The lieutenant recognizes the boy as the one who threw a bottle at him. He is internally leashed with the boy's reaction but tries not to gloat as he smiles at the boy.



Part 3, Chapter 3 Analysis

One of the most interesting points in this chapter is that the lieutenant feels the priest is worse than the Yankee. He says the Yankee has done no real harm while the priest has, this despite the Yankee killing several people and robbing a bank.

The priest and the lieutenant do agree on some things. They both are concerned with the poor people and their future. Where the difference lies is that the lieutenant is concerned with this world while priest is concerned with the afterlife. The priest is trying to save peoples souls, the lieutenant wants to make peoples lives better now. The lieutenant's heart is in the right place, but according to the priest's beliefs he is misguided. The lieutenant is also driven largely by his personal hatred for the church more than a true ideology in socialism.

The boy seen at the end of the chapter is the boy that has been seen throughout the story. He is the same boy that saw the lieutenant's gun and the one whose mother has been reading to him. He is symbolic of all children that both the lieutenants and the priest are fighting for. As the boy sees the lieutenant bringing in the priest he is excited. At this point it seems that the lieutenant may be winning over the boy as he has to choose between the two philosophies.



Part 3, Chapter 4

Part 3, Chapter 4 Summary

The lieutenant goes to Father José's house and asks him to come down to the police station. Father José is frightened at this, saying he has done nothing wrong. Neighborhood children are watching and begin to chant Father José's name. The lieutenant tells him to relax, that they have caught the priest and he wants to confess. Father José says it is against the law, but the lieutenant tells him not to worry about that. Father José fears it is a trick and that they are trying to trap him. He says he cannot do it; the lieutenant tries to convince him, telling him there is nothing to worry about, but Father José is too frightened and refuses to come and hear the priest's confession.

The lieutenant returns to the prison and tells the priest the bad news and that he has been tried and found guilty. He tells the priest he will be killed tomorrow. He asks if he would like to be put in with the other prisoners so he is not alone. The priest says no, for he has a lot to think about and to prepare himself for. The lieutenant then gives the priest a bottle of brandy he has brought for him. The priest thanks him, saying it will help the pain. The lieutenant says we all have to die sometime, it doesn't really matter so much when it happens. The priest tells the lieutenant he is a good man and he will have nothing to be afraid of when he dies. The priest says it would be much easier if he could have been officially absolved. The lieutenant is sorry Father José would not come. The lieutenant then closes the door to the cell and returns to his desk. He sits down content, knowing the last priest is under lock and key. He feels a little sorry he has nothing left to do; he enjoyed the hunt for the priest. Then he hears a voice—the priest asks him if the shooting will hurt. The lieutenant tells him that it will not hurt. The lieutenant then goes to the wall and tears down the pictures of the priest and the Yankee, sits down at his desk and falls asleep.

In the cell the priest sits on the floor. He takes a sip of the brandy but it does nothing for him. He attempts to start some sort of confession. He begins to state his sins out loud. As he states he has slept with a woman he thinks of his daughter. He begins to cry at the thought of her pleading with God to let her live forever. He knows this is the pain he should feel for every soul in the world, but it was only for his daughter that he prayed. He wishes that he had just one soul he could point to as an example of a soul he has saved. He feels like a failure. He knows people have died for him and he knows they deserve better. The night goes on slowly. Finally he finishes the brandy and it helps him sleep. He dreams that he is sitting at a table in front of a high altar. On the table six dishes are laid out. He is eating the food and has a great sense of happiness. He has the feeling that when he finishes the dishes there will be the best dish of all. Finally he finishes the food and hears a bell ring. Then a priest holds a host in front of him and his wine glass begins to fill. He looks up and sees it is the girl from the banana station pouring the wine. He speaks to her and remembers the Morse Code they talked of. Suddenly he hears the tapping all around and he asks what it is. The girl tells him it is news.



In the morning the priest awakes with a great sense of hope, but the feeling immediately leaves as he realizes where he is. It is the morning of his death. He kneels and tries to recite an Act of Contrition, asking forgiveness for his sins, but he is confused and cannot concentrate. He knows this is not the good death he had hoped for. He feels like a fool, knowing that he has done nothing for anyone. He feels disappointed that he will have to go to God empty handed. He thinks that at the end there is really only one thing that matters and that is to be a saint.

Part 3, Chapter 4 Analysis

Father José again refuses to help the priest. Throughout the story he refuses to do his duty as a priest so this is no surprise. He is a frightened man, afraid of death and pain. He feels guilty for his weaknesses but cannot overcome them. This was the priest's last chance to be absolved and now he has no hope of being officially forgiven by God.

The priest is afraid of death, mostly afraid of the pain. The lieutenant does not quite understand this. It is unusual that the priest tells the lieutenant he is a good man, the very man that is responsible for his death. It seems that the priest truly does believe this, perhaps because the lieutenant is so firm in his beliefs and has no worries that he is doing the wrong thing.

The priest is also afraid that he will meet God empty handed. It was his job to save souls and he feels that he has failed. He cannot point to any life that he has changed, and person that he has helped. He regrets the life he led and wishes he had been a better man. On his deathbed he knows what it means to be a saint, that if he had led the life of a saint he would have nothing to worry about. Again he is concerned with the afterlife, with getting into heaven. This is the main difference between the priest and the lieutenant. The lieutenant feels that life will be over at death, while the priest feels that real life will be just beginning.



Part 4

Part 4 Summary

The scene opens in a hotel room with Mrs. Fellows lying in bed. She feels sick and her husband offers to get her some medicine. She tells Captain Fellows he has been so quiet recently, that it is hard for to be sick and she feels alone. She tells her husband they have agreed not to be morbid and to say nothing at all ever. She says they have their own life to lead. They are on their way back home where they will live with Mrs. Coral's sister. Captain Fellows tells his wife they have caught a priest this morning and shot him. He wonders if it is the same priest Coral helped, but when he says Coral's name he stops, knowing he is not suppose to use his daughters name. Captain Fellows says he does not want to go back to England, but wants to stay in Mexico. Mrs. Fellows says that is ridiculous they are going back and they have to be together. She says he cannot leave her alone. They begin to fight, and he says they are running away and leaving their daughter. She says it was not her fault, that if he had been home it would never have happened. Then they relax, and Mrs. Fellows asks her husband if he will leave her alone. He says no of course not. He apologizes for mentioning Coral, for he knows he promised not to mention her. Mrs. Fellows says at least they have each other.

