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This post may contain affiliate links. I will make a small commission if you make a purchase through one of these links, at no extra cost to you. See full disclosure and disclaimer policy HERE. Imagine starting a book where the ending is given away right at the beginning. Sounds like a spoiler, right? Not when it's done by Gabriel García Márquez. The
title itself reveals a murder foretold, yet it's the journey to the inevitable that hooks you. Márquez employs a journalistic style, blending facts with fiction, and draws you into a small Latin American town where everyone knows the murder of
Santiago Nasar, a young man of Arabic descent. The story begins the day Santiago is killed, but instead of focusing on who committed the crime, the novella explores the events and societal norms leading up to the unnamed
narrator, who returns to the town years later to investigate the circumstances surrounding Santiago's death. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the murder was an event shaped by collective apathy, fatalism, and rigid social codes. Through a blend of journalistic detail and magical realism, Gabriel García Márquez crafts a compelling tale that
delves deep into themes of honour, fate, and communal responsibility. The novella leaves readers questioning the inevitability of Santiago's fate and the moral complexities of the society that allowed his murder to occur. Márquez populates his novella with a cast of vivid characters, each etched deeply into the narrative. Santiago Nasar, the doomed
protagonist, is a figure shrouded in ambiguity and innocence. The Vicario brothers, bound by honour, and Angela Vicario, the dishonoured bride, paint a complex picture of morality and societal expectations. You find yourself oscillating between sympathy and frustration with each character's actions and motivations. Gabriel García Márquez's
Chronicle of a Death Foretold is rich with themes explored throughout the novella: Honour and Social Expectations: Honour is the central theme driving the plot. In the story, the concept of honour dictates the actions and decisions of the
characters. Angela Vicario's loss of virginity before marriage is seen as a stain on her family's honour, compelling her brothers to commit murder to restore their reputation. The societal pressure to uphold family honour, regardless of personal beliefs or moral considerations, highlights the destructive nature of rigid social expectations. Fate and Free
Will: The novella explores the tension between fate and free will. Despite the forewarning of Santiago Nasar's death, the townspeople fail to prevent it, suggesting a fatalistic worldview where events are predestined. This theme raises questions about human agency and the extent to which individuals can alter their destiny. The inevitability of
Santiago's fate, despite numerous opportunities for intervention, underscores the idea that some outcomes may be unavoidable. Collective responsibility and Guilt: Márquez delves into the theme of collective responsibility and Guilt: Márquez delves into the theme of collective responsibility. The entire town is complicated that some outcomes may be unavoidable.
to the tragedy by either not taking the brothers' threats seriously or assuming someone else will intervene. This collective guilt reflects on the moral responsibility of individuals within a community and the consequences of societal apathy. Gender Roles and Machismo. The novella critiques traditional gender roles and machismo. Women in the story,
like Angela Vicario, are subject to strict social norms regarding purity and honour, while men are often driven by a code of machismo that values reputation and revenge. The double standards in the treatment of men and women highlight the deep-seated patriarchy and the societal expectations that perpetuate inequality and injustice.
RELATED:Review: 100 Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez Truth and Subjectivity: Márquez also explores the subjectivity of truth. The narrative is reconstructed through the memories and testimonies of various characters, each offering a different perspective on the events leading up to Santiago's death. This fragmented storytelling
technique emphasizes the elusive nature of truth and the idea that reality is often shaped by personal biases and perceptions. The townspeople's adherence to traditional codes of honour and societal norms plays a crucial role in the
unfolding tragedy. The ritualistic nature of the Vicario brothers' actions and the community's passive acceptance highlight how deeply ingrained customs can override individual moral judgment and lead to tragic outcomes. Isolation and communication: Finally, the theme of isolation and communication is evident throughout the novella. Despite the
close-knit nature of the town, there is a significant lack of effective communication. Misunderstandings, assumptions, and a reluctance to speak out contribute to the sense of isolation among characters. This breakdown in communication prevents the timely intervention that could have saved Santiago's life. Through these themes, Gabriel García
Márquez paints a poignant picture of a society caught in the throes of its traditions and moral dilemmas, making Chronicle of a Death Foretold a profound and thought-provoking read. Márquez's narrative structure is non-linear and fragmented, mirroring the fragmented recollections of the townspeople. This approach not only builds suspense but
also allows readers to piece together the events from multiple perspectives. It's akin to assembling a jigsaw puzzle where every piece, though disparate, forms a coherent and compelling picture. RELATED:Why You Should Read Gabriel Garcia Marquez: His Best Novels One cannot discuss Márquez without mentioning his lyrical prose. His writing is a
symphony of vivid imagery, poetic descriptions, and sharp dialogues. Every sentence is crafted with such precision that it evokes the sights, sounds, and smells of the town, making you feel like a silent observer in the unfolding drama. Chronicle of a Death Foretold is not just a story about a murder; it's a profound exploration of human nature and
societal constructs. Gabriel García Márquez, with his exceptional storytelling, transforms a simple plot into a rich tapestry of themes and emotions. What is the central theme of "Chronicle of a Death
Foretold"?The central theme revolves around honour and the societal pressures that dictate actions, leading to a tragic and avoidable murder. How does Márquez use magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary, using magical realism in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the mundane with the extraordinary in the novella?Márquez blends the novella and no
Death Foretold" based on a true story? Yes, the novella is inspired by a real-life murder that took place in Sucre, Colombia, in 1951. How does the narrative reflects the collective memory of the townspeople, creating suspense and inviting readers to piece together the story. What
makes Márquez's prose stand out? Márquez's prose is distinguished by its lyrical quality, vivid imagery, and the seamless integration of magical realism, making his storytelling both engaging and evocative. Did you like it? Pin this post for later! Chronicle of a Death Foretold, published in 1981, is based on true events that occurred in Colombia. The
narrative simulates a journalistic chronicle, as the title suggests. However, it doesn't fully adhere to newspaper conventions. While grounded in historical facts, the treatment of these facts stems from the author's imagination and creativity. It's a two-sided text, blending objective narration with narrative fabrication. Journalistic Elements: Accuracy of
time coordinatesReal basis of the event and its protagonistsInterviews with witnessesAuthor's visit to the sceneSummary of investigationsNovelistic Elements:Narrative structuring techniques (e.g., disrupted chronology)Multiperspectivism (different viewpoints)Changes in character names (onomastics)Fabrications and hyperbole (exaggeration)The
novel sparked controversy regarding its genre. Some consider it a true story, others a novel. The debate arises from the minimal narrative substance of the fantastic, leading to a more realistic work, not only due
to the factual basis but also due to the chronicle-like aspect. There's also an affiliation with the detective genre, which the author described as a detective story turned upside down. While much of the most interesting
