

# Death foretold by symbols

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Gabriel Garcia Marquez is the author of the very intriguing novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The chronicle “ is very strange and brilliantly conceived,” and “ a sort of metaphysical murder mystery in which the detective, Garcia Marquez himself, reconstructs events associated with the murder 27 years earlier of Santiago Nasar, a rich, handsome fellow who lived in the Caribbean town where the author grew up” (Michaels, P. 1). Marquez plays himself in the novel, interviewing people who remember the murder and studies documents assembled by the court.

He gathers various kinds of data—dreams, gossip, philosophical speculation, weather reports—and creates a chronological record of what occurred. The data that is accumulated demonstrates that symbolism was very prominent in the story and essential to the death of Santiago Nasar. Symbolism is first set up when it is introduced to the readers that Santiago Nasar had dreamed the night before his death that he was flying: “ He’d dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit” (Marquez, P. ).

Beginning with the place, Nasar was passing by timber trees which are evergreens. “ Evergreens represent immortality, everlasting life or an undying spirit, ironically enough” (“ Symbolism in *Chronicle of a Death foretold*”). This adds to the whole ironic theme represented in a symbolic way. What is also symbolic about this piece is that flying usually represents moving to the next level spiritually. So that foreshadows his death. Another related dream that Nasar had was the one in which he was alone in a tinfoil

airplane and “flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything” (Marquez, P. ).

These almond trees are a symbol of virginity, divine favor, and purity. Trees are also recognized as being feminine. This could be representative of Santiago Nasar flying through a grove of virginal Angela Vicario. His airplane did not bump into anything, leaving the trees fully intact. This could also represent the innocence of Nasar, saying that he did not touch Angela. His innocence could also be represented in a form of Jesus. Santiago and Jesus Christ can be direct parallels when Marquez writes: “ Santiago put on a shirt and pants of white linen...” (Marquez, P5).

Since white is the color of innocence and purity, this choice of clothing promotes those attributes. Jesus wore a linen cloth before his death as well and was aware that they were going to kill him, much like Nasar. Not only is this symbolism, but religious also. The bishop coming to town also gives a slight symbolic feature. This is because a bishop could resemble god in the way when he blesses, hears sins and such (“ Bishop”). So god coming to town could foreshadow something big occurring as well.

As many Christians and Catholics would agree it's a very big deal, so it being a very big deal, one would think that everyone would behave but the exact opposite occurs when Santiago Nasar is murdered in such a brutal way right in front of his home. This story is filled with irony. When Nasar tells his mother about the symbolic dreams it would have been ideal for her to decipher them and tell him that they meant death. But instead it is mentioned that she did not recognize anything ominous within them.

It is also quite ironic when he mentions, the day of his death, that “ it was a very beautiful day” (Marquez, P. ) when most people agreed that the weather was funeral, with a cloudy, low sky and the thick smell of still waters, and that at the moment of the misfortune a thin drizzle was falling like the one Santiago Nasar had seen in his dream grove. Another malicious omen ignored. In a certain way, it is understandable that a lot of omens and symbols are ignored because they are not facts. The work that Marquez does is supposed to be “ journalistic and factual” (“ Chronicle of a Death Foretold”) and symbols would be counter-productive because they are not very good evidence, so they become anecdotes.

However, if the people in town would have interpreted the symbols and warned him, he would be alive. But then again, if that would have occurred in the interesting novel, it wouldn't be called Chronicle of a Death Foretold. It would just be Death or something like that, which eliminates all the entertainment. Returning to the symbols, we also see that flowers are important. A day before the death of Santiago Nasar, he distinctively told Marquez that he did not like flowers because they remind him of a funeral.

This is also ironic because usually flowers are meant to represent purity, love, happiness, etc. But in his case it was the opposite. Other prominent symbols are the knives that the Vicario brothers used to kill Nasar, because almost everyone had seen them. Not only did they see the knives but when they did the Vicario brothers even rubbed it more in by saying that they were going to kill Santiago Nasar. The townspeople were very ignorant by believing that they would not carry on with the malicious deed. So they had great reticence

by doing this. The ending adds to the both ironic and symbolic theme of the story.

Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roman reconcile and it is foreknown if one looks at how many letters Angela sends Bayardo in the years that they are separated. But the twist is that he does not even open them. Chronicle of a Death Foretold puzzles the reader by demonstrating many symbols that foreshadow the death of Santiago Nasar. Dreams, clothing, flowers, weather, knives, and letters are just a few that make the story more interesting by giving it a symbolic view. If they had been ignored the story would not be the story that it is. Therefore, symbolism and irony play a very significant role in the story.