The next scene is in the police chief's office. Mr. Trench is there performing a dental procedure for the Chief. As he is working he looks out the window and sees the man he had in his home once. He is startled to see the man walking out in front of a firing squad. He asks the Chief what is happening and he learns the man is a priest. Mr. Trench is very upset; he feels that it is like watching a neighbor killed and he wants to do something to stop it. Yet he watches the scene and the priest screams something before he is shot. After the firing squad shoots the lieutenant walks up to the priest and shoots him again. Mr. Trench feels all alone, deserted.

The next scene is in the home of the mother again reading to her children. She is telling them the story of a martyr, a priest that was killed for his beliefs. The story portrays the man as a brave hero, a martyr. After the story the boy asks if the priest that was shot today was also a hero. He knows the priest once stayed in their house. The mother says yes he is now a martyr of the Church. One of the girls says the priest smelled funny but her mother snaps at her telling them never to repeat that. She says he may be one of the saints. Later the boy is sitting at his window and he watches the lieutenant walk by. The man stops and looks at the boy, recognizing him as the one who he once let touch his gun. He thinks again that this is who he is working for, but the boy looks at him and crinkles his nose, then the boy spits at the lieutenant.

That night the boy is lying in bed. He hears a banging on the door but no one answers. His father is not home so he feels like the man of the house. The banging continues so the boy goes to answer the door. He opens it and a man is standing there. The man asks to speak to his mother but he says she is sleeping. The man insists and the boy starts to close the door, but the man says he is a priest. Before the man can say



anything else the boy has swung open the door and is on his knees kissing the priest's hand.

Part 4 Analysis

The first part of this section reveals that Coral is in fact dead. Her parents act as traditional British people and try to ignore the tragedy. Mrs. Fellows does not want to mention her daughter and just wants to leave Mexico. At one point Captain Fellows begins to break down and show emotion about his great loss but he quickly pulls himself together. He has to stray strong for his wife. It is never revealed exactly how Coral dies, but it is suggested that the Yankee killed her.

The next part of the section is with Mr. Trench. Mr. Trench is not a particularly important character but he is the first one to see the priest in the story and the last one to see him alive. He feels genuine remorse for the man and after his death he somehow feels abandoned. This last section is never scene from the priests point of view and it is not know exactly what he was thinking or feeling. It is only known that the priest is dead.

The final part of the book is very significant. The young boy that is symbolic of all children in the state has made his choice. He has chosen religion for himself and rejected the ideology put forward by the lieutenant. It is ironic that the methods used by the lieutenant is what has driven the boy to religion. He has seen the power of faith in the priest and the honor in his death. This has inspired the boy. The boy spits at the lieutenant as he walks by and reveres the priest that comes to his house. The new priest in the state is symbolic of the fact that the Church cannot die. Even in the worst of conditions it survives—God cannot die.



Characters

The Priest

The protagonist of the story, the priest is not given a name. He is a Roman Catholic priest on the run from the authorities in a Mexican state that has outlawed religion. The man admits he is a bad priest who has fathered a child with one of his congregates, and is a drunk. Yet the priest still feels a calling to his vocation, to minister to the people. He knows he is the last priest in the area and has a responsibility to represent the Church and God.

He is known as the 'whiskey priest' as he is constantly drunk, mostly on brandy. He was born in Carmen and his parish was in Conception. He studied at a seminary in the United States and can speak English. He can even pass as a white American.

He has enormous love for his daughter despite hardly knowing her. He says he will go to any length to save her and she is the main reason he leaves the safety of her village. His daughter is never far from his mind and her existence makes it impossible for him to regret his single greatest sin, conceiving her.

At the end of the novel the priest is captured by the police. He willingly follows the Mestizo man even though he knows it is a trap. He is executed by a firing squad. Throughout the story the priest explains why he should not be considered a martyr or a saint because he has been such a sinner and not lead a good life. But after his death the large underground Catholic communist begins to talk of him as a martyr.

The Lieutenant

The Lieutenant is the antagonist of the story and is also never given a name. He is an atheist who has an intense hatred for the Catholic Church. It is suggest that he had a very bad experience with the church as a child although the details are not known. He makes it his mission to destroy the church and personally hunt down the priests and kill them.

He is more dedicated to this mission than even his superiors. He has his own very strict code of ethics from which he does not waver; he is very sure in his beliefs and has no doubts about what he is doing. He takes hostage one man from each village the priest visits and kills them in an effort to get the villagers to help him, he feels no real guilt in having to do this. He is also searching for an American on the run for murder and bank robbery. He considers the priest a much more serious threat, however, and spends little effort trying to find the other man.



The Mestizo Man

The Mestizo man is also referred to as 'half-caste.' The priest first encounters him laying in a hammock on his way to Carmen. The man has only two teeth that look like yellow fangs. He immediately suspects that the priest is in fact the wanted priest. Right away the priest suspects that the man will turn him in for the reward money. The priest tries to escape from the man but he keeps turning up. Eventually the mestizo works with the priest to help find the priest as he is the only person that knows what the priest looks like. At the end of the novel the mestizo draws the priest back from safety telling him the wanted American is dying and wants to confess to a priest. The priest knows this is a trap but follows anyway. The mestizo man has planned a trap and plays a Judas like figure in the story, betraying the priest. He does show real guilt for his actions, telling the priest he needed the money and had no choice.

Mr. Trench

Mr. Trench is a British dentist living in Mexico. He is trying to make enough money to move home but the currency's value keeps dropping making his savings worthless. He does not play an important role in the story but is the first one to see the priest in the story and sees him again while the priest is being executed.

Chief of Police

The Chief of Police, sometimes called the jefe, is the lieutenant's boss. He however does not have a serious commitment to finding the priest. He is more interested in drinking. He takes orders from the Governor and gives permission to the lieutenant to do whatever he needs to do to find the Priest. At one point the Chief unknowingly meets the priest and drinks with him. The priest watches the man finish the bottle of wine he has bought for mass with the last of his money.

Father Jose

A Catholic priest who has chosen to marry his housekeeper instead of being killed. He has chosen the humiliating act out of fear of death, and lives on a government pension. He is constantly ridiculed by the local children. At the end of the novel he refuses the priest a last confession before his execution because he is afraid of persecution.

James Calver

Calver is the wanted American referred to as 'the Yankee.' He robbed a bank in the United States and killed two federal agents. He escaped to Mexico and is on the run. His picture is on the wall of the police station along with the Priests. Towards the end of the story he is nearly caught and takes an Indian boy hostage, both of them are shot



and the boy is killed. At the end of the story the man is dying and the priest is lured back to hear his confession. He tries to save the priest and feels guilty for helping the priest get caught. It is implied that he also killed another character in the story, Coral.