aspects of the work is its multiperspectivism. The main narrator is omniscient but employs various elements to reconstruct the events: the transcript (legal opinion), autopsy report, incomplete letters from the protagonist's mother, and the testimonies of numerous witnesses. These elements are formalized as follows: the narrator tells the story in an
autobiographical form, acting as a chronicler and witness who speaks in a direct style and incorporates the testimonies of several characters. He also acts as a transmitter of a summary report and speaks in the third person, recounting things he remembers or knows. Generally, the narrator's voice is objective, but in descriptive passages, it's imbued
with subjectivity and imagination, giving rise to polyphony (multiple voices). This occurs because the narrator, in his role as chronicler, has to reconstruct a case based on an incomplete record, having been both a witness and participant in the events. Examples of multiple perspectives include: discrepancies in accounts of the weather on the day of
the murder, differing opinions about Santiago Nasar and Angela Vicario's disgrace, varying perceptions of the perpetrator's identity, and conflicting interpretations of Nasar's attitude before the crime (some describe panic, others arrogance). The dominant perspective is the narrator's, particularly in his recollection of the characters' histories and the
descriptions of their homes and family environments. However, he gathers various perspectives, using direct and indirect styles, from witnesses are the only oral manifestations in a predominantly conversational record. Nevertheless, the narrator is always present, even when relaying the dialogue of other
characters. The continuous interweaving of perspectives gives Chronicle a narrative focus reminiscent of Cubism in painting. 3. Fatality The title encapsulates the core elements of fate: a death foretold and an eyewitness account that merely recounts events without intervention. In a sense, much of García Márquez's fiction (e.g., One Hundred Years of
Solitude) chronicles predetermined events. While suspense exists, there's no surprise. It's no wonder, then, that Chronicle of a Death Foretold begins with a similar sense of inevitability. The novel presents a foray into the work's nature. In the novel, fate
(fatum) dominates the narrative, culminating in a tragedy of inescapable destiny. Unlike classical tragedy, however, human stupidity, not the gods, drives the tragic outcome. The work reveals human fallibility in various ways: Contradiction: Everyone knows the Vicario brothers plan to kill Santiago Nasar, except Nasar himself, who remains unaware
until the end. This contradiction, a stark reality of the plot, highlights human folly and contributes to the tragic atmosphere. A second contradiction arises in the closed, puritanical society where Angela Vicario could lose her virginity to a local boy without anyone knowing. This appears as pure fate. Ambiguities: Many facts remain unclear to the
characters, the reader, and even the narrator. The book revolves around the ambiguity of who deflowered Angela Vicario, leading to the "crime of honor." The reader is left with the impression that Santiago Nasar was killed for something he might not have done. Even when Angela later refutes her accusation, confirming his innocence, no one
believes her. Other ambiguities contribute to the fatalistic atmosphere: conflicting versions of the weather on the day of the murder, the identity of the person who leaves a warning note under Nasar's door, and whether the Vicario brothers were drunk. Accidents or Coincidences: Numerous coincidences, some deadly, occur. Santiago, who rarely used
the front door, enters through it that day—where the Vicario brothers await him. Santiago's mother, who sensed tragedy, fails to interpret her premonition correctly. Cristo Bedoya, the friend who could have warned Santiago, fails to find him. The warning note is discovered too late. The family of Flora Miguel, Santiago's fiancée, unusually wakes up
early. Santiago returns home early, unexpectedly encountering the brothers. Yamil Shaium can't find cartridges to prevent the murder. These incidents are blunders that contribute to the tragedy to unfold. The butchers don't deliver the Vicario brothers' that cartridges to prevent the murder. These incidents are blunders that contribute to the tragedy.
message because they think it's drunken rambling. Clotilde Armenta doesn't warn Santiago because she believes the situation has been resolved. Plácida Linero misinterprets her son's dreams and mistakenly shuts the door when she sees the Vicario brothers, thinking they want to kill him inside the house, preventing his escape. Cristo Bedoya fails to
protect his friend, assuming he's having breakfast at the narrator's family's home. Father Carmen Amador, seeing Santiago healthy earlier, dismisses the threat as a hoax. The characters are helpless slaves to fatum, which manifests through their blunders. These mistakes and coincidences inexorably lead to tragedy. However, fate seems to override
morality. If the crime was inevitable, are those who participated in any way culpable? It seems not. Yet, the beginning of Chapter 5 lists consequences suffered by some characters, suggesting they atone for the crime. 4. HonorThe action of Chronicle of a Death Foretold unfolds amidst coincidences, contradictions, and human error, enabling the
tragedy. Years later, the villagers' memories of the events diverge. Only two points remain clear: Santiago Nasar's murder and the unwavering belief in the validity of their honor code. The townspeople agree on one value: honor, which, as they interpret it, leads to tragedy. This is a central irony of the novel. When Bayardo San Román returns his
bride to her parents for not being a virgin, he sets in motion a chain of events that sentences Santiago Nasar to death. The town's honor code demands that honor be restored through death, a traditional precept found in many literary texts, from ballads to the works of García Lorca, often rooted in folk literature. Santiago Nasar's misfortune lies in
inhabiting a village with distorted, unreasonable values. The author exposes these values through the characters' words and actions. Early in the novel, the narrator confesses to frequenting a prostitute and "devastating the virginity of his generation." This suggests a lack of moral censure regarding prostitution, which might even be viewed favorably
in the village. Another moral inversion is the characters' materialism. Bayardo San Román squanders money on an extravagant wedding and fails to understand why the widower Xius refuses to sell his house, despite a generous offer. The novel highlights the sexual implications of the honor code, particularly in parenting. The narrator mentions that
the Vicario brothers were raised to be men, while the sisters were raised to marry, learning to sew, wash, iron, embroider, and knit. This upbringing prepares them for the "crime of honor." The Vicario brothers kill Santiago Nasar to fulfill their perceived duty, seemingly without malice. They are considered innocent and never repent because they
believe they acted according to the prevailing honor code, accepted even by women. When the brothers tell Prudencia Cotes's mother they don't have time for coffee, she replies that honor code is so ingrained that no one questions why a prostitute's
actions are inconsequential while Angela Vicario's loss of virginity is a tragedy. This code assumes that a woman who loses her virginity outside marriage has been forced against her will. Even the brothers' lawyer accepts the honor code, and most townspeople do as well, partly because it exonerates them for failing to prevent the crime. In conclusion
García Márquez offers an ironic critique of the honor code prevalent in the Vicario brothers' village, which ultimately triggers the novel's tragedy. Earlier this month the news came out that Miguel Reyes Palencia, Gabriel García Márquez's inspiration for the character Bayardo San Román in his novel Chronicle of a Death Foretold, had died in
Barranquilla, Colombia, at 95 years of age. In the story, widely considered a masterpiece, with its fluctuation between journalism and fiction, Bayardo San Román sent back his wife Angela Vicario confessed
that the perpetrator of her dishonor was Santiago Nasar, a lively and cordial 21-year-old of Arab origin who managed a finca inherited from his father. Upon hearing her confession, Angela's twin brothers, Pedro and Pablo Vicario, take it upon themselves to kill Santiago Nasar to avenge the dishonor to which their family had been subjected. Their
