

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Ernest Hemingway

Plot Overview

- Opens May 1937 at height of Spanish Civil War
- American Robert Jordan has left the US to enlist on the Republican side of the war
- Travels behind enemy lines to work w/ Spanish guerilla fighters or guerrilleros, hiding in the mountains
- Republican command assigned Robert Jordan task of blowing up a Fascist controlled bridge as part of a larger Republican offensive
- Peasant named Anselmo guides Robert Jordan to guerrilla camp hidden in cave
- They encounter Pablo, leader of camp, who greets Robert Jordan w/ hostility & opposes bridge operation b/c he believes it endangers the guerrilleros' safety
- Robert Jordan believes Pablo may betray/sabotage the mission

- At camp Robert Jordan meets Pilar, Pablo's "woman"
- Pilar is large sturdy part-gypsy who appears to be the real leader of the band of guerrilleros
- Rapport quickly develops between Robert Jordan & Pilar
- He meets 6 other inhabitants of camp: Rafael, Agustin, Fernando, Primitivo, and brothers Andres and Eladio
- Camp also shelters the young woman Maria who a band of Fascists raped not long before; Robert Jordan and Maria immediately drawn to each other
- Jordan and Anselmo leave camp to scout out bridge
- Upon return, Pablo publicly announces neither he nor his guerrilleros will help blow up the bridge
- Since Pilar and others disagree, Pablo sullenly gives in
- Privately Rafael urges Jordan to kill Pablo, but Pilar insists that Pablo is not dangerous

- That night Maria joins Jordan as he sleeps outside where they profess their love for one another and then make love
- Next morning Pilar leads Jordan through the forest to consult El Sordo (leader of another band of guerrilleros) about bridge operation; Maria is taken along
- El Sordo agrees to help but both he and Jordan are troubled about having to blow up the bridge in daylight, which makes their retreat more difficult
- On the way back to camp, Jordan and Maria make love in the forest
- When they catch up w/ Pilar, Maria confesses to Pilar that the earth moved as they made love; Pilar is impressed and says that something like that happens no more than 3 times in a person's lifetime
- At camp a drunken Pablo insults Jordan who tries to provoke Pablo, hoping to find an excuse to kill him

- Pablo refuses to be provoked even when Agustin hits him in the face
- When Pablo steps away for a few minutes, others agree that he is dangerous & must be killed, which Jordan volunteers to do
- Suddenly Pablo returns & announces he has changed his mind and will help w/ the bridge
- Later that night, Maria comes outside to sleep w/ Jordan again, and they talk about their feeling that they are one person, that they share the same body
- In the morning Jordan wakes up, sees a Fascist cavalryman, & shoots him, awakening the camp
- After breakfast, the group hears sounds of a fight in the distance, & Jordan believes that the Fascists are attacking El Sordo's camp
- Agustin & Primitivo want to aid El Sordo, but Jordan & Pilar know that it would likely be useless
- Scene shifts to El Sordo's hill, which group of Fascists is assaulting

- El Sordo's men play dead & manage to shoot the Fascist captain, but several minutes later Fascist planes bomb the hilltop & kill everyone in the guerrillero band
- Ranking Fascist officer orders beheading of all the corpses
- Guerrilleros at Pablo's camp after hearing the bombs feel glum as they eat lunch
- Jordan writes a dispatch to the Republican command recommending that both bridge operation & the larger offensive be canceled for the Fascists are aware of the plan & the operation will not succeed
- Sends Andres to deliver dispatch to the headquarters of General Golz (Republican leader)
- Maria again joins Jordan in his sleeping bag where they fantasize about their future in Madrid
- In Madrid, Jordan's friend a Russian journalist named Karkov learns that Fascists know about the offensive planned for the next day and he worries about Jordan

