

# One Hundred Years of Solitude



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

García Márquez was raised by his maternal grandparents for the first ten years of his life in Aracataca, eventually moving to Sucre to live with his father, a pharmacist. García Márquez's grandfather was a great storyteller, and this combined with his grandfather's progressive politics were two of García Márquez's greatest influences. García Márquez was sent away to school in Baranquilla, where he began writing humorous poems and comic strips, though he was seen as a serious young man. He moved to Bogotá while completing his secondary studies and stayed on there for college to study law, though he still prioritized his writing. After an uprising, García Márquez moved to Cartagena to finish his degree and work as a reporter for the newspaper there. García Márquez never finished his higher studies, instead growing his career as a journalist, working in Cartagena, Barranquilla, Bogotá, and Caracas, Venezuela. García Márquez met his wife, Mercedes Barcha, while she was in school, and they decided to wait for her to finish while he traveled as a foreign correspondent. In 1958 they married and the following year, their first son Rodrigo García was born. The family traveled by Greyhound bus through the Southern United States and then settled in Mexico City, before their second son, Gonzalo was born. He published his first novella, *Leaf Storm*, in 1955 and then *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1967. After the publication, García Márquez moved his family to Barcelona, Spain, for seven years, and his recognition earned him the ability to help as a facilitator in negotiations between the Colombian government and guerillas there. His outspoken opinion on U.S. Imperialism prevented him from acquiring a visa by the U.S., a ban that was not lifted until Bill Clinton took office. García Márquez continued to publish creative work, including his second most well known [Love in the Time of Cholera](#) in 1985, two memoirs, and several screenplays. In 1999 he was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer, but treatment proved successful and the cancer went into remission. In 2012, his brother announced that García Márquez was suffering from dementia, and in April 2014, he was hospitalized in Mexico due to several infections, but he died later that month of pneumonia.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be read as an allegory of Colombian history, representing the nation's historical events and mythology through the Buendía family. Colombia's long history of social stratification and wealth disparity—vestiges of

colonial rule—are depicted in the differences between the simple life that the people of Macondo live and the struggle by interlopers like Fernanda to assimilate to village life. The war that is fought throughout the book is a reference to La Violencia, the civil war between the Colombian Liberal and Conservative parties, estimated to have cost the lives of some 200,000 people. The fighting took part largely in rural areas, with political leaders and police encouraging impoverished supporters of the Conservative Party to seize land from peasant Liberals. Censorship and reprisals against press reports were common at the time, as in the book when José Arcadio Segundo tries to spread the word about the massacre that takes place while the workers at the intrusive American banana plantation are striking. The people of Macondo prefer to believe the official report, which suppressed the total number dead, rather than believing the firsthand account of a radical. Though the timeline is condensed and the events reimagined in the context of the fictional town of Macondo, most major happenings have a real-life basis.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Gabriel García Márquez is known as one of four Latin American novelists most well known for the rise of Latin American literature in the 60s and 70s. The other writers were Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, Argentine Julio Cortázar and Mexican Carlos Fuentes. Among these writers, García Márquez is known as the representation of magical realism. Stylistically, the book was influenced by both Modernism (García Márquez was a fan of Woolf and Faulkner) and the Cuban Vanguardia movement which embraced both surrealism and the heritage of their island, becoming increasingly political in their ideology.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** One Hundred Years of Solitude
- **When Written:** 1955-1967
- **Where Written:** Mexico City
- **When Published:** 1967
- **Literary Period:** Latin American Boom
- **Genre:** Magic Realism
- **Setting:** Macondo, Colombia
- **Climax:** Aureliano is born with the tail of a pig, as feared and predicted by generations of the Buendía family. Aureliano finally deciphers the manuscript left by Melquíades, a hundred years before to be the story of his family, and a hurricane destroyed Macondo.
- **Antagonist:** Solitude and Time
- **Point of View:** Third person omniscient

## EXTRA CREDIT

**Romantic Inspiration.** Márquez's father had to work very hard to woo his mother. He was Conservative and had a reputation as a womanizer, and Márquez's mother's parents tried everything to get rid of the young man, but eventually they gave in, convinced by his dedication to their daughter. The story of their courtship is the inspiration for one of Márquez's other books, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, but echoes of family disapproval and infatuation can also be found in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

**Real Magic.** Gabriel García Márquez's grandmother influenced him with the way she treated the extraordinary as expected. She told him stories of ghosts and omens as though they were fact. Márquez incorporated this deadpan style of magical storytelling in his writing.



## PLOT SUMMARY

José Arcadio Buendía and his wife, Úrsula Iguarán, set out from Riohacha, Colombia to make a new home for themselves. While sleeping on a riverbank, José Arcadio Buendía dreams of the town of Macondo, a city made of mirrors, and he determines that the place where they sleep is where they should establish the town.

José Arcadio Buendía oversees the building of the village as his family grows—his sons José Arcadio (I) and Aureliano (later known as Colonel Aureliano Buendía) are born on the way to or in Macondo. A band of gypsies visits periodically to show the residents inventions like magnifying glasses, magnets, and flying carpets. The gypsy Melquíades leads this band, and he shares a prophecy written in code with José Arcadio Buendía, prompting him to become obsessed with technology, specifically alchemy.

The book flashes back to before José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán left Riohacha. They were warned that, because they are first cousins, their children could have genetic defects (two of their ancestors gave birth to a child with a **pig's tail**). Since they're reluctant to consummate their marriage, rumors swirl that José Arcadio Buendía is impotent, and he kills a man—Prudencio Aguilar—for mocking him.

Back in the present, the gypsies come to show José Arcadio Buendía a block of ice, which fascinates him. His older son, José Arcadio (now a teenager), is seduced by Pilar Ternera, a fortune teller whom he impregnates. However, he leaves town with the gypsies. Just after, Úrsula gives birth to her daughter, Amaranta, and leaves home to try to find her son, discovering a shortcut between Macondo and civilization in the process.

Pilar Ternera gives birth to José Arcadio's son Arcadio and the Buendía family adopts an orphan named Rebeca who suffers from contagious insomnia that causes memory loss, a condition

which grows to infect the whole town. Melquíades arrives with a cure for the amnesia: the photograph. José Arcadio Buendía tries to use the technology to take a photo of God, but he is unable to, and his son Aureliano tries to learn the silversmith trade from Melquíades. A representative of the central government, Don Apolinar Moscote, appears in the formerly-independent Macondo and José Arcadio Buendía challenges him, stripping him of much of his authority. Despite the Moscotes being enemies of the Buendía family, Aureliano falls in love with the youngest Moscote daughter, Remedios.

Waiting for his betrothed to come of age, Aureliano, too, sleeps with Pilar Ternera. Meanwhile, the Buendía daughters, Amaranta and Rebeca, fall in love with Pietro Crespi, the Italian pianola expert hired to give them dancing lessons. Crespi chooses Rebeca, and Amaranta vows to prevent their marriage. After Melquíades dies of old age, José Arcadio Buendía's obsessions with the mysteries of the world drive him to madness. Convinced that each day is the same as the one before, he is tied to a tree in the yard.

Remedios and Aureliano marry, but Amaranta sabotages the wedding of Pietro Crespi and Rebeca, which was to happen on the same day. Remedios dies soon after the wedding, pregnant with twins. When the eldest son, José Arcadio (who ran away with the gypsies), returns, Rebeca cannot resist her attraction to her adopted brother and they marry. Úrsula banishes the couple from the house. Aureliano takes an interest in the Liberal side of the war with the Conservatives, leading a rebellion in town before leaving to fight elsewhere. From this point on, he is known as Colonel Aureliano Buendía.