Brigitta

The priest's young daughter he fathered after he spent one night with her mother, Maria.

Maria

The woman the priest had sex with one time, resulting in the birth of their daughter, Brigitta.

Miss. Lehr

A German woman living in Mexico with her brother, Mr. Lehr. She is a Lutheran who lets the priest stay with her for several days.

Mr. Lehr

A German man living in Mexico with his sister. His wife has previously died. He is a Lutheran but lets the priest stay with him and say mass in his barn.

The Governor

The head of the state the priest is trying to escape. It is his policies that have outlawed religion and called for all priests to be killed.

Captain Fellows

An English businessman in Mexico, he runs a banana business. His wife and daughter live on a remote farm. His daughter, Coral, allows the priest to stay in their barn unknown to Captain Fellows. At the end of the story he and his wife are heading back to England and it is implied that their daughter has been killed.

Mrs. Fellows

Captain Fellows' wife, she is often sickly. She is a teacher to her daughter, Coral, before her death. At the end of the story she is on her way back to England with her husband.

Coral

The young girl living on the banana plantation, she is the daughter of Mrs. and Captain Fallows. She helps the priest hide and brings him food and beer. She prevents the priest from searching the building he is hiding in. She is killed at the end of the story and it is implied that she was murdered by the Yankee.



Objects/Places

Carmen

The Mexican town where the priest was born and raised.

Conception

The Mexican town in which the priest's parish was located.

Mexico City

The capital city of Mexico.

Whiskey Priest

A derogatory term used to describe a priest who drinks large amounts of alcohol. It is often used to describe the priest that is the protagonist of the novel.

Yankee

A term used to describe an American.

Mestizo

A person of mixed race, usually European and Spanish or Latin ancestry.

Act of Contrition

A Catholic prayer recited during or after confession.

Confession

The process of confessing your sins and asking for forgiveness. In the context of the novel a sinner confesses to a priest admitting all of his or her sins. It is a central element of the Christian faith.



Ora pro nobis

A Latin phrase meaning 'pray for us.' The phrase is repeated by the priest in the story.

Martyr

A person who is murdered for refusing to renounce their faith or belief in a principle.

Setting

The story takes place during the 1930s, a time of totalitarian reign in Mexico. It is set south of Mexico City in the province of Tabasco. In his introduction to the 1962 edition of the book, Greene explains that he traveled in Mexico from 1937 to 1938 for the express purpose of writing a novel. Greene relates that the towns he visited are depicted in the novel: El Frontera, where the story opens; Tabasco, a prohibitionist town; Villahermosa, where he developed the character of the priest and discovered the prototype for the lieutenant; and Las Casas, where churches still stood although no priest was allowed to enter them.



Social Sensitivity

Social Concerns

Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory*, and his travel book, *The Lawless Roads* (1939), published in the United States as *Another Mexico* (1939), were the result of a trip he took to Mexico during 1938 and 1939. The immediate social concerns of the journey and the novel are straightforward: Greene went with the express purpose of investigating the persecution of the Catholic Church in some of the southern Mexican states. The novel tells the story of a fugitive priest, the last in his area, who knows he will be executed if he is captured, but chooses to stay and administer the sacraments to his people (the travels of the priest in the novel parallel Greene's own). It is not surprising that Greene seems sympathetic to the position of the Church: Greene had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1926. Although his interest in the Church had begun because of his relationship with a Catholic woman, Vivien Dayrell Browning, whom he married in 1927, Greene maintains "my conversion was not in the least an emotional affair. It was purely intellectual. It was the arguments of Father Trollope at Nottingham which persuaded me that God's existence was a probability." Also, speaking of his journey to Mexico, Greene has said that his religious faith "is all bound up with my loyalty to the underdog — and so it has been ever since. In Mexico the underdogs were the Catholics."

This religious commitment to the underdog — what Pope John Paul II refers to as "a preferential option for the poor" — is perhaps what accounts for the novel's more surprising undercurrent of sympathy for the revolutionary police lieutenant who relentlessly tracks down the priest and finally sends him before the firing squad.

Although the novel surely makes the reader feel that the lieutenant is wrong in persecuting the priest, he is shown as a basically good man, which is to say a man who cares for the poor. He is himself from a peasant family, and, once, when he fails to recognize the priest and thinks him only another poor, old man, he gives him money.

His opposition to the Church is based on his belief that the Church has failed the people. As a secularist, he judges by a completely materialistic standard: If the people remain in poverty, the Church has failed. Although the priest maintains that the spiritual needs of the people must also be fulfilled, he recognizes some truth in the lieutenant's position, and, perhaps more importantly, he recognizes the compassion that lies beneath it.

In juxtaposing the priest and the revolutionary, Greene introduces social concerns that are perhaps even more topical in the 1980s than they were in the 1940s: What is the relationship between the Church and the poor?

What part, if any, should the Church play in revolutionary attempts to redistribute the wealth of the nations? These issues are still perhaps most crucial in Central America,



particularly in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Greene's novel in no way anticipates Liberation Theology — it is impossible to imagine this priest wearing a red beret and carrying a gun, like Father Ernesto Cardenal, S.J., the Cultural Minister of Nicaragua — but it raises questions that any serious investigation of the place of the Church in Latin American society must try to answer.

Social Sensitivity

Greene has always been a provocative, controversial writer, often offending people either because of their political or religious beliefs. Although there is nothing offensive about the story itself in *The Power and the Glory*, the underlying views about Catholicism might cause concern. According to Greene, even the Vatican was divided. Pope Paul VI, on hearing that the book, which he had read, had been condemned by the Holy Office, replied: "Mr. Greene, some parts of your books are bound to offend some Catholics, but you should pay no attention to that."

The conflict between the priest and the lieutenant is the root of the theological controversy. Although the novel makes the reader sympathize with the priest, the lieutenant is also depicted as a good man who cares for the poor. He is himself from a peasant family, and when he encounters the priest in prison and mistakes him for a poor old man, he gives him money. His opposition to the Church is based on his belief that the Church has failed the people. As a secularist, he judges by a completely materialistic standard: if the people remain in poverty, the Church has failed. Although the priest maintains that the spiritual needs of the people must also be fulfilled, he recognizes some truth in the lieutenant's position and perhaps recognizes the compassion that lies beneath it.



