

Chronicle of a death foretold essay sample

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Chronicle of a Death Foretold (original Spanish title: *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*) is a novella by Gabriel García Márquez, published in 1981. It tells, in the form of a pseudo-journalistic reconstruction, the story of the murder of Santiago Nasar by the two Vicario brothers. Analysis

One of the unanswered questions in this book is who actually took Angela Vicario's virginity, for the narrator is unsure why she named Santiago Nasar as the one who committed the crime, although it is suggested by gossip that she did it to protect the man whom she loved. The crime against Santiago would not only be done to him by the Vicario brothers, but also by all those in his community. The fact that not one individual took it upon themselves to stop the crime shows that even in a community that revels in the coming of their bishop, there can still be wrongdoing. It's also possible to read the book as a Kafkaesque love and crime story: the beginning of the book is itself a variation of the start of *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis*, both by Franz Kafka. García Márquez himself acknowledges this influence, saying that it was the reading of *The Metamorphosis* that showed him "that it was possible to write in a different way. Magical realism

Chronicle of a Death Foretold exhibits many of the aspects of a novel written in the magic realist style. For example, the novel makes oblique references to God and clairvoyance. Additionally, it has the magic realism aspect of a warped timeline. The main plot plays out five times—once in each of the five chapters—and each time information is given from a different individual in the community. This allows for the storyline to portray the idea of fragmentation, thus bringing in this idea of reality and fantasy. While this is reminiscent of the traditional tragic format, it turns it inside out. The narrator's inclusion of <https://assignbuster.com/chronicle-of-a-death-foretold-essay-sample/>

personal judgments, as well as the events occurring many years after the drama unfolds, seems to breach the definition of a chronicle. The kaleidoscopic imagery found in the novel adds to this impression and, combined with the contorted chronological structure and the townspeople's anticipation of Santiago Nasar's murder, erodes the plausibility of mere irresponsibility as an explanation for the tragedy. This incongruity fits with the magic realism style; it may be put down to fate. The opposite of unlikely powerlessness, unlikely endurance, is also present as Santiago Nasar's stench permeates the town even after he dies. The subtle intersection of human values and the supernatural with the physical world is a hallmark of magical realism.

Adaptations

It was translated into English by Gregory Rabassa and by Edith Grossman. The book was adapted for the big screen in the Spanish language film: *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1987), an Italian-French-Colombian co-production, directed by Francesco Rosi, starring Ornella Muti, Rupert Everett and Anthony Delon. In 1995, Graciela Daniele adapted it into the Tony Award-nominated Broadway musical of the same name, which she also directed and choreographed. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronicle_of_a_Death_Foretold 1-4-10

A Chronicle of a Death Foretold

Major Character Descriptions and Quotes

- Santiago Nasar: A seemingly innocent young man who is named the perpetrator in the loss of Angela Vicario's virginity. But Argenida Lanao, the oldest daughter, said that Santiago Nasar walked with his usual good bearing, measuring his steps well, and that his Saracen face with its dashing ringlets was handsomer than ever. As he passed the table he smiled at them and continued through the bedrooms to the rear door of the house. •

Narrator: An unnamed man with the curiosity to continue gathering facts about the murder of Santiago many years later. I tried to get the truth out of [Angela] myself when I visited her the second time, with all my arguments in order, but she barely lifted her eyes from the embroidery to knock them down. "Don't beat it to death, cousin," she told me. "He was the one." •

Bayardo San Román: At first, he was a mysterious man, but by the time he had married Angela he was well known and well liked. In the end, when he had gone away, leaving his wife of five hours, he was said to be one of the major victims of the events linked to the murder. Nobody knew what he'd come for. Someone who couldn't resist the temptation of asking him, a little before the wedding, received the answer: "I've been going from town to town looking for someone to marry." • Angela Vicario: A young woman who at the start of the novel was just ready to be married, but was quickly jilted by Bayardo San Román because she had already lost her virginity.