Arcadio is in charge of the town after the victory of the Liberal party, but he quickly becomes a dictator himself. Attracted to Pilar Ternera, he tries to sleep with her, but she knows he is her son, and so she pays Santa Sofía de la Piedad to go in her place. Arcadio marries her and she gives birth to their daughter Remedios the Beauty. When the Liberals lose the war, Arcadio is executed by firing squad. Pietro Crespi proposes to Amaranta but, despite her love for him, she declines. He commits suicide and she burns her hand to punish herself, wearing a black bandage over the burn for the rest of her life.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía and Colonel Gerineldo Márquez are sentenced to be executed by firing squad. José Arcadio prevents the execution at the last minute, and Colonel Aureliano Buendía returns to war. Eventually, he is deserted by the official Liberal party for his radical actions, and he realizes he is fighting not for his ideals, but out of pride, so he leaves the army. Santa Sofía de la Piedad gives birth to the twin sons of her dead husband, **naming** them José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo. Perhaps because of his recent brave actions saving his brother, José Arcadio is murdered, and his widow Rebeca becomes a hermit. Colonel Gerineldo Márquez is left to govern the town and pursues romance with Amaranta, but she spurns him, too. Finally, José Arcadio Buendía, the

patriarch tied to a tree, dies, and the sky rains yellow flowers.

Aureliano José, the son of José Arcadio and Pilar Ternera, grows up and finds himself attracted to his aunt Amaranta. They sleep naked together, but never consummate their feelings. When she insists they stop sleeping together, he joins the army just before a peace treaty is signed. Aureliano José deserts the army to tell Amaranta he wants to be with her, but he is killed by a Conservative soldier as he returns home.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía's seventeen sons arrive to Macondo to meet him just before he returns to fight in an attempt to convince the Liberals to end the useless war once and for all. He agrees to sign a treaty that he believes betrays both himself and his party and then attempts to kill himself.

Having survived his suicide attempt, Colonel Aureliano Buendía secludes himself in his workshop making fish out of gold. Both of the twin brothers sleep with the same woman, Petra Cotes, though Aureliano Segundo's relationship with her proves to be long-lasting and has a magical effect on their livestock, making them incredibly fertile. José Arcadio succeeds in bringing a boat down the river to Macondo, celebrating with a carnival. Remedios the Beauty is named queen of the carnival but her position is challenged by another queen, Fernanda del Carpio, and a riot breaks out, killing many in the crowd.

The story flashes back to reveal more about Fernanda del Carpio's upbringing in a declining aristocratic home that gave her unrealistic expectations for her life. After the carnival, Aureliano Segundo marries her, though their temperaments are not well-matched, and Aureliano Segundo continues his affair with Petra Cotes. Fernanda del Carpio and Aureliano Segundo have two children: Meme and José Arcadio (II). The seventeen Aurelianos return to celebrate the anniversary of the armistice, receiving a permanent mark of ashes on their foreheads for Ash Wednesday. Aureliano Triste and Aureliano Centeno decide to remain in Macondo to build the ice factory their grandfather had dreamed of and a railroad connecting Macondo to the outside world.

The arrival of the train brings with it other modern technologies and foreign investors in a banana plantation across the river. Remedios the Beauty remains ignorant of all that is changing in the village and of the deadly effect her beauty has on men. One day she ascends into heaven, never to be seen again. Colonel Aureliano Buendía, dismayed by the changes to the city, threatens to start a war to return Macondo to its original state. He plans to use his seventeen sons as his army, but assassins kill all of his sons but one.

Úrsula is going blind, but she is able to keep it a secret because she is so well acquainted with people's habits. José Arcadio and Meme go away to school, allowing Aureliano Segundo the freedom to move in with Petra Cotes. Colonel Aureliano Buendía dies.

Fernanda del Carpio gives birth to her third child, Amaranta

Úrsula. The elder Amaranta sews her funeral shroud and dies on the day it is finished. Úrsula, grieving the last of her children, goes to bed and doesn't move for many years.

Meme falls in love with a mechanic named Mauricio Babilonia, who is trailed constantly by yellow butterflies. Fernanda del Carpio forbids Meme from seeing Babilonia, but he sneaks in each night to make love to her. Fernanda del Carpio hires a guard who shoots Mauricio Babilonia the next time he tries to visit, paralyzing him, and sends Meme away to a convent. Several months later, a nun arrives to the Buendía house to deliver the child Meme gave birth to, Aureliano. Fernanda, ashamed of the illegitimate child, pretends he is an unrelated orphan and hides him.

José Arcadio Segundo organizes the banana plantation workers to strike for better conditions. At a meeting to resolve their issues, an army kills 3000 of the workers leaving only José Arcadio Segundo alive. Their bodies are loaded on a train and dumped in the ocean, but no one in town believes this story. Rain begins to fall. José Arcadio Segundo hides in Melquíades' old room and trying to decipher the manuscripts.

The rain continues for nearly five years. Aureliano Segundo, trapped in his house, begins to care for Amaranta Úrsula and little Aureliano. All of the livestock die in the flood. Fernanda seeks treatment for a uterine disease by writing letters to "Imaginary Doctors." Aureliano Segundo believes he can find the fortune of gold coins Úrsula has hidden somewhere in or around the house, digging up the land in search. The rain ends, revealing a decimated Macondo.

Úrsula finally emerges from bed and then dies at the age of 120, closely followed by the forgotten Rebeca. Aureliano Segundo begins to rapidly lose weight and hurries to earn the money needed to send Amaranta Úrsula to school in Brussels. José Arcadio Segundo shows his grandnephew Aureliano the progress he has made in deciphering Melquíades' manuscript, so that he might take up with the project after him. Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo, having completed the tasks they aimed to, die at the same moment and their bodies are buried in each other's graves.

Aureliano determines that Melquíades' prophecies are written in Sanskrit and that they will be deciphered when they are one hundred years old. Santa Sofia de la Piedad, all but forgotten, walks away from the house without another word and, soon after, Fernanda del Carpio dies. José Arcadio returns and finds the gold Úrsula had hidden under her bed, squandering it on parties with the youth of the town, who eventually drown him and steal his gold.

Amaranta Úrsula returns from Brussels with her husband Gaston on a leash. Aureliano pines after Amaranta Úrsula, but he tries to distract himself by befriending an old Catalan bookseller and some young men who meet to talk about their studies at the shop. At a brothel, Aureliano meets the ancient

Pilar Ternera who gives him advice. Aureliano admits his love to Amaranta Úrsula and they become lovers while Gaston is on a business trip—Amaranta Úrsula tells him never to return.

The Catalan bookseller and Aureliano's friends all leave Macondo. The Buendía house has been destroyed by a swarm of red ants. Aureliano and Amaranta Úrsula bear a child (which they name Aureliano) who, in line with Úrsula's fears all those years ago, is born with the tail of pig. Amaranta Úrsula dies soon after giving birth. Aureliano, in his grief, forgets about the baby and finds it being devoured by ants. He finally deciphers Melquíades' prophecies, a history of the Buendía family. As he reads, a hurricane destroys Macondo.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**José Arcadio Buendía** – The patriarch of the Buendía family and the founder of the city of Macondo. Against his family's wishes, he marries his third cousin, Úrsula Iguarán. Because their families have been intermarrying for centuries, the pair are warned before their wedding that any child they have will be born with the **tail of a pig**. They set out to discover a new city where they can live without shame for their incest and past mistakes, and they establish Macondo, parenting three biological children—Colonel Aureliano Buendía, José Arcadio (I), and Amaranta—and also the orphan Rebeca. José Arcadio Buendía becomes obsessed with the sciences introduced by the gypsy Melquíades, and he slowly transitions from being a hands-on founder and developer of the town into a solitary man, overcome with curiosity about technology. In a fit of frustration, he starts to destroy his home, and the family determines that he has lost his mind. They tie him to a tree in the center of town, where he lives out the end of his life.

