

Fate the hero and santiago the victim



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There are a copious of characters that play some vital role in Chronicle of a Death Foretold - minor or major - that individually pose as an example or symbol for a theme or idea. Consider the bishop, who only appears momentarily in the beginning of the story to cross himself from a distance. His behavior is befitting that of a religious figure, who neither shows passion nor concern for his duty to the masses as a representative of God. Observe Bayardo San Roman's sisters who cry excessively to hide their shame of his failed marriage; highlighting the importance of keeping up appearances for the public eye. The colonel as well, plays a significant role in his meek attempt at stopping the twins from killing Santiago. In spite of his position of authority, the colonel evidently places society and tradition first before his duty to the law, thus exemplifying the corruption prevalent in the society's jurisdiction.

With all of these examples, it is manifest that the novella is rich with meaning, as even the smallest of roles contribute to illustrate a concept or subject matter present in the story. However, the question used to instigate this analysis is, among all of these characters, are there any winners in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold? Is it Angela, for having successfully placed the blame on Santiago, whom she clearly shows no particular attachment to? Is it the Vicario twins for restoring honor to their family name despite their obvious reluctance to do so? Is it the respectable Cristo Bedoya, who runs all over town at the end of the story in a futile attempt to warn Santiago of the planned murder? Or perhaps it is all of society, who have, in their collective unconscious, permitted the murder to happen out of their honor-killing ideology.

Based upon scrutiny and assessment, the answer would have to be fate. Fate is the only winner of the story; the only one who appears to have had everything go according to her plan. From the very beginning readers are given a glimpse of fate at work. An example of which is how, on the morning of his death, Santiago leaves the house through the front door, which, "except for festive occasions, remained closed and barred." Ironically, this is the door Santiago chose to exit from, which happens to be where the Vicario twins were waiting with their knives to kill him. It is even more bizarre because Santiago left to receive the bishop who would be at the docks at the rear end of his house, so it would have been more efficient and convenient for him to have left through the commonly used rear door that "opened onto the street to the new docks." Yet, "in spite of the fact that he would have to walk completely around the house in order to reach the docks," it was the front door, the door which would later be named "The Fatal Door" because of this incident, that Santiago chose to go through.

Moreover, there are multiple traces of magical realism within the novella that hint at Fate's influence, such as Clotilde Armenta's impression of Santiago when he exited the door of his house at dawn, remembering him to have "already looked like a ghost," thereby symbolizing the idea that death is already upon him - there is no escaping it. Another prominent example is how Divina Flor thought she had seen Santiago enter the house and go upstairs to his room, and so believing that Santiago had safely escaped the Vicario twins. This was unfortunately only her imagination, a trick of the mind's eye. If she had not mistakenly "seen" this, Santiago could possibly have had a chance to seek refuge in his house when the twins began to

come after him. It is inexplicable as to why or how Divina Flor had this misleading vision. Its incomprehensibility can only be explained with the notion of the influence of an external force such as fate.

To summarize, all of the events that lead up to Santiago's death prove to be preordained. Cristo Bedoya, for example, searched frantically for Santiago to warn him of his imminent death, but was always at the wrong place at the wrong time. Furthermore, he even grabbed Santiago's gun from the Nasar house in order to aid Santiago in protecting himself. However, he had not known that the gun was unloaded, and so his efforts were to no avail. The Vicario twins as well, waited for Santiago outside the rarely used front door because they expected him not to come out from there, but for whatever "fatal coincidence," he did. Finally, Santiago could have been able to save himself in his own home, but by some horrible fate, his own mother locks the front door on him, for she had believed that her son was safely in his room. Thus, by Fate's hand, Santiago's mother as well had had a role in his murder.

In conclusion, the characters of the story - in particular the main characters - are all victims of fate. Although Santiago is considered a tragic hero, fate can also be regarded as the true hero; the winner of the story. From Santiago's ominous dream, to having missed and overlooked crucial warnings of his death until the very end, Santiago Nasar is trapped in a web woven by Fate. He is her greatest victim.