- At 2 in the morning, Pilar wakes Jordan & reports that Pablo has fled camp w/ some of the explosives meant to blow up the bridge
- At first furious, then Jordan controls his anger & plans to carry out operation anyway w/ fewer explosives
- Wakes up Maria, and as they make love, they feel the earth move
- Pablo returns just before dawn, claiming that he left in a moment of weakness
- Says he threw explosives into the river but felt great loneliness after doing so
- He brought back 5 men w/ their horses from neighboring guerilla bands to help, and the fighters take their positions
- Scene shifts to Andres who has been traveling through the night to deliver Jordan's dispatch to General Golz
- Crossing into Republican territory, Andres is slowed when several suspicious but apathetic officers question him

- As Andres & escort finally near Golz's headquarters, politician named Andre Marty suspects they are Fascist spies & orders them arrested
- Karkov hears about arrests & uses his influence to free them
- Jordan's dispatch reaches Golz but too late & the offensive has already begun & can't be stopped
- As dawn breaks, Jordan & Anselmo descend on the bridge, shoot the Fascist sentries, & plant the explosives
- Pilar arrives & says Eladia has been killed, and Fernando (fatally wounded) must be left behind
- When Jordan detonates the explosives, the bridge falls but shrapnel from blast kills Anselmo
- Pablo emerges from below saying all 5 of his men are dead
- Agustin accuses Pablo of shooting them from the horses, and Pablo doesn't deny it
- Group crosses road in retreat, Fascist bullet hits Jordan's horse

- Horse tramples Jordan's left leg, breaking it
- Knowing he must be left behind, Jordan says goodbye to Maria, saying he will be w/ her even if she goes
- Pilar leads maria away
- Jordan contemplates suicide but resolves to stay alive to hold of Fascists
- He is grateful for having lived in his final days a full lifetime
- For first time he feels "integrated," in harmony w/ the world
- As the Fascist lieutenant approaches, Jordan takes aim, feeling his heart beating against the floor of the forest

Characters

Robert Jordan - An American volunteer for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War and the protagonist of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Robert Jordan is pragmatic, very good at what he does, and never lets his emotions interfere with his work. He appreciates physical pleasures like smelling pine trees, drinking absinthe, and having sex. At the same time, he is conflicted about his role within the war and within the larger world. Interior dialogues in which he argues with himself about these conflicts constitute a significant part of the novel. Over the course of the novel, he gradually resolves these tensions and learns to integrate his rational, thinking side with his intuitive, feeling side.

Pablo - The leader of the guerrilla camp. Pablo is an individualist who feels responsible only to himself. Hemingway often compares him to a bull, a boar, and other burly, stubborn, and unpleasant animals. Pablo used to be a great fighter and a great man but has now started drinking and has “gone bad,” as many characters remark. Tired of the war and attached to his horses, Pablo is ready to betray the Republican cause at the start of the novel.

Pilar - Pablo's part-gypsy “woman.” Pilar means “pillar” in Spanish, and indeed, the fiercely patriotic, stocky, and steadfast Pilar is—if not the absolute leader—the support center of the guerrilla group. Pilar keeps the hearth, fights in battle, mothers Robert Jordan, and bullies Pablo and Rafael. She has an intuitive, mystical connection to deeper truths

Maria - A young woman with Pablo's band who falls in love with Robert Jordan. The victim of rape at the hands of Fascists who took over her town, Maria is frequently described by means of earth imagery. Hemingway compares her movements to a colt's, and Robert Jordan affectionately calls her "Rabbit."

Anselmo - An old, trustworthy guerrilla fighter. For Robert Jordan, Anselmo represents all that is good about Spaniards. He lives close to the land, is loyal, follows directions, and stays where he is told. He likes to hunt but has not developed a taste for the kill and hates killing people. Anselmo has stopped praying ever since the Communists banned organized religion but admits that he misses it.

Agustín - A trustworthy and high-spirited guerrilla fighter. Agustín, who mans the machine gun, curses frequently and is secretly in love with Maria.

Fernando - A guerrilla fighter in his mid-thirties. Short and with a lazy eye, Fernando is dignified and literal-minded, embraces bureaucracy, and is easily offended by vulgarities. These factors, combined with his lack of a sense of humor, make Fernando the frequent target of Pilar's jokes.