**Úrsula Iguarán** – The matriarch of the Buendía family: wife of José Arcadio Buendía and mother to Colonel Aureliano Buendía, José Arcadio (I), and Amaranta. She is a hard worker, dedicated to the development of her business making candy animals and other confections. She is the character most afraid of the warning that intermarrying will produce a child with the **tail of a pig**, a fear she spreads for generations. She is also one of the characters who can most clearly see the cycles the family goes through, recognizing the traits associated with the **names** Aureliano and José Arcadio. She becomes senile in her old age, but lives to be over 120 years old.

**Pilar Ternera** – An older fortune teller in town who is a constant source of lust to the Buendía men. With Colonel Aureliano Buendía, she produces Aureliano José, and with Colonel Aureliano Buendía's brother José Arcadio (I), she gives birth to Arcadio. She lives to be at least one hundred and forty years old. "Fat, talkative, with the airs of a matron in disgrace." She smells like smoke, a scent that lures José Arcadio. Later in

life she runs a brothel and continues to tell both the past and future using her cards.

**Melquíades** – A gypsy who comes through Macondo to introduce different scientific and magical objects. He dies and comes back to life many times throughout the novel, providing guidance to each generation of Buendías. His manuscript, though not deciphered until the end of the book, prophecies the entire future of the Buendía family.

**Colonel Aureliano Buendía** – The first person born in Macondo. He is silent and withdrawn even before he is born, as his fetus was said to weep inside Úrsula. When he was born, his eyes were open, indicating the gift of clairvoyance. He falls in love with Remedios Moscote while she is still a child and marries her when she is of age, but she dies in childbirth. He does not remarry, but he does father a child with the older Pilar Ternera, who **names** the child Aureliano José. The Colonel's personality and politics position him as the most central figure of the book. Throughout the book he oscillates between a violent dedication to the cause of the Liberal Party or the rebels, and cynical view of the purposelessness of the war.

**José Arcadio (I)** – José Arcadio is the oldest child of the second generation. He begins having an affair with Pilar Ternera at the age of fourteen. He leaves home a young man and returns home strapping and crude. He falls in love with this adopted sister Rebeca, and their union causes Úrsula to completely disown them. José Arcadio saves the Colonel from execution, but he is shot to death in his bedroom without a known cause.

**Amaranta** – Amaranta is the only biological daughter of José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula. She competes with her adopted sister Rebeca for the love of Pietro Crespi, the Italian pianola salesman, and loses, though he returns to her later in life. She denies the affections of all of her suitors though, burning her hand as a symbol of her rejection of passion and wearing a black bandage on her hand as a symbol of her virginity. She maintains her grudge against Rebeca until the very end of her life.

**Rebeca** – The adopted daughter of José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula. She wandered to the town from Manure and she is believed to be the second cousin of Úrsula. She marries José Arcadio (I) against the wishes of her adopted family. After José Arcadio dies, she remains sequestered in her home, slowly forgotten by the town.

**Remedios Moscote** – The youngest daughter of Don Apolinar Moscote, the mayor of Macondo. Colonel Aureliano Buendía falls in love with her when she is only nine years old, and so he must wait until she has had her period to marry her. She accepts his son with Pilar Ternera (Aureliano José) as her own son, and is a positive presence in the lives of the Buendías. She dies suddenly, perhaps from a miscarriage, while carrying twins. A daguerreotype of her hangs beside a lit lamp in the Buendía home until the end of the book.

**Pietro Crespi** – The Italian pianola expert. Handsome and polite, he is hired to teach Rebeca and Amaranta how to dance, causing both of them to fall in love with him. He chooses Rebeca, but their courtship experiences numerous complications. When Rebeca discards him for the returned José Arcadio (I), he begins to court Amaranta, but she declines his affections, and he kills himself.

**17 Aurelianos** – Colonel Aureliano Buendía fathers seventeen sons with seventeen different women while away fighting in the war. They all arrive in Macondo for the first time in a small span of time, and are baptized with the **name** Aureliano and the last names of their mothers. The Aurelianos receive ashes on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday that affix permanently to their faces. When Colonel Aureliano Buendía threatens to start his own army with his sons, it is this mark which identifies them for assassination.

**Santa Sofía de la Piedad** – When Arcadio falls in love with Pilar Ternera, unaware that she is his mother, Pilar pays Santa Sofía de la Piedad, a virgin, 50 pesos to sleep with him instead. She has three children with Arcadio: Remedios the Beauty, and twins José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo. She works hard all of her life without complaint, so much so that family members mistake her for a servant rather than a matriarch.

**Remedios the Beauty** – The daughter of Santa Sophia de la Piedad and Arcadio goes unnamed for eight months of her life until her father's execution. She takes on the latter half of her **name** when she begins attending school. She remains simple-minded and oblivious to the effect she has on men for her entire life, even as men kill themselves in want of her. One afternoon she ascends to heaven and is never seen again.

**Aureliano Segundo** – The twin of José Arcadio Segundo and son of Santa Sofía de la Piedad and Arcadio. Aureliano grows to be a fat hedonist, loving orgies and behaving recklessly. He marries Fernanda del Carpio, a woman from another town whom he admires in a carnival parade, but they are ill-suited, as she is far more mannered than he is. Aureliano Segundo carries on a lifelong affair with Petra Cotes, and the passion of their relationship is contagious to the livestock they raise together, making Aureliano Segundo a very wealthy man. Úrsula speculates that Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo switched identities as children because they both so accurately match the temperament associated with the other's **name**.

**José Arcadio Segundo** – The twin of Aureliano Segundo and son of Santa Sofía de la Piedad and Arcadio. José Arcadio Segundo is a moralist with a hot temper. He is “marked with a tragic sign.” He sees a man executed when he is a child and cannot shake the concern that the smile on the man's face was evidence that they buried him alive. He spends much of his life secluded in the laboratory, studying Melquíades' manuscripts.

**Fernanda del Carpio** – The wife of Aureliano Segundo. She comes to Macondo as the “Queen of Madagascar,” in opposition

to Remedios the Beauty's position as queen of the carnival. She had a proper upbringing, which makes her feel as though she deserves the best in life, but others see her as being nervous and especially formal for Macondo. She tries her best to ignore her husband's affair with Petra Cotes.

**Renata Remedios (Meme)** – The eldest daughter of Fernanda del Carpio and Aureliano Segundo. Fernanda calls her Renata, but the rest of the family and town call her Meme. She falls in love with Mauricio Babilonia, an auto mechanic, and gives birth to his child Aureliano. When she is caught kissing Mauricio Babilonia, she stops speaking and is sent to a convent, never heard from again.

**José Arcadio (II)** – The son of Fernanda del Carpio and Aureliano Segundo who is sent to Rome to become a priest (and hopefully Pope) though he returns without even having gone to seminary. He befriends children in town and uncovers the gold that Úrsula had hidden in the house, but he is eventually drowned and robbed by the children.

**Amaranta Úrsula** – Daughter of Fernanda del Carpio and Aureliano Segundo. She and Aureliano are best friends as children, and she does not know that his mother is her sister because Fernanda del Carpio has kept it a secret. She is sent to Europe for school, but she falls in love there and returns married to Gastón. When she has an affair with Aureliano, Gastón leaves her. She dies after giving birth to the final Aureliano.