Techniques

Greene uses a number of techniques in this novel that are particularly appropriate for its religious theme. For example, the priest is literally "called back" three times when he is on the verge of escaping, each time to administer the sacraments to a dying person.

Repetition of plot motif is common to all mythologies, and the calling three times is particularly appropriate to the Christian theme of the novel (God calls Samuel four times, Peter denies Christ three times, and, most appropriate of all for this particular novel, at the end of Saint John's Gospel, Christ tells Peter three times that, if he truly loves Him, he should feed his sheep).

Greene, usually a master of suspense, uses the self-consciously mythic quality of the story to create irony. The reader, as well as the priest, knows that the mestizo has to betray the priest, so that the priest can attain martyrdom, but Greene can still tease the reader about when the betrayal will take place.

Greene self-consciously uses the conventions of the stories of saints' lives to counterpoint his own story. At the opening of the story, a woman is reading the story of a martyr to her children. Greene parodies the romantic nature of those stories: In her story, the martyr pardons his executioners and dies crying out, "Viva el Cristo Rey!"

Then Greene undercuts the traditional story by telling the more realistic story of the whisky priest who spends the night before his execution drinking brandy and generally wishing he were somewhere else. The ironies continue: By the end, the reader is quite prepared to accept the whisky priest as a saint (even though he thinks he dies a failure), yet in the conclusion the reader finds the woman from the opening, this time telling a romanticized version of the whisky priest's death. In her version, he too shouts, "Viva el Cristo Rey!" Her version might seem annoyingly romanticized, but that too, is consistent with Greene's theme: With the imagination, gaudy as it might be, a human being finds some form of redemption.



Literary Qualities

Greene uses several techniques that complement his religious themes. For example, the priest is detained three times when he is on the verge of escaping, called back each time to administer last rites to a dying person. This kind of repetition is common to all mythologies, and the particular plot motif of calling three times is deeply rooted in the Bible.

Greene, a master of suspense, plays myth against plot line. The reader, as well as the priest, knows that the halfcaste must betray the whisky priest so that the priest can attain martyrdom, but no one is sure when the betrayal will happen or how it will affect the symbolic crucifixion.

Greene also uses the conventions of the stories of the saints' lives. At the opening of the story, a woman is reading the story of a martyr to her children.

Greene parodies the romantic nature of these stories: the martyr pardons his executioners and dies crying out, "Viva el Cristo Rey!" At the end of *The Power and the Glory*, Greene echoes the stories of the saints by telling the more realistic story of the whisky priest's final night, which he spends drinking brandy and wishing he were somewhere else. The reader is prepared to accept the whisky priest as a saint without benefit of embellishments on the story of his life. Yet, as the same woman recounts the story of the priest's execution, she records him as shouting "Viva el Cristo Rey!"

Although the woman's version seems hopelessly romanticized, it is consistent with Greene's theme: gaudy as the imagination may be, through it a human being finds some form of redemption.

A complex theological novel that defies simplistic analysis, *The Power and the Glory* has provoked dissension among both Catholic and secular critics.

Greene's departure from conventional piety—his decision to make his priest a "sinful" man—has helped lead modern Catholic literature in a less sentimental direction. Four years after *The Power and the Glory* appeared, Evelyn Waugh published an unsentimental view of Catholicism in *Brideshead Revisited*, (1944) and American Catholic writers, such as Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy, have furthered Greene's themes and opened the way for stories that would have been considered offensive before Greene's work.



Themes

Redemption

Throughout the story the priest is looking for redemption for his sins. Perhaps because he is constantly so close to death his mind is never far from his sins. He knows he is a sinner and is not afraid to admit it to anyone. As he hears the confessions of others he is constantly reminded that he himself cannot officially confess to a priest. Perhaps because he cannot talk to another priest he often confesses his sins to other people he meets.

The priest's biggest concern is that he does not feel guilt for his largest sin, fathering a child. While he feels guilt and genuine remorse for his other sins this one he cannot seek forgiveness for. The fruit of his sin is his daughter and he loves her so much he cannot feel sorry for the sin of conceiving her. Despite the fact that he does not feel sorry for this he admits that it was a sin and doesn't seem to want to do it again.

Throughout the story the priest is told that he will never be a martyr. The mother of his child tells him this as well as the woman he meets in the prison. He also freely admits that he can never be a martyr. Despite the fact that he is not a great man and has not led an exemplary life, he does die for his faith. When he is killed in public as a priest his story begins to be told. The priest proves to be a martyr in the end. He is remembered as a hero and only his sacrifices will be remembered, not his sins.

At the end it is open for interpretation whether the priest is truly redeemed, but it is clear that he is becoming a martyr, and for that his life will not be a waste. He feared that he would be going to God empty handed but the example of his life is ultimately an offer to God. The sins he committed seem to be overshadowed by his death. He has brought at least one boy to faith. The young boy that is an example of all children turns to God after experiencing the death of the priest.

Father José is another man who wants redemption but is not trying to seek it. He takes a very different path than the priest. He goes out of his way to not help those in need and constantly refuses to do his duties as a priest. He has chosen to renounce his faith in order to live. He is a very bad example to the people. He has chosen to save his own life and as such will have no chance of being a martyr. The priest seeks redemption throughout the novel while Father José does not seem to. He does still believe in God and never forgets the gift he has been given to turn bread and wine into the bread and blood of wine.

Faith

Faith plays a very strong role in the novel. Many of the characters have a strong belief in God, while one, the lieutenant, has a strong belief that God does not exist. Other s



are struggling with their faith. Father José has a strong faith but fails to live up to it. The young boy in the novel is faced with choosing faith and ultimately does choose it.

The young boy in the story who is being constantly read to by his mother is an example of the soul both the priest and the lieutenant are trying to meet. The boy is about thirteen years old and he is at the age where he has to make his own choices in life. He is faced with making a serious decision. He has to either choose the life his mother has tried to lead him to, a faithful religious person, or the one the lieutenant is trying to provide for him. The lieutenant wants the boy to not know anything about religion and all the work he has done in irradiating the priests and the Church is to this goal. The boy does consider this option, he sees the Red Shirts in the street and the power of the police officer and is tempted by this. He sees his mother and his sisters' actions as silly. But at the end it is clear the life he has chosen. He knows the priest that has stayed in his house and he has seen him killed. When a new priest comes into their home he reveres him and kisses his hand. Ironically it is the lieutenant's very actions that result in the boy choosing the religious path. He has seen the priest killed for his beliefs and it excites him in a strange way. Faith has also become somewhat daring as it is illegal. The combination of all these things drives the boy, a symbol of all children, into the church. This is Greene's way of explaining the church will never die, that faith endures. Even under the harshest of conditions faith survives, not just in the older generations but in the young. The Church, God, will never die.

