

Love in the time of cholera: overcoming the obstacles of love

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In the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the author focuses on the obstacles of love that Florentino faces with Fermina. Written in the late 1800s, author Gabriel Marquez tells the story of Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. A young romantic couple who are split, only to be reunited with rejection. Fermina marries a doctor and for fifty-two years Florentino waits, but not without sleeping with many of different women. After Fermina's husband dies, Florentino begins to make an attempt to confess his love for Fermina again. This is just one of the obstacles Florentino has to conquer. Throughout the story there are multiple of instances where it became challenging for Florentino and Fermina. But the determination from the both of them help overcome many of those obstacles.

The novel is set in a city in the Caribbean Sea. Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza are two teenagers who fall in love at a young age. Florentino and Fermina rarely see each other and write love letters for each other. Fermina is caught with a letter at school by her teacher, and the academy expels her. After this, her and her father move away for some time; when she returns, she shows her maturity when rejecting Florentino and choosing to marry wealthy doctor Juvenal Urbino. Throughout their marriage, Fermina discover her husband is having an affair. After she confronts him, he feels horrible from what he has done and tries to apologize. One day Urbino's pet parrot escapes its cage in a tree nearby and he falls trying to reach for it and dies. Florentino is determined to win Fermina back and this was his chance. At Dr. Urbino's wake, Florentino shows up and tells Fermina about the love he still has for her. She is appalled by Florentino's attempt and she writes him a

letter to show it. After Florentino calms Fermina down and writes her often, they get back together. Florentino asked Fermina to go with him on a cruise and she accepted. They fall in love but when they return, Fermina refuses to allow people to see her with Florentino. The ship raises a yellow flag to indicate a cholera outbreak, and no port will allow them dock. Florentino and Fermina cruised forever.

Love in the Time of Cholera is a sentimental novel about the enduring power of true love. This relates to "The Many Faces of Love" in Chapter 4, more specifically the obstacles to love. One of the obstacles mentioned by the book was age. Florentino and Fermina met at a young age. Florentino tried to give Fermina a love letter, but she refused until getting approval from her father. Florentino encounters his first obstacle, Fermina's dad. He allows Florentino to give Fermina the letter, and they begin to frequently write love letters. Fermina is caught writing a letter at her academy and is expelled. Her father finds more letters in her room and punishes her. They leave on a journey and now have been presented a new obstacle. Now that they don't see each other anymore there are no more letters, now they communicate by telegraph. Florentino's biggest obstacle came when Fermina returned. He still had love for her, and she had matured. She married Dr. Juvenal Urbino upon her return; her father insisted she marry the doctor who was a physician. This presented Florentino with his biggest obstacle: Fermina being married. This created a class division. Florentino and Fermina were considered to be in two different social classes after Fermina married Dr. Urbino. Fermina was considered to be high-class and was highly respected

by the community. However, Florentino was considered middle-class; he acquired his uncle's company and became president, but he was not as popular. For fifty-two years Florentino faced many obstacles, but his time may have come. Dr. Urbino fell to his death after trying to get his pet parrot out of a tree after it had escaped. He fell while reaching for the parrot and died. When Florentino hears this, he ends his affair and attends Dr. Urbino's wake to win back Fermina. He does so convincingly and asks her on a cruise. She accepts and long story short, they cruise forever.

Those were some of the emotional obstacles Florentino overcame, but there are physical obstacles he has to overcome as well. Márquez uses symbols such as flowers and animals to describe the effects of love and cholera throughout the novel. Fermina admires flowers because the smell and looks bring her joy. Florentino however does not receive as much joy from flowers. They remind him of the scent of Fermina and the love that he has for her. When he could not be with her, he ate flowers and became sick and would vomit. This sickness was comparable to cholera and the pain that it brought. The author also uses animals as an obstacle. Fermina loves animals but this presented an obstacle in her marriage. Dr. Urbino insisted on Fermina only having animals that could talk. " Nothing that does not speak will come into this house," said Urbino. Urbino had a history with parrots, so she bought a parrot. The parrot would sleep outside except for December through March, where it would be inside a cage. One day it got out of its cage and was stuck in a tree. Dr. Urbino to climb a ladder to get the parrot and when he reached for the parrot, he fell and died. Fermina would later cut down the tree and

gave the parrot to a museum to avoid being reminded of the death of her husband. These obstacles remind us of the many different barriers you may have to face in a relationship or marriage, and how you can overcome those obstacles. It is important for the author to include these in the book because it allows for a couple of different plots throughout the novel. Each character is presented with a problem that they have to find a solution for. Some solutions are out of their control, but some can be much more complicated than it may seem. The author's clever use of Florentino eating flowers allowed him to set up a comparison between his sickness and cholera. He brings awareness of how ill the disease can make someone.

Florentino's style of love may have been noticed quickly by readers. He falls quickly in love with Fermina at a young age, and he is stuck on her for the rest of his life. This can be compared to "Lee's Six Styles of Love" that are listed in the textbook. There are three primary styles and three derived styles explained in the book. Eros is an immediate attraction to the physical appearance of another, basically love at first sight, which is shown between Florentino and Fermina. "Erotic lovers are often preoccupied with pleasing their lover, and sexual intimacy is strongly desired," says the textbook. This is a perfect description of Florentino's character throughout the course of the novel. Ludus is described as a carefree, nonpossessive love, without a deep commitment or lasting emotional involvement. "A ludus lover often has several partners simultaneously..." as described in the textbook can also be compared to Florentino, which is a derived style of love called Mania. Mania combines eros and ludus. Manic love is characterized by obsession and

possessiveness. According to Lee, “ This type of love seldom, if ever, develops into a long-lasting, committed relationship.” Moving on from Florentino, Fermina has a different type of love. She may be viewed as storge. Storge is an unexciting and uneventful style of loving, which Fermina lives most of her life. “ An affectionate style of love with an emphasis on companionship. It usually develops slowly and gradually develops into love.” This definition from the textbook is very similar to how Fermina is portrayed in the novel. Some might argue that she is the derived style, pragma, which combines ludus and storge. She is logical and practical, and compatibility is a must. “ A pragmatic lover rationally chooses a partner who shares their background, interests, concerns, and values. Although she does not have an overwhelmingly derived love comparison, throughout the book she demonstrates both personalities.

Gabriel Marquez showed a lot of symbolism throughout his entire book. From start to finish, he shows how strong love can be. Florentino waited years for his chance to express his love to Fermina and overcame many obstacles along the way. Although his plan of dating and getting married to Fermina at a young age was put to a stop because of her marrying Dr. Urbino, Florentino's love for Fermina stayed constant. Fermina also faced many obstacles along her journey in the novel. She fell in love with Florentino and dated him at a young age, then she returned much wiser, and rejected Florentino because of his immaturity. After she married Dr. Urbino she goes through many ups and downs throughout their marriage. When Dr. Urbino dies, she handles his death fairly well. When she moves on, it is with her

continuous love, Florentino. His symbolism continues in their personalities and how they construct themselves. Florentino is a reckless lover, determined to be with Fermina. On the other hand, Fermina is changed by her childhood self, and has higher standards as an adult. She marries a doctor and moves on from Florentino's childish love. This shows the maturity in Fermina and how she was determined to not let anyone bring her down. Although, in the end they do get together, their love was not always promising. Florentino's determination to be with Fermina could never stop the love he felt for her.