

7. A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings (Last Story) Grade 12 (Summary)

About the Author

Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1927-2014) was Colombian-born Spanish American journalist, novelist, and short story writer. He is regarded as the literary volcano of the nineteen sixties and an exponent of a new narrative style known as magical realism. His novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is taken as a classical example of magical realism. Marquez is one of the best novelists of world literature and perhaps the best in Spanish literature. For many readers, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and magical realism as synonymous with each other. Magical Realism is a mode of narrative in which real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, are coherently represented in a state of equivalence. Marquez's other best-known novels are *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961), *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985), and *Memories of my Melancholy Whores* (2004). The story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" was first published in 1955.

"A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" is a magical realist story which examines the human response to those who are weak, dependent, and different. The story shows human nature-related curiosity, greed and cruelty.

Main Characters

Pelayo:

Elisenda's husband who discovered the old man. Pelayo was an ordinary villager.

Elisenda:

Pelayo's wife who convinced Pelayo to charge villagers to see the old man.

Father Gonzaga: The priest of the village who was an authority figure in the community. **The Neighbor Woman:** She was the neighbor of Pelayo and Elisenda.

The Spider Woman:

She spider had the body of an enormous spider and the head of a sad young woman.

Summary of the Story

A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings is written by Graciela Garcia Marquez. He was Colombian-born Spanish American writer. It is a story of magical realism. It examines the human response to those who are weak, dependent and different. The story reveals nature-related greed, curiosity and cruelty.

The story opens with a rainy situation. On the third day of rain. Pelayo and his wife Elisenda were throwing dead crabs into the sea because they thought that their newly born child had a fever all night due to the smell. The world had been sad since Tuesday. The light in the afternoon was also very dim. Pelayo came back to his house. He saw something moving in the courtyard. It was a filthy and weak old man with enormous wings there. He was frightened by the nightmare. He ran towards Elisenda. They both came there and observed the strange creature. They looked at him so long and so closely that they soon overcame their surprise. They tried to speak to him but they could not understand his unintelligible language. They called a neighbor woman who told them that he was an angel who came there for the child. She added that he was very weak therefore he was knocked down by the rain.

On the following day, everybody found a flesh-and-blood angel. Pelayo and Elisenda imprisoned him in the chicken's coop. In the middle of the night their child became free from fever and felt hungry too. There were arguments on whether the old man was an angel or not. Father Gonzaga tried to investigate about the old man but could not. He tried to obtain the truth from the church's higher

authorities. The news of the angel widespread very fast. They made a plan to take charge 5 cents from the visitors as entry fee. The couple started making money. People started mistreating the old man as he did nothing to impress them. He was unresponsive to people's reaction. They poked him and burnt him with a branding iron. Then the old man became violent due to pain. He responded angrily, flapped his wings and yelled in a strange language.

A new carnival arrived there in the town. There appeared the Spider Woman and people were attracted to her as they could ask her any questions and she told her interesting stories to the people. Moreover, it was less expensive to see her than the admission to see the old man. Because of the woman, people's attraction to the old man slowly faded. However, Pelayo and Elisanda were able to build a two-story house to be safe from the crabs and angels from the money they had charged as entry fee