

## CHAPTER 3

## SYNOPSIS

At first nothing was important neither his life nor the imminent danger of his death, but the bridge. Robert Jordan was a young American teacher who was in Spain fighting with the loyalist guerrillas. His present an most important mission was to blow up a bridge which would be of great strategic important during the Loyalist offensive three days hence. Jordan was behind the Fascist lines, with the orders to make contact with Pablo, the leader of a guerrilla band, and with his wife Pilar, who was the really strong figure among the partisans. While Pablo was weak and a drunken braggart, Pilar was strong and trustworthy. She was a swarthy. raw-boned woman, vulgar and outspoken, but she was so fiercely devoted to the Loyalist side that Jordan knew she would carry out her part of the mission regardless of her personal danger.

The plan was for Jordan to study the bridge from all angles and then make final plans for its destruction at the proper moment. Jordan had blown up many bridges and three trains, but this was the first time that everything must be done on a split-second sched-

ule. Pablo and Pilar were to assist Jordan in any way they would, even to rounding up other bands of guerrillas if Jordan needed them to accomplish his mission.

At the cave where all guerrillas stay, Jordan met Maria, a beautiful young Spanish girl, who had escaped from the Fascists. Maria had been subjected to every possible indignity that a woman could suffer. She had been starved, and tortured and raped, and she felt unclean. At the camp Jordan also met Anselmo, who would follow orders regardless of his personal safety. And Anselmo hated having to kill, but if he were so ordered, faithfully Anselmo would kill.

Robert Jordan loved the brutally shrewd, desperate, loyal guerrillas, for he knew their cruelties against the Fascists stemmed from poverty and ignorance. But the Fascists' cruelty he abhorred, for the Fascists came largely from the healthy, ambitious people of Spain. Maria's story of her suffering at their hands she told to Jordan one night, filled him with such hatred that he could have killed a thousand of them, even though he, like Anselmo, hated to kill.

The first night he spent at the guerrilla camp influenced his cold approach to the mission before him, for he felt deeply in love with Maria. She came to

his sleeping bag that night, and although they talked but little, he knew after she left that he was no longer ready to die. He told to Maria that one day they would be married, but he was afraid of the future. And fear was dangerous for a man on an important mission.

Robert Jordan heard airplanes when he awoke. This was an ominous sound because the guerrilla was helpless against the planes, especially since the Loyalists had so few planes of their own. Only Jordan understood immediately the seriousness of their being so many enemy planes in the vicinity. He sent Anselmo and the gypsy, Rafael, to watch the road and report on the movement of any vehicles they might see. Jordan was sure that the Monarchists knew all about the planned attack.

Jordan, Pilar and Maria were on their way to see El Sordo. They stop rest on their way and Pilar told, in a very graphic and moving narrative, of the day the movement started on her town. It was not merely the story of the atrocities committed by Pablo and his men, but of the courage and cowardice displayed by some of the people in their killing and dying.

The snow begin to fall, as predicted by Pilar. Jordan was greatly irritated, and Pablo, who has been drinking wine all day, laughed at Jordan's reaction to

the snow. He invited Jordan to have some wine, since the blowing of the bridge would have to be called off now, but Jordan replied that he had to and talked to Anselmo whom he had sent to watch the road.

Robert Jordan and Pablo started to argue each other, Pablo insulted Jordan about how the snow would cause the cancellation of the destruction of the bridge, while at the other side, Jordan insisted to blow the bridge. Even both of them nearly came into a fight, but Pablo left to see his horses. At an instant Pablo returned and seemed to be friendly and cooperative. He even emphasized that whether they trusted him or not he was the only one that could take them safely to Gredos after the bridge.

On the second day of his being around the guerrilla band, Jordan was awakened early by the sound of a horse's hooves in the snow. Maria was beside him, she clang to him but his mind was on the very serious problem at hand. The horse was carrying a Fascist cavalry-man, whom Jordan shot. A few hours later, after breakfast, they heard gunfire from El Sordo and his band's place on a small hilltop. No one of them could help El Sordo, although one of them wanted too. When the firing stopped, Jordan and the others knew

that El Sordo and his men were all dead, for Jordan watched from his field glasses, he saw the Fascist cavalry went back down the mountain. Anselmo arrived at the cave and reported to Jordan about the movement on the road, and Jordan decided to send Andres to General Golz with the information that the Fascist knew about the coming attack and were well prepared for it to succeed.