macabre plans were known to everyone in the community. In fact they disseminated the news themselves, as at heart they did not want to carry out the murder and hoped someone would stop them. Nonetheless, no one did. Nor did anyone alert Santiago Nasar that he was being pursued by the Vicario brothers who intended to murder him, as
García Márquez himself, ends with the reality of the tragedy presaged from the first pages: the death of Santiago Nasar, for violating the sacred myth of virginity. THE ACTUAL EVENTS In 2007, Miguel Reyes Palencia published the book The Truth: 50 Years Later, in which he recounts the true story of Cayetano Gentile, fictionalized as Santiago
Nasar, accused of dishonoring Margarita Chicha Salas, who became Angela Vicario in Márquez's story. In his book, which proved a relative success, Reyes Palencia describes the episode that took place on January 20, 1951, in his native department of Sucre on Colombia's Caribbean coast. In a blur of disappointment and heartbreak, he nearly
strangles Margarita Chica Salas, whom he had married that night. In different interviews, Miguel even confessed that upon leaving for their honeymoon, his new spouse believed that because he was drunk he would be unable to consummate his marriage and discover the truth. According to him, Margarita's mother had instructed her to lead to him
believe, the following morning, that the deed had been done, with the proof being the bloodstain on the white sheet, which in fact a virgin, the this was not the case. At the moment of penetration, he immediately realized that she had been with a man before him. After this discovery that she was not in fact a virgin,
Margarita exclaimed between sobs, "Miguel, forgive me, I didn't mean to offend you." To which he replied: "Forgive you my ass, you stupid whore." Later, according to his own story, he returned her to his mother-in-law, Victor and Joaquín Chica Salas, who were stunned and stupefied by what was happening. Upon
leaving the house, in his anguish and desperation, he managed to cry, "I'm bringing her back here because she's broken!" And he left. Miguel Reyes Palencia explains how his brothers-in-law, Víctor and Joaquín Chica (Pedro and Pablo Vicario in the novel), armed themselves with butcher knives with the aim of avenging their sister's injury and shame
The victim turned out to be Cayetano Gentile (Santiago Nasar), a 21-year-old student of medicine, son of an Italian immigrant of high standing and appreciation in his community. The Chica brothers took to the streets to bellow that they were going to kill Gentile. The news circulated everywhere. Everyone in town knew what was going to happen. The
only person in the neighborhood who remained unaware was Cayetano Gentile himself. When he realized that he was being pursued by the Chica brothers, he tried to get into his house. But at that moment he was attacked by his assailants, who wordlessly stabbed him and flayed him like an animal. When he found out what had happened, Miguel was
terrified, worried that he might be deemed responsible for the tragedy. He asked for police protection and eventually left town, as did his disgraced wife Margarita, who moved to Sincelejo, the capital of Sucre. TRUTH AND FICTION According to Miguel Reyes Palencia, the future Nobel laureate witnessed these events firsthand. García Márquez, who
arrived to Sucre from Aracataca when he was still a boy, was present on the night of Reyes's wedding. And like everyone else, he heard about what happened afterward. It's even said that he stated that the episode would make a terrific novel, and in fact he wrote it immediately. But it would be another 30 years until, in 1981, he published it. His
mother, Luisa Santiaga Márquez Iguarán, had vehemently begged him to forgo publication while Hermelinda Salas, mother of the disgraced Margarita Chica, remained alive. In 1994, several years before publishing The Truth: 50 Years Later, Miguel Reyes Palencia filed a lawsuit against the author of Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Gabriel García
Márquez, and his brother Eligio García Márquez brothers had cause him moral harm, as the disclosures altered his daily life, to the point
of making him lose his own identity. Miguel Reyes Palencia was no longer called by his real name by nearly anyone. It had been replaced by the fictional character created from his own mishap: Bayardo San Román. What Reyes wanted as moral reparation for damages to his image and reputation was no small thing: fully 50 percent of the literary and
film profits accrued to Gabriel García Márquez and his brother Eligio from the publication of their two works related to Reyes's own lived experience rejecting Reyes Palencia's appeal, on grounds that copyright does not apply to lived
experiences, but to creations of the spirit in any field; lack of copyright ownership on the part of the plaintiff; true facts of public knowledge; and lack of a causal connection between the alleged damages caused and the literary works. Miguel Reyes Palencia was devastated by the death of Cayetano Gentile, as they had been good friends. Of Gabrie
García Márquez he says that he was like a member of the bride's family. García Márquez lived in that house for six or so months while his father was having money problems. In the book, Angela Vicario wrote letters to Bayardo San Román for years without receiving a response. One day, however, he appeared unexpectedly. He was carrying two
suitcases. One held his clothes, the other the 2,000 letters that he'd never opened. He came to stay. And he was finally able to concretize what could not be done on that first fateful night. In real life, Miguel Reyes Palencia took up with Margarita Chica Salas again. They remained unmarried but lived as man and wife until the affection between them
died. With her hair gone snowy and skin furrowed by the years, having never revealed the true story of her life, Margarita said goodbye to this world at 78 years of age. Reliable evidence was never found that it had actually been Cayetano Gentile who had caused her misfortune. Nor that Santiago Nasar had caused Angela Vicario's, in the world of
fiction. The publication of Chronicle of a Death Foretold broke Gabriel Garcia Marquez's (1927-2014) self-imposed "publication strike." (He had pledged to not publish anything for as long as Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet remained in power.)
publication of Chronicle of a Death Foretold, which was written, according to some critics, at the urging of other Chilean authors. While it is common for countries such as Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia to have their own publication run of 5,000 to 30,000 being the exception, Chronicle of a Death Foretold was, without doubt, and
exception beyond that. Garcia Marquez's publishing house, located in Spain, Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, published 1 million copies of the book. Immediately after, as might be expected, Garcia Marquez gave private interviews and newspaper reviews appeared the world over. One year after the publication of Chronicle of a Death Foretold, in
1982, newspapers around the world announced that Garcia Marquez was that year's winner of the Nobel Prize in literature. The glory days that took
place in Sucre, Colombia, in 1951. In an interview for the Argentine newspaper La Nacion (The Nation), Garcia Marquez declared that Cayetano Gentile Chimento—Santiago Nasar in the novel—had been one of his childhood friends. On January 22, 1951, two brothers of the Chica family (Vicario in the novel) killed Cayetano because their sister was
taken back to her family by her husband, Miguel Reyes Palencia, on their wedding night when he discovered that she was not a virgin. Similarly to the way the murder takes place in the parallels, Chronicle of a Death Foretold, uses an anonymous
town and fictional names for the characters. In this sense, the narrative is not a chronicle would when recounting past events. Nevertheless, Garcia Marquez insists that the circumstances and the events of Chronicle of a Death Foretold are
absolutely truthful. The incident was highly publicized in Colombia and elsewhere. Garcia Marquez's reconstruction of the story is now a classic in Latin American literature. Six years after its publication in Spanish, in 1987, Italian movie director Francesco Rossi released it as a film. To date, the public can also enjoy Chronicle of a Death Foretold on the story is now a classic in Latin American literature.