She writes thousands of letters to him until they are reunited when they have both reached middle age. Angela Vicario was the prettiest of the four [sisters], and my mother said that she had been born like the great queens of history, with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck. But she had a helpless air and a poverty of spirit that augured an uncertain future for her. •

Pedro Vicario: One of the murderers, and the older yet less dominant of the two brothers, who made the initial decision to kill Santiago, but hesitated to sharpen the knives a second time and actually go through with it. He had a painful case of blennorrhoea that made it difficult to urinate. Pablo Vicario found him hugging the tree when he came back with the knives. " He was in a cold sweat from the pain," he said to me, " and he tried to tell me to go on by myself because he was in no condition to kill anybody." • Pablo Vicario: The more dominant brother, who assumed command when the knives were taken away from them. There's no way out of this," [Pablo] told [Pedro]. " It's as if it had already happened."

Minor Character Descriptions

- Flora Miguel: Santiago Nasar's fiancée, who is angered when she discovers the cause of Santiago's murder.
- Pura Vicario: Angela's mother, who beats her after discovering she has lost her virginity, then demands to know who the perpetrator was.
- Plácida Linero: Santiago Nasar's mother, who misinterprets a dream Santiago has on the morning of his murder as being a good omen.
- Clotilde Armenta: The owner of a milk shop in the town who is always a good source of information, particularly about the murder.
- Cristo Bedoya: A close friend of Santiago Nasar, who is not aware of the murder until it is too late, as by then he cannot find Santiago to warn him.
- Maria Alejandrina Cervantes: The narrator's lover, with whom he spends the night with before Santiago is killed.
- Ibrahim Nasar: Santiago's father, who died suddenly about three years before the murder.

- Dr. Dionisio Iguarán: A doctor involved with the case who was appaled by the horroble autopsy performed on Santiago's body.
- Xius: The widower who's house was bought rather forcefully by Bayardo San Román because Angela liked it. He was heartbroken, and when things began to disappear from the house, he claimed that the spirit of his wife Yolanda was reclaiming them.
- Victoria Guzmán: The cook who does not warn Santiago after she has been told of his impending murder by a beggar woman. Later she says she did not tell him because he was like his father, who had mistreated her.
- Divina Flor: Victoria Guzman's daughter, who does not tell Santiago of the murder because she truly does not believe the twins would go through with it.
- Margot: The narrator's sister.

- Luis Enrique: The narrator's brother.
- Father Carmen Amador: The local priest, who also believed that the murder would not really happen.
- Prudencia Cotes: Pablo Vicario's fiancée.

- Colonel Lázaro Aponte: The policeman who had taken the first set of knives away from the Vicario twins.
- Luisa Santiaga: The narrator's mother.
- Jamie Santiaga: The narrator's younger brother.
- Poncio Vicario: Angela's father.
- Alberta Simonds: Bayardo's mother, a mulatto.
- General Petronio San Román: Bayardo's father, a civil war hero well liked by almost everyone.

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Themes

Honor

The motive for the murder of Santiago Nasar lies undetected until halfway through *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. While everyone knows that Nasar will be murdered, no one knows the reason. Then, after a night of carousing, the Vicario twins, Pedro and Pablo, return home at their mother's summons. The family presses a devastated Angela, the twins' sister, to tell the reason for her humiliated return from her marriage bed. When Angela says, "Santiago Nasar," the twins know immediately that they must defend their sister's honor. The twins' attorney views the act as "homicide in legitimate defense of honor," which is upheld by the court. The priest calls the twins' surrender "an act of great dignity." When the twins claim their innocence, the priest says that they may be so before God, while Pablo Vicario says, "Before God and before men. It was a matter of honor." Revenge

While the twins say the murder was necessary for their sister's good name, and the courts agree with them, many disagree, viewing the murder as a cruel act of revenge. The manner in which they kill Santiago appears to be much more vicious than what a simple murder for honor would entail. The twins first obtain their two best butchering knives, one for quartering and one for trimming. When Colonel Aponte takes these knives from them, the twins return to their butchering shop to get another quartering knife — with a broad, curved blade — and a twelve-inch knife with a rusty edge. Intent on making sure Santiago is dead, the twins use the knives to stab him over and over again. Seven of the wounds are fatal; the liver, stomach, pancreas, and colon are nearly destroyed.

