

Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

1. How much time has passed between the crime and the narrator's research?
2. What time did Santiago Nasar (SN) wake up?
3. What did SN dream about? How did his mother interpret this dream and what do notice about the interpretation?
4. Why does the narrator discuss the weapons in the Nasar home on pg. 5?
5. What reasons does Victoria Guzman have for hating SN? What motif does this play-into?
6. On pg. 12, what is ritualistic about the "Fatal Door"?
7. What did SN and Divina Flor fail to see at the door? Why is this significant?
8. What information does the first paragraph of the novel give you about the story that is going to unfold?
9. Why doesn't Victoria Guzmán warn Santiago Nasar about the men who are going to kill him?
10. What signs does Santiago Nasar overlook that would have forewarned him of the impending crime?
11. What impression does the writer give you of the bishop and of the townspeople's relation to him?
12. How does the writer communicate the animosity of the power towards the rich in the novel?
13. Describe the character of Santiago Nasar.

Chapter 2

1. What do you learn about the background of Bayardo San Román?
2. Describe Angela Vicario.
3. Explain the relationship the narrator had with SN (41).
4. Contrast Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roman.
5. What two roles does Angela play as a woman in the novel?
6. Describe the wedding festivities.
7. What does the beating of Angela Vicario tell you about Pura Vicario? What does it tell you about the role of women?
8. Which twin demands the name of her lover from Angela Vicario?
9. In what ways are the wedding festivities unusual for the town?
10. How have the Vicario sisters been raised? What is it about them that the narrator's mother notes is particularly unusual and virtuous?
11. What does it show about Bayard San Román that he buys the house belonging to the widower Xius?
12. What do Angela Vicario's confidantes explain to her about a woman's "honor"?
13. Why does the narrator's mother consider Angela Vicario's putting on the wedding veil to be an act of courage?

Chapter 3

1. What was the twins' defense at trial?
2. Why do Pablo and Pedro believe they are innocent?
3. Do you think the Vicario brothers wanted to kill SN? Give evidence that you are right.
4. Why did no one believe that the twins were going to kill SN?
5. Why do the townspeople hate the rich? Did this contribute to the murder (53)?
6. Which of the townspeople were forewarned of the murder? What are their reasons for not having spoken to Santiago Nasar about it?
7. 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?

Chapter 4 & 5

1. Describe the autopsy that is performed on Nasar. Who does it? What is the narrator's opinion of it?
2. What is ironic about the description of Nasar's wounds as stigmata, about the description of his brain made during the autopsy?
3. After the murder and the autopsy, how does everyone recollect their impression of its affect on the town?
4. Who is considered to be "the only one who had lost everything"? In what way is this accurate or inaccurate?
5. What are the fates of the members of the Vicario family after the murder?
6. What plea do the Vicario twins make at their trial? What is your assessment of the accuracy of this plea?
7. In what ways does Angela Vicario change after the murder? What does she realize about her mother? About Bayardo San Román? How does she deal with this?
8. 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?
9. What are some of the coincidences that conspired to allow the Vicario brothers to be successful in their murder of Santiago Nasar?
10. What does the magistrate conclude about Nasar's implication in the crime? On what basis does he draw his conclusion?
11. What is the narrator's assessment of Nasar's feelings at the time of his death?
12. What other opinions are expressed on this matter and by whom?
13. What instances are given to show that the Vicario brothers do not want to carry out the murder?
14. How does Santiago Nasar learn that the Vicario brothers are going to kill him? How does he react to this information?
15. Why does Placida Linero, Nasar's mother, bolt the front door of the house?
16. What are Nasar's actions after the Vicario brothers' attack is concluded?
17. What effect is achieved by Nasar's long walk into the house?
18. Who do you feel is to blame for the murder?

Novel Questions

1. Point of View

In what ways does the narrator's profession influence the way in which the novel is told? Why do you think García Márquez chose to make his narrator a journalist?

2. Plot

Although the first sentence of the novel informs the reader that Santiago Nasar is about to be killed, the actual murder scene is withheld until the final pages.

- What takes up the intervening pages?
- What purpose is served by having the reader wait until the end to "see" the murder itself?
- What effect does this have on the reader?

In what sense is the inevitability of the murder intensified by the sequence of events García Márquez sets down?

3. Imagery and Symbols

Point out the way writers use patterns of images and symbols to convey a novel's themes. Trace the images and symbols in **Chronicle of a Death Foretold** and discuss how each reflects an important aspect of theme. (Mention the cocks, animals, butchery, the cult of death, flowers, trees, colors.)