the stage, where it continues to be performed for Spanish-speaking audiences. The first chapter opens with a sentence announcing that on that day, the main character, Santiago Nasar, is going to be killed. While this event is the focus of the narrative, there is at least one subplot: the wedding of Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roma'n. There is also
a secondary event that distracts the characters in the novel while the killers go about their business: the visit of a bishop. At the last minute, the bishop decides not to get off the boat in which he is traveling. The omniscient narrator, functioning like a murder detective, reconstructs the crime bit by bit. In the process, he describes a classic coastal
town where religion and law as institutions are inefficient in protecting the townsfolk. Santiago Nasar and his friends are all members of the ruling class. The narrator's family, for instance, is best friends with the Nasar family, for instance, is best friends with the Nasar family and so has reasonable expectations that the bishop will pay them a personal visit during his stay in town (199). The town's family, for instance, is best friends are all members of the ruling class.
economic makeup presents a background of contrasting wealth and poverty. Santiago Nasar, an only child, lives in one of the best houses in town, has two mulattas as maids, and is the owner of a farm, named the Divine Face. His death gives the novel its title. With few exceptions, nearly everybody in the town, the mayor and the priest included,
know that the identical twins, Pedro and Pablo Vicario, are looking for Santiago Nasar in order to kill him. What makes the plot intriguing are the pieces of information that are left for the reader to put together. Santiago Nasar, for example, is not aware that he is the target of the Vicario brothers until right before the time he is at-tacked. However
the threads that weave together the murder are all present in the first chapter. As is the case with Leaf Storm and Love in the plot of Chronicle of a Death Foretold unfolds in an inverted fashion. Instead of moving forward, the plot of Chronicle of a Death Foretold unfolds in an inverted fashion. Instead of moving forward, the plot of Chronicle of a Death Foretold unfolds in an inverted fashion. Instead of moving forward, the plot of Chronicle of a Death Foretold unfolds in an inverted fashion. Instead of moving forward, the plot of Chronicle of a Death Foretold unfolds in an inverted fashion.
possible reasons, circumstances, and motivations for the crime that takes place. By the end of the first chapter, readers have been told who killed Santiago Nasar, how he was killed, and why. These facts, however, are the guideposts that allow Garcia Marquez an opportunity to take readers through an intricate and detailed labyrinth of surprises. The
second and subsequent chapters flesh out the plot, so to speak. Bayardo San Roma'n is the man who marries Angela Vicario, only to return her to her parents five hours after the wedding ceremony. Angela is amply aware. She knows that there is no love
between her and Bayardo, and she wants to stop the marriage. The Vicarios, however, are impressed by his wealth and oppose her decision. The comedy of errors, which turns into a tragedy, builds up bit by bit and minute by minute. Angela does not love Bayardo and neither does he love her. Rather, he is enamored with the concept of being married
to a beautiful woman. The wedding celebration is an excuse for Bayardo San Roma'n to show off his wealth and power. The narrator comments that Bayardo could marry any woman he chose. He is the same Buendia who
features prominently in One Hundred Years of Solitude.) If lack of love is not a good enough reason to stop Bayardo San Roma'n and Angela Vicario from getting married, Angela for her indiscretion, but her mother does, for hours.
Questioned and pressured to name the perpetrator, Angela names Santiago Nasar. Pedro and Pablo, her twin brothers, know what to do next. In fact, the whole community knows that to restore the Vicarios' honor, which resides in Angela's virginity, Santiago must be killed: one only washes one's honor clean with blood. Pig butchers by trade, the
twins set out to kill Santiago and carve him up like a pig (186). However, readers do not witness this event until the last chapter. Before God and before men" (220). After three years in jail awaiting trial, the twins are acquitted by the court
because their action is considered a legitimate defense of their family's honor. Before the murder, the twins tell everybody of their intent but people do not believe them. When the town's mayor is told, he treats them like children, confiscates the butcher knives, and sends them home to sleep. They come back with a second set of knives but look for
Santiago in places where they know he will not be. They are hoping not to find him; they plan to kill him yet hope someone will stop them. However, no one takes responsibility to see that the killing does not occur. In fact, there are those, like Santiago's maid, Victoria Guzman, who want Santiago dead. She does not tell Santiago, although she is aware
of it, that the Vicario brothers are looking for him to kill him. The reader comes to the end of the third chapter and reads, "they've killed Santiago Nasar!" (237). However, the plot has not yet entirely un-folded. The reader is still not a firsthand witness; he or she continues to be led, and the narrator still holds the reader in suspense. Almost
tormentingly, the narrative voice continues leisurely to piece the story together. Indeed, no stone is left unturned. The narrator recounts the story of the life of both Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roma'n. Foreshadowing Love in the Time of Cholera, Angela Vicario at the story together. Indeed, no stone is left unturned. The narrator recounts the story of the life of both Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roma'n. Foreshadowing Love in the Time of Cholera, Angela Vicario at the Story of the life of both Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roma'n.
After she has written Bayardo San Roma'n nearly 2,000 letters, he shows up with two suitcases. In one of them he has all the letters Angela has written, all unopened. In the other is clothing in order to stay. Bayardo San Roman is no longer trim, handsome, and elegant. He needs glasses to read, he is fat, and he is losing his hair. "She knew he was
seeing her just as diminished as she saw him" (255). Have they reconciled their under- standing about love? It seems like another error in a comedy that is meant to be a tragedy. Angela does not love Bayardo; he takes her back for not being a virgin; her brothers kill Santiago Nasar to regain her honor and that of her family; she realizes, seventeen
years later, that she really loves him. The plot, unfortunately, affords no time or interest for this second chance. Finally, in the last chapter, the reader witnesses the brutal and horrid crime. Now there is no escape: neither Santiago Nasar nor the reader witnesses the brutal and horrid crime. Now there is no escape: neither Santiago Nasar nor the reader witnesses the brutal and horrid crime. Now there is no escape: neither Santiago Nasar nor the reader witnesses the brutal and horrid crime.
