

Mother Courage and Her Children Quotations

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Quotes

“Here’s Mother Courage and her wagon!

Hey, Captain, Let them come and buy!” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Prologue)

Explanation (English): This is Mother Courage’s cheerful sales-call as she pulls her wagon. It shows how she treats war as business and tries to survive by selling goods even in danger.

“A mighty fortress is our God.” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Scene III)

Explanation (English): The Chaplain and the Cook sing this hymn during a Catholic attack. Brecht uses it ironically — holy words are sung while soldiers kill, showing religion’s failure to stop violence.

“The trouble with Poland is the Poles.” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Mother Courage, Scene III)

Explanation (English): Mother Courage speaks this bitter line to blame the people themselves for their troubles. It shows her harsh, practical attitude and cynicism about war and survival.

“Don’t forget they made you paymaster because you’re honest.” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Mother Courage, Scene III)

Explanation (English): Mother Courage proudly praises Swiss Cheese’s honesty when he becomes paymaster. Later this honesty turns tragic, as it leads to his capture and death.

“Scarce seventeen was I when

The foe came to our land.” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Yvette, Scene III)

Explanation (English): Yvette sings this song recalling how war entered her life at a very young age. It shows how innocent girls are ruined by war and forced into survival through painful choices.

“The soldier laughs and loads his gun.” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Eilif, Scene II)

Explanation (English): Eilif sings this with pride after showing his bravery. It captures the cruelty of war where killing is celebrated as heroism.

“Didn’t I teach you to take care of yourself, you Finnish devil, you?” – (Mother Courage and Her Children – Mother Courage, Scene II)

Explanation (English): Mother Courage scolds Eilif for being careless in his excitement for war. Her words mix anger and motherly love, showing the conflict between maternity and war.

“So shall we all be torn asunder if we let ourselves get too deep into this war!” –
(Mother Courage and Her Children – Mother Courage, Scene I)

Explanation (English): The Chaplain warns that too much involvement in war will destroy everyone. The line is a reminder of Brecht’s anti-war message.