

Novel review: the townspeople



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In chapter one, many of the townspeople agree “ the weather is funereal” (4). In addition, Santiago has a dream about “ going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling” (3) and when he dies, the villagers say that there is a “ cloudy, low sky and the thick smell of still waters, and that at the moment of the misfortune a thin drizzle is falling like the one Santiago Nasar had seen in his dream grove” (4). It is also strange that on the day the Vicario twins kill Santiago, the bishop is coming to visit their village.

If it was any other day, Santiago would have come and gone from his house using the back door but since the day is such a special event, Santiago decides to go to and from his house from the front door, which allows his on-looking killers to see that he is in his house. Additionally, there is a note left under the front door of Santiago’s house warning him that he is going to get murdered by Pablo and Pedro Vicario, yet no one finds the note until after the crime. The Nasar family’s maid states that Santiago “ already looked like a ghost” (15) when he comes down to the kitchen for coffee on the morning of his death.

Finally, the last ironic thing Santiago stated in chapter one is “ That’s what my wedding’s going to be like. Life will be too short for people to tell about it” (18). Not only is life too short for people to talk about his wedding, but life is too short for Santiago, himself, to even have a wedding, let alone another day to live. In chapter two, the reader is informed that the Vicario brothers are extremely protective of their younger sister, Angela.

Angela marries Bayardo San Román, who returns her back to her family after discovering that his new bride is not a virgin. Angela then tells her brothers that she has lost her virginity to Santiago Nasar and then the two men go off and search for him. The reader also discovers that if Santiago has in fact slept with Angela, he would have told his friends. As stated by the narrator, who is also Santiago's friend, "I was with him all the time, in the church and at the festival, and none of us caught a glimpse of any change in his manner" (41). Santiago shows no guilt during Angela and Bayardo's wedding. Another ironic fact in chapter two is when Santiago says at the wedding party, "I don't want any flowers at my funeral" (42). He has no idea that the next day, his friend would see to it that there would be no flowers at the funeral.

The name of the novel ties in to an important sentence in chapter 3, "There had never been a death more foretold" (50). There has never been a more predicted death than Santiago Nasar's because the Vicario brothers tell everyone they see that they are going to kill Santiago. In comparison to the short story, "The Lottery", where none of the villagers try to stop a horrible tradition from occurring even though they know the outcome of the event, the people who know the twins are going to kill Santiago do not do anything about it. Many of the villagers believe that the Vicario twins are pretending, because they think the two boys were drunk and know them as well-respected men. In addition, when people ask Pablo and Pedro why they are going to kill Santiago, all the two say are "Santiago Nasar knows why" (53).

One of the only people who try to stop the twins is Clotilde Armenta, the storekeeper's wife that lives across the street from Santiago. While the two

boys are waiting for Santiago in the shop, Clotilde ruthlessly tries to stop them from carrying out their plan. Although she tells her husband and many others about the impending murder, no one believes her because it is such an unbelievable tale. As said on page 59, " They came to sharpen their knives a second time and once more they shouted for people to hear that they were going to cut Santiago Nasars guts out, so I believed they were kidding around". The fact that Pablo and Pedro walk around the town with butcher knives in their hands, as well as sharpening their tools twice, indicates that they are going to do something dangerous, yet no one sees the signs and ignores the evidence.

The townspeople are ignorant to believe that the twins re joking even though they have all the signals right in front of them. I think that the Vicario brothers know that killing Santiago is wrong, but they think that they need to commit the crime in order to rid their sister's dishonor. In addition, I believe that the twins are waiting for someone to stop them, that way they can say they try to kill Santiago but are stopped. Pablo recalls that on the day of the murder " it hadn't been easy for him to convince his brother of their final resolve" (60). The two know that murdering a good friend is ultimately wrong, but they remind each other that their goal is to restore the honor back to their family. On the first page of Chapter 4, Father Carmen states, " It was as if we killed him all over again after he was dead." (72). Not only does Santiago get murdered, but in a way, his corpse is dually murdered because his guts are falling out and his body is mutilated.

The priest that does the autopsy on Santiago thinks that it is humiliating for Santiago, even after he is dead, because of his awful condition. On page 75,

Santiago is compared to Christ on the crucifix. This comparison is accurate because both Christ and Santiago are murdered without trial, and like Jesus, who was murdered on a wooden cross, Santiago is murdered and held up on a wooden door with knives. Ironically, even though the Vicario brothers follow through with their plan in the end, they both experience guilt and sickness while in jail. In addition, what seems so right and necessary to the Vicario brothers in terms of killing Santiago, in the end, is so wrong for them. They become ill and cannot rid themselves or their consciences of the awful smell of Santiago's dead corpse. The act of killing Santiago ultimately scars this town for life.

As stated on page 97, " Hortensia Baute, whose only participation was having seen two bloody knives, that weren't bloody yet, felt so affected by the hallucination that she fell into a penitential crisis, in one day, unable to stand it any longer, she ran out naked into the street." Hortensia Baute, in addition to many others, such as Flora Miguel, Aura Villeros, Don Rogerlio de la Flor, and Placida Linero, all have been affected by this murder. The act of this murder leaves an open wound for these people.

Since there is no hard evidence that Santiago had been with Angela, he is an innocent victim who is brutally murdered. As stated on page 100, " The victim's varied behavior during his last hours was overwhelming proof of his innocence...So the murdered man's refusal to worry could have been suicide." If Angela lost her virginity to Santiago, then he would have showed signs of worry because he knew that her brothers were coming for him, but because Santiago acts normal and innocent on the day of his death, one

realizes that he has no idea that Angela told her brothers about Santiago and that they are going to kill him.