curtain falls, the narrator brings to the reader's attention the fact that in this tropical tragedy there is also a comedy of errors. Cristo Bedoya, Santiago's friend, can stop the crime but does not know how to use—he cannot even tell if it is loaded. Those who want to come forward to prevent the killing of Santiago are
uncertain and are put off by his apparent carefree attitude. Once Santiago is told of the Vicarios' plan to kill him, he decides to use the front door, which faces the plaza. His mother, thinking that he is inside the house, locks the front door
seconds before Santiago gets to it. The attack begins, and nobody does anything to stop it. Indeed, Santiago's screams go unheard as they are confused with the sounds of the bishop's festival. GENRE AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE Chronicle of a Death Foretold reads like a fictional work. The reader of Garcia Marquez, however, should be interested
in knowing that the account the novel relates is based on a factual event. However, as Latin American literary critic Gonzalo Diaz-Migoyo put it, "it is an account the imagination" (Diaz-Migoyo 75). The faithful facts to which Diaz-Migoyo refers took
place in Sucre, Colombia in 1951, thirty years before Chronicle of a Death Foretold was published. On January 22, 1951, Miguel Reyes Palencia returned his wife, Margarita's brother, Victor Chica Salas, killed Cayetano
Gentile Chimento for stealing his sister's honor without an intention to marry her. Chronicle of a Death Foretold is a combination of journalism, realism, and detective story, and therefore a hybrid genre. Its journalism of the time
of each event and the matter-of-fact usage of language that marks the plot and presents the events of an atrocious and horrid crime. Journalism, however, at- tempts to report on the basis of fidelity to the facts. As such, Chronicle of a Death Foretold is a deceiving chronicle, for the facts are altered by the fictitious additions made by Garcia Marquez.
In real life, the returned bride continued to live alone after her return, while the embarrassed husband left the country, got married in Costa Rica, and went on to have twelve children with his new wife. In the novel, Angela stays with her mother and Bayardo goes off and is not heard of until seventeen years after the date of the wedding, when he and
Angela reunite. The story is told in a journalistic style of reporting. Garcia Marquez's own mother, and Luis Enrique, the narrator's younger brother, is also the name of Garcia Marquez's own younger
brother. Luisa Santiaga has a daughter who in the novel is a nun; Garcia Marquez, in real life, has a sister who used to be a nun. As if that were not enough, the narrator recounts that on the night of Angela and Bayardo's wedding, he proposed marriage to Mercedes Barcha, only to marry her fourteen years later because at the time she was just
finishing primary school. Garcia Marquez married a woman of the same name, Mercedes Barcha, to whom he proposed on the exact day of the wedding in 1951 and whom he wed fourteen years later because she, too, was just finishing primary school. Most of the story has a factual/journalistic base with a few exceptions, such as the fact that Garcia
Marquez was not in town at the time of the crime, nor were the lovers ever reunited. Both instances are fictitious. The realism of Chronicle of a Death Foretold is seen in its intent to faithfully portray life in a coastal town. The novel accurately describes the routine of everyday life: the ways in which the town's people prepare for the visit of the bishop
and celebrate at Angela's wed-ding; the habit of the single young men to spend time at the bordello; and even the fact that, as a result, one of the Vicario twins is suffering from a venereal disease. Chronicle of a Death Foretold, as is typical in realistic fiction, is interested in ordinary people, whom it faithfully depicts at both the social and the
psychological levels. The reader of Chronicle of a Death Foretold is exposed to the inner workings of the minds of the min
the victim, in the same manner that a detective might approach the case. However, Chronicle of a Death Foretold is intentionally deceiving—moreover, it can be read as if inverted or backward. From the start the reader knows the culprits is actually
in the wrong. The absurdity of the crime, however, calls for a reader who might question who really killed Santiago Nasar. The physical evidence indicates that the killers are the Vicario brothers, but is there any responsibility on the part of the townsfolk or the legal or religious authorities? This is a question for the reader to decide. In that sense,
then, the novel can indeed be read as a detective story. The narrative structure of Chronicle of a Death Foretold will seem familiar to the Garcia Marquez reader. It starts in medias res (in the middle of things). At the start of the novel, an omniscient narrator (a character within the novel who knows everything there is to know) is describing the last
hours in the life of Santiago Nasar. The time line of the events is very precise and linear, faithfully following the clock. However, the reading is not so linear. Even the events of the main plot do not unfold in a straightforward manner, but rather move back and forth in time. Besides dealing with the genesis of the main plot, Chronicle of a Death
Foretold also has a subplot describing the short-lived idyll of Bayardo San Roman and Angela Vicario. This subplot, contained in Chapters 2 and 4, plus the intrusions by the omniscient narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters, makes the narrator discussing the origin of the characters and the origin of the characters are the narrator discussing the origin of the characters are the narrator discussing the origin of the characters are the narrator discussing the origin of the characters are the narrator discussing the origin of the origin of the characters are the narrator discussing the origin of t
killing of Santiago Nasar. The narrative structure, like the genre, is rather deceiving. The story of Santiago Nasar's murder is described with rigid adherence to the exact hour and minute of each event because of the insistence by the narrator to be exact. However, the time line presented to the reader is arbitrarily jumbled and replayed haphazardly.
moving forward and backward in time with equal ease. While Chapter 1 stars at 5:30 and has Santiago killed by 7:05, an hour and thirty-five minutes later, the narrator eventually takes the reader all the way back to the end of the nineteenth century and its civil wars. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT As is the case with most of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's
fictional work, the number of characters in this novel is large. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, this is due to the fact that the entire coastal town where the murder takes place is an active participant. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, as in Leaf Storm and No One Writes to the Colonel, the community is charged with a moral responsibility for its
indirect participation. As a result, the community can be viewed as a character. There is an abundance of names that come in and out of the murder—are relatively few: Santiago Nasar, Bayardo San Roma'n, Angela Vicario, and the
Vicario twins, Pedro and Pablo. The secondary characters are much more numerous, however. As is typical of Garcia Marquez's writing, female characters densely populate this novel. There are women who do everything they can to stop the murder, particularly Clotilde Armenta and Luisa Santiaga; and there are also women who, each in some
fashion, contribute to Santiago's death, including Flora Miguel, Placida Linero, Victoria Guzman, and Divina Flor. The secondary male characters are also numerous. Cristo Bedoya is instrumental in the plot, as are Father Carmen Amador, the mayor, Lazaro Aponte, and General Petronio San Roman. The description of the main character, Santiago
Nasar, is both detailed and exquisite. Santiago is handsome, young, and well-mannered and has an enviable fortune at the tender age of twenty-one. He is a lover of horses, a fan of falconry, and, from his father, he is supposed to have learned both courage and prudence. Santiago is portrayed as a happy young man. He is described as pale, curly-
haired, and, like his father, with Arabian eyes and long, dark eyelashes. He is the only child of a marriage of convenience. From his father he has inherited a cattle ranch, the "Divine Face." He is known as a peaceful man, although he is also a lover of guns. However, he is never armed unless he is dressed to tend his ranch. Being a first-generation
Colombian of Arabic descent, the reader might expect that Santiago practices the Islamic religion, but in- stead he is deeply Catholic. On the day he is killed, he was hoping to kiss the bishop's ring. His social life, although he is a rich and rather aristocratic young man, is as simple as that of the rest of the townsfolk. A lover of parties, Santiago Nasar
has an intimate group of friends. His friends include the narrator, the narrator's brother, Luis Enrique, and Cristo Bedoya. The four friends grew up together, went to school together, went to school together, and vacationed together, and Vacationed together, and Vacationed together, and Cristo Bedoya. The four friends grew up together, went to school together, and vacationed together, and Cristo Bedoya.