**Aureliano** – The illegitimate son of Meme and Mauricio Babilonia. Fernanda del Carpio raises him in secret, and his parentage is kept from the rest of the family. Aureliano tries to decipher the manuscript left by Melquíades and he succeeds, discovering that it is the narrative of the Buendía family. He falls in love with his aunt (though he doesn't know she is his aunt) Amaranta Úrsula, and with her, produces the final Buendía, also **named** Aureliano.

**Prudencio Aguilar** Before the start of the novel's action, when Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía are still living in Riohacha, Prudencio Aguilar publicly insults José Arcadio Buendía's masculinity by implying that he is impotent (this is based on rumors that he and Úrsula have not consummated their marriage). In response, José Arcadio Buendía kills Prudencio Aguilar, whose ghost then haunts the couple until they leave Riohacha to found Macondo. José Arcadio Buendía sees Prudencio Aguilar's ghost several more times throughout his life, and when Buendía is dying, Aguilar's ghost takes care of him.

**José Raquel Moncada** A successful mayor of Macondo, who becomes friends with Aureliano Buendía despite being of the opposite political party. The friendship raises questions about how serious their political differences can be, and perhaps proving Aureliano's earlier belief that he fights more for pride than for the cause of the Liberals. This idea is further born out

by the fact that the men consider finding a way to combine their political parties, but then sense that they would lose all purpose without their political rivalry. Ultimately, Colonel Aureliano Buendía's cruelty is proven when, despite his fondness for his friend, he eventually allows Moncada to be executed.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Don Apolinar Moscote** – The conservative, corrupt mayor of Macondo and father of Remedios Moscote.

**Father Nicanor Reyna** – The first priest of the Catholic church in Macondo.

**Bruno Crespi** – The brother of Pietro Crespi who runs the store when Pietro Crespi takes charge of the music school.

**Gerineldo Márquez** – Friend of Colonel Aureliano Buendía. He also becomes a colonel and courts Amaranta, growing a lovely friendship with her, though she declines his proposal of marriage.

**Magnífico Visbal** – Friend of Colonel Aureliano Buendía. He is stabbed to death in the same tent at Colonel Aureliano Buendía without his knowing.

**Amparo Moscote** – Another daughter of Don Apolinar Moscote.

**Visitación** – A Guajiro woman who helps in the Buendía household. She arrives in Macondo trying to escape a plague of insomnia in her tribe.

**Father Coronel** – The new priest who replaces Father Nicanor Reyna at the Catholic church. A veteran.

**Mr. Herbert** – A hot air balloonist who is the first gringo to try a banana and scouts out the location for the plantation.

**Mr. Jack Brown** – The owner of the banana plantation.

**Aureliano José** – The child born to Colonel Aureliano Buendía and Pilar Ternera. He falls in love with his aunt Amaranta, though they never consummate their love. He dies still dreaming of his aunt.

**Aureliano Triste** – One of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's seventeen illegitimate sons. He establishes the ice factory that was originally imagined by José Arcadio Buendía. He also brings in the first train to Macondo.

**Aureliano Centeno** – One of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's seventeen illegitimate sons. He invents sherbet.

**Aureliano Amador** – One of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's illegitimate seventeen sons. He is the last to be killed.

**Arcadio** – The son of José Arcadio (I) and Pilar Ternera. He and Amaranta are close to the same age, despite being aunt and nephew, and so they grow up together. Arcadio is deemed the cruelest ruler of Macondo, making up unreasonable laws at his slightest whims.

**Father Antonio Isabel** – The next in the line of Catholic priests,

after Father Coronel.

**Petra Cotes** – The mistress of Aureliano Segundo, after she sleeps with José Arcadio Segundo. Fernanda del Carpio's rival. She is mixed race. Her presence causes animals to experience extreme fertility.

**Camila Sagastume** – A music teacher known as “The Elephant” who challenges Aureliano Segundo to an eating competition.

**Father Ángel** – The Catholic priest that follows Father Antonio Isabel.

**Catalonian Bookseller** – The owner of the store that carries the books Aureliano needs to learn Sanskrit and more. He introduces Aureliano to his four intellectual friends.

**Mauricio Babilonia** – The auto mechanic who fathers Aureliano with Meme. When he goes to meet Meme in her bathroom, he is shot and paralyzed by a guard's bullet.

**Gastón** – The Belgian husband of Amaranta Úrsula, who keeps him on a leash. While away trying to set up an airmail business in Brussels, he learns of Amaranta Úrsula's affair with Aureliano and separates from her amicably.

**Nigromanta** – A prostitute to whom Aureliano loses his virginity.

**Gabriel Márquez** – The closest friend of Aureliano and great-great-grandson of Colonel Gerineldo Márquez. He is the only one who remembers the history that Aureliano knows to be true.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



### THE CIRCULARITY OF TIME

Throughout *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, characters cannot break free of their family's behavioral patterns: instead, they find themselves trapped within fates that echo their family history. Characters are haunted by the decisions they've made, but also by the decisions their ancestors have made, even becoming confused by the difference between past, present, and future. As a result, Márquez reveals the bulk of his characters to be fatalists, or people who believe that their fates have been predetermined and are thus resigned to whatever happens. By presenting the story as a predetermined narrative, set in stone, and impossible to revise no matter a person's determination, Márquez suggests that fatalist progression of history is impossible to overcome.

One of the clearest ways that Márquez illustrates the circularity of time and the impossibility of overcoming the past is through the repetition of family **names**, which reflect (or determine) the characters' personalities. Úrsula notes that the Aurelianos of the family are silent and withdrawn, often possessing the gift of a second sight; the José Arcadios, however, are generally stronger and more boisterous, often marked with a tragic fate. These qualities are predictable to the point of her becoming convinced that Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo, twins, must have switched identities when they were children because they match the temperament of the other's name so well. This fixity between name and personality suggests that a character's fate is sealed at birth and he or she has no ability to overcome it. The effect of reading these repeating names can also be confusing, making it difficult to recall which generation Márquez is referencing at any given time, but this confusion is intentional: it allows a hundred-year span of generations to appear as though they are existing simultaneously.

It's not just readers who experience a collapse of past, present, and future—the characters feel it, too. This undermines their agency, because it makes them unable to logically associate cause and effect, thereby trapping them in a present moment that is out of their control. Pilar Ternera, for example, uses her cards to predict people's futures, and characters named Aureliano also have psychic abilities, but they are not always correct in determining whether their visions reflect current events or the future, because of the confusion of repeated names and personalities. Characters tend to see the predictions as being set in stone, rather than as warnings that could allow them to adjust their actions to avoid these outcomes.

Furthermore, not long after Macondo is established, a plague descends on the town causing an insomnia that results in a collective amnesia, trapping the characters in an eternal present. Before a cure is found, Pilar Ternera begins using her cards to fill in the missing memories of the past in the same way she predicts the future, and these "memories" have a deterministic effect similar to her prophecies. Because of this amnesia and these faulty memories created by Pilar Ternera, Márquez suggests that whatever story one is told is true ends up determining a person's fate. This relates to Melquíades, who is able to foretell the entire lifespan of Macondo and the Buendía family, though he keeps his forecast a secret until the destruction of Macondo. Melquíades' meticulous prediction of generations to come suggests that the future is indeed predetermined and unchangeable.

Even the characters who attempt to entirely escape their histories (by living elsewhere, educating themselves, etc.) fail to overcome their past, seemingly because they remain emotionally devoted to home. Colonel Aureliano Buendía spends much of his life away from home, trying to protect the

city he loves so dearly, but he ultimately follows in his father's footsteps, secluding himself in the workshop to focus on his studies of alchemy and refusing to see the ways in which his life mirrors his father's. Amaranta Úrsula perhaps comes closest to escaping her fate: she goes to school in Belgium and marries a Flemish man, Gaston. However, her nostalgia for home leads her back to Macondo, where she finds herself blinded by her childhood memory of the place, rather than seeing it for the failing city it truly is. The way she forsakes her passionate love with Gaston for the nostalgic joy that Aureliano brings her is yet another example of the way she remains firmly trapped in the past, rather than making a new life. Furthermore, Amaranta Úrsula wants to name her child with Aureliano "Rodrigo" (which is not a family name), but Aureliano insists on the name Aureliano, which implies that the next generation will not escape the past, either.