The twins stab him with such vengeance that they are covered with blood themselves, and the main door of Plácida Linero's house, where Santiago was killed, must be repaired by the city. Further supporting the view that the twins acted in revenge is the fact that they show no remorse for the murder. After the murder, the twins fear revenge from the Arab community. Even though they believe they have rightfully murdered Santiago for their sister's honor, the twins think that the tightly knit community of Arabs will seek revenge for the loss of one of their own. When Pablo becomes ill at the jail, Pedro is convinced that the Arabs have poisoned him. Sex Roles

Purísima del Carmen, Angela Vicario's mother, has raised her daughters to be good wives. The girls do not marry until late in life, seldom socializing beyond the confines of their own home. They spend their time doing embroidery, sewing, weaving, washing and ironing, arranging flowers, making candy, and writing engagement announcements. They also keep the old traditions alive, such as sitting up with the ill, comforting the dying, and enshrouding the dead. While their mother believes they are perfect, men view them as too tied to their women's traditions. Purísima del Carmen's sons, on the other hand, are raised to be men. They serve in the war, take over their father's business when he goes blind, drink and party until all hours of the night, and spend time in the local brothel. When the family insists on Angela's marrying Bayardo, a man she has seldom even seen, the twins stay out of it because, "It looked to us like woman problems." "Woman problems" become "men's problems" when the family calls the twins home upon Angela's return. She feels relieved to let them take the matter into their hands, as the family expects them to do. Deception

Angela Vicario is not a virgin when she marries Bayardo, but no one would suspect otherwise. Her mother has sheltered her for her entire life. Angela has never been engaged before, nor has she been allowed to go out alone with Bayardo in the time they have known one another. Angela, however, is concerned that her bridegroom will learn her secret on their wedding night, and considers telling her mother before the wedding. Instead, she tells two of her friends, who advise her not to tell her mother. In addition, they tell Angela that men do not really know the difference and that she can trick Bayardo into believing that she is a virgin. Angela believes them. Not only does Angela wear the veil and orange blossoms that signify purity, she carries out her friends' plan of deception on her wedding night. Supernatural

Throughout of Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Márquez weaves elements of the supernatural. From the dreams that Santiago has the night before his death to the signs that people note foretelling his death, a sense of an unseen force prevails. For example, Santiago has inherited his "sixth sense" from his mother, Plácida. Margot feels "the angel pass by" as she listens to Santiago plan his wedding. Supernatural intervention pervades all aspects of the characters lives. For example, Purísima del Carmen tells her daughters that if they comb their hair at night, they will slow down seafarers.

Style

Point of View

One of the most outstanding features of Chronicle of a Death Foretold is the point of view García Márquez uses to tell the story. Narrating the story from the first-person point of view is the unnamed son of Luisa Santiaga and

brother of Mar-got, Luis, Jaime, and a nun. Having returned to the river village after being gone for twenty-seven years, the narrator tries to reconstruct the events of the day that ends in the murder of Santiago Nasar. Typically, a first-person narrator gives his own point of view but does not know what other characters are thinking: an ability usually reserved for the third-person omniscient, or all-knowing, point of view. In this novel, however, García Márquez bends the rules: the narrator tells the story in the first person, yet he also relates everything everyone is thinking.

Setting

Chronicle of a Death Foretold takes place in a small, Latin American river village off the coast of the Caribbean sometime after the civil wars. Once a busy center for shipping and ocean-going ships, the town now lacks commerce as a result of shifting river currents.

The events of the story evolve over a two-day time period. A wedding has taken place the night before between a well-known young woman from the town and a rich stranger who has been a resident for only six months. On the day of the murder, most of the townspeople have hangovers from the wedding reception. Because a visit from the bishop is expected, however, a festive air prevails.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is typically achieved through an author's implication that an event is going to occur. García Márquez adds a twist to foreshadowing by telling exactly what is going to happen but not why it will happen. The entire story builds on the foretelling of Santiago's murder. The twins do not hide

their plot; they tell everyone they meet of their plans. Each village person who hears about the scheme tells the next person. Santiago himself dreams of birds and trees the night before he dies, which his mother later interprets as the foretelling of his death. In the end, even Santiago knows that he is going to die.