Cervantes, a local prostitute. The love affair lasted fourteen months. It was so strong that his own father stepped in to end it, entering the brothel and dragging Santiago out after delivering a beating with his belt. To complete the punishment, the father isolated his son at the ranch. At the time of Santiago's death, he was formally engaged to Flora
Miguel, a loveless arrangement favored by both families. The marriage was to be held within the year. Fate plays an important role in the character development of Santiago. He is accused by Angela Vicario of being responsible for the loss of her virginity. This is the reason why he is killed at the hands of Angela's brothers. Everyone in town,
including his best friends and his maids, knows that he has been sentenced to die—except Santiago is, in fact, responsible, as Angela claimed. Among the many facts supporting Santiago's innocence are the facts
that he and Angela were never seen together in public, he considered her a "fool," (251) and they belong to separate social class determined identity. Supporting a case for Santiago's fame as a "spar- row hawk," (251) who liked young girls, especially those beneath his social class (like his father before
him). The narrative voice, however, suggests that Angela Vicario was probably protecting someone she really loved and picked Santiago. However, one way or another, Santiago dies. As the narrative voice explains, never was a death more
foretold. Despite all the efforts, no one is able to stop it, not even Father Carmen Amador or the mayor, Colonel Lazaro Aponte. The husband of the bride, Bayardo San Roman, is a thirty-year-old man whose personality evokes opposing remarks. "He looked like a fairy," but "I could have buttered him and eaten him alive," (202) says one of the female
characters. He is known for his honesty; good heart; religious inclinations; knowledge of Morse code, trains, and medicine; ability as a swimmer; and love of a good party. On top of all this, he is immensely rich: the townspeople gossip that "he's swimming in gold" (203). However, he is not a man whom someone gets to know when they first meet him
and his golden eyes, says the narrator's mother, "re- minded me of the devil" (204). He is heartless when he literally brow- beats Xius into selling him his house in order to please Angela's caprice and to demonstrate his own power. Although Bayardo San Roma'n is a member of a distinguished family, he shows up in town alone. Nobody knows where
he came from or what he stands for. Before he even meets Angela Vicario, and after seeing her only once, he decides that he is going to marry her, and six months later, he does. He never tries to court her, but instead seduces her family, showering them with presents and his charming personality. Angela and Bayardo's wedding is both extravagant
and costly, perhaps to hide the fact that their marriage is a loveless one. In fact, their fated marriage only lasts five hours. Bayardo San Ro- ma'n takes his wife back to her parents when he discovers that Angela is not a virgin. After the tremendously emotional embarrassment of being held up to ridicule, Bayardo locks himself in his new home and is
found intoxicated a week later. Finally his family comes to his rescue and takes him away. Bayardo continues to surprise the reader with his strange personality up to the end of the novel. Seventeen years after that fateful Monday when he returned his wife to her mother, he seeks out Angela. He is now fat, balding, old, wearing glasses and, as if he
has lost all his pride, returns to the woman who had caused him such embarrassment. Angela Vicario's role is twofold. She is a member of a poor and simple family. Her father, Poncio Vicario, has gone blind from
the eyestrain of his work as a goldsmith. He is a man without a will of his own, who is dominated by his wife and Angela's mother, Purisima del Carmen Vicario, was a schoolteacher until she married, and twin brothers, Pedro and Pablo, who are pig
butchers by trade. Angela is a beautiful twenty-year-old who, like her father, lacks character and determination and does not enjoy the moral support of her mother's demanding character, a fear that is emphasized on the night when her parents, her husband's sisters, and her twin brothers decide that she
must marry a man she has hardly seen and does not love. Although she makes explicit her lack of love for her husband-to-be, her mother flatly responds, "Love can be learned too" (209). Angela tries to commit suicide but does not have the strength to do so, so she realizes that she has no other alternative but to marry Bayardo San Roma'n. She
arrives at this decision with the hope that she will manage to fool Bayardo into believing that she is a virgin on the night of their wedding. On the day of the wedding, she continues the sacred symbols of purity. In truth, however, she is horrified in
the knowledge that she has to face her husband that night. Her husband does not have to think twice about what to do once he becomes aware that his wife is not a virgin. He decides to denounce his marriage and return Angela to her parents. Although humiliated and full of shame, her feeling of horror changes into one of liberation when Bayardo
takes her back to her parents. Angela not only knows that he does not love her, she also considers herself inferior to him and says that he is too much of a man for her. After the death of Santiago, Angela and her family are asked by the town's mayor to leave the town forever. Angela then undergoes a positive change. She spends her time
embroidering and regains her zest for life. Inexplicitly, she cries after Bayardo and nearly goes insane over him, so much so that she starts to write frequent, desperate love letters but gets not a single response. She takes consolation in the fact that her
letters are not returned to her. This is a clear fore- telling of Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, it is the woman who writes in order to achieve a goal, whereas in Love in the Time of Cholera, except that the roles are reversed.
in both, ironically, the two letter writers are first rejected yet, over time and with persistence, gain the loved one. Pedro and Pablo, the twin brothers of Angela, are twenty-four years old and known in town by their good looks. They have the innocent demeanor of a child, and their reputation is that of good young men. Their fate, however, is to kill
Santiago to restore Angela's honor and reputation. Pedro is six minutes older than his brother. He seems to be more imaginative, decisive, sentimental, and authoritarian. When they both show up to enlist in the military, Pedro's
character develops as one willing to give orders and to decide for his own brother. It is Pedro who decides that the twins do not really want to kill Santiago Nasar. Throughout the novel the reader becomes aware that the twins do not really want to kill Santiago Nasar.
to get someone to stop them, yet no one did so. From the very start of the ordeal, they publicly announce that they are going to kill Santiago Nasar. They tell the priest, the police, and every passerby. When the news reaches the mayor, he half-heartedly tries to stop them, yet no one did so. From the very start of the ordeal, they publicly announce that they are going to kill Santiago Nasar. They tell the priest, the police, and every passerby.
