One Hundred Years of Solitude: An Introduction

“One Hundred Years of Solitude, written by Gabriel García Márquez, is an epic novel tracing six generations of the Buendía family. The novel is based on people and events from García Márquez’s life: his grandfather (who really did father seventeen illegitimate children), his grandmother (who is like the matriarch, Ursula) and his parents, as well as the conflict between liberals and conservatives, war, the Banana Strikes and the Banana Massacre. The tale of the Buendía’s spans one hundred years of life, death, passion, intrigue, rebellion, prophecy, rebirth, renewal and mystery in the fictional village of Macondo, which is based on García Márquez’s home time of Aracataca, Colombia.

The villagers are symbols for the loss of innocence, and the village of Macondo itself is a microcosm of human society, highlighting the effects of physical, mental, and psychological separation, or solitude. The novel demonstrates an involuntary submission to a kind of slow adulteration that can corrupt a culture over time. The novel is literally teeming with cultural, political, and religious subtext, making it one of the most intricate works in the canon of world literature. It is important to delve into One Hundred Years of Solitude’s mysteries with curiosity and appreciation for its brilliant literary effects. Yet, more than anything, it is a fascinating read that should be enjoyed for its humor, passion, wit, and imagination.”


What is Magical Realism?

The term magic realism, originally applied in the 1920’s to a school of painters, is used to describe the prose fiction of Jorge Luis Borges in Argentina, as well as the work of writers such as Gabriel García Márquez in Colombia, Gunter Grass of Germany, and John Fowles of England. These writers interweave, in an ever-shifting pattern, a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and descriptive details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tale...These novels violate, in various ways, standard novelistic expectations by drastic—and sometimes highly effective—experiments with subject matter, form, style, temporal sequence, and fusions of the everyday, the fantastic, the mythical and the nightmarish, in renderings that blur the traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic.