

Mother Courage and Her Children Character

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Major Characters

- **Mother Courage (Anna Fierling):** The central character of the play. She is called Mother Courage because she dares to continue her business even during the war. With her wagon, she sells food and supplies to soldiers. But in trying to profit from the war, she loses her three children, Eilif, Swiss Cheese, and Kattrin, one by one. Her character symbolizes war, greed, motherhood, and helplessness.
- **Eilif:** Mother Courage's eldest son. Brave but war-loving. He is recruited by soldiers because he mercilessly kills peasants. At first, he is praised as a hero, but later, during peacetime, he is executed for the very same act. His character symbolizes the moral contradictions of war.
- **Swiss Cheese:** Mother Courage's second son. He works as a paymaster (cashier) for the regiment. Honest and simple-minded. He is captured by enemies because he hides the cashbox. Since his mother fails to negotiate his release in time, he is shot dead. His character symbolizes honesty and the cruelty of war.
- **Kattrin:** Mother Courage's daughter. She is mute and cannot speak. However, she is deeply compassionate. She has strong maternal affection for children. In the final scene, she beats a drum to awaken and warn a town under threat of attack, sacrificing her life in the process. Her character symbolizes sacrifice, innocence, and silent protest.

Minor Characters

- **The Cook (Pavel):** A cook who wishes to partner with Mother Courage in business. At one point, he proposes to her, but she refuses because of Kattrin. His character symbolizes the conflict between selfishness and humanity.
- **The Chaplain:** A Protestant clergyman who accompanies Mother Courage for much of her journey. He exposes the hypocrisy of religion and morality during wartime. His character represents the helplessness and duplicity of religious institutions in times of war.
- **The Sergeant and the Recruiting Officer:** Characters who appear at the beginning of the play. They come to recruit soldiers and drag people into war. Their characters symbolize the machinery of war.

- **The Peasant Family:** Appears toward the end of the play. They are victims of the destruction caused by war. Kattrin sacrifices her life to save their children. Their characters symbolize the suffering of ordinary people.
- **Yvette Pottier:** A camp prostitute who survives by doing business with soldiers. At one point, she tries to form a relationship with Swiss Cheese. Later, she marries an old officer and becomes wealthy, but she does not find happiness. Her character symbolizes the exploitation of women and their struggle for survival during war.
- **The Sergeant and One Eye:** Two characters who appear at the beginning of the play. They recruit young men from villages into the army. One Eye refers to a one-eyed soldier. They represent how war pulls common people into its grasp.
- **The Young Soldier:** An ordinary young man drawn into war. He expresses frustration about his wages and the injustice. His character symbolizes the voice of common soldiers trapped in the terrifying cycle of war.
- **The Captain:** An army officer who often commands soldiers and makes transactions with Mother Courage. His character symbolizes military discipline and the harsh reality of war.
- **The Parson:** A religious figure in the play, sometimes also referred to as the Chaplain. He highlights the role of God and religion in war, but his hypocrisy and helplessness are revealed.
- **The Lieutenant:** A military officer, symbolizing obedience to orders and authority. His character represents the machinery of war, where there is no room for humanity.

Family and Relations

- **Mother Courage's Family:** Anna Fierling and her three children, Eilif, Swiss Cheese, and Kattrin. Their deaths throughout the play highlight the impact of war and business on Mother Courage's life.