The lieutenant on the other hand has a very strong belief that God does not exist. This belief is as strong as the priest's faith that God does exist. The lieutenant does still have a strong moral code. He lives his life to a high standard and does not let himself down, he does not drink or fornicate. His moral code is unique however, he finds it acceptable to kill people to reach his ends. His strange faith in the state and not in God is very strong and in contrast to the priest's faith in God.

There are others in the story that have a strong faith that has not been quenched despite the major adversary they have had to go through. The woman the priest meets in the prison is a very pious woman and even faces prison time for keeping religious books in her home. The mother who reads to her children is also taking a serious risk in passing on her faith but is glad to take the risk to pass the faith on to her children.

Suffering

Suffering is a major factor of this novel. The region of Mexico where the story takes place is very poor and nearly all the characters of the story experience some degree of suffering. Many of the people in the novel do not have food or clothing and are struggling everyday just to survive.

Both the priest and the lieutenant spend their lives trying to help those who suffer. The lieutenant has a true compassion for the many poor people he sees around him. It is also hinted that he had a bad childhood full of suffering. Consequently he has taken up a strong belief in socialism. He is trying to end the suffering of the people around him.



He believes that the Church is a major factor contributing to continued suffering of so many people. He sees the Church as spreading lies and false hope to the people. He wants to stop this.

The priest is also trying to end the suffering of people but he is concerned with ending the suffering in the afterlife. He believes, like Jesus, that the poor will get to the kingdom of heaven. He says that it will be very difficult for the rich to get into heaven. He does not do a great deal to end suffering on earth, for he is trying to save the soul. He says as long as he does not make the suffering worse for the poor he is not doing any real harm. The priest's end is very different than the lieutenant's; he is trying to help in a different way.

The priest of course also suffers himself. He is constantly cold and hungry as he is on the run. This is an example to the people he meets. He is also of course killed for his beliefs, the ultimate suffering. The ending of suffering is one of the major tenets of the Catholic Church and the priest is exemplary of this belief.

Significant Topics

The novel rather obviously develops two themes — the religious theme of faith and devotion, even to the point of martyrdom — and a somewhat Marxist critique of the Church's failure to improve the lot of the poor. The novel seems to side with the Church. However, the novel is more than a convert novelist's own simple-minded faith and devotion to his adopted Church.

Greene's religious theme is more complicated than it first appears, and it is apt to be misunderstood by Catholic and secularist alike.

The most salient characteristic of the priest, the hero of the story, is that he is an alcoholic, what his people call "a whisky priest." He has also, in a moment of weakness, fathered a child. He berates himself throughout the novel for being a "bad priest" (in *The Heart of the Matter* [1948], Greene has a priest say that the expression "bad Catholic" is "about the dumbest expression in common usage"), and he means it. He seriously wonders if he isn't doing more harm than good, if he isn't a scandal to his Church and a bad example for his people. Yet he stays, despite the danger, after all the other priests have left or, as Father Jose has done, denied their vows and taken wives. He stays, because if he were to leave "it would be as if God in all this space between the sea and the mountains ceased to exist."

It was not only the whisky priest who worried that he might be a scandal to the Church: The novel was proscribed by the Vatican. Yet, the weakness of this priest was not meant for shock value, even though Greene has expressed a strong distaste for — and willingness to offend — what he calls "traditional piety." They are essential to the themes of the novel. (At least one Catholic reader apparently saw the point. According to Greene, Pope Paul VI, on hearing that the book, which he had read, had been condemned by the Holy Office, replied: "Mr. Greene, some parts of your books are



bound to offend some Catholics, but you should pay no attention to that.") The sacraments this "bad priest" administers are, as every Catholic is taught, as valid as if they were administered by the holiest of saints. This position of the Church was established to combat the Donatist heresy in the fourth century, and Greene is not attempting to break new theological ground. Greene does, however, apply this old theological position to the political theme of the book. When the priest is finally captured, he and the lieutenant have what must be considered, under the circumstance, a very cordial debate, and the priest maintains, "It's no good you working for your end unless you're a good man yourself. And there won't always be good men in your party. Then you'll have all the old starvation, beating, get-rich-anyhow.

But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward — and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same — and I can give him God's pardon. It wouldn't make any difference to that if every priest in the Church was like me."

The priest's argument is not, of course, necessarily conclusive — not all readers will accept a belief in God's pardon or a priest's power to give it.

Yet, his belief offers a way to sustain compassion even when people are not "good." A person can "imagine" — see the image of Christ in the priest during the sacrament — even when he knows the priest in his private life is an alcoholic and a fornicator, just as the whisky priest learns to see the image of Christ in his fellow jail-mates: "When you visualized a man or woman carefully, you could always begin to feel pity — that was a quality God's image carried with it. When you saw the lines at the corners of the eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of the imagination." Perhaps the lieutenant is a better man than the priest — the priest certainly thinks he is — but the novel seems to suggest that what matters is a certain kind of compassion, a compassion sustained not so much by the "goodness" of people as by a certain use of the imagination.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person, with the narrator knowing all details including the inner thoughts, feelings and emotions of the characters. The point of view frequently changes between characters and the narrator sometimes reveals things to the reader and that other characters do not know. A lot of time is dedicated to the thoughts of the characters. These thoughts reveal the most important things about the story as it describes what motivates the characters. These thoughts and feelings make the characters sympathetic and show them as whole people. This makes the characters likable in a way they would not be if only their actions were shown.

Setting

The novel is set in a rural Mexican state. Though the state is never specifically named it is believed Greene based it on the state of Tabasco. The region is very poor and made up mostly of small towns and villages. It also has a large Indian population. Green describe the area in great detail, it is dry and mountainous and full of buzzards. It is described as a largely bleak and sad place. This landscape is similar to the story as the characters live in a world that is also sad and bleak.

The novel takes place in the 1930s, a period of unrest in Mexico. Much of the world is seeing Communist revolutions often led by young violent youths represented by the Red Shirts. This Mexican state is one example of this. The Red Shirts have taken over led by the Governor and have outlawed religion and are attempting to create a socialist state. Mexico has a long tradition of Catholicism and the new laws mean that any priest that has not escaped will be hunted down and killed if they do not renounce their faith.

