

A character sketch about maria clara



Maria Clara de los Santos, commonly known as Maria Clara, is the heroine in Jose Rizal's novel "Noli Me Tangere". In the novel she was described as the daughter of Pia Alba and Kapitan Tiago, but her biological father turns out to be Padre Damaso, a Spanish friar. She never met her mother since Pia Alba died upon giving birth to Maria Clara. She was also described to be the love interest of Crisostomo Ibarra, the hero in the novel.

Maria Clara and Crisostomo Ibarra's relationship was forbidden because Ibarra was said to be a filibustero who seeks to go against the Church, more specifically, against the way of the Spanish friars. She was sent to a convent called Beaterio de Santa Clara, and there she developed femininity under religion. Further in the novel, Maria Clara was described to have the physical qualities of a Spanish woman – fair skin, pointed nose, and all the qualities of a common mestiza.

She was also described as a woman so beautiful, graceful, and charming, and was promoted by Rizal as the "ideal image of a Filipino woman".

Because of this, Maria Clara was viewed to be an image of a "True Woman", possessing the virtues of one, namely: Piety, wherein Religion was given much value; Purity, where Virginity was seen as a woman's greatest treasure; Submission, which requires all women to be submissive and obedient to men because they were regarded as superiors; and Domesticity, where a woman's actual sphere was the home where her role is to become a wife and a mother.

And since women before were physically described to be soft and weak, Maria Clara was made an image of a true woman because of Rizal's

description of her as a Filipina maiden who is delicate, feminine, with eyes always downcast, an Oriental decoration, has pure soul, and has a sense of identity. The basis of Maria Clara's character was Rizal's first love, Leonor Rivera.

Their love was reflected in Maria Clara and Crisostomo Ibarra's relationship in the novel, wherein they wrote letters to each other to continue showing their deep affection in spite of the distance between them. Though their love had a tragic ending, there were still many proofs of their faithfulness to each other even after they got separated. Furthermore, Maria Clara had symbolisms to the Filipino people.

She is known to represent the motherland of Filipinos, the Philippines. She is also the personification of the sad state of the Filipino country during Rizal's time. These sad states were portrayed in the life events faced and experienced by Maria Clara in the novel. Some of these were her tragic experiences inside the convent where she got habitually raped for 13 years straight, and aside from that, also locked up, punished, and starved mercilessly.