## SOLITUDE

Despite the vast number of characters and the many communities depicted in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, solitude is a characteristic that marks each

character in its own way. The males of the Buendía family (particularly those **named** Aureliano) are repeatedly described as having a solitary nature. Though the Aurelianos are characterized as withdrawn, the José Arcadio characters also note their loneliness, especially when in the company of others. Though solitude is portrayed as a characteristic determined by fate, Márquez suggests that the loneliest characters suffer from the negative effects of a community that forces its members to do what's expected of them, rather than being allowed to more truthfully follow their passions.

José Arcadio Buendía, the patriarch of the family, is perhaps the most literal example of this community-imposed solitude, since his natural eccentricities make him an outcast from his community. For example, out of natural curiosity and ambition, he tries to innovate new ways of using the technologies Melquíades brings to town, but the community considers him to be insane for these pursuits, and they condemn him to spending the rest of his life alone, tied to a tree in the courtyard. When José Arcadio Buendía begins speaking gibberish, the townspeople find this further evidence of his insanity, but a priest visits and reveals that the man is speaking Latin. This embodies the way in which José Arcadio Buendía is not crazy, but rather misunderstood. When José Arcadio Buendía is invited back into the house at the end of his life, he prefers to return to the tree, that position of solitude now more comfortable for him than the bustling house with the rest of his family. In this way, the community forcefully imposed the solitude on this first male of the family until he was insistent on maintaining his own solitude, which sets a precedent for all of the males to come.

While José Arcadio Buendía's solitude seems imposed on him

by the community, other characters' solitude seems part of their nature. Colonel Aureliano Buendía, for instance, is a loner from the start, "silent and withdrawn" even before being born. This is fitting, since he's the first baby born in the isolated town of Macondo. Despite being a loner, Colonel Aureliano Buendía is community-minded: he fights for Macondo throughout his life, but it is in this context that his community deserts him. Through his various political evolutions, different political parties (which are forms of community) come to reject him and even violently rebel against him, leaving him, ultimately, in exile—forgotten by most people in Macondo, despite his historic political and military importance.

José Arcadio Segundo, the great-grandson of José Arcadio Buendía, is also isolated by the knowledge he possesses. When he takes the initiative to lead a strike against the banana company, he is the lone survivor of the battle and is met with disbelief when he tries to share what happened during the strike. While José Arcadio Segundo attempted to shed the solitary nature of his predecessors by building a community of workers fighting for their rights, after the massacre (and its public denial), he is forced to detach from the town, since he cannot participate in the consensus reality that the massacre did not occur.

Many characters of the novel also experience isolation and loneliness because social norms force them into solitude or unfulfilling relationships. Aureliano's very existence is kept secret by his grandmother because of his illegitimacy, which isolates him from others and cultivates in him the desire to stay home even once he is allowed the freedom to leave the house. Furthermore, Amaranta's refusal to marry Pietro Crespi and then Colonel Gerineldo Márquez shows her way of imposing solitude on herself, and also on the men she spurns, as an act of both contrition and vengeance. She wants to punish herself for possibly willing the death of Remedios Moscote, but she also wants her suitors to suffer for not having chosen her sooner. Likewise, Rebeca is left in solitude, alone in her home, when her husband is inexplicably shot, disowned by the family because of the impropriety of having married her adopted brother. Years later, when she is offered help, she refuses it, having grown accustomed to the solitude that was initially forced on her.

Finally, Pilar Ternera and Petra Cotes, who are the mistresses of many of the Buendía men, remain their mistresses rather than becoming their wives: the Buendías maintain the ruse of being happily married in unfulfilling relationships, while secretly visiting the women they love who are less respected by society. Rather than following their hearts, the Buendía men adhere to social standards that require their relations with these women to be kept secret. Throughout the book, then, solitude seems less determined by fate and personality than by the community, which forces characters into their detachment from society, a condition that grows comfortable and irreversible over time.



## PROGRESS AND CIVILIZATION

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be read as an allegory of Colombian history, with the book's one-hundred-year span standing in for hundreds of years of the nation's past. Many of the novel's events—such as the Buendía family arriving in Macondo and establishing a town, the military conflict between the Liberal and Conservative parties, the expansion of the railway to connect colonial settlements, and the hegemony of the American Fruit Company over Colombian produce—echo the most critical developments of the Colombian nation. While at first, Márquez seems to be depicting a civilization in ascendance (a growing town with new technologies and possibilities), the town reverses its course, falling into disrepair caused by the repetitive destruction of civil wars and the stagnation of local innovation. Therefore, the novel suggests that civilization's progress is a futile illusion.

Even in its infancy, Macondo does not seem to have great promise. When José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguaran leave their home of Riohacha, Colombia, to seek a better life for themselves, José Arcadio Buendía dreams of a city of mirrors, suggesting a city with no content of its own that instead reflects everything around it. While their hope had been to live in a secluded place free of the outside authority of others, Macondo's new residents struggle with their desire to be free from outside influence, while also wanting the conveniences of modern life, which are only attainable through interaction with outsiders. José Arcadio Buendía is the best example of this tension, as he threatens to leave Macondo—the city he himself established—to move to a place with greater access to new modern inventions. However, José Arcadio Buendía's interest in technology does not mean that he's able to bring innovation to Macondo. When new technology is introduced to Macondo by the gypsies and others, it advances the town's way of life, but it fails to spark people to innovate successfully on their own. Macondo seems to embody the hall of mirrors of its founding vision: it doesn't create anything of its own, and therefore it can't influence the outside world or even sustain itself without the ideas of others.

As the novel progresses, Macondo makes peace with itself as a city that is not wholly separate from the rest of society, and its measured embrace of outside influence allows it to thrive for a time: new residents come, new amenities become normal, and the economy begins to boom as industry arrives. However, these developments always come at a cost. For example, when the Colombian government sends a magistrate to govern Macondo, José Arcadio Buendía compromises with him to retain some of the independence that Macondo is accustomed to. Nonetheless, the introduction of outside politics brings strife to their peaceful town as political parties cleave the town and lead to decades of fruitless civil war. Furthermore, the introduction of the railroad brings with it the arrival of

“gringos” who seek ways to profit from the land, including Mr. Herbert who sees bananas as a new investment opportunity, something the people of Macondo didn’t realize they could export to grow their economy. While the arrival of the American fruit company grows the town and its economy, the people of Macondo see the arrival of these new people as a challenge to their way of life, as gambling, drinking and prostitution increase in the presence of the newcomers.

Worse, the people of Macondo come to rely on the work provided by the plantation, the business that the influx of new residents brings, and the imported goods that begin to flood the town. Eventually, when José Arcadio Segundo joins the workers in fighting for their rights and 3000 protestors are massacred, the people of Macondo are so dedicated to the fruit company that they refuse to believe the massacre actually occurred. When the weather turns bad and the American fruit company evacuates Macondo, the workers leave, the imported goods stop coming, and there is not enough work for everyone, so the economy collapses, leading to Macondo’s rapid decline.

Though history is often depicted as constant forward progress, Márquez makes the point in this novel that many of the events of history repeat themselves or regress instead of constantly improving. The town of Macondo, by the novel’s end, has fallen into dilapidation and abandonment, and the town is eventually destroyed entirely by a hurricane, bringing it back to a state of wilderness, just as it was before the Buendía family arrived to develop the town. This shows that progress is an illusion, and that all civilizations are destined to eventually fall.



