



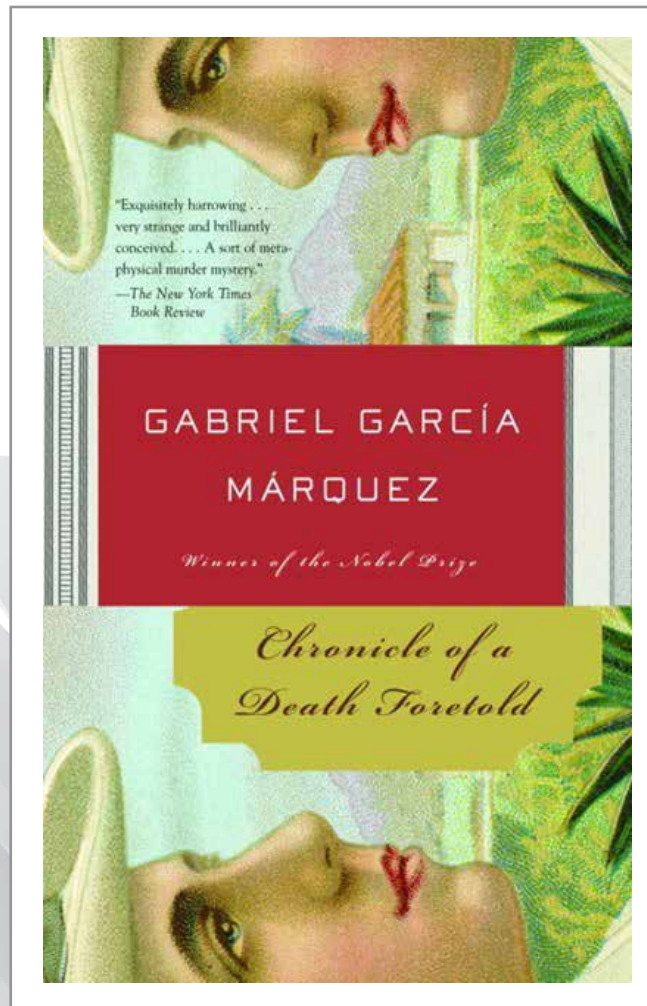
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Gabriel Garcia Marquez



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Analysis, brainstorming,
research, critical thinking,
evaluation

Literary Elements

Irony, metaphor, simile,
symbolism, foreshadowing,
characterization, setting,
theme, genre, structure, fate

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,
applications

Writing

Poetry, newspaper article, TV
script, review, journal, eulogy,
sequel, elegy

Comprehension

Cause/effect, predicting,
inference, plot development,
thematic development,
conflict, catharsis

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, reports, script
performance

Across the Curriculum

Music—ballad, appropriate
selections; Art—collage,
poster, sketch, caricature;
Drama—TV script,
reenactment; Current
Events—newspaper and
magazine articles;
Multimedia—video or DVD

Genre: fiction

Setting: small Colombian coastal village; 1950s

Point of View: first person; unnamed narrator with omniscient view into details and characters' minds

Themes: death, passivity, hatred, honor, revenge, justice/injustice, apathy

Conflict: person vs. person; person vs. society, i.e., passivity of villagers and Vicarios' honor code

Style: investigative journalistic narrative; analytical

Structure: Unlike a typical chronicle, which records events in the order in which they happen(ed), the novel is nonlinear, interweaving information about the murder with details about the characters' lives and the aftermath of the murder.

Date of First Publication: as *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* by Editorial La Oveja Negra Ltda.; Bogotá, Colombia; 1981

Summary

Twenty-seven years after the murder of Santiago Nasar, the narrator returns to the small Colombian village where the crime occurred, determined to discover the facts surrounding the homicide. The murder focuses on Angela Vicario, whose bridegroom, Bayardo San Román, discovers she is not a virgin within hours of their wedding and returns her to her parents' home in disgrace. When her mother forces her to reveal the man who took her virginity, she names Santiago Nasar. Angela's twin brothers, Pedro and Pablo, announce their plan to murder him for dishonoring their sister. Although almost everyone in town knows of their intentions, no one intervenes to stop the murder. As the narrator's investigation evolves, each character must face his or her role in the brutal crime.