like innocence, they bless themselves when they see the town's priest and bless themselves again right before killing Santiago. On the day when they are taken into custody and put in jail, they suffer mental and emotional torment. Pedro affirms that he can smell Santiago on him regard- less of how much he washes himself. He adds that he cannot
sleep, an insomnia that continues for eleven consecutive months. Pablo suffers from diarrhea, which leads Pedro to think that his brother had been poisoned. Although the brothers suffer the psychological fallout of having killed a man, they do not view themselves as sinners and refuse to confess themselves to a priest when they have the opportunity
to do so. When they leave jail, they decide to do so in broad daylight so that everyone can see their faces and judge their innocence and lack of shame. The mission of the Vicario brothers in the novel is odious. The twins especially fear that the Arab community in town will react against them; but the Arabs in town, surprisingly, hold no grudge against
the killers. Clotilde Armenta is a strong woman, valiant and decisive, who tries wholeheartedly to stop the killing of Santiago. She and her husband, Rogelio de la Flor, own a shop where they sell milk in the evenings. Therefore, their shop is almost always open. Their business is located
in the plaza, which Santiago's house faces. It is in their shop that the Vicario twins wait for Santiago in order to kill him. Clotilde sells the twins a bottle of liquor for no other reason than, hopefully, to get them too drunk to act. At first she thinks that the brothers do not have the heart to kill any man. However, as they continue to drink, she starts to
realize that they are indeed serious. She also senses that the twins are looking for some- one to stop them. She insists that the twins but simply takes the first set of knives away from them. Worried about the consequences that this might
provoke, Clotilde sends people out to warn Santiago. She also sends a young girl to tell Father Amador. In addition, she sends a warning note to Santiago's maid, Victoria Guzman. However, all her efforts are futile. Luisa Santiago is the mother of several characters in the novel. Her children include the narrator and Luis Enrique, both intimate friends
of Santiago. Her youngest son is Jaime. She has a daughter who is a nun and another daughter, Margot, who is also a good friend of Santiago and the person for whom he was named. Luisa Santiaga is the one who takes to the streets in an attempt to warn Placida Linero,
Santiago's mother, that the Vicario brothers are looking for her son to kill him. She rushed to the Nasars' house to prevent the crime, but her efforts are also in vain—she does not arrive in time. Among the female characters close to Santiago Nasar who actually may have contributed to his death in various ways, the four most salient are Flora Miguel,
Placida Linero, Victoria Guzman, and Divina Flor. Flora Miguel is a woman who lacks grace and judgment. She is the conventional fiancée of Santiago's betrothed since her teenage years, she demonstrates her immaturity at several opportune moments. Early on the day
when Santiago dies, somebody tells Flora that the Vicario brothers are looking for her fiance to kill him, She feels humiliated and hurt because of the rumor concerning why the Vicario brothers want to kill him and decides to end the relationship with Santiago instead of asking him for an explanation. When Santiago arrives at her home, Flora Miguel
is so upset that she throws Santiago's "loveless" letters at him and bitterly screams, "I hope they kill you!" (270). Santiago stands there speechless, not knowing what to do. She runs to her room and locks the door. Placida Linero is Santiago's mother. She is one of the last people in town to hear about the Vicario brothers' intent. She is described as a
beautiful woman who has lived in solitude since her husband, Ibrahim Nasar, died. As a solitary woman, she spends time interpret her son's dream as an omen of his death. Ironically, it is she who, in trying to stop the crime, closes the front door of her home to her son as he approaches to escape the Vicario
brothers. Victoria Guzman deliberately abets the crime although she could have helped to stop it. Her decision to remain silent and thus allow the killing to proceed dates back to her youth, when Ibrahim Nasar, Santiago's father, seduced her and made love to her in secret for several years in the stables of his cattle ranch. As Victoria grew older and
Ibrahim fell out of love with her, he brought her into his house as a maid. Victoria Guzman withholds the warning message that Clotilde
Armenta sent with a beggar earlier on, which would have been early enough to prevent the same from happening to her daughter. The name Victoria is reminiscent of victory, as if to emphasize Victoria's triumph over
an age-old tradition in which the landlord abuses the rights of women, whether maid, slave or otherwise. Among the male secondary characters, there are two worthy of special mention: Cristo Bedoya and General Petronio San Roma´n. Cristo Bedoya is one of Santiago´s intimate friends. He is a young medical student who accompanies Santiago
during the last minutes of his life. Of the circle of friends who grew up together in school, it is he who suffers the frustration and anguish of knowing Santiago's fate without being able to change it. He partakes, with Santiago and their other friends, in the celebration of Angela and Bayardo's wedding. He is so close to Santiago that he loves him like a
brother. He and Santiago walk along the dock together while waiting for the bishop to arrive. The townsfolk look at them in bewilderment, knowing what is about to happen but not realizing that Santiago and Cristo are unaware. After Cristo and Santiago separate, an Arab friend of Santiago's father tells Cristo that the Vicario brothers are going to
kill his son. Cristo races around, trying to find Santiago and warn him. However, his efforts, too, are fruitless, and he witnesses Santiago's fatal stabbing just a few steps away. General Petronio San Roma'n is Bayardo's father. He is a hero of the civil wars of the nineteenth century and a member of the Conservative Party. His role in the novel,
although small, is sufficient to demonstrate the glory and power that he gratuitously parades in public. The first time he arrives in town, he does so in a Ford Model T convertible with official license plates, in the company of his wife, Alberta Simonds, a tall, large mulatta from Curacao, and his two daughters. For Bayardo's wedding, he arrives with his
family and his illustrious friends on the official vessel of the National Congress, loaded with wedding presents. At first glance, everybody in town knows that his son can marry any woman he wants. Petronio San Roma'n, as a character, represents a recurring theme in Garcia Marguez's writings, that of the two opposing Colombian parties, the
Conservatives and the Liberals. THEMATIC ISSUES The reader may focus on the choice of focus, can recognize several different theme of machismo, a theme that, in turn, can be related to the theme of machismo in Chronicle of a Death Foretold can be
observed as a form of emphasis on male pride and on the characters' sexual behavior. Upon his arrival to town, Bayardo San Roma'n attracts the attention of the female characters by his looks, however, make some female characters say that he looks like a marica ("a fairy"). This reaction by the female characters
denotes an expected code of male behavior. This societal code is perhaps the justification for the bordello in town. It is male behavior to frequent this place, where women can be used as objects of desire. The males are proud to go there and feel no shame to show the results, not even when sexually transmitted diseases appear, as is the case with
Pedro Vicario. Bayardo San Roma'n shows his male pride when he returns Angela Vicario brothers flaunt their machismo in the abusive way they drink and also by defending an age-old tradition of placing the family's honor in the women's virginity. The sexual behavior of the male characters shows an attitude passed on through the
generations. Santiago Nasar, like his father before him, is a "sparrow hawk" (251). Both father and son have made a sport of having their young female servants for their own sexually. Santiago's father, Ibrahim Nasar, teaches him the art of domesticating
high-flying birds of prey. In addition, fidelity, to Santiago and his father, is not a part of the sexual or moral code, Males in this community can express their sexuality in any way they want because theirs is a patriarchal society (ruled by men according to men's needs). It may seem contradictory for the reader to realize that Bayardo San Roma'n
returns his wife because she is not a virgin when the same society glorifies men who go after women only to take away their virginity. The female characters succumb to this patriarchal society where women are educated to be stoic wives, passive beings capable of giving and expected to ask for nothing in return. The incident motivating the killing of
Santiago Nasar in Chronicle of a Death Foretold is the loss of honor by Angela Vicario. The blood of virginity, when lost outside the sanctity of marriage, can only be washed off with the blood of the perpetrator, cries an age-old Spanish folk tradition. In the town where the novel takes place, this tradition is morally acceptable. Therefore, the Vicario
twins must kill Santiago Nasar to re- store the family's honor. The townsfolk go along with this and see the twins' deed as morally acceptable; hence, they do nothing to stop the killing. There is only a small minority within the novel that objects to the killing. There is only a small minority within the novel that objects to the killing. There is only a small minority within the novel that objects to the killing.