Dream Vision

Throughout *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the characters refer to dreams and visions they have that are related to Santiago's impending death. Santiago's mother, for example, though well-known for her interpretations of dreams, fails to understand Santiago's dream of his own death. He tells her of his dream of traveling through a grove of trees and awakening feeling as if he is covered with bird excrement. She remembers later that she paid attention only to the part about the birds, which typically imply good health. Clotilde Armenta claims years after the murder that she thought Santiago "already looked like a ghost" when she saw him at dawn that morning. Margot Santiago, listening to Santiago boast that his wedding will be even more magnificent than Angela Vicario's "felt the angel pass by." The author's many references to dreams and visions contribute to the surrealistic tone that is characteristic of magical realism. **Magical Realism.**

Latin American culture gave birth to the literary genre magical realism. While critics attribute its beginnings to the Cuban novelist and short story writer Alejo Carpentier they agree that García Márquez has continued its tradition. The hallmark of magical realism is its roots in reality with a tendency toward the fantastic. That is, while everything a magic realist writes has a historical

basis, it also has fictitious elements throughout. Emphasizing this point, García Márquez said in an interview with Peter H. Stone in *The Paris Review*, “ It always amuses me that the biggest praise for my work comes for the imagination while the truth is that there’s not a single line in all my work that does not have a basis in reality.”

Critical Overview

Critics credit García Márquez with bringing attention to Latin American literature. When García Márquez first appeared on the literary scene with his popular *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, reviewers praised not only his style but also his ability to tell a story to which everyone can relate. According to John Sturrock in the *New York Times Book Review*, García Márquez is “ one of the small number of contemporary writers from Latin America who have given to its literature a maturity and dignity it never had before.” David Streitfeld adds this sentiment in the *Washington Post*, “ More than any other writer in the world, Gabriel García Márquez combines both respect (bordering on adulation) and mass popularity (also bordering on adulation).” Following on the success of this first novel, García Márquez has continued to build his reputation as a writer and storyteller.

By the time Jonathan Cape Limited of London published the English translation of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* in 1982, García Márquez had established himself as a master of magical realism, a literature genre born in Latin America. Magical realism, a unique blending of fantasy and reality, evolved out of a culture that has been shaped by a combination of ethnic and religious populations that practice animism, voodoo, and African cult

traditions. García Márquez credits his life experiences and his heritage with his ability to present the magical as part of everyday life. He says in a UNESCO Courier interview with Manuel Oscorio, “ the area is soaked in myths brought over by the slaves, mixed in with Indian legends and Andalusian imagination.

The result is a very special way of looking at things, a conception of life that sees a bit of the marvelous in everything.” Throughout García Márquez’s long writing career, critics have commended his unique style. Besides his mastery of magical realism, García Márquez also possesses a talent for applying to his stories unconventional narrative styles, universal themes, and an unusual journalistic style that is often a commentary on social and political issues. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* contains all of these. First, García Márquez has the narrator tell the story in the first person, but from an omniscient point of view. As Ronald De Feo says in a review in the *Nation*, “ This narrative maneuvering adds another layer to the book.” Next, the themes in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* touch on universal concerns including male honor, crimes of passion, loyalty, and justice. Finally, most critics agree that *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* provides a snapshot in time of a society that remains captured by its own outmoded customs, beliefs, and stories.

While *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* retains a fairly widespread popularity, some reviewers have not been as accepting of its unusual form. The very characteristics of García Márquez’s novel that most critics applaud have prompted others’ scorn. Keith Mano, for example, says in the *National*

Review, “ In general, I wish García Márquez hadn’t surrendered so many of the devices and prerequisites that belong to fiction: subjectivity, shifting POV, omniscience, judgment, plot surprise.” Anthony Burgess has even harsher criticism in his review in *The New Republic*. He calls the book “ claustrophobic” and goes on to say, “ It does not induce a view, as better fiction does, of human possibilities striving to rise out of a morass of conservative stupidity. The heart never lifts. All that is left is a plain narrative style and an orthodox narrative technique managed with extreme competence. Perhaps one is wrong to expect more from a Nobel Prizeman.”

Recognized for his revival of Latin American literature, García Márquez receives credit, too, for reinvigorating the modern novel genre. Overall, critics maintain that García Márquez deserves international acclaim for his unique style, plots, themes, and blending of fantasy and realism. In a review in *Tribune Books*, Harry Mark Petrakis describes García Márquez as “ a magician of vision and language who does astonishing things with time and reality.” Readers all over the world who await García Márquez’s books would concur.

