Angela’s Ashes

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**Before reading**

I expect this book is about a woman who will die in the end. And so I also think this will be a quite exciting book.

**Chapter one**

It all starts with Frank who describes his life, first by telling about his father, who’s an alcoholic. He describes his childhood as a miserable one, because he grew up in a Catholic Irish family living in New York but who returned back to Ireland when he was four. He also tells something about his brothers and one sister, who died.

Frank’s father, Malachy, fought in the Old IRA and he committed a crime for which a price on his head was placed. Because of that, he escapes to America. Frank was jealous of his little brother Malachy because it looked like he got all the attention. Their father had a lot of jobs and when he came back home, they all would be happy because the debts could be paid again. One day, when he did not come home, he went to a pub and when he came home late again, he let the boys sing and swear that they would be prepared to die for their country, Ireland. He also tells stories about a great Irish warrior named Cuchulain. Then father loses his job and a twin is born. There isn’t much food left and Frank and his brother are hungry. Now and then they get some food from a shopkeeper. Then another baby is born, a girl this time. But not much later she dies. Father starts drinking again and mother lies in bed, doing nothing. The neighbours take care of the children and teach Frank and his brother Malachy how to take care of their brothers. One day mother’s sisters come to visit them but they do not like what they see and decide to get them some help. They make them fly back to Ireland.

Page one: “*When I look back on my childhood I wonder how I survived at all. It was, of course, a miserable childhood: the happy childhood is hardly worth your while. Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood.*”

**Chapter two**

When they arrive in Ireland, the two brothers see all sorts of different things. Malachy’s family doesn’t welcome them friendly, only Malachy’s father was quite nice to Angela. Though they still do not have a lot of money and so Malachy’s father advises him to go to the IRA to ask for some money because his mother doesn’t want them to stay at their house. And so the morning after, Malachy and his son Frank go to the IRA and he asks for some money, though they do not want to give them any. Because he does not have a document of Malachy’s employment. And because of that they do not have any money to get back and they have to stay at the police station, the police officers and guards are very nice to them.

The day after they get some money from the police officers for a train which will take them to Limerick, to Angela’s mother. Also she doesn’t give a warm welcome but she does help them get a small room where they can stay for a while. But it isn’t really luxurious because they all have to sleep on one matrass. A few days later Angela has a miscarriage and has to go to a community to beg for money. But the people find her suspicious because of her clothes but when Angela tells them about her miscarriage they act slightly better. Angela meets a sweet woman called Nora Molly who helps her with the groceries.

A few days later Frank’s brothers gets sick and has to be taken to the hospital, in the meantime Frank and his other two brothers are taken to their aunt’s house where they stay until they have to get back home to hear that their little brother has died. Because of this Malachy, Frank’s father, starts drinking again. To prevent this, Angela takes away his dole money so he cannot use it to drink anymore. Because Angela doesn’t want to stay in the apartment because of the memories of Oliver, they move again.

Frank and Malachy are sent to school, the teachers are very strict. Six months later Oliver’s twin Eugene, dies. Frank’s father can’t take it and starts drinking again to hide his feelings and Angela wants to move again. At the day of the funeral, Frank’s father is in a pub, drinking. He has to get him back for the funeral.

**Chapter three**

Again Angela wants to move because of Eugene’s death. The St. Vincent de Paul Society donates some old furniture to them for in their new apartment. The toilet is next to the house and about eleven families use it. In the winter they have to sleep upstairs and downstairs in the summer. They call upstairs *Italy* because it’s warm and dry there. For Christmas they got a pig’s head for dinner. The family only got sixteen shillings per week but now they will get even less because two of the family members have died. Malachy Sr. thinks his earned money goes to the pub and the dole money goes to his family.

