

# Content Guide

## Roland West, Loner

**Themes:** Loneliness, sibling bullying, family relationships, friendship, having a sibling/friend with disabilities, Communion of Saints, miracles, mercy, and forgiveness.

**Educational Value:** Student Study Guide, Parent Study Guide (with answers), and Discussion guide available on the author's website. The priest in the story explains Church teaching about relics.

**Positive Messages:** Roland learns the importance of forgiveness and mercy in sibling relationships. He also overcomes insecurities and learns how to make friendships.

**Spiritual Messages:** As members of the Body of Christ, we have a “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1) with us always, thus we are never truly alone. God allows us to experience loneliness so that we might turn to him.

**Positive Role Models:** Caitlyn is a patient, faith-filled character who listens to others, gives helpful advice, shows repentance, and apologizes when she makes mistakes. While Peter has his own share of faults, he tries to be a good friend and brother, he encourages his new friend, Roland, to go to Confession and return to Mass, and he shows mercy to Mr. Reinhard at the end of the story.

**Violence/Gore:** Sibling bullying. Twin brothers gang up on their younger brother, one twin rips the younger brother's shirt, and the twins lock him in the basement and later in a turret (they have a castle-like house). Another character makes fun of a teen who uses a wheelchair.

**Sexuality:** None

**Language:** None

**Drinking, Drugs & Smoking:** A character plants cigarettes in another character's room to get him in trouble. The same character is seen smoking, though other characters show disgust at the behavior.

### WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

The West family is not a perfect family. Years before the story takes place, Mrs. West passed away and Mr. West stopped trusting God. The effects of that are seen throughout the series, beginning in this story. As a result of the example of friends and the power of prayer, the West brothers grow in faith, one by one, over the series—and their father too. The beauty of the Catholic faith comes to life in each of these stories.

**Rating Scale:** Light, for all readers from junior high on up