Language and Meaning

Greene is British so writes in British English which is slightly different then American English. This mostly results in a few words spelled differently. The novel was first published in 1940 which means the language is also a little antiquated. As the story takes place in Mexico there are a few Spanish words used but it is not at all necessary to speak Spanish to understand their meaning as it is clear from the context of their use. There is a lot of dialogue in the story and well as the internal thoughts of the characters. The language flows very easily and the story moves quickly.



Structure

The novel is split into four sections, the first three are then split into sections. The chapters in the first section have names while the others do not. The chapters and sections all vary in length.

Part one contains four chapters and sets up the story. It describes the scene of Mexico and gives details on the background of the characters. The second and third tell the majority of the story and the the final section is very short and wraps up the story as well as all various characters.

The novel often changes scenes within chapters by a line break. There is one main plot following the priest and the lieutenant. However there are several other small plots that intertwine with the main story. The first is Mr. Trench the British dentist. His story is not particularly important. He is the first and last person in the story to see the priest. He first meets him and shares a drink with him in his home. He sees him the next time from the window of the police station as he watches him get executed. The other story lines show different characters. They are not central to the story but show how the Church or the priest affects the average persons life.



Quotes

"Mr. Trench went out to look for his either cylinder, into the blazing Mexican sun and the bleaching dust. A few vultures looked down from the roof with shabby indifference: he wasn't carrion yet. A faint feeling of rebellion stirred in Mr. Trench's heart, and he wrenched up a piece of the road with splintering finger-nails and tossed it feebly towards them. One rose and flapped across the town: over the tiny plaza, over the bust of an ex-president, ex-general, ex-human being, over the two stalls which sold mineral water, towards the river and the sea." Part 1, Chapter 2: The Port, p. 7.

"Let me be caught soon...let me be caught.' He had tried to escape, but he was like the king of a West African tribe, the slave of his people, who may not even lie down in case the winds should fail." Part 1, Chapter 1: The Port, p. 19.

"They [priests] all look alike to me,' the lieutenant said. Something you could almost have called horror moved him when he looked at the white muslin dresses - he remembered the smell of incense in the churches of his boyhood, the candles and the laciness and the self-esteem, the immense demands made from the altar steps by men who didn't know the meaning of sacrifice. The old peasants knelt there before the holy images with their arms held out in the attitude of the cross: tired by the long days labor in the plantations they squeezed out a further mortification. And the priest came round with the collecting bag taking their centavos, abusing them for their small comforting sins, and sacrificing nothing at all in return - except a little sexual indulgence." Part 1, Chapter 1: The Capital, pp. 22-23.

"The lieutenant walked home through the shuttered town. All his life had lain here: the Syndicate of Workers and Peasants had once been a school. He had helped to wipe out that unhappy memory. The whole town had changed: the cement playground up the hill near the cemetery where iron swings stood like gallows in the moony darkness was the site of the cathedral. The new children would have new memories: nothing would ever be as it was. There was something of a priest in his intent observant walk - a theologian going back over the errors of the past to destroy them again." Part 1, Chapter 2: The Capital, p. 24.

"This was his own land, and he would have walled it in if he could with steel until he had eradicated from it everything which reminded him of how it had once appeared to a miserable child. He wanted to destroy everything: to be alone without any memories at all. Life began five years ago." Part 1, Chapter 2: The Capital, p. 25.

"[Jose] knew that he was a buffoon. An old man who married was grotesque enough, but an old priest...He stood outside himself and wondered whether he was even fir for hell. He was just a fat old impotent man mocked and taunted between the sheets. But then he remembered the gift he had been given which nobody could take away. That was what made him worthy of damnation - the power he still had of turning the wafer into the flesh and blood of God." Pat 1, Chapter 2: The Capital, p. 29.



"There's the pain. To choose pain like that - it's not possible. And it's my duty not to be caught. You see my bishop is no longer here...this is my parish." Part 1, Chapter 3: The River, p. 40.

"An enormous temptation came to Pade Jose to take the risk and say a prayer over the grave. He felt the wild attraction of doing one's duty and stretched a sign of the cross in the air; then fear came back like a drug. Contempt and safety waited for him down by the quay: he wanted to get away. He sank hopelessly down on his knees and entreated them: 'Leave me alone.' He said, 'I am unworthy. Can't you see? - I am a coward.'" Part 1, Chapter 4: The Bystanders, p. 49.

[The Lieutenant] "would eliminate from their childhood everything which had made him miserable, all that was poor, superstitious, and corrupt. They deserved nothing less than the truth - a vacant universe and a cooling world, the right to be happy in any way they chose. He was quite prepared to make a massacre for their sakes - first the church and then the foreigner and then the politician - even his own chief would one day have to go. He wanted to begin the world again with them, in a desert." Part 1, Chapter 4: The Bystanders, p. 58.

"The priest scrambled off and began to laugh. He was feeling happy. It is one of the strangest discoveries a man can make that life, however you lead it, contains moments of exhilaration; there are always comparisons which can be made with worse times: even in danger and misery the pendulum swings." Part 2, Chapter 2, p. 59.

"The child stood there, watching him with acuteness and contempt. They had spent no love in his conception: just fear and despair and half a bottle of brandy and the sense of loneliness had driven him to an act which horrified him - and this sacred shame-faced overpowering love was the result." Part 2, Chapter 2, p. 66.

"You're fools if you still believe what the priests tell you. All they want is your money. What has God ever done for you? Have you got enough to eat? Instead of food they talk to you about heave. Oh. Everything will be fine after you are ahead, they say. I tell you- everything will fine when they are dead, and you must help." Part 2, Chapter 2, p. 74.

"I [Maria] know about things. I went to school. I'm not like these others - ignorant. I know you're a bad priest. That time we were together - that wasn't all you've done. I've heard things , I can tell you. Do you think God wants you to stay and die- a whiskey priest like you?" Part 2, Chapter 2, p. 79.

"He was a man who was suppose to save souls. It had seemed quite simple once, preaching at Benediction, organizing the guilds, having coffee with elderly ladies behind barred windows, blessing new houses with a little incense, wearing black gloves...it was as easy as saving money: now it was a mystery. He was aware of his own desperate inadequacy." Part 2, Chapter 1, p. 82.

"I would give my life, that's nothing, my soul...my dear, my dear, try to understand that you are - so important.' That was the difference, he had always known, between his



faith and theirs, the political leaders of the people who cared only for things like the state, the republic: this child was more important than a whole continent. Part 2, Chapter 1, p. 82

- "Better not to believe - and be a brave man."