Primitivo - An elderly guerrilla fighter. Despite his gray hair and broken nose, Primitivo has not learned the cynicism needed for survival in the war. His name, which means “primitive,” evokes his idealism as well as the basic, earthy lifestyle of all the guerrilleros.

Rafael - A gypsy member of the guerrilla band. Frequently described as well-meaning but “worthless,” Rafael proves his worthlessness by leaving his lookout post at a crucial moment. He is a foil for the trustworthy Anselmo, who does not leave his post on the previous night despite the cold and the snow. Rafael has few loyalties and does not believe in political causes.

Andrés - One of the guerrilla fighters, in his late twenties. Andrés comes into conflict with the Republican leaders' bureaucracy in his attempt to deliver Robert Jordan's dispatch to the Republican command. Andrés serves also a foil to Pablo: although both Andrés and Pablo enjoy killing in an almost sexual way, Andrés has had the opportunity to satisfy that thirst through his experience with bull-baiting during a town fiesta. As a result, unlike Pablo, Andrés has learned to identify and control his desire to kill.

Eladio - Andrés's older brother and another of the guerrilla fighters. The jumpy Eladio plays a relatively minor role in the novel. His most noticeable feature is that Robert Jordan repeatedly forgets his name. His death at the end of the novel attracts little notice.

El Sordo (Santiago) - The leader of a guerrilla band that operates near Pablo's. Short, heavy, and gray-haired, El Sordo (Spanish for “the deaf one”) is a man of few words. Like Robert Jordan, he is excited by a successful kill and is sad to die.

Joaquín - One of the members of El Sordo's band. Joaquín originally wanted to be bullfighter but was too scared. He lost most of his family at the hands of the Fascists and cries when he talks about them. Joaquín buys into the Republicans' propaganda but turns back to religion at the moment of his death, illustrating the emptiness of political rhetoric in times of true crisis.

General Golz - The Russian general, allied with the Republicans, who assigns Robert Jordan the bridge-blowing mission. Robert Jordan says that Golz is the best general he has served under, but the Republican military bureaucracy impedes all of Golz's operations. Golz believes that thinking is useless because it breaks down resolve and impedes action.

Kashkin - A Russian guerrilla operative who once worked with Pablo's band to blow up a train. Although Kashkin never appears in the novel, he is a foil for Robert Jordan. Unlike Robert Jordan, Kashkin was openly nervous.

Karkov - A well-connected foreign correspondent for the Russian newspaper Pravda and Robert Jordan's friend in Madrid. Karkov, the most intelligent man Robert Jordan knows, teaches Robert Jordan about the harsh realities of wartime politics. Karkov believes that abstract philosophy is superior to action and intuition.

Captain Rogelio Gomez - A former barber and now commander of the battalion that Andrés first reaches after crossing the Republican lines. Gomez romanticizes the idea of guerrilla warfare and escorts Andrés to several commanders, trying to reach General Golz.

Lieutenant-Colonel Miranda - A Republican staff office brigade commander. Miranda's only goal in the war is not to be demoted from his current rank. He is one of many examples of apathetic or inept Republican commanders who contribute to the eventual Republican defeat.

André Marty - The French Commissar of the International Brigades, the troops of foreign volunteers who serve on the Republican side in the war. Marty has become blinded by political paranoia and is convinced that he is surrounded by enemies.

Lieutenant Paco Berrendo - A devoutly Catholic Fascist officer who orders the beheading of El Sordo's men. Berrendo's sorrow for his dead friend, his awareness of the useless horror of war, and his tendency toward introspection make him a sympathetic character. Hemingway's portrayal of Berrendo underscores the fact that the enemy side is not faceless but composed of real individuals who also make real and difficult decisions.

Captain Moro - An overconfident Fascist commander in charge of taking El Sordo's hill. Moro serves as a foil for the more introspective Lieutenant Berrendo.

Finito de Palencia - Pilar's former lover, a bullfighter who died from complications from wounds received in a bullfight. Short, sad-eyed, and sullen, Finito was brave in the ring in spite of his fear of bulls. Finito, who appears in the novel only in Pilar's flashbacks, exemplifies the courage of Hemingway's code hero and Hemingway's deep respect for the bullfighting profession.

