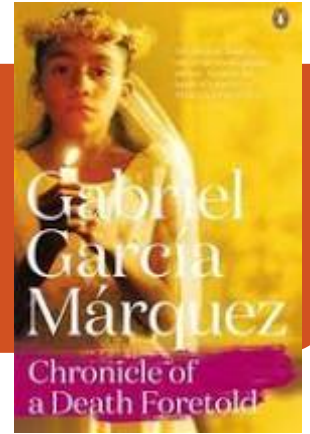




Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Gabriel García Márquez



Author Background

Gabriel García Márquez grew up in the tiny rural town of Aracateca, Colombia. He and his parents lived in his maternal grandparents' large ancestral house. Márquez received a top-notch education, eventually graduating from law school. He became a journalist, reporting for various newspapers as a foreign correspondent. The work took him all over the world: he lived in Rome, Paris, Barcelona, Bogotá, Caracas, New York City, and Mexico City.

Alongside his journalistic efforts, he wrote a handful of short stories and three novels, but it wasn't until 1967, with the publication of his masterpiece, *100 Years of Solitude*, that his fiction won widespread literary acclaim. The novel was an instant success and inaugurated a veritable literary boom in Latin America.

After 1967 Márquez turned most of his attention to fiction writing. He went on to publish seven novels, including *Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) and *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985), two short story collections, and seven nonfiction books. During the latter half of his life he lived in Spain, Mexico City, Paris, and Havana. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. He died in 2014.

Book Summary

In a small town on the northern coast of Colombia, on the morning after the biggest wedding the town has ever seen, Santiago Nasar, a local man, is brutally murdered outside his own front door. The culprits are Pablo and Pedro Vicario, twins and older brothers to the bride, Angela Vicario.

Just hours before the murder, Angela was returned to her parents by her husband, the dashing Bayardo San Román, when he discovered she wasn't a virgin as he had anticipated. Pablo and Pedro intimidate Angela into giving them the name of the man who deflowered her. She, perhaps on an impulse, or perhaps sincerely, tells them it was Santiago Nasar. To defend their sister's honour and the honour of the family, the twins resolve to kill him. They go about town announcing their intentions to all who will listen, such that Santiago is one of the last people to learn that his life is in danger. Some of the townspeople try to prevent the murder but fail, others are too frightened to do so, and still others want Santiago dead. Most people simply don't take the threat seriously, until it is too late.

The murder is now decades into the past. The Narrator, an old friend of Santiago's and a distant relative of the Vicario family, has returned to the town to make sense of it all. He collects the testimonials of eyewitnesses and other townsfolk, in the hope of recreating a clear picture of the events that led up to the mysterious and apparently senseless murder.

The more that is learned, the less is understood, and as the story races to its inexplicable conclusion, an entire society, not just a pair of murderers, is put on trial.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What information does the first paragraph of the novel give you about the story that is going to unfold?
- ❖ Why doesn't Victoria Guzmán warn Santiago Nasar about the men who are going to kill him?
- ❖ What impression does the writer give you of the bishop and of the townspeople's relation to him?
- ❖ How does the writer communicate the animosity of the power towards the rich in the novel?
- ❖ How have the Vicario sisters been raised? What is it about them that the narrator's mother notes to be particularly unusual and virtuous?
- ❖ Which of the townspeople were forewarned of the murder? What are their reasons for not having spoken to Santiago Nasar about it?
- ❖ How does the writer build suspense about the fate of Santiago Nasar? Why doesn't it matter that you know what has happened from the beginning?
- ❖ After the murder and the autopsy, how does everyone recollect their impression of its effect on the town?
- ❖ Who is said to be "the only one who had lost everything"? In what way is this accurate or inaccurate?
- ❖ What is the effect of the murder on the people of the town? How do those who could have done something to prevent it console themselves?
- ❖ What is the narrator's assessment of Nasar's feelings at the time of his death?
- ❖ Who do you feel is to blame for the murder?

References

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