Criticism

Jeffrey M. Lilburn

Gabriel García Márquez’s *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is a seemingly simple story about the murder of a young man in a small Colombian town. Written in a factual, journalistic style, the novel is told by an unnamed narrator who returns to his hometown twenty-seven years after the crime to “ put the broken mirror of memory back together from so many scattered shards.”

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Assuming the role of detective, or investigative reporter, the narrator compiles and reports the information that he collects from the memories of the townspeople he interviews. What he finds, however, is a town full of people with varying and often conflicting memories of the events he is investigating. Consequently, what begins as an attempt to fill the gaps, to find out once and for all what really happened that dark and drizzly morning — or was it bright and sunny? — becomes instead a parody of any attempt to recapture and reconstruct the past. At first glance, the narrator does what appears to be a very thorough job of finding and compiling information relating to the crime. He speaks to a great many people who knew Santiago Nasar, who were present on the evening of the wedding celebrations, and who were out to greet the bishop on the morning of the murder.

Still, new information contradicts and undermines more often than it clarifies. Throughout the narrator's chronicle, for example, we hear varying accounts of the weather on the morning of the crime. According to some, it was a beautiful sunny morning; to others, the weather was drizzly and funereal. To the individuals reporting this information, the memory of that morning's weather is a fact — it is the reality they remember. Or it may simply be the reality they choose to report at that time since facts, or the reporting of facts, change over time. Victoria Guzmán, for example, initially reports that neither she nor her daughter knew that the Vicario brothers were waiting to kill Santiago, yet “in the course of her years” admits that both of them did, in fact, know about the twins' plans.

Memories are problematized further by the fact that the entire town was, on the night before the murder, celebrating Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Román's wedding. To begin, the narrator, before deciding to "rescue" the events of the festival "piece by piece from the memory of others," has "a very confused memory" of those events. Yet there is no indication that the memories of the individuals on whom the narrator relies to construct his narrative are any more reliable than his own. On the contrary, most of the townspeople seem equally confused. The narrator's brother, for example, who returns home in the early hours of the morning and falls asleep sitting on the toilet, also has "confused" memories of an encounter he has with the Vicario brothers on his way home. Similarly, the narrator's "sister the nun" has an "eighty-proof hangover" on the morning of the crime and doesn't even bother to go out to greet the bishop. These fuzzy, alcohol-drenched memories of events that happened twenty-seven years earlier not only help explain the varying reports about the weather, but they cast doubt on the entire narrative that uses these memories as its foundation.

According to Mary G. Berg, the narrator's failed attempt to find consensus among the varied accounts of the past reveals both the subjectivity of memory and the "inherent fallibility of journalistic report or written history." In short, it demonstrates the "insufficiency of words to depict (or reflect) human experience." It also, as John S. Christie writes, undermines the notion of a single narrative authority, since the ambiguity that results from the multiple perceptions and points of view reveals that no one version of the truth exists. Within the world represented in the novel, however, ambiguities and uncertainties are not so closely scrutinized. Santiago Nasar is murdered

not because it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that he was the man responsible for stealing Angela Vicario's honor, but because he is accused of doing so. It is the telling, Christie argues, that "creates the reality." The same might be said about the narrator's chronicle: by telling the story, by selecting and carefully arranging the conflicting versions of events into a highly structured narrative, the narrator creates the illusion that his version of the events succeeds in recapturing the reality of the past.

It is, however, only a temporary illusion. The narrator himself suggests that written reports can conceal more than they reveal when he mentions that the original report prepared by the investigating magistrate left out certain key facts. The fact that the twins started looking for Santiago at Maria Alejandrina Cervantes' house, for example, where they and Santiago had been just a short time earlier, is not reported in the brief. If this event is not reported, one must therefore ask what other information was also left out.

Similarly, information that could significantly alter how events are understood and interpreted is also missing from the narrator's chronicle; he was only able to salvage "some 322 from the more than 500" pages of the original, incomplete brief from the flooded floor of the Palace of Justice in Riohacha. Moreover, some of the people whose testimony might have proven enlightening either refused to talk about the past, as did Angela's mother, or were unable to do so because they were dead, namely officer Leandro Pornoy.

