

Who are the main protagonist and antagonist of the novel?

Protagonist - *Juan Crisostomo Ibarra y Magsalin*, (also known as Crisostomo Ibarra)

A wealthy young mestizo who has just returned to the Philippines after seven years of studying in Europe, Ibarra is sophisticated, highly esteemed, and very idealistic. The priests of San Diego all view him with great wariness on account of his highly liberal education and connections. His father, the equally idealistic Don Rafael, was labeled a subversive and a heretic by the corrupt priesthood and incarcerated, ultimately leading to his death. Ibarra hopes to create a school in San Diego in order to carry out his father's dreams and ideals, but he becomes entangled in conflicts with the church and is forced to flee San Diego as a result of a conspiracy led by the scheming Father Salví. In contrast to his more radical friend Elías, Ibarra generally wants to work within systems to reform the Philippines, rather than overthrow them, but he shifts towards Elías's beliefs as the novel progresses.

Antagonist - *Dámaso Verdolagas* (also known as Padre Dámaso, Padre Damaso, or Father Damaso)

Father Dámaso is an old, power-hungry, and shamelessly corrupt Spanish priest who has lived among the native Filipinos for nearly two decades. In spite of having spent all that time among them, the years have done nothing to endear him or develop any sympathy in him for his "flock." He is deeply racist, as well as petty and vindictive, and he thinks nothing of using his considerable influence to ruin the lives of those who have slighted him, regardless of how small the offense is. He masterminded the death of Don Rafael Ibarra, then brazenly taunted the younger Ibarra. After he publically insults Ibarra's father, Ibarra attacks him and he excommunicates Ibarra from the church. He is also the godfather (and, in fact, the biological father) of María Clara, giving him influence over her relationship with Ibarra.

Who are other prominent characters? Discuss their significance in the overall plot of the story.

María Clara de los Santos (also known as María Clara)

A woman of high social standing, she is thought to be the daughter of Capitan Tiago and goddaughter of Father Dámaso. She is the biological daughter of Father Dámaso, the product of a scandalous relationship between the old priest and Capitan Tiago's wife. María Clara grew up alongside Ibarra and planned to marry him, but Father Dámaso disapproved of the union. After Ibarra is excommunicated from the church, her guardians set her up to be wed to Linares, a wealthy young man of Spanish descent, and she tries to go along with the plan to avoid hurting her father, the weak-willed Capitan Tiago. When Ibarra is put on trial for sedition, she is coerced into surrendering the letters Ibarra has sent her as evidence of his guilt. Ultimately, when she hears of Ibarra's apparent death, she refuses to marry Linares and joins a convent.

Eliás

A mysterious character, Eliás is a man on the run from the law who resents both the Spanish colonial government and the Catholic Church, despite his strong religious convictions. He crosses paths with the more temperate Ibarra when Ibarra bravely saves him from a crocodile. Eliás uncovers a plot against Ibarra's life and works closely with him throughout the second half of the novel. He and Ibarra have several long conversations regarding the ethics of politics and governance, with Eliás taking a more revolutionary stance.

Don Anastacio (also known as Pilósopo Tasyo)

An old man who previously studied philosophy and is believed to be crazy by most of the community. He respects Ibarra and gives him valuable advice, and also helped Ibarra's father before him.

Don Santiago de los Santos (also known as Kapitan Tiago)

Capitan Tiago is a rarity in that he is a wealthy Filipino who is native-born. He keeps close ties with high-ranking members of the Catholic Church, despite having no respect for religion, and shamelessly joins in others' racist insults against his own people. His primary concern is to marry off his daughter, María Clara, to an affluent man from an influential family. This is one of the main reasons that he is quick to toss aside his loyalties to Ibarra when he is labeled a subversive. His predilection for advantageous social pairings makes him quick to assent to Linares as a potential new match for his daughter.

Padre salvi

A younger, more cunning Spanish priest who assumes control over Father Damaso's post as friar curate of San Diego. He is in many regards more dangerous than his precursor as he is a more gifted strategist who uses his religious role for political influence as well as personal vendettas. He frequently fights with the town's ensign for power. His most significant role in the novel comes through his plot to ruin Ibarra, who is engaged to María Clara, who he is in love with.

Sisa

The long-suffering mother of sextons-in-training Crispin and Basilio, she goes mad upon the loss of her sons. Impoverished and married to a violent drunkard, she is allied only with her sons. She wanders the town, clothes tattered and hair disheveled, calling out for her sons. When she actually does meet Basilio, she cannot recognize him.

Basilio

Sisa's 10-year-old son. An acolyte tasked to ring the church bells for the Angelus, he faced the dread of losing his younger brother and the descent of his mother into insanity. At the end of the novel, Elias wished Basilio to bury him by burning in exchange for a chest of gold located on his death ground. He will later play a major role in *El Filibusterismo*.

Crispin

Basilio, a young boy living in San Diego, is one of the sacristans of the church alongside his brother, Basilio. After being accused of stealing from church coffers, Crispin was punished by the head of Sacristan and Padre Salvi.

Dona Victorina

Victorina de los Reyes de Espadaña, a woman who poses herself as a Peninsulares. Wife of Don Tiburcio de Espadana, known in the novel as a trying hard rich woman who abhors anything that is Filipino and clings for Spanish way of life. This kind of character was manifested on some Filipinos of that time.

Pedro

abusive husband of Sisa who loved cockfighting.

Don Rafael Ibarra

Known in the plot as a concerned citizen and property owner who was a father of Crisostomo Ibarra. Padre Damaso who played an antagonist role called him a heretic and filibustero due to his view on relating to liberalism in society.

The School Master

A teacher at San Diego who's view in the novel represented weak and useless education in the Philippines. He attributes the problem from facilities and methods of learning that the friars implemented in the country.