



# The Education of a Poker Player (American Reader)

*James McManus*

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**The Education of a Poker Player (American Reader)** James McManus  
**2015 NOMINEE FOR THE KIRKUS PRIZE FOR FICTION**

*New York Times*-bestselling author James McManus offers up a collection of seven linked stories narrated by Vincent Killeen, an Irish Catholic altar boy, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Persuaded at age eight by his grandmother that entering the priesthood will guarantee salvation for every member of his family, Vince eagerly commits to attending a Jesuit seminary for high school. As the meaning of a vow of celibacy becomes clearer to him, however, and he is exposed to the irresistible temptations of poker and girls, life as a seminarian begins to seem less appealing. These autobiographical stories are enlightening and evocative, providing keen, often humorous insight into Catholicism, faith, celibacy and its opposite, as well as America's—and increasingly the world's—favorite card game.

**James McManus** has been called “poker’s Shakespeare.” He is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of *Positively Fifth Street* and *Cowboys Full: The Story of Poker*, among others. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Harper’s*, *The Believer*, *Paris Review*, *Esquire*, and in *Best American* anthologies for poetry, sports writing, science and nature, and magazine writing. He is the recipient of the Peter Lisagor Award for Sports Journalism, as well as fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations. He teaches at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

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