

Ultimate responsibility
lie for the death of
santiago nasar essay
sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ On the day they were going to kill him”[1], is the opening to Chronicle of a Death Foretold, by Gabriel Marquez, is a novella written in the form of a pseudo-journalistic reconstruction;, in which the reader is told about the ‘ murder death’ from the first line. Here comes the importance of the theme of responsibility; we, along with the narrator, work backwards to unravel the reasons and the mysteries behind the murder. However, we must differentiate between two opposite aspects of this theme; responsibility and action. Some characters were prominently conventionally responsible for the death of Santiago, through their actions. Their actions have lead in a direct or indirect manner, to the latter’s murder. On the other hand, other characters can be perceived as responsible through their negligence and laxity. Marquez lucidly vividly depicts the Columbian community, where the novel takes place, as a tightly knit one, in which more than twenty-two people were either formally or informally informed about the Pablo twins’ intention.

Many of these characters were closely linked to Santiago and have seen him the day he was murdered, such characters include; Divina Flor, Colonel Aponte and LeonardoLeandro Pornoy. Yet, none of these characters managed to alert Santiago about his predicted fate. Furthermore, alongside the ignorance of the different characters, the Colombian code of honour and culture can be also perceived as a responsible figure. The society seemed to regard Angela’s violation, as a more serious event compared to a loss of life. For them, honour is a fundamental moral trait that is vital to keep intact and its prominence surpasses their sturdy religious beliefs. Angela Vicario, in spite of not taking the action and killing the protagonist, shares beares much

initial of the responsibility for Santiago's death. She named him as her deflowerer to her brothers, thus imposing on him a death sentence for his wrongful actions. Yet, it could never be completely proved candidly know if it was really Santiago who deflowered her.

Angela is asked on three separate occasions to name her deflowerer, these three occasions come with a wide span of time in between. The first occasion, was when she was first returned to her house, after Bayardo San Roman learned that she had lost her virginity before their marriage. The narrator conveys in prodigious detail her firmness and decisiveness in naming Santiago, " she nailed it to the wall with her well-aimed dart, like a butterfly with no will whose sentence has always been written. (Marquez, P. 47)" As for the second occasion, the narrator explains that Angela revealed in the court reports, according to the case's judge that, " He (Santiago) was my perpetrator" (Marquez, P. 101). Yet, She does not provide any other details, as to where or when this happened, which reduces her credibility.

Finally the third occasion, comes years after the murder took place, when the narrator was trying to unravel the mysteries of the case. He had already come to a conclusion that Angela's naming of Santiago could have been an attempt to save her real lover's life. The latter was notorious of being a ladies' man and consequently it was easy for people to deem that he is the deflowerer. Furthermore, Santiago was an intimate friend of the Vicario twins and therefore, she supposed that they would rule him out from their notion of honour. Yet, when she was asked, she boldly responded, "' He was the one. (Marquez, P. 91)'" On both of these three occasions, we get an

impression of her decisiveness and resolution; she was always ready to say the name.

Divina Flor's actions played a pivotal and significant role towards the theme of responsibility. Marquez clearly portrays her affection and overwhelm towards for Santiago. Yet, the narrator also reveals, that she loathed abhorred his sexual abuse. She along with her mother, Victoria Guzman, were notified about the plans to kill Santiago, the morning of the incident. However, they both determined, not to mention it to the latter. It could be perceived that she, as a young woman, just stepping into the world of adolescence, was not yet able define her feelings towards Santiago.

The narrator comments that, "(Divina) didn't warn him because she was nothing but a frightened child at the time, incapable of a decision of her own." She was unclear about her feelings towards him and permitted her mother to decide for her. However, Divina's main contribution to the theme of responsibility arises at the end of the novella. She led Plácida Linero, into locking the door, deeming believing that she had seen Santiago had gone up to his room. Yet, in fact the latter, was assaulted by the Vicario twins, in front of his house and the narrator comments that, "(he) only lacked a few seconds to get in when the door closed. (Marquez, P. 119)" Despite, the fact that her illusion sounds implausible, Divina confirms that she had seen him come inside the house, " It was a very clear vision" (Marquez, P. 118). We, as the readers are left with no option but to believe her.

Two other characters; LeonardoLeandro Pornoy and Colonel Aponte can be both held responsible for the murder, they had equivalent chances to save

Santiago's life. Leonardo Leandro Pornoy, the policeman, was given first hand information, when the Vicario twins, informed him of their intent to kill Santiago. However, his ignorance prevented him from arresting them or even confiscating their knives. In lieu, he only passed the news to Colonel Aponte and dismissed the twins' account. Similarly, the Colonel, who was informed twice about the murder, was apathetic and dawdling primitive in his actions. The narrator reveals that, " He'd settled so many fights between friends the night before that he was in no hurry for another one. (Marquez, P. 56)" Here the narrator places great emphasis on his diction, in choosing the term, " friends", thus, highlighting the unlikely nature of the Vicario brothers murdering Santiago. The Colonel visited the twins at Clotilde Armenta's store and confiscated their knives.

He alleged that through confiscating the twins' knives, they will not possess any equipment to commit a murder, and also vindicated his action, by describing them as " a pair of big bluffers. (Marquez, P. 56)" Furthermore, he also stresses that he cannot take further actions because, " no one is arrested upon suspicion.(Marquez, P. 57)" On the second occasion, Cristo Bedoya, Santiago's best friend, tells the Colonel, that he has seen the Vicario twins with a new set of knives. The mayor, " promised to take care of it at once." However, he in fact disregarded the prospect of a murder happening, and got distracted by dominoes that night. During his game, the massacre murder was committed. The Colonel should have comprehended the Vicario twins' determination to kill Santiago, which has lead them into getting a new set of knives, (and sharpening them), after their first were confiscated.

One might perceive the Columbian society, its code of honour and traditions as one of the responsible factors for the murdering of Santiago. The narrator reveals that at first, the Vicario twins did not want to get involved in the marriage of their sister, "it looked to [them] like woman problems."

However, their perception of this subject soon changes, once they find out that their sister is has been returned because she had lost her virginity. They become obliged to defend their sister's respect and to obey by the Columbian code of honour. The restoring of her dignity, hence becomes a projected necessity action for them to make and they are told that, "' Honor doesn't wait. (Marquez, P. 63)" Yet, the narrator divulges that they were compelled to commit the murder. It was a duty that they had to fulfil, in order to meet the society's expectations. Many characters; including Clotilde Armenta touched mentioned this compulsion, she even reveals that, "' It's to spare those poor boys from the horrible duty that's fallen on them (Marquez, P. 57)'"

Throughout this novella, many characters (including the Columbian society itself), could be beheld responsible through their actions, for the murder of Santiago. Yet, one might sense that it is the Columbian code of honour that evidently stands out as the authentic slayer. Its old-fashioned ideology and verdicts on the case of Angela Vicario was what has lead to Santiago's murder. The Vicario twins were persuaded into assassinating their friend, in order to regain their sister's lost pride. We could never truly know if it was Santiago who deflowered Angela, yet he was still murdered in conviction that he was the offender. The narrator divulges that, " Nevertheless, what has alarmed him (the judge) most at the conclusion of his excessive diligence

was not having found a single clue, not even the most improbable that Santiago had been the cause of the wrong. (Marquez, P. 100)” This is in spite of the abundant evidence collected in terms of the investigations, interviews, reports and collection of facts. Marquez, delights as a writer, in not offering the reader what he wants to know. We are told about the murder from the first lines of the book but are left to judge whether Santiago was the deflowerer or not.

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