

# [Chronicle of a death foretold argumentative essay](https://assignbuster.com/chronicle-of-a-death-foretold-argumentative-essay/)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ novella Chronicle of a Death Foretold portrays a theme of struggle for genuine individuality through the first person perspective of an unnamed narrator in a small Columbian sea-port town during the 1950’s. Through the characterization of central characters; Bayardo San Roman and Angela Vicario, the author criticizes the culture of this Columbian town as he strongly implies how the community’s obsessive concern of the honor and reputation of an individual can lead to the impediment of character growth and individuality.

Within the narrator’s characterization of Bayardo San Roman in chapter two, the narrator also characterizes the townspeople’s values and conventional interest in the business of others. The first time Bayardo San Roman appeared to the town, all the townspeople were curious about the arrival of this mysterious man, and aspired to obtain knowledge based on his status and wealth. This was apparent when the narrator’s mother wrote about Bayardo’s arrival in a letter to her son, providing details about his occupation as a “ track engineer”, his ability to “ doing everything.. uite well” and his “ access to endless resources”(26-27).

Due to the fact that the “ people like him (Bayardo) a lot” (27), respect is shown to him by the community. Wealth and status are evidently valuable qualities to have as a man during this time period. As a man of great reputation, Bayardo at this point in the novella, desires to further enhance his status by finding a wife. He tells the townspeople that he has been “ going from town to town looking for someone to marry” (26), suggesting that Bayardo has a strong belief in the traditions of this society that a man his age should settle down, and begin a family.

Bayardo shows lack of individuality as he feels obligated to fulfill his expectations. Bayardo is desperate to find a woman to marry not for love but for convenience as an upgrade in his status. This is demonstrated through the aloof manner in which Bayardo erratically decides to pursue Angela Vicario, simply after seeing her cross the square with her mother. The characterization of Angela Vicario is a reflection of the expectations of a woman in this Columbian town, as Angela’s upbringing consisted of domestic chores. Angela’s mother, Purisma “ reared” her girls “ to get married”(31) by teaching them how to sew, washes, and iron.

Purisma describes her daughters as “ perfect”, proving that the highly regarded traits in a woman are those that involve housework. The value of a woman from this sea-port town also includes beauty as well as her ability “ to suffer” (31), demonstrating the insignificant role that women play. Bayardo takes notice of Angela’s appealing qualities and begins his courtship through extravagant gifts. Despite Bayardo’s wealthy status and good reputation, Angela is distinctively unimpressed with him, as he “ hadn’t even tried to court her, but had bewitched the family with his charm” (34).

Angela’s indifferent feelings towards Bayardo reveal her rare individuality as it would be customary to seize the opportunity of gaining such a prospect as well respected and prosperous as Bayardo. Angela’s rare uniqueness was further juxtaposed with Bayardo’s impassive obligation to continue to court Angela through gifts revealing his wealth and status- such as the music box and the Xius’ house- rather than making an effort in getting to know Angela. Angela’s unique taste in men is, however; condemned by her family who strongly believes in the customs of their community and aspires to attain a higher status through a marriage to Bayardo.

Despite the fact that Angela does not love him, and perceives him as “ conceited” (29), she is simply told by her mother that, “ love can be learned” (35). Angela now faces a dilemma between the yearnings of her heart and her obligation to fulfill her daughterly duties. Consequently, Angela’s true personality is revealed when she does take Bayardo’s hand in marriage, proving that her desire to please her parents and meet her expectations is superior to her potential to grow as an individual.

By the end of the novel, Marquez insinuates truth in the statement, “ Where other people exist genuine individuality is never possible”. Both Angela and Bayardo left their Columbian sea-port homes after the revelation of Angela’s impurity, and only 23 year later, does the narrator encounter them. From this encounter, Angela is no longer the timid and obedient young woman she once was but a “ mature” and “ witty” (89) woman that was unrecognizable to the narrator.

During the years away from her old scrutinizing town, Angela appears to have grown as an individual with a determined attitude to do what she pleases. An example of this would be her pursuit in Bayardo’s love, after she realized that, “ hate and love are reciprocal passions” (93). Although an unmarried woman of Angela’s age was unacceptable during that time, Angela continued to prove her loyalty to Bayardo by not getting married and continuing to write him love letter without a reply.

Bayardo’s growth in character is also demonstrated by the end of the novel, when he arrives at Angela’s doorsteps, “ carrying a suitcase… with almost two thousand letters that she had written him” (95). His appearance on Angela’s doorstep proves his forgiveness of Angela’s humiliating deceit and establishes the fact that like Angela, he too had remained loyal to Angela, without marrying another woman. By remaining unmarried at an old age, both characters demonstrated their lack of concern for the customs of society, and finally learning to follow their hearts’ desires.

In conclusion, the old traditions and customs upheld by the Columbian sea-port town was the source of the hindrance to the growth of Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roman, as they were too constricted by the communities’ expectations to grow as individuals. It was only until after the incident of Santiago’s death that revealed clarity about the insignificance of the concern for honor and status. Santiago Nasar’s death served as a purpose for both characters to escape their constrictive town and gain insight and strength to pursue their individual aspirations.