Characters

Narrator: unnamed friend of Santiago who returns to his village after 27 years to investigate circumstances surrounding Santiago Nasar's death

Santiago Nasar: protagonist; 21 years old; only child of a marriage of convenience; pompous and smug, yet happy, peaceful, and honest; learns falconry from his father; known for his sexuality but is never seen with Angela

Angela Vicario: pretty antagonist whose dishonor leads to Santiago's death; center of plot and the only one who knows the truth about whether or not Santiago seduced her; does not want to marry Bayardo but falls in love with and writes to him for 17 years after he abandons her

Bayardo San Román: wealthy, mysterious 30-year-old man who arrives in the village looking for a woman to marry

Pedro and Pablo Vicario: Angela's twin brothers who commit the murder; Pedro, the more serious of the two, has been in the army and joins again after his release from prison; Pablo, who is engaged, marries after his stay in prison.

Plácida Linero: Santiago's mother; has the ability to interpret dreams but cannot forgive herself for misinterpreting Santiago's dream the night before his death

Ibrahim Nasar: Santiago's father who dies three years before the murder

Purísima del Carmen (Pura Vicario): Angela's mother; beats her for disgracing the family

Poncio Vicario: Angela's father; blind; dies shortly after the twins are sent to prison

Victoria Guzmán: the Nasar family's cook; Ibrahim's former mistress

Divina Flor: Victoria's daughter

Clotilde Armenta: owner of milk shop; tells her husband about murder plot; tries to warn Santiago

Don Rogelio de la Flor: Clotilde's husband; doesn't think the twins will harm anyone

Cristo Bedoya: Santiago's friend who tries unsuccessfully to warn him

María Alejandrina Cervantes: madam of village brothel

Flora Miguel: Santiago's fiancée

Faustino Santos: butcher; friend of Vicario twins; reports murder plot to Pornoy

Leandro Pornoy: police officer who reveals murder plot to Aponte

Don Lázaro Aponte: retired colonel; town mayor

Father Carmen Amador: village priest; performs autopsy on Santiago

General Petronio San Román and Alberta Simonds: Bayardo's parents

Xius: widower from whom Bayardo buys house

Dr. Dionisio Iguarán: village doctor

Luisa Santiaga, Margot, Jaime, Luis Enrique: narrator's mother (actual name of author's mother), sister, and his brothers

Mercedes Barcha: narrator's wife (actual name of author's wife)