- "I see - yes. And of course, if one believed the Governor did not exist or the jefe, if we could pretend that this prison was not a prison at all but a garden, how brave we could be then."

- "That's just foolish." Part 2, Chapter 3, p. 126.

"I don't know how to repent.' That was true: he had lost the faculty. He couldn't say to himself that he wished his sin had never existed, because the sin seemed to him now so unimportant and he loved the fruit of it. He needed a confessor to draw his mind slowly down the drab passages which led to grief and repentance." Part 2, Chapter 3, p. 128.

- "It seems to me you people make a lot of fuss about inessentials."

- "Yes? You mean..."

- "Fasting...fish on Friday..."

...

- "...discipline is necessary. Drills may be no good in battle, but they form character. Otherwise you get - well, people like me." Part 3, Chapter 1, p. 163.

It is astonishing the sense of innocence that foes with sin - only the hard and careful man and the saint are free of it. These people went out of the stable clean; he [the priest] was the only one left who hadn't repented." Part 3, Chapter 1, p. 172.

- "And what happens afterwards? I mean after everybody has got enough to eat and can read the right books - the books you let them read?"

- "Nothing. Death's a fact. We don't try and alter facts."

- "We agree about a lot of things,' the priest said, idly dealing out his cards. 'We have facts, too, we don't try to alter - tat the world's unhappy whether you are rich or poor - unless you are a saint, and there aren't many of those. It's not worth bothering too much about a little pain here. There's one belief we both of us have - that we'll all be dead in a hundred years.'" Part 3, Chapter 3, pp. 194-195.

"It's no good your working for your end unless you're a good man yourself. And there won't always be good men in your party. Then you'll have all the old starvation, beating , get-rich - anyhow. But it doesn't matter so much my being a coward - and all the rest. I can put God into a man's mouth just the same - and I can give him God's pardon. It wouldn't make a difference to that if every priest in the Church was like me." Part 3, Chapter 3, p. 195.

"The fact is, a man isn't presented suddenly with two courses to follow: one good and one bad. He gets caught up. The first year - well I didn't believe there was really any cause to run. Churches have been burnt before now. You known how often. It doesn't



mean much. I thought I'd stay till next month, say, and see if things were better. Then - on you don't know how time can slip by...I suddenly realized that I was the only priest left for miles around" Part 3, Chapter 3, p. 195.

"I got careless about my duties. I began to drink. It would have been much better, I think, if I had gone too. Because pride was at work all the time. Not love of God...Pride was what made the angels fall. Pride's the worst thing of all. I thought I was a fine fellow to have stayed when the others had gone. And then I thought I was so grand I could make my own rules. I gave up fasting, daily mass. I neglected my prayers - and one day because I was drunk and lonely - well, you know how it was, I got a child. It was all pride. Just pride because I'd stayed. Part 3, Chapter 3, p. 196.

-"Well, you're going to be a martyr - you've got that satisfaction."

-"Oh no. Martyrs are not like me. They don't think all the time - if I had drunk more brandy I shouldn't have been so afraid." Part 3, Chapter 3, p. 196.

"I'm not as dishonest as you think I am. Why do you think I tell people out of the pulpit that they're in danger of damnation if death catches them unawares? I'm not telling them fairy story I don't believe myself. I don't know a think about the mercy of God: I don't know how awful the human heart looks to Him. But I do know this - that if there's ever been a single man in this state damned, then I'll be damned too.' He said slowly, 'I wouldn't want it to be any different. I just want justice, that's all.'" Part 3, chapter 3, p. 200.

Adaptations

The Power and the Glory was adapted for the screen by Dudley Nichols and directed and produced by John Ford as *The Fugitive* in 1947. Although Ford is considered a great film maker, the movie was not commercially successful, and it is considered by many critics to be one of Ford's worst films. The film did receive some good reviews when it was first released, notably from the *New York Times*, which called it a "thundering modern parable on the indestructibility of faith." However, the film tried to cater to conventional expectations of priestly conduct: Henry Fonda, as the priest is a stronger person than Greene's character, and the lieutenant, who is shown as a complete fanatic, is made the father of the illegitimate child. These attempts to sanitize the priest rob Greene's vision of its power. On the other hand, in 1961, CBS produced a television version which was more faithful to the novel, and viewers were outraged at Sir Lawrence Olivier's portrayal of the priest. The television adaptation also cast George C. Scott as the lieutenant and Julie Harris as Maria.



Topics for Discussion

Why does the lieutenant have such a strong hatred of the church? Why does he consider the priest a worse criminal than the American murder and bank robber? It is apparent that the lieutenant has had a bad experience with the church as a child; how much does this influence his mission in irradiating the church?

Why does the priest go back with the Mestizo when he knows the man is lying and it will lead to his death?

The priest does not consider himself a martyr; he recognizes his many sins, but he does die for his faith. Is the priest a martyr?

Several times the priest tells the lieutenant that he is a good man, even though he is personally responsible for killing many priests and innocent men in the search for the priest. Is what the priest says true, is the lieutenant a good man? Why does the priest tell him this? Does he truly believe it?

What are the differences in the moral codes of the priest and the lieutenant?

Neither the priest nor the lieutenant have names in the story. What is the significance of this?

How is the lieutenant's action in killing the priest ultimately ironic and self-defeating?

The priest is obviously a sinner and has not led an exemplary life. Does this make him a bad priest? Can his life still be revered as it is by the mother in the final pages of the book? Even though the woman knows the true nature of the priest she honors him and teaches her children to do so; is this a good thing? What are the lasting effects of such teachings? Is the true nature of the priest even important or just the idea of his legacy? Does his death overshadow all the bad that he did?

Who is the worse man, Father Jose who marries and refuses to perform his priestly duties but is allowed to live, or the priest who is a drunk and has fathered a child but still performs his duties?

Does the priest find redemption in the end?

What is the significance of the last scene when a new priest arrives in the town?