The narrator's chronicle is complicated even more by the fact that he was himself a resident of the town. He grew up with Santiago and, in later years,

they along with other friends spent their vacation time together. Moreover, he was with Santiago on the evening before his murder and, at the moment the crime was committed, was in the arms of Maria Alejandrina Cervantes, a woman with whom Santiago was once obsessed and whom the narrator was seeing without Santiago's knowledge. What's more, the narrator is related to Angela Vicario. According to Carlos Alonso, these ties between the narrator and the community put "in check the objectivity that his rhetorical posturing demands" and may even serve to "nurture the secret at the core of the events." At the very least, they add yet another layer of uncertainty to an already questionable narrative.

Central to an investigation of the events surrounding the crime is the code of honor which leads the Vicario brothers to arm themselves with pig-killing knives and take the life of a man with whom they were drinking and singing just a few short hours before. The code of honor is one which, Christie explains, derives from a paternal authority associated with the "mythic past of some religious or moral order which has now dissipated." Still, the code remains sufficiently relevant in the community that an entire town stands by and watches as Pedro and Pablo brutally kill Santiago Nasar in the street. Years later, the townspeople who could have done something but didn't turn to the code for consolation, believing that "affairs of honor are sacred monopolies, giving access only to those who are part of the drama." The comment made by Prudencia Cotes, Pablo Vicario's fiancée, is also suggestive of the pressure the Vicario brothers were under as a result of the code: "I knew what [Pablo and Pedro] were up to and I didn't only agree, I never would have married [Pablo] if he hadn't done what a man should do."

The structure of the narrative seemingly supports this code by giving the impression that Santiago's death was inevitable. His imminent demise is announced on the very first page of the novel and is announced several times again throughout the chronicle. Even the Vicario brothers are said to think of the murder "as if [it had] already happened." Yet opportunities to prevent the crime are plentiful. By the time Santiago reaches the pier to greet the bishop, for example, very few of the townspeople do not know that the Vicario brothers are waiting for him to kill him. Even the town's mayor and priest are aware of the twins' intentions and do nothing. In the end, William H. Gass writes, "one man is dead, and hundreds have murdered him." And indeed, everyone who knew of the twins' intentions and did nothing to stop them shares responsibility for the crime.

One of the few characters who does try to intervene and prevent the twins from carrying out the duty that has befallen them is Clotilde Armenta. That she fails in her attempt, Mark Millington writes, emphasizes the difficulty that female characters have in trying to move out of the passivity enforced by the male-dominated society. Indeed, the community is very much one characterized by a gender divide. In Angela Vicario's family, for example, boys are "brought up to be men" and girls are "reared to get married." Of her daughters, Angela's mother says that any man would be happy with them because "they've been raised to suffer." Moreover, it is not Angela who chooses to marry Bayardo San Román but rather her family who, like the widower Xius, falls prey to Bayardo's charm and money and obliges Angela to marry him. Millington argues that the murder of Santiago Nasar encapsulates much of the structure of power in the town. The murder, he

writes, involves only male characters who act in defense of an honor code that “ safeguards the dominant position of male characters.” Female characters, Millington continues, are “ peripheral to the main actions of the narrative just as they are peripheral to the structures of power in the society represented.”

Yet Millington offers a reading of the novel that focuses on what he describes as “ the untold story,” namely that of the marginalized and powerless Angela Vicario. Her story, Millington contends, would trace her relationship with Bayardo and culminate with their reconciliation — a reconciliation that undermines the dominant system by annulling their separation. Millington’s reading not only draws attention (once again) to the selective nature of the information used to construct the chronicle (the narrator chooses to focus on Santiago’s story, rather than Angela’s), but also to the multiple truths lurking behind and within it. This reading also highlights the subversive power implied by Angela’s refusal to feign her virginity on her wedding night. To do so, Millington explains, would have acknowledged the importance of the honor code.

More importantly, Angela’s refusal to feign her virginity provides her with a way out of an arranged marriage to a man that she does not love and eventually allows her to break free of the authority that forced her into the marriage. Later, when Angela discovers that she does indeed have feelings for Bayardo, she begins to write him letters and discovers that she has become “ mistress of her fate for the first time.” In the version of events constructed by the narrator, however, the details of her story remain largely

untold. Trapped and represented in another's chronicle, she is once again subjected to male authority by a narrator who uses pieces of her story to tell the inevitable-seeming story of a death foretold.

Source: Jeffrey M. Lilburn, in an essay for Novels for Students, Gale, 2000.

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