Robert Jordan's father - A weak, religious man who could not stand up to his aggressive wife and eventually committed suicide. His father's weakness is a constant source of embarrassment to Robert Jordan.

Robert Jordan's grandfather - A veteran of the American Civil War and a member of the Republican National Committee. Robert Jordan feels more closely related to his grandfather than to his father.

Themes, Motifs, and Symbols

Themes

- The loss of innocence in war - Each of the characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* loses his or her psychological or physical innocence to the war. Some endure tangible traumas: Joaquín loses both his parents and is forced to grow up quickly, while Maria loses her physical innocence when she is raped by a group of Fascist soldiers. On top of these tangible, physical costs of the war come many psychological costs. Robert Jordan initially came to Spain with idealism about the Republican cause and believed confidently that he was joining the good side. But after fighting in the war, Robert Jordan becomes cynical about the Republican cause and loses much of his initial idealism.

The victims of violence in the war are not the only ones to lose their innocence—the perpetrators lose their innocence too. The ruffians in Pablo's hometown who participate in the massacre of the town Fascists have to face their inner brutality afterward. Anselmo has to suppress his aversion to killing human beings, and Lieutenant Berrendo has to quell his aversion to cutting heads off of corpses.

War even costs the innocence of people who aren't involved in it directly. War journalists, writers, and we as readers of novels like *For Whom the Bell Tolls* have to abandon our innocent expectation that wars involve clean moral choices that distinguish us from the enemy. Hemingway shows in the novel that morality is subjective and conditional, and that the sides of right and wrong are almost never clear-cut. With no definite sides of right and wrong in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, there is no sense of glorious victory in battle, no sense of triumph or satisfaction that good prevails and evil is defeated.

- Value of human life - Many characters die during the course of the novel, and we see characters repeatedly question what can possibly justify killing another human being. Anselmo and Pablo represent two extremes with regard to this question. Anselmo hates killing people in all circumstances, although he will do so if he must. Pablo, on the other hand, accepts killing as a part of his life and ultimately demonstrates that he is willing to kill his own men just to take their horses. Robert Jordan's position about killing falls somewhere between Anselmo's and Pablo's positions. Although Robert Jordan doesn't like to think about killing, he has killed many people in the line of duty. His personal struggle with this question ends on a note of compromise. Although war can't fully absolve him of guilt, and he has "no right to forget any of it," Robert Jordan knows both that he must kill people as part of his duties in the war, and that dwelling on his guilt during wartime is not productive.

The question of when it is justifiable to kill a person becomes complicated when we read that several characters, including Andrés, Agustín, Rafael, and even Robert Jordan, admit to experiencing a rush of excitement while killing. Hemingway does not take a clear moral stance regarding when it is acceptable to take another person's life. At times he even implies that killing can be exhilarating, which makes the morality of the war in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* even murkier.

- Romantic love as salvation - Even though many of the characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* take a cynical view of human nature and feel fatigued by the war, the novel still holds out hope for romantic love. Even the worldly-wise Pilar, in her memories of Finito, reveals traces of a romantic, idealistic outlook on the world. Robert Jordan and Maria fall in love at first sight, and their love is grand and idealistic. Love endows Robert Jordan's life with new meaning and gives him new reasons to fight in the wake of the disillusionment he feels for the Republican cause. He believes in love despite the fact that other people—notably Karkov, who subscribes to the “purely materialistic” philosophy fashionable with the Hotel Gaylord set—reject its existence. This new acceptance of ideal, romantic love is one of the most important ways in which Robert Jordan rejects abstract theories in favor of intuition and action over the course of the novel.

Motifs

- Rabbits & hares - Animal imagery pervades *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but rabbits and hares appear most frequently. Robert Jordan's nickname for Maria is "Rabbit." When Robert Jordan first meets Rafael, the gypsy is making traps for rabbits. Later, Rafael, distracted by trapping a pair of hares that he has caught mating in the snow, leaves his post. The guerrilla fighters have a somber meal of rabbit stew after the Fascists slaughter El Sordo's men. And shortly before his death, El Sordo invokes the image of a skinned rabbit when thinking about how vulnerable before enemy planes he feels on his hilltop.