Essay Topics

1. In what ways does the lieutenant believe the Church has failed the people? What evidence does the novel produce to support his view?
2. Why does the revolutionary government want to outlaw the Church?
3. In what ways does the whisky priest exhibit cowardly behavior? In what ways is he brave?
4. Is it possible that the whisky priest is both a "good man" and a "bad priest"? Explain this conflict.
5. What characteristics does the lieutenant exhibit that make him out to be a "good man"?
6. Why is it necessary to the conclusion of the story for the priest to be executed?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Greene establishes loose parallels between his characters and some from the Bible. Explain how the whisky priest plays the role of Christ; the mestizo Judas, the lieutenant, Caesar; and Father Jose, the Apostle Peter. How does the story of the Good Samaritan serve as a foil? Are there other biblical allusions?
2. The title is taken from the Lord's Prayer. Analyze the importance of prayer (and the absence of it) in the novel. What does the title mean?
3. A principal theme is the power of corruption and the potential for redemption. Explain how the novel develops this theme.
4. Research and report the history of the repression of the Catholic Church in Mexico or in other countries.
5. How does Greene develop his objections to a totalitarian government? What does he suggest that the Church's role should be under such conditions?

Literary Precedents

Even though Greene parodies conventional, sentimental stories of saints' lives, the novel does stand in that tradition, and, even though it is not as sentimental as much popular religious literature, it has much in common with the *Quo Vadis?* legend, in which Saint Peter, escaping his imprisonment in Rome, is confronted by the risen Christ. When Peter asks Christ, *quo vadis?* (where are you going?), Christ replies "to Rome, to be crucified," and Saint Peter follows him back to Rome and his own martyrdom, just as the priest follows his calling back to his imprisonment and martyrdom.

Yet Greene's departure from conventional piety, in making his priest a "sinful" man, has helped lead modern Catholic literature in a new, less sentimental direction. Evelyn Waugh, another English Catholic, published *Brideshead Revisited*, certainly an unsentimental view of Catholicism in 1945, slightly after *The Power and the Glory*, and orthodox Catholic American writers such as Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy have continued the unsentimental trend. Perhaps the closest parallel to Greene's priest is the title character of Georges Bernanos' novel, *Diary of a Country Priest* (1937). Although the French writer's priest is not so spectacularly sinful as Greene's, he does not appear to be heroic, and it is only the reader, not his parishioners, who can understand his true saintliness.



Further Study

Allain, Marie-Francoise. *The Other Man*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

A series of interviews with Graham Greene.

Allott, Kenneth, and Miriam Farris. *The Art of Graham Greene*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951. This book on Greene remains one of the best, despite its essentially thematic approach. The chapter titles are chosen to illustrate Greene's "obsessive" subjects: the terror of life, the divided mind, the fallen world, and the universe of pity. Given their rather narrow focus, the readings are remarkably penetrating and cogent.

Consolo, Dominick P. "Graham Greene: Style and Stylistics in Five Novels." In *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations*, edited by Robert O. Evans. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1963. Consolo's pioneering study of four "Catholic" novels and *The Quiet American* provides a detailed, rigorous analysis of Greene's recurring techniques of characterization, narrative viewpoint, structure, and syntax.

DeVitis, A. A. *Graham Greene*. New York: Twayne, 1964. DeVitis mounts a vigorous attack on critics who treat Greene's work as a species of theological argument.

Hoggart, Richard. *Speaking to Each Other*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970. Focusing on *The Power and the Glory* as representative of Greene's novels, Hoggart analyzes the "seedy" setting, the "allegorical" symbols, the "nervous, vivid, astringent" style, the puppet-like characters, and the melodramatic plot, finding them all to be powerful but unrealistic contrivances.

Lodge, David. *Graham Greene*. *Columbia Essays on Modern Writers*, no. 17. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966. A sympathetic and often perceptive survey of the novels.

Spurling, John. *Graham Greene*. *Contemporary Writers*, no. 14. London: Methuen, 1983. Concise overview of Greene's life and career, with due attention to the later works.

Stratford, Philip. *Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1964. Stratford writes perceptively of Greene's adolescent crisis, and persuasively demonstrates how this experience shaped Greene's adult persona.



Related Titles

Greene has written a number of other "Catholic" novels, of which *The Heart of the Matter* is generally considered the best. In this novel, Major Scobie, basically a good and honest man, is driven to suicide by pride, love, and perhaps a mistaken sense of the duty. The religious question of the novel is whether Scobie, a Catholic, might have found salvation, despite the Church's position that suicide is an unforgivable sin. (This novel basically reworks the same question Greene considers in his earlier novel, *Brighton Rock*, 1938) Greene's answer, given by the priest at the conclusion of the novel, is consistent with the ethics of compassion and forgiveness evident in *The Power and the Glory*: "The Church knows all the rules, but it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart."

Although the priest's words irritate Scobie's bitter and more conventional wife, they are perfectly in keeping with Catholic dogma, as expressed by the priest in *Brighton Rock*: "The Church does not demand that we believe any soul is cut off from mercy."

The novel which most closely parallels *The Power and the Glory*, however, is *Monsignor Quixote*, (1982). Although it is a reworking of the *Don Quixote* story, the characters of *The Power and the Glory* reappear: The priest is Monsignor Quixote, and he is on the road again, this time hounded not by the revolutionaries but by his more modern Bishop. This time, the priest is not alone. He is accompanied by the literary descendant of the Mexican lieutenant, the Communist ex-mayor of the town, whom Quixote insists on calling Sancho. The debate between religion and politics is rejoined, but this time in comic tones. There is even a feeling that both Catholicism and Marxism are as outdated as *Don Quixote's* chivalry, but the men come to understand each other, in the common goodness of their souls. Whether or not the Communist receives communion from the old priest shortly before the priest dies can be debated — the rules of the Church would deny the form of the sacrament, and the Communist cannot allow himself to believe — but one thing is certain: The priest turns to the kneeling Communist and calls him *companero* — friend, comrade — and the Communist repeats the word to the dying man.



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Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Editor

Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Cover Design

Amanda Mott

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Includes bibliographical references and index

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for the works of authors of popular fiction. Includes biography data, publishing history, and resources for the author of each analyzed work.

ISBN 0-933833-41-5 (Volumes 1-3, Biography Series)

ISBN 0-933833-42-3 (Volumes 1-8, Analyses Series)

ISBN 0-933833-38-5 (Entire set, 11 volumes)

1. Popular literature—Bio-bibliography. 2. Fiction—19th century—Bio-bibliography. 3. Fiction—20th century—Bio-bibliography. I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952-

Z6514.P7B43 1996[PN56.P55]809.3—dc20 96-20771 CIP

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Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1996

Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults

Editor - Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Library of Congress

Cataloging-in-Publication Data



Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults

Includes bibliographical references.

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for fiction, nonfiction, and biographies written for young adults.

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I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952

Z1037.A1G85 1994 028.1'62 94-18048 ISBN 0-933833-32-6

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Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1994