

# ◀◀ KAPITAL: Principal Characters ▶▶

## **“Big Bill” Haywood**

Haywood is a towering man in height and girth whose size would be his most noticeable trait except for his dead milky right eye — something he is very self-conscious of, but rarely covers with an eye patch. Born in the Wild West, his persona has been shaped by the rough-and-tumble world of hard rock mining. He is self-taught and well read. He recites Shakespeare and poetry and openly weeps. He is also a consummate philanderer who drinks too much, brawls, but rarely swears.

As the miniseries unfolds, Haywood becomes a near mythic figure prone to self-destructive tendencies. His marriage disintegrates. His estrangement from his eldest daughter (nearly the same age as Gurley) continuously haunts him.

## **Elizabeth “Gurley” Flynn**

Flynn is a product of immigrant working-class New York City raised by loving socialist parents. Though poor, the Flynn household is rich in intellectual discourse. A child prodigy with a gift for rhetoric, Gurley hones her skills to become one of the most acclaimed orators of the day. She is readily accepted into the male-dominant world of the Wobblies. But she is unlucky in love, enduring a failed teenage marriage and a long-time affair that ends when her lover leaves her for her youngest sister. She is a single-mother continuously torn and confounded by the pull between the allure of her radical life and her motherly instincts.

Flynn matures in the miniseries from an idealistic girl of 14 with a baby-fat physique to an attractive slender young mother of 21 to a battle-scarred woman of 31 (and, as the narrator, a contemplative matronly women of 72). Flynn is, by many measures, a survivor.

## **Joe Hill**

Hill is a man of mystery — even to those you know him. He is, at his heart, a romantic poet finding his muse in his wanderlust. A Swedish immigrant (arriving at the age of 23), he is forever hopping freight trains — stopping when he wants to and finding work when he needs to — and seizing each stop along the way as an opportunity to organize. Completely devoted to the Wobbly cause, Hill is a prolific writer who composes allegorical poems and songs (often put to popular melodies) that he uses to teach, inspire, and incite the working masses.

As the miniseries unfolds, Hill remains a man of mystery, but with increasing glimpses into an inner-psyche drawn to the darkness and divinity of martyrdom.

## **Annie Flynn**

Gurley’s mother, Annie, straddles the established roles of wife and mother and that of a freethinking woman at the turn of the 20th Century. She constantly strives to instill in her children a respect for all people and a clear sense of class-consciousness. She is the glue that holds the Flynn family together.

## **Thom Flynn**

Gurley’s father, Thom, is a self-centered and well-read blue-collar socialist who immerses the Flynn family in Marxist theory. He is often out of work — often the result of his own doing. Thom views himself as Gurley’s mentor as her stature as an orator grows.

### **Carlo Tresca**

Tresca is Gurley's handsome, charismatic, and married, Italian anarchist lover. He is 11 years older than Gurley. Tresca's anarchist views and actions often put him at odds with Haywood, thrusting Gurley between the man she admires and the man she loves. Gurley tolerates Tresca's wandering eyes — trusting him, and attributing his flirtations to his “romantic” Italian nature.

### **Nevada Jane Haywood**

Nevada Jane is Haywood's arthritic invalid wife who turns to opium and cocaine and then to Christian Science to help her ease her tremendous physical suffering. She admires her husband's stature as a leader but is often confused and somewhat embittered by her husband's steadfast commitment to the union cause. She silently accepts Haywood's marital transgressions.

### **Rocco “Rocky” Lorentz**

Rocky is a sympathetic reporter for Joseph Pulitzer's pro-labor *World* who chronicles the Wobblies' struggles and is a friend and sometimes counsel to Haywood. Despite his sympathies, Rocky strives to maintain journalistic integrity in his dispatches and is increasingly intrigued by an emerging concept that reporting should be “objective” rather than partisan.

### **William Wiley**

Wiley is an unscrupulous reporter for the anti-labor *LA Times* with no bit of ethical angst. His reporting style is summed-up by his line: “There's nothing wrong with a little embellishment for the sake of clarity.” Wiley is not above creating “fact,” or for that matter, surreptitiously inciting events in an effort to sensationalize his stories.