Angela’s pregnant with a boy, called Michael. Malachy says it’s been given to them by an angel. Frank calls this angel the Angel on the Seventh Step, asking him questions because he believes the angel exists. But when the baby’s born, it’s sick like his two other brothers and stops breathing. Luckily he could be saved by his father. Then some people come and check the house of the McCourts. They offer the boys new shoes but their father won’t accept them and instead he tries to mend their old shoes. When the boys have to go back to school, their classmates start to tease them. The teacher tells them not to tease them because no one in their class is rich. Malachy gets a new job but then again, he does not return home but goes to the pub. Spending his money there.

**Chapter four**

Frank meets Mikey Molloy, an eleven-year-old boy who lives in their neighbourhood. They both go to the First Confession. There they meet a boy named Brendan Quigley who constantly asks questions. Paddy Clohessy is one of the poor boys in their class.

Mikey tells Frank about a story of Cuchulain’s wife and it makes Frank worry and so he tells his sin to the Angel on the Seventh Step. The angel forgives him, and so does the priest. His father tells him that it is not a sin if someone tells you a story like that. Mikey pretends that he has got an attack so Frank can sneak into the cinema.

**Chapter five**

The family’s contact isn’t so good. Hardly anyone talks to one another. Then a man, Bill Galvin, arrives at Frank’s grandmother’s house who is willing to pay for a place to sleep and for some food. So Frank has to bring the man some food every day and gets paid for it. But on the first day, Frank can’t resist because he’s so hungry and eats the man’s food. Because of that, he must deliver the next meals for free for the coming two weeks.

Then Angela tells Frank that he will have to follow dance classes but Frank uses the money for the cinema instead. His parents eventually find out and Malachy wants Frank to confess to the priest.

After three years, everything is still quite the same. Malachy still hasn’t got a job.

**Chapter six**

In church as a reward, you will get an apple peel. In church Paddy and Frank meet a girlish boy called Fintan Slattery. He invites the two boys to come over to his house some day and promises them that they will get some food there. A couple of days later, Fintan again wants them to go with him to his house. But they won’t get any food, so they steal some from a farm. Frank stays with Paddy that night because Brendan saw them and told them that his parents are going to kill him from stealing the food. The next day Frank’s mother shows up at school and tells him how worried she was.

**Chapter seven**

Angela doesn’t want to talk to her husband because he won’t stop drinking. Mickey Spellacy asks Frank and Billy if they want to pray for his sister so that she won’t die until September so he will get a week off. And he promises them that he will invite them to the funeral but when his sister dies during school, both boys are not invited. Frank is glad that Mickey dies later of tuberculosis. Frank get two jobs, one is that he has to deliver papers and the second job is that he will have to read the paper to Mr. Timoney for some money. Angela tells Frank that Mr. Timoney’s wife is Indian but that she was accidentally killed by a soldier. Later, Mr. Timoney had to be send away and Frank gets fired. Angela gets another baby, called Alphie. They get a small amount of money from their grandfather and Angela wants Malachy to cash the money. But instead he takes it to the pub, Angela sends Frank and Malachy Jr. after their father to get him back but it is already too late. The money is spend already. Frank is really hungry and so he stole a meal from a drunken man, he feels guilty and confesses.

**Chapter eight**

Frank is now ten years. Peter Dooley lets Frank, Mikey and Billy pay to see his naked sisters. But when they want to see them, they get caught because Mikey gets an attack when he masturbates and falls down. Peter’s mother is very angry and scolds at the boys, and she also tells Angela about it and that Frank should confess. But Angela doesn’t think he should, she makes Frank swear he didn’t see the girls naked.

Frank gets ill and the doctor says he’s got typhoid fever, he’s close to death.

For the first time Frank’s father kisses him on the forehead. In the hospital Frank meets a girl, called Patricia. They can keep contact because of Seamus, he passes the notes of them. They cannot see each other because they are both very sick. A few days later, Frank is informed by Seamus that Patricia had died. Because Seamus had to give the poems over, he can now remember them. After a few weeks, Frank can go home but he is disappointed when he hears that he has to repeat a class. Frank is confused because he doesn’t know what to feel for his father. Because he likes him when he’s alone with him but dislikes it when he drinks the money away.

**Chapter nine**

Angela doesn’t want to have any more children.