The association of the guerrilleros with rabbits underscores their fragile position relative to the Fascists. Throughout the novel, we get the impression that the Fascists are the hunters and the guerrilleros the hunted: much like rabbits, Robert Jordan and his band are prey rather than predators. Like rabbits, the guerrilleros live in close contact with the natural world: they are a small, vulnerable group, in sharp contrast to the well-equipped Fascists with their incessant plane patrols and threatening, industrial war machinery.

- The forest floor -

- The forest floor - *For Whom the Bell Tolls* opens with Robert Jordan lying “flat on the brown pine-needed floor of the forest.” We see him amid the evergreens on the forest floor at several points throughout the novel, implying how he literally embraces the Spanish land. On the second night, after it snows, Robert Jordan makes a bed of spruce branches for himself and Maria to share. His embrace of Maria and his closeness to the ground becomes a physical act of love both for the woman and the country. Toward the end of the novel, Robert Jordan assumes his post as he awaits the start of the attack on the bridge. On he is again “on his belly behind the pine trunk” and feels the “give of the brown, dropped pine-needles under his elbows.” His literal closeness to the earth highlights the natural, pre-civilized lifestyle that the guerrilla fighters lead in the wilderness. Robert Jordan takes this position one final time, at the very end of the novel, when he again lies behind a tree and feels “his heart beating against the pine needle floor the forest.” Comparing his position at the end of the novel to his almost identical position at the beginning reminds us of the ways in which Robert Jordan has changed over the course of the novel. There is a new element at the end—his beating heart, which he has reawakened through his relationships with Maria and with the guerrilla fighters.

- Signs and omens - Omens abound in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and the belief in them indicate closeness to a pre-civilized, natural way of life. For example, the worry Pilar feels after reading Robert Jordan's palm is borne out when Robert Jordan is wounded at the end of the novel. Even characters who claim not to believe in signs often rely on them subconsciously. Although Robert Jordan professes not to believe Pilar's superstitions, he plays games with himself and repeatedly interprets natural phenomena as signs. His framing of other people's behaviors as good signs or bad signs further undermines his claim not to believe in omens. At the end of the novel, however, as Robert Jordan faces death and comes to terms with his life, he grudgingly admits that gypsies do indeed "see something . . . feel something." Ultimately, Hemingway implies that the wisdom associated with the natural, Spanish way of life trumps the other characters' cynical rationality and skepticism.

- Suicide - Throughout *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway characterizes suicide as an act of cowardice by associating it with characters who are vulnerable or lack strength of spirit. A number of characters contemplate suicide: Karkov always carries pills to use to kill himself if he is ever captured, and Maria carries around a razor blade for the same purpose. Robert Jordan's father committed suicide—an act that Robert Jordan says he understands but nonetheless condemns. The traits of these characters who contemplate suicide connect the act of suicide to weakness. Robert Jordan's father is characterized as weak, Maria is young and female, and Karkov is a man of ideas, not action. At the end of the novel, Robert Jordan contemplates suicide but rejects the idea, preferring to struggle to stay awake despite the pain. Robert Jordan's reliance on inner strength in his rejection of suicide contrasts the other characters' weakness, which demonstrates that the will to continue living requires psychological strength.