Prudencia Cotes: Pablo Vicario's fiancée

Yamil Shaium: Arab store owner; reveals murder plot to Cristo Bedoya

Indalecio Pardo: Santiago's friend who goes to warn him but loses his nerve

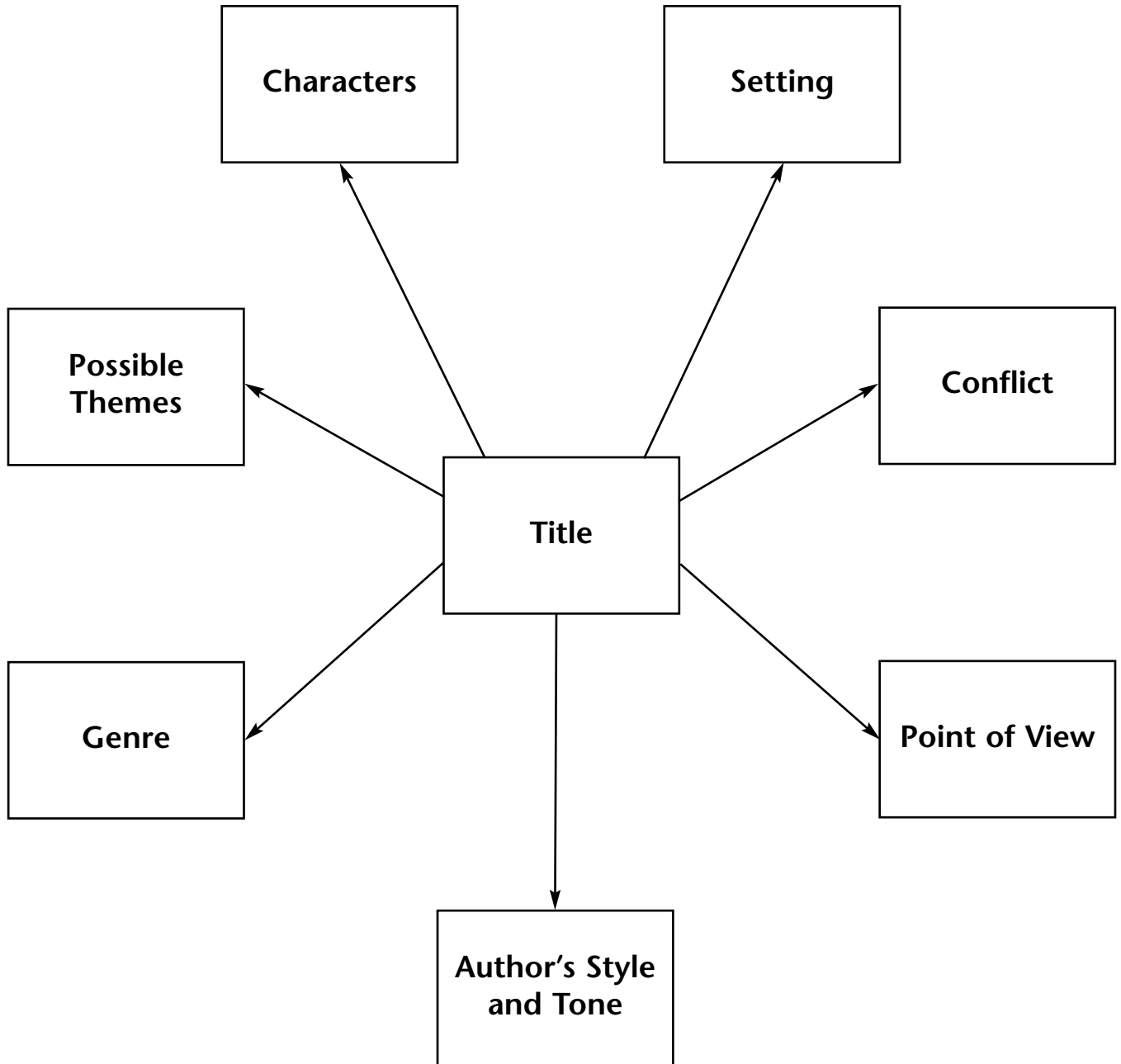
About the Author

Personal: Gabriel García Márquez was born March 6, 1928 (some biographical sketches give the date as 1927), in Aracataca, Colombia, the oldest of the 12 children of Luisa Santiaga Márquez Iguarán and Gabriel Elgio García. He lived with his maternal grandparents until he was eight years old. He married Mercedes Barcha in 1958. They became parents of Rodrigo (1959) and Gonzalo (1962). He now lives in Mexico.

Education: As a child, Márquez attended boarding school. In 1940, he received a scholarship to attend a secondary school run by the Jesuits for gifted students. He entered law school in 1946 at the National University of Bogotá, Colombia, which was closed due to riots caused by the assassination of the Liberal presidential candidate. He then transferred to the university in Cartagena. In 1950, he left his study of law to begin writing for the Liberal newspaper *El Heraldo*.

Career: Márquez published his first short stories in the late 1940s. Following his writing tenure for *El Heraldo*, he became a reporter for the Bogotá *El Espectador*, working in Paris as a foreign correspondent until the newspaper closed in 1956. In 1957, he became an editor for a newspaper in Caracas. His first novel, *Leaf Storm*, was published in 1955. Subsequent works include: *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1958), *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), *The Autumn of the Patriarch*

Story Map



Pages 3–15 (“...so as not to awaken them.”)

The narrator returns to his home village to investigate the death of Santiago Nasar 27 years before. Life seems normal for Santiago on the day of his death as he prepares for the arrival of the bishop. The Nasar family cook and her daughter know about the murder plot but do not warn Santiago.

Vocabulary
augury (4)
apostolic (5)
falconry (5)
prostrated (6)
baptistry (7)
prudence (7)
pontifical (8)

Discussion Questions

1. Examine information about Santiago Nasar and analyze the significance of his dreams, including his mother’s response. How might a different response have changed the course of events? Correlate the symbolism of the dreams with that of the weather. (*Santiago is a 21-year-old young man of valor and prudence. He is happy, peaceful, and has a special interest in falconry. He has several guns and sleeps with one hidden in his pillowcase but never leaves a gun loaded when he leaves his room. His father’s death three years before forced him to drop out of school in order to run the family’s cattle ranch, The Divine Face. He frequently dreams about trees and does so again shortly before*

awakening on the morning of his death. In this dream, however, a light drizzle is falling in the grove of trees through which he is walking, and he awakens with a headache and feeling as if he is “completely spattered with bird s---.” He tells his mother about his dream, but neither he nor she, who is known for accurately interpreting dreams, senses any ominous omen in this or any of the other dreams. In fact, she believes that any dream about birds means good health. Symbolically, a light drizzle of rain is falling on the morning of his death, much like in his dream. In retrospect, both his dream and the weather prove to be signs of impending trouble. Santiago’s mother has lived for 27 years with the guilt of misinterpreting the omen. Answers will vary. pp. 3–8)