Within the moral parameters of Colombian rural society of the 1950s and 1960s, the loss of a woman's virginity without the balm of marriage destroyed not only the honor of the woman, but also that of the family. Such an act could only be absolved with the death of the perpetrator. This is why, without a legal trial or a simple conversation to clarify
the innocence or the guilt of Santiago Nasar, the Vicario twins are convinced of their moral duty. Since Angela's father is blind, and thus unable to carry out this duty, the burden falls to the brothers. Ironically, the twins, who are now in charge of guarding the moral values of the family, were seen the night before drinking and carousing at a house of
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ill repute, in the company of Santiago Nasar, their ultimate victim. Moreover, one of the twins, Pedro Vicario, is suffering from a venereal disease that the town's doctor cannot cure. Pedro's blennorrhagia (gonorrhea) demonstrates a moral life that is, indeed, hardly praiseworthy. On the surface, the Vicario family professes a strong moral value sys-

tem. However, regarding Angela, they are a family that pays no attention to such essential values as love, respect for others, and free will. They know, because Angela tells them, that she does not love Bayardo San Roma'n and does not want to marry him. However, they ignore her and decide to marry her even without her consent. Their morality takes a back seat when it comes to this marriage of convenience because Bayardo San Roma'n, the offended husband who returns his wife, is also ambiguous, if not ironic. He is the one who decides to marry Angela at first sight, before even being introduced to her. He is the one who, instead of courting her, pays more attention to seducing her family with his money and his charm. It is he who marries Angela, as if to purchase his happiness with his immeasurable fortune. It is Bayardo who, showing no scruples, forces Xius, a widower who married and lived in love in his house for many years, to sell that house to him because he wants it. Bayardo, as a character, shows no moral value system greater than his monetary system. The moral and legal institutions of Church and state pay little attention to the Vicarios' thirst for revenge. Father Carmen Amador, who presumably is in charge of the town's religious values, refuses to get involved although he is clearly capable of putting a stop to the planned murder. He justifies his action by saying that he was concentrating his attention on the imminent arrival of his bishop. Ironically, the bishop arrives but does not disembark to greet the people who so anxiously await his visit. The civil authorities could stop the killing, but also choose to ignore it. The mayor of the town, Lazaro Aponte, could incarcerate the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to kill Santiago, but he chooses not to. It is his nonchalant way of enforcing the law that permits the twins for carrying the knives and threatening to knive the contract the twins for carrying the knives and threatening the knive insists that everybody in town knows the intention of the twins, but few make an honest attempt to stop it. There seems to be a kind of secret complicity among the townsfolk. Their silence can be viewed as a form of acceptance, a belief that the crime against Angela had to be avenged. Santiago, according to the towns folk. done something wrong. The town's moral value of virginity is superior to a man's death. Only the blood of the perpetrator can wash off the blood of stolen virginity. The Vicario brothers believe that, but the townsfolk seem to enforce it. Early in the morning of the day of the killing, a crowd of women, men, children, and young people congregates on the dock to receive the visiting bishop. This type of behavior is consistent with what would be expected of a Christian town. Therefore, one would also expect to find a solid moral value system. However, when it comes time to stop the killing, the townspeople assume a passive role and act as mere observers of the spectacle. Their inaction seems to imply that redeeming a family's lost honor by the killing of the perpetrator is consistent with their collective sense of moral values. All the town's individuals, from the civil and religious authorities to the simple folks, demonstrate an ambiguous sense of moral values of the town and the fundamental beliefs of society. SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT Chronicle of a Death Foretold is one of Garcia Marquez's works that is least concerned with the political context, which permeates many of his other writings. Whether in Leaf Storm, No One Writes to the Colonel, In Evil Hour, One Hundred Years of Solitude, or Love in the Time of Cholera, the reader is faced with descriptions of the Colombian civil wars of the end of the nineteenth century. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, however, this historical fact is dealt with in a single reference. The reference, how-ever, should not pass unnoticed. General Petronio San Roma'n, father of the groom, Bayardo San Roma'n, is a member of the Conservative Party regime. Although the narrator describes him with admiration (he routed Colonel Aureliano Buendia of the Liberal Party), the narrator's mother, when she recognizes the general, will not even shake his hand. Luisa Santiaga remembers him as a traitor who ordered his troops to shoot Gerineldo Marquez in the back (208). Although the historical context of the novel can be inferred from what has already been noted, the novel is not at all clear about the exact time of the events. What is clear is the time when he published the book, 1981. In the early 1950s, Colombia was experiencing terrible shootouts between conservatives and liberals. This social and historical moment, recognized in Colombian history as La violencia (the Violence), is neither the background nor the focus of the novel. What are the background and focus, instead, are the disparity and even hatred between the rich and the poor. The marriage of Bayardo San Roman and Angela Vicario provides a striking example of opposing social and economic forces. No one in town is as rich as Bayardo San Roma'n. It is his wealth, along with his charm, that wins people over to him. This includes everyone—the priest, the mayor, and the town's aristocracy. Because of his wealth, Angela Vicario's mother says, in response to Angela's statement that she does not love Bayardo, "Love can be learned too" (209). The attacks on the wealthy found in No One Writes to the Colonel are well camouflaged in Chronicle of a Death Foretold, due, perhaps, to an effort to fully focus on the main plot. Another such attack, for example, occurs when Faustino Santos, an obscure character, asks the Vicario brothers why they must kill Santiago Nasar when there are plenty of other rich men who deserve to die first (223). The narrator, however, adds that Faustino Santos says this jokingly. By 1981, when Chronicle of a Death Foretold was published, Colombia was facing many of the guerilla factions still fighting today. The guerilla groups of Colombia have been at war with the government's army since the 1950s. The Colombian guerillas, as reported by the world news, continue to resist to the present day. In 1981, Garcia Marquez and his wife, Mercedes, were linked by rumor to a guerilla group, M-19, which specialized in urban violence. Although just a rumor, the government forces wanted to arrest Garcia Marquez and his wife. The couple sought asylum in the Mexican embassy and then left the country. Later that year, Colombian President Belisario Betancur invited the couple to return (Anderson 70). Bibliography Alonso, Carlos J. "Writing and Ritual in Chronicle of a Death Foretold." In Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Views. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989. 257-69. Alvarez-Borland, Isabel. 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