Symbols

- Planes, tanks, and mortars - The rumble of Fascist war machinery often jars the serenity of the Spanish mountains in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, usually in the form of Italian and German observation and bomber planes that fly overhead. The military threat from the Fascists is both physical and moral: the planes menace not only with their bombs but also with their intimidating rumble. The planes move like “mechanized doom,” conveying a sense of automation and industry that contrasts sharply with the earthy, close-to-nature lifestyle of Robert Jordan's relatively helpless band of guerrillas. The fact that the planes move like “mechanized doom” highlights the Fascists' superior technology. At the time of the Spanish Civil War, industrialization threatened the natural lifestyle of the peasants who lived off the land not only in Spain but also in many other countries. Hemingway saw Spain as one of the last places where small community life was still possible, and he saw the Spanish Civil War as destroying this possibility.
- Absinthe - Robert Jordan's flask of absinthe (a green liqueur flavored with anise, a substance similar to licorice) embodies his deep appreciation for sensory pleasures—food, drink, smells, touch, sex, and so on. For Robert Jordan, absinthe “[takes] the place of the evening papers, of all the old evenings in cafés, of all the chestnut trees that would be in bloom now in this month . . . of all the things he had enjoyed and forgotten.” Although Robert Jordan uses absinthe to buy trust and build relationships with the guerrilla fighters, he cannot help begrudging every drop. In the novel's wartime setting, absinthe represents the attitude that one should take advantage of carnal or sensory pleasures while one has the chance

Analysis of Major Characters

Robert Jordan - The protagonist of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan left his job as a college instructor in the United States to volunteer for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Initially, he believed in the Republican cause with a near-religious faith and felt an “absolute brotherhood” with his comrades on the Republican side. However, when the action of the novel starts, we see that Robert Jordan has become disillusioned. As the conflict drags on, he realizes that he does not really believe in the Republican cause but joined their side simply because they fought against Fascism. Because he fights for a side whose causes he does not necessarily support, Robert Jordan experiences a great deal of internal conflict and begins to wonder whether there is really any difference between the Fascist and Republican sides.

Robert Jordan's interior monologues and actions indicate these internal conflicts that plague him. Although he is disillusioned with the Republican cause, he continues to fight for that cause. In public he announces that he is anti-Fascist rather than a Communist, but in private he thinks that he has no politics at all. He knows that his job requires that he kill people but also knows that he should not believe in killing in the abstract. Despite his newfound love for Maria, he feels that there cannot be a place for her in his life while he also has his military work. He claims not to be superstitious but cannot stop thinking about the world as giving him signs of things to come. These conflicts weigh heavily on Robert Jordan throughout the bulk of the novel.

Robert Jordan resolves these tensions at the end of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in his final moments as he faces death. He accepts himself as a man of action rather than thought, as a man who believes in practicality rather than abstract theories. He understands that the war requires him to do some things that he does not believe in. He also realizes that, though he cannot forget the unsavory deeds he has done in the past, he must avoid dwelling on them for the sake of getting things done in the present. Ultimately, Robert Jordan is able to make room in his mind for both his love for Maria and his military mission. By the end of the novel, just before he dies, his internal conflicts and tensions are resolved and he feels “integrated” into the world.

Pablo - Pablo, the exasperating leader of the guerrilla band, is a complex character and an unpredictable force in the novel—a man who is difficult to like but ultimately difficult to condemn unwaveringly. Pablo and Robert Jordan view each other with mutual suspicion and dislike from the start: Pablo adamantly opposes the bridge operation and views Robert Jordan as a threat to the guerrilleros' safety, while Robert Jordan senses that Pablo will betray the guerrilleros and sabotage the mission. Hemingway uses a variety of unflattering imagery to highlight Pablo's uncooperative and confrontational nature, often comparing Pablo to a bull, a boar, and other stubborn and unpleasant animals.

In virtually all of his actions, Pablo displays a selfish lack of restraint, an irresponsible individualism that contrasts with Robert Jordan's pragmatic and morally motivated outlook. Pablo rashly follows his impulses, whether in the cruel slaughter of the Fascists in his hometown or in the theft of Robert Jordan's explosives. Although this self-indulgence made Pablo a strong and courageous fighter when he was younger, it now proves a liability, for it sows dissent within the guerrilla band and jeopardizes the mission. As Pilar says, Pablo once would have sacrificed anything for the Republican cause but has “gone bad” as the war has dragged on and now wavers in his loyalties.

