

The Power and the Glory

Graham Greene

Publication: 1940

Title : an allusion to the doxology (an expression of praise sung to the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)

- **Often recited at the end of the Lord's Prayer:
"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever, amen."**

Background:

- **Roman Catholicism – an official religion of Mexico Supressed by the Government**
- **Catholic churches were persecuted severely in the province of Tabasco**
- **Tobasco was under the anti-clerical governance of Tomas Canabal.**
- **The Cristero War (1927-1929)**

Reason:

- **The Church and the state had their own ideas about how the state should be run ..but they didn't match.**
- **Interference of the Church in the state affairs**
- **The church exploited the people – money, morality, land ownership**
- **Worldly, unethical priests**

Result:

- **The Churches were either closed or destroyed or converted into government buildings**
- **Clergies were hunted and executed.**
- **Religious books and public prayers were outlawed**
- **Owning a religious statue was considered a punishable crime – one night in jail**
- **Priests were forced marry and renounce soutanes**
- **children have no memories of going to Mass**
- **The protagonist of the novel is apparently the only living priest in the area**

Effect on the People:

- **Helpless**
- **Needed a priest for baptism, funeral and Confession**
- **Internal Struggle**

Setting: Southern Mexican state during the 1930s

Characters:

The 'whisky Priest' –

- **The unnamed main character in the novel, the priest**
- **On the run from the authorities, who will kill him if they catch him.**
- **A "whisky priest", and not the finest example of his profession,**
- **Alcoholic - fathered a child - broken his vow of celibacy - smug and self-satisfied - has fair share of sins -proud, envious, dishonest, cowardly, weak of faith, judgmental, gluttonous - feels bitter and sometimes even hate for the people he serves.**

The lieutenant

- **Principled, disciplined man with a strong sense of justice.**
- **Committed to political ideals that he thinks will help the poor and create equality and tolerance in the state.**

The Jefe / yeh fuh/ -

- **Chief of Police,**
- **an awkward, flabby, uncommitted bureaucrat**
- **More concerned with having his tooth extracted or filled than with ridding Mexico of its "last priest."**
- **Possesses a tolerance and a passivity that evade his subordinate, the lieutenant.**

Mestizo

- **Half-Indian peasant**
- **Insists on guiding the priest to Carmen.**
- **The priest knows that the mestizo will at some point hand him over to the authorities in exchange for a reward. (Mixed race – Spanish and indigenous American Ancestry)**

Maria:

- **Mother of Brigitta, the priest's daughter.**
- **Keeps brandy for the priest and helps him evade the police when they come to her village looking for him.**

Brigitta:

- **The priest's illegitimate daughter**
- **Meets her father briefly during his stay at her village.**
Mocked because of her humiliating parentage,
- **Less than thrilled to meet her long-lost father**

Padre Jose /hov 'zei/

- **A priest who was forced to marry by state regulations**
- **Excommunicated**
- **The only other priest in the novel besides the protagonist**
- **Opts to renounce his faith rather than flee the state or face execution**
- **Forced to marry, Padre Jose is allowed to remain in his town as a symbol of the weakness of the priesthood.**
- **Mocked regularly by the children in his neighbourhood**
- **Feels a deep and abiding sense of shame over the choices he has made.**

Mr. Tench

- **Dissatisfied English dentist**
- **Longs to return from Mexico to England.**
- **Befriends the priest, whom he meets at the dock,**
- **Later witnesses his death.**

Coral Fellows

- **The thirteen-year-old daughter of Captain and Mrs. Fellows.**
- **Young American girl whom the priest meets early on in the novel**
- **Discovers the priest hiding on her family's property**

Captain Fellows

- **An American living in Mexico with Mrs. Fellows, his wife, and his young daughter, Carol**
- **Runs the "Central American Banana Company"**

Mr. Lehr

- **A German-American living in Mexico**
- **The first to come upon the priest after he crosses the border**
- **A Lutheran who is mildly disapproving of Catholicism**
- **Engages the priest in muted religious debate**
- **Basically a kind person living a rather easy life**

The Gringo:

- **An American fugitive called James Calver**
- **wanted for murder and bank robbery**

The Chief of Police:

- **Mostly concerned with playing billiards and assuaging his own toothache**
- **Doesn't share the Lieutenant's idealism and wilfully breaks the law.**

Juan:

- **The Character in the story which the mother is reading out to her children.**
- **A young Mexican – entered priesthood – lived pious life – faced death with courage.**

The Boy:

- **A youngster growing up in this violent and impoverished land.**
- **Listens with scepticism to stories about Juan.**
- **Meets the priest in the beginning of the novel and by the end**
- **Impressed by a martyr / the Priest for his faith.**
- **Represents the human ability to better itself by teaching its youth.**

Locations

- **Mostly in small villages and plantations the priest visits or in the unnamed Capital.**
- **Tobasco , Carmen , Las Casas**

Plot:

- **Catholicism is outlawed in Mexico**
- **priests have either been settled by the state with wives**
- **The Main Character - tries to minister to the people as best he can - Faced by a lot of problems**
- **Tabasco is also prohibitionist, with the unspoken prime objective to hinder celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass**
- **haunted by his personal problems and past and present sins - encounters a mestizo**
- **Overcomes weaknesses and performs acts of great heroism.**
- **The lieutenant succeeds in making the State free from religion.**

Thank You !!