Later that night, Andes had been sent off with his message to Golz, all orders had been given, and all preparations had been made for the blowing up of the bridge the next morning. Jordan hoped that the attack would be called off, but he knew that it probably would not be. His thought turned to his grandfather, who fought in the American Civil War. Jordan's father had killed himself with the gun that his grandfather had carried in the war. After the funeral, Jordan had taken the gun and thrown it into the lake. He hoped that he had inherited his grandfather's courage instead his father's cowardice.

While Jordan and the guerrillas were still on the mountain on the night before the bridge was to be blown, at the same time Andres worked his way past a Fascist guard post through the enemy lines. He was wondering if he could deliver his message to Golz and

still back in time to help blow up the bridge. Andres had made his way rapidly and comparatively through enemy territory, but had been slowed down once he was behind friendly lines for he had to go through a long bureaucracy of officers. Finally he was able to reach Golz's headquarters with the help of one officer named Gomez. Unfortunately Andres was too late, he sent the message to Duval for Golz was not there. Duval tried to reach Golz by phone, because the information brought by Andres would have caused the cancellation of the offensive if it had reached Golz in time. But from the phone they heard the bombers approaching, signalling that the attack had begun, and it made Jordan's mission would be absolutely of no value.

Jordan had made many sketches of the bridge and laid his plans carefully. There his work was almost ruined by Pablo's treachery. On the night before the blowing up the bridge, Pablo deserted after stealing and destroying the explosives and detonators hidden in Jordan's pack. Pablo returned, repentant, on the morning of the mission, but the damage had been done. The loss of detonators and the explosives meant that Jordan and his helper would have to blow the bridge with hand grenades, a much more dangerous method. Pablo had tried

to redeem himself by bringing with him another small guerrilla band and their horses. Although Jordan despised Pablo by that time, he forgave him, as did Pilar.

At the bridge Jordan worked quickly and carefully. Each person had a specific job to do, and each did his work well. First Jordan and Anselmo had to kill the sentries, a job the old Anselmo hated. Pablo and his guerrillas attacked the Fascist lines approaching the bridge, to prevent their crossing before the bridge was demolished. Jordan had been ordered to blow up the bridge at the beginning of a Loyalist bombing attack over the Fascist lines. When he heard the thudding explosions of the bombs, he pulled the pins and the bridge shot high into the air. Jordan got to cover safely, but Anselmo was killed by a steel fragment from the bridge. As Robert Jordan looked at the old man and realized that he might be alive if Pablo had not stolen the detonators, he wanted to kill Pablo. But he knew that his duty was otherwise, and he ran to the designated meeting place of the fugitive guerrillas.

There he found Pablo, Pilar and Maria, and the two remaining gypsy partisans. Pablo, herding the extra horses, said that all other guerrillas had been killed. Jordan knew that Pablo had ruthlessly killed the other

men so that he could have their horse. When he confronted with this knowledge, Pablo admitted the slaughter, but shrugged his great soulders and said that the men had not been of his band.

The problem now was to cross a road which would be swept by Fascist gunfire, the road that led to safety. Jordan knew that the first two people would have the best chance, since probably they could cross before the Fascists were alerted. Because Pablo knew the road to safety, Jordan put him on the first horse. Maria was second, for Jordan was determined that she would be safe before the others. Pilar was to go next, then the two remaining guerrillas, and at last of all Robert Jordan. The first four crossed safely, but Jordan's horse, wounded by Fascist's bullets, fell on Jordan's leg. The others dragged him across the road and out of the line of fire, but he knew that he could not go on; he was too badly injured to ride a horse. Pablo and Pilar understood; but Maria begged to stay with him. Jordan told Pilar to take Maria away when he gave the signal, and then he talked to the girl he loved so much. He told her that she must go on, that as long as she lived, he lived also. But when the time came, she had to be put on her horse and led away.



Robert Jordan, settling down to wait for the approaching Fascist troops, propped himself against a tree, with his submachine gun across his knees. As he waited, he thought over the events that had brought him to that place. He knew that what he had done was right, but that his side might not win the war for many years. But he knew, too, that if the common people, kept trying, kept dying, someday they would win. He hoped that they would be prepared when that day came, that they would no longer want to kill and tortured, but Robert would struggle for peace and for good as they were now struggling for freedom. He felt at the end that his own part in the struggle had not been in vain. As he saw the first Fascist officer approaching, Robert Jordan smiled. He was ready.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**HEROISM OF ROBERT JORDAN**