2. Discuss the two events that are mentioned in the first sentence of the novel. Brainstorm as to how these two events correlate. (*This is the day someone is going to kill Santiago, and the bishop is coming to the village by boat. Santiago rises early and dresses carefully for the bishop’s arrival. If it had not been for the bishop’s impending arrival, Santiago might have gone to work on the ranch rather than roaming around the village, thus giving the Vicario brothers time to consider more rationally their plan to murder him. pp. 3–5)*
3. Discuss information about Santiago’s parents and analyze his mother’s reaction to his death. (*His father, Ibrahim Nasar, was of Arab descent. Santiago is the only child of his father and mother’s unhappy marriage of convenience. From his father, Santiago learned the manipulation of firearms, a love for horses, and the art of falconry. From his mother, he has inherited a sixth sense. He had always had a good relationship with both of his parents. When the narrator returns to the village after 27 years, he finds that Santiago’s mother, now old and almost blind, has suffered from an interminable headache since the day of his death. Consumed by guilt and regret, she lies in the same position on the same hammock as when she last saw her son and constantly relives that fateful day. pp. 6–8)*
4. Examine Santiago’s reaction to the bishop’s arrival and analyze what this reveals about him. (*His attire, a white shirt and pants he wears for special occasions, symbolizes his fascination with the church and its officials; e.g., He hopes to have a chance to kiss the bishop’s ring. However, his devotion to the church does not supersede his sensuality. Even as he rushes through the house in order to get to the bishop’s boat, he makes sexual overtures to Divina Flor. pp. 5, 8, 13–14)*

5. Discuss information about Victoria Guzmán and Divina Flor. Examine their roles on the day of Santiago's death and analyze why they do not warn him. Note the symbolism of Victoria's preparation of the rabbits for lunch. (*Victoria is the cook for the Nasar household. Santiago's father seduced Victoria Guzmán when she was young, and she remained his mistress for many years. Divina Flor is Victoria's daughter by a more recent mate. Santiago has begun to make sexual advances to Divina Flor, and Victoria realizes he will seduce her daughter just as his father seduced her. Although they both know of the Vicario twins' plan to kill Santiago, neither warns him. Victoria excuses her failure by saying she thought the Vicarios' threat was just drunkards' talk, but Divina Flor later reveals that her mother didn't warn him because she wanted him to die. Divina did not warn him because she was a frightened child who was incapable of making such a decision. Divina Flor did attempt to help him by leaving the door unbarred so he could get back in if he faced an emergency. Victoria's preparation of the rabbits for lunch symbolizes Santiago's death. She is disemboweling the rabbits, just as the Vicario twins will disembowel Santiago in about an hour. Victoria is enraged because Santiago obviously intends to seduce Divina Flor and threatens him with a knife; the Vicario twins choose knives as their murder weapons. Dogs eat the rabbits' intestines, and dogs attempt to eat Santiago's intestines after the autopsy. pp. 8–14*)
6. Analyze the role of "fate" in the plot, noting the significance of the "Fatal Door" and of the envelope someone shoves under the door of Santiago's home. (*The rear door of the Nasar house, which opens onto the streets, is the one most often used to enter and leave the house. The front door is usually closed and barred. On the day of the bishop's arrival, however, Santiago leaves through the front door, and it is here that the Vicario twins wait for him and eventually kill him. An unidentified person shoves a piece of paper under this door, warning Santiago about the murder plot and giving details about the plan. Neither Santiago nor anyone else sees this paper until long after his death. Thus, the front door becomes known as the "Fatal Door." If Santiago had not used the front door, and if he or Divina Flor had seen the paper warning of the plot, the murder might have been prevented. pp. 11–14*)

Supplementary Activities

1. List one metaphor and one simile from this section, giving the translation and identifying the ideas or objects being compared. Continue this for each section of the book where applicable. **Metaphors**—memory: broken mirror (p. 6), Divina Flor's sexuality: drink of water (p. 9); **Similes**—" [Santiago] carved up like a pig" (p. 4), "[Santiago's hand] like the hand of a dead man" (p. 13), "[Santiago] 'looked like a ghost'" (p. 15)
2. Working with a partner, list the characters in this section (and ensuing sections) and note whether their roles in Santiago's murder result from apathy, vengeance, passivity, or another reason.