## PROPRIETY, SEXUALITY, AND INCEST

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, love and lust are inextricably tangled: familial love is confused with sexual love, husbands and wives have so little

sexual chemistry that they must satisfy their urges with other partners, and the parentage of many characters is kept secret, heightening the risk of incest. These complicated circumstances are caused by the characters’ misplaced dedication to propriety and social norms. Márquez suggests that if the characters were more honest about their mistakes and desires, then their lives would be more straightforward and fulfilling.

Though the Buendía family is continually afraid of incest and its punishment (having children with a **pig tail**, as their incestuous ancestors did), their fear is not so strong as to overcome the power of their sexual attraction to their relatives. The patriarch of the family, José Arcadio Buendía, is the first character in the story to commit an act of incest when he marries his first cousin Úrsula Iguaran. Though the family warns them against marrying each other, José Arcadio Buendía says he doesn’t care if the child is born with a deformity because he loves Úrsula so completely; luckily, none of their children is born with the tail of a pig. There are negative social consequences to their union,

though: José Arcadio Buendía kills Prudencio Aguilar for mocking him, and the couple leaves their hometown to found Macondo, a place where they won’t be judged.

Throughout the story Márquez indicates that, despite the pervasive fear of a child with a pig tail, the real danger of incest comes from its social and psychological effects: causing divisions in the family and insecurity around the legitimacy of one’s parentage. For one, the Buendías’ inability to grow their family beyond its original bloodline exaggerates their isolation and solitude. Incest, in this context, keeps them from growing their community through intermarriage. And when characters do intermarry, it not only fails to incorporate new family members, but it also estranges old ones. For instance, when José Arcadio falls in love with his adopted sister, Rebeca, Úrsula disowns them. The couple is passionately in love with one another, and because the threat of the pig’s tail does not apply to their possible progeny (they’re brother and sister, but not by blood), they decide that their relationship is worth the sacrifice of the rest of their family.

In addition to these incestuous developments, many characters find themselves barred by social propriety from the person they love, a comment on the way that rules of decorum can end up causing more harm than good. Aureliano Segundo, for example, marries an outsider named Fernanda del Carpio to whom he is not physically suited, but Fernanda’s Catholicism causes her to refuse divorce and even look past his passionate affair with Petra Cotes. The passion between Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cotes has positive effects beyond just their mutual satisfaction, prompting extreme fertility in the livestock they raise together, a sort of proof from the natural world that they belong together, despite the fact that their community doesn’t accept their union. Furthermore, Aureliano Segundo and Fernanda’s daughter, Meme, has an illegitimate child **named** Aureliano through her passionate affair with Mauricio Babilonia. Fernanda insists on keeping the baby a secret, claiming he arrived out of nowhere in a basket and raising him as an orphan, never revealing his true parentage for the sake of social propriety.

This social shame takes Mauricio Babilonia’s life, destroys Meme’s, and creates secrecy about bloodline that results, finally, in the child with the tail of a pig. Despite generations of incestuous temptation, the first child born with this dreaded defect is born to Aureliano and Amaranta Úrsula (who do not know they’re related), just before the city is destroyed by a hurricane. Both Amaranta Úrsula and the baby die shortly after birth, which seems to be a punishment for her and Aureliano’s sin, however unintentional. Incest, then, seems like a taboo that should be respected, as is pedophilia, since Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s young bride Remedios Moscote dies during pregnancy, perhaps a punishment for Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s pedophilic passion for her. Despite suggesting that the universe has some taboos that must be respected, though,

Márquez generally shows that honesty and desire should take precedence over social propriety. Following social norms leads to unfulfilling relationships, shame, loneliness, and life-destroying secrecy.



### MAGIC VS. REALITY

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Márquez calls into question the nature of fact and reality. He suggests that the recorded history of Colombia is one that has been shaped by the Conservative victors, and so he seeks to tell the history of Macondo through the lens of lived experience, complicating the story and showing the reader the way perspective can shape reality. This is directly related to the literary style of magical realism, in which magical elements are presented as commonplace—a style that evolved, in part, as a way of embodying the everyday nature of horrific violence in the colonization of Latin America. Márquez takes into account aspects of life that tend to be ignored by written history, including unjustifiable genocide, superstition, and the exaggeration of feelings, thereby pivoting the perspective of this story away from the logical narrative recorded in history books and toward one focused on the extraordinary lived experience the people of Macondo.

Márquez's clearest demonstration that official history does not always match reality is the story of the strike. When the workers on the banana plantation strike for better working conditions, they are systematically rounded up and murdered and then their bodies are dumped in the ocean. José Arcadio Segundo is the only worker who survives, but his story is not believed when he returns to Macondo—people prefer instead to read a fabricated newspaper story claiming that the strike ended peacefully. In this case, Márquez is making the point that people would prefer to believe a toned-down version of history that allows them to avoid facing the truth of the horrific events. The effect then, is to prompt the reader to question what historical narratives can be trusted, destabilizing the accepted narrative of Colombian history.

While Márquez shows official history to be somewhat disconnected from reality, the book presents magic and reality as being utterly compatible. This suggests that reality can be stranger than the stories we tell about it, and it gives a poetic way of illustrating emotions and experiences that are too extreme to be conveyed in words. For example, when José Arcadio Buendía, the patriarch of the family, finally dies, a rain of yellow flowers falls from the sky, illustrating the intense grief of the town for its founder. While the death of the town's founder and the family's patriarch might be seen to have historical significance, Márquez uses the flowers to show that this death is an emotional, humane event rather than an "official" one. All of the examples of magic in the story allow for a historical narrative based on lived experience, rather than a more academic, "official" account of historical facts. Márquez

thereby shows that the truest account of life is one that allows for the subjectivity of personal experience.



### SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### NAMES

Gabriel Garcia Márquez shows the way that history is destined to repeat itself over and over by using only a few names to represent seven generations of the Buendía family. Úrsula, the matriarch of the family, notes that the men named "Aureliano" are solitary and studious, usually gifted with some sort of psychic ability. On the other hand, the men named "José Arcadio" tend to be very strong, but marked with a tragic fate. The pattern is so recognizable that when the twin brothers Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo grow up following the paths of the opposite names, Úrsula believes that they might have swapped places in their youth. The female characters of the book also repeat their names, recycling Úrsula, Amaranta and Remedios in various combinations and forms. All of the names identify the characters' personalities and determine the ways they are destined to live their lives, a fate that proves inescapable throughout. Though primarily women try to break the cycle of naming, the male characters of the family continue the family lines of naming, insisting on paying tribute to their ancestors, while also dooming the newborns to the same fate they suffered.



### TAIL OF A PIG

Throughout the story, whenever a relative threatens to marry another relative, Úrsula warns them of the genetic defects that could result from incest, specifically a baby being born with the tail of a pig. When she and her first cousin José Arcadio Buendía decide they want to marry, they are warned about a child from an incestuous union generations before who was born with a tail of a pig and who died when they attempted to cut the tail off. Despite the specter of a pig-tailed child, many generations of Buendías are tempted towards incest, although they largely avoid it: adopted siblings marry, but not biological ones. Aunts and nephews find themselves attracted to one another, but they don't consummate their attraction. Men father children with prostitutes, but not their wives who are their relatives. Only when Amaranta Úrsula sleeps with her nephew Aureliano (whom she doesn't know to be her nephew) is a child born with the tail of a pig. Though the couple assumes that the child's deformity can be corrected with modern surgery, his fate is

sealed, and he is eaten alive by red ants while his father is mourning his mother who died in childbirth.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the HarperCollins edition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* published in 1970.