Despite Pablo's disagreeable characteristics, however, he is not an evil man, and we cannot label him a villain. Although he is stubborn, rash, and sometimes brutal, Pablo displays a clear sense of conscience and realizes when he has done something wrong. He wishes he could bring back to life the Fascists he massacred in his town, and he characterizes his theft of Robert Jordan's explosives as a “moment of weakness.” At the same time, however, it is impossible to ignore the fact that Pablo feels remorse over a deed only after it's too late to do anything about it. Above all, Pablo fears death and is exhausted with the war. He simply wants the war to end so that he may live a peaceful life in the country along with Pilar and his horses—a sentiment that is difficult to judge harshly. Ironically, it is Pablo, not Robert Jordan, who survives at the end of the novel. However, although Pablo stays alive, he does so without the moral strength that Robert Jordan maintains and develops throughout *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Pilar - Arguably the most colorful and likable character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Pilar embodies the earthiness, strength, and wisdom of the Spanish peasantry. A large, robust, part-gypsy woman, Pilar exercises great influence over the band of guerrilleros—in fact, we quickly become aware that Pablo leads the band in name only. The strong and stable Pilar provides the motivating force behind many of the novel's events. She pushes Robert Jordan and Maria's romance, commands the allegiance of the guerrilla fighters, and organizes the guerrilleros' brief alliance with El Sordo. She acts as the support structure for the camp as she unites the band of guerrilla fighters into a family, cooks for all, and sews Robert Jordan's packs. In short, Pilar manipulates the most important characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and sets in place many of the encounters that drive the plot.

Pilar, though practical, often relies on intuitive, mystical, gypsy folk wisdom. Shrewd and worldly-wise, she claims a deep connection to the primitive forces of fate. She claims to be able to smell death, and she describes the smell in repulsively naturalistic detail. She reads palms and interprets sexual experiences. Despite Robert Jordan's cynicism, Pilar's predictions do come true. Pilar exhibits the inevitable sadness that comes with knowledge: “Neither bull force nor bull courage lasted, she knew now, and what did last? I last. . . . But for what?” In the end, the only aspect of Pilar's personality that seems not to show wisdom is her unswerving commitment to and belief in the Republican side, which ultimately loses the war.

Maria - The young, gentle Maria catches Robert Jordan's eye from the moment he meets her. She exudes a natural, glowing beauty, despite the fact that she has recently suffered a traumatic rape and has had most of her hair shorn off. Though she is vulnerable and lays her emotions bare, she exhibits an inner strength, determination, and resilience that enable her to bear her difficult circumstances. Some critics contend that Hemingway intends Maria to represent the land of Spain itself, ravaged by the warring forces beyond her comprehension, yet always enduring, beautiful, and loving. Indeed, Hemingway frequently uses earth imagery to describe Maria, comparing her hair to the "golden brown of a grain field" and her breasts to "small hills." In this light, Robert Jordan's closeness with Maria mirrors his closeness with Spain, his adopted country.

As Robert Jordan's love interest, Maria provides the impetus for his personal development from an unfeeling thinker and doer to a romantic individual. In his conversations with General Golz and with Maria early in the novel, Robert Jordan reveals his belief that he does not have time for women during the war. Even after Robert meets Maria, he remains closed to extreme emotion or romance. Though in love with her, Robert Jordan still shuts her out whenever he must think about his work. However, by the end of the novel, Robert Jordan thanks Maria for everything that she has taught him and faces the day of his mission noting that he has integrated his commitments to work and to love. Maria, determined to embrace their love fully, teaches Robert Jordan how to resolve his tensions between love and work.

Some critics of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* consider Maria a weak link in the novel because her characterization depends so heavily on the effect she has on Robert Jordan rather than on her own motivations and conflicts. These critics argue that Maria's submissiveness and the speed with which her affair with Robert Jordan progresses are unrealistic. They assert that Maria is not a believable character but rather a stereotype or the embodiment of a male fantasy. Some feminist critics have blanched at Hemingway's treatment of Maria's rape, especially at the fact that sexual intercourse with Robert Jordan appears to heal Maria instantaneously. But although Maria does come across as a rather static character, this flatness renders her symbolic importance all the more apparent. Maria's lovely image endures beyond the last pages of the novel, an emblem of a land that maintains its beauty, strength, and dignity in the face of forces that threaten to tear it apart.