### Chapter 1 Quotes

☛ Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice.

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio Buendía, Colonel Aureliano Buendía

**Related Themes:**

**Page Number:** 1

#### Explanation and Analysis

This line is one of the most famous first lines in literature. While it appears to be an example of action that starts “in media res” (in the middle of the action), it’s important to recognize that the quote also contains a memory, indicating the collapse of past and present that is central to the events of the novel. Though readers assume that this quote reveals the way Colonel Aureliano Buendía will die, in fact, this is only one of the many life-threatening events he lives through. The “discovery” of ice is also an important detail in the way it reveals that some things that are commonplace in other parts of the world are novel in Macondo, and in that it hints at Macondo’s inability to innovate for itself (what they’re really describing is the *introduction* of ice to Macondo, but they don’t distinguish between discovery and introduction because nobody in Macondo ever really discovers anything).

☛ “We will not leave,” she said. “We will stay here, because we have had a son here.”

“We still have not had a death,” he said. “A person does not belong to a place until there is someone dead under the ground.”

Úrsula replied with a soft firmness:

“If I have to die for the rest of you to stay here, I will die.”

**Related Characters:** Úrsula Iguarán, José Arcadio Buendía

**Related Themes:**

**Page Number:** 13

#### Explanation and Analysis

In this scene, José Arcadio Buendía, the founder of Macondo, regrets the isolated location in which he decided to situate the city because he is feeling acutely detached from the modern technologies that might be available to him if they lived in a place that was more centrally located and closer to civilization. Úrsula, ever the strong matriarch, tells him that they must persist in their original goals, especially because one of their sons has now been born in Macondo. The husband and wife battle through their arbitrary rules of what requires them to remain in this place (the first of many arbitrary conditions for certain actions or events to occur, such as Úrsula saying she will die when the rains stop). Úrsula is willing to play along with her husband’s rules, saying that she is willing to sacrifice her life for the city, the first of many sacrifices she offers in service of her family.

### Chapter 2 Quotes

☛ They were afraid that those two healthy products of two races that had interbred over the centuries would suffer the shame of breeding iguanas. There had already been a horrible precedent. An aunt of Úrsula’s, married to an uncle of José Arcadio Buendía, had a son who went through life wearing loose, baggy trousers and who bled to death after having lived forty-two years in the purest state of virginity, for he had been born and had grown up with a cartilaginous tail in the shape of a corkscrew and with a small tuft of hair on the tip. A pig’s tail that was never to be seen by any woman and that cost him his life when a butcher friend did him the favor of chopping it off with his cleaver. José Arcadio Buendía, with the whimsy of his nineteen years, resolved the problem with a single phrase: “I don’t care if I have piglets as long as they can talk.”

**Related Characters:** Úrsula Iguarán, José Arcadio Buendía

**Related Themes:**

**Related Symbols:**

**Page Number:** 20

#### Explanation and Analysis

When Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía decide they want to be married, before they leave Riohacha to found Macondo,

they are warned of the dangers of incest because they are cousins. The specificity of the warning haunts the entire novel: a child born to two Buendía family members could be born with the tail of a pig, a concern that frightens Úrsula, but not her husband. The image of a child with a tail remains until Úrsula dies, and by the time the prophecy comes true, the couple who has produced the child is not aware of their ancestors' warnings. Though there are countless instances where family members almost consummate their desire for each other, and instances where adopted siblings defy their family's sense of propriety, the nightmare is not fulfilled until Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Úrsula, unaware they are siblings because of the shame and silence that does the family more harm than good, make love unaware that they are aunt and nephew.

☛ José Arcadio Buendía dreamed that night that right there a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up. He asked what city it was and they answered him with a name that he had never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream: Macondo.

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio Buendía

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 24

### Explanation and Analysis

After having crossed the mountains in search of a place to build a city, when the explorers come to a river without having located the sea as they expected, José Arcadio Buendía uses the dream as a justification for establishing the city right there, instead of continuing to explore their options. As he does with many visions and inventions, he later misinterprets what he saw, interpreting the city of mirrors to mean that the city will one day be made of ice (an impossibility given its warm climate). In fact, this image of a city of mirrors predicts the way the people of the Buendía family will reflect each other's lives from generation to generation, and it predicts the way that Macondo will echo the developments of the outside world without contributing anything itself (like a "hall of mirrors").

## Chapter 3 Quotes

☛ "If we don't ever sleep again, so much the better," José Arcadio Buendía said in good humor. "That way we can get more out of life." But the Indian woman explained that the most fearsome part of the sickness of insomnia was not the impossibility of sleeping, for the body did not feel any fatigue at all, but its inexorable evolution toward a more critical manifestation: a loss of memory. She meant that when the sick person became used to his state of vigil, the recollection of his childhood began to be erased from his memory, then the name and notion of things, and finally the identity of people and even the awareness of his own being, until he sank into a kind of idiocy that had no past.

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio Buendía, Visitación

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 44

### Explanation and Analysis

In this scene, an orphan girl, Rebeca, has arrived at the Buendía house with a letter that says she's to be taken in by the family. Their servant, an Indian woman who escaped her tribe because of a plague of insomnia, though, recognizes that the girl also has the plague. For the industrious Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía this seems like an opportunity for increased productivity, but with the lack of sleep comes a gradual form of amnesia, eventually erasing the entirety of one's mind. This condition in which people dream while awake and forget their histories appears throughout the book in different permutations, but it's crucial to notice that, with a loss of memory (or the past), Márquez asserts that the "identity of people" and the "awareness of [their] own being" disappear. Therefore, knowledge of a person's history is central to their identity, which is part of why the past is so intertwined with the present.

☛ In the meantime, Melquíades had printed on his plates everything that was printable in Macondo, and he left the daguerreotype laboratory to the fantasies of José Arcadio Buendía, who had resolved to use it to obtain scientific proof of the existence of God. Through a complicated process of superimposed exposures taken in different parts of the house, he was sure that sooner or later he would get a daguerreotype of God, if He existed, or put an end once and for all to the supposition of His existence.

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio Buendía, Melquíades

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 53

### Explanation and Analysis

Melquíades has introduced countless inventions to the people of Macondo, often moving onto a newer interest while leaving behind his equipment for José Arcadio Buendía to continue exploring. José Arcadio Buendía always seems to misinterpret the limits of what the instruments can do, trying to apply their practical abilities to impractical ends. To him, something as magical as a camera should not be limited to taking pictures of everyday people and objects. This echoes his beliefs that magnets should be strong enough to pull gold from the earth and that magnifying glasses could burn an enemy in war. However, even though the magical and the everyday coexist seamlessly in this book, José Arcadio Buendía's impractical (and even mystical) curiosity never bears fruit. Despite his lack of success at his endeavors, though, the novel is clear that he's not crazy—he's a smart, curious, caring man who happens to have eccentric interests, but labeling him "crazy" (as the town eventually does) is a misunderstanding.

through her early death). His passion for her is inflexible, though he does consort with Pilar Ternera while he waits to be married, calling attention to his hypocrisy.

☞ On the next day, Wednesday, José Arcadio Buendía went back to the workshop. "This is a disaster," he said. "Look at the air, listen to the buzzing of the sun, the same as yesterday and the day before. Today is Monday too."

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio Buendía

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 77

### Explanation and Analysis

As José Arcadio Buendía grows deeper and deeper obsessed with his experiments and technologies (though without ever making significant new discoveries of his own), he becomes paranoid, feeling that each day is repeating the one before. This delusion seems to be a result of his lack of progress. In the past, he has come to some conclusions that Melquíades proved correct, such as his declaration (based on his navigational instruments) that the earth was round. However, his family is rarely supportive of his discoveries, as in this moment, when no one believes him that each day is the same as the one before. Technically, each day is not Monday, but throughout the book generations repeat the same actions and time turns in on itself, so what José Arcadio Buendía is saying is not as crazy as it sounds.

## Chapter 4 Quotes

☞ "Love is a disease," he thundered. "With so many pretty and decent girls around, the only thing that occurs to you is to get married to the daughter of our enemy."

**Related Characters:** Remedios Moscote, Colonel Aureliano Buendía, José Arcadio Buendía

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 68

### Explanation and Analysis

Colonel Aureliano Buendía (at this point still referred to as Aureliano) has fallen in love with the nine-year-old Remedios Moscote, daughter of the outsider magistrate that has shown up to rule Macondo. José Arcadio Buendía doesn't understand his son's unreasonable desire for a girl so young who is from a family they are trying to oust from the city. Aureliano's desire for a little girl and the family's general trend towards incest are the two primary taboos explored in the book, and though the families agree to allow the two to marry despite their feud, Colonel Aureliano Buendía is made to wait until his beloved has menstruated to marry (and, still, she is punished for his pedophilia

## Chapter 5 Quotes

☞ On a certain occasion when Father Nicanor brought a checker set to the chestnut tree and invited him to a game, José Arcadio Buendía would not accept, because according to him he could never understand the sense of a contest in which the two adversaries have agreed upon the rules. Father Nicanor, who had never seen checkers played that way, could not play it again. Ever more startled at José Arcadio Buendía's lucidity, he asked how it was possible that they had him tied to a tree. "*Hoc est simplicissimus*," he replied. "Because I'm crazy."

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio Buendía, Father Nicanor Reyna

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 83

**Explanation and Analysis**

Father Nicanor has been trying to earn money to build the first church in Macondo, but José Arcadio Buendía is just as resistant to a church as he was to official governance. In this quote, Father Nicanor is attempting to connect with José Arcadio Buendía despite his lack of reason, because the patriarch still holds clout in the community. In the same way that José Arcadio Buendía doesn't want to live in a city with rules imposed by someone else, or follow a religion with strict guidelines, he also doesn't want to play checkers in the traditional way, and Father Nicanor abandons his efforts, confused at the fine line José Arcadio Buendía walks between rationality and insanity.

**Chapter 6 Quotes**

☝☝ “Don't be simple, Crespi.” She smiled. “I wouldn't marry you even if I were dead.”

Pietro Crespi lost control of himself. He wept shamelessly, almost breaking his fingers with desperation, but he could not break her down. “Don't waste your time,” was all that Amaranta said. “If you really love me so much, don't set foot in this house again.”

**Related Characters:** Amaranta, Pietro Crespi

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 109

**Explanation and Analysis**

Before Pietro Crespi proposed to Amaranta, he was engaged to her adopted sister Rebeca (who dumped him for José Arcadio). Throughout their engagement, Amaranta loved Pietro Crespi, and she leads him on for a long time before declining his proposal while knowing she has fully conned him into thinking she loved him. Amaranta acts in defiance of her own desire for Pietro Crespi seemingly out of pure vengeance. She had vowed to prevent Rebeca's marriage to Pietro Crespi due to her own jealousy, and here she punishes Pietro Crespi for choosing Rebeca first, prioritizing his suffering over even her own happiness. When she rebuffs him in this way, he takes his life, an extreme action that Amaranta mourns for the rest of her life by remaining a virgin. This seems to be an example of how following rules—even self-imposed ones—rather than honest desire leads to tragedy and lack of fulfillment.

**Chapter 7 Quotes**

☝☝ As soon as José Arcadio closed the bedroom door the sounds of a pistol shot echoed through the house. A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendía house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other living room, made a wide curve to avoid the dining-room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair as she gave an arithmetic lesson to Aureliano José, and went through the pantry and came out in the kitchen where Úrsula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread.

“Holy Mother of God!” Úrsula shouted.

**Related Characters:** Úrsula Iguarán, José Arcadio (I)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 132

**Explanation and Analysis**

José Arcadio's death could have any number of causes, although Márquez never specifies which is the true cause. The magical way in which the death is communicated to Úrsula shows the bond of mother and son, despite their estrangement. After all, José Arcadio's wife Rebeca is in the house with him, and she neither hears the gunshot nor sees the blood, while Úrsula—who is clearly a long ways away, judging by the path of the blood—knows almost immediately that her son is dead. This “bloodline” connecting mother and son underscores how close and insular the family is (despite estrangement) and suggests that the powerful connection that the family members share makes it difficult to avoid incest (José Arcadio's wife is his adopted sister, though they are not related by blood). It's notable, though, that Úrsula's powers to know whether her children are alive or dead are hardly reliable, as she predicts Colonel Aureliano Buendía will die long before he actually does.

☞ “Tell me something, old friend: why are you fighting?”  
 “What other reason could there be? Colonel Gerineldo Márquez answered. “For the great Liberal party.”  
 “You’re lucky because you know why,” he answered. “As far as I’m concerned, I’ve come to realize only just now that I’m fighting because of pride.”  
 “That’s bad,” Colonel Gerineldo Márquez said.  
 Colonel Aureliano Buendía was amused at his alarm.  
 “Naturally,” he said. “But in any case, it’s better than not knowing why you’re fighting.” He looked him in the eyes and added with a smile:  
 “Or fighting, like you, for something that doesn’t have any meaning for anyone.”

**Related Characters:** Gerineldo Márquez, Colonel Aureliano Buendía

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 136

### Explanation and Analysis

The conversation between Colonel Aureliano Buendía and Colonel Gerineldo Márquez shows the honesty that exists between these two friends without harming the friendship. Colonel Aureliano assumes that his understanding of a situation must be the right one, unable to imagine that his friend might truly feel differently. He has become convinced of the uselessness of the war in this moment, although, as time passes, he will commit to it and then abandon it again and again. The same pride that Colonel Aureliano Buendía believes drives him to fight is also driving his side of this argument with his friend. Colonel Gerineldo Márquez proves the more reasonable and gentle between them, fighting for more just and genuine purposes.

## Chapter 8 Quotes

☞ They became great friends. They even came to think about the possibility of coordinating the popular elements of both parties, doing away with the influence of the military men and professional politicians, and setting up a humanitarian regime that would take the best from each doctrine.

**Related Characters:** José Raquel Moncada, Colonel Aureliano Buendía

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 146

### Explanation and Analysis

The friendship between Colonel Aureliano Buendía and General José Raquel Moncada provides a contrast to that of Colonel Aureliano Buendía and Colonel Gerineldo Márquez because General Moncada’s beliefs are Conservative. Despite coming from opposite sides, Colonel Aureliano Buendía is able to be friendly with the mayor of Macondo, calling into question how serious their political differences can be, and perhaps proving his earlier belief that he fights more for pride than for the cause of the Liberals. Though the men consider finding a compromise, they also see that they would lose all purpose if they combined forces, and so they fail to do so. Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s cruelty is proven when, despite his fondness for his friend, he allows him to be executed.

## Chapter 9 Quotes

☞ And normality was precisely the most fearful part of that infinite war: nothing ever happened.

**Related Characters:** Colonel Aureliano Buendía (speaker), Colonel Aureliano Buendía

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 167

### Explanation and Analysis

Colonel Aureliano Buendía decides to return to the war, but with a new knowledge: that it changes nothing. Even if war changes the living conditions of the people temporarily, another war will be waged to change them back, and this cycle will continue indefinitely. Not only that, but war was not even seen as extraordinary anymore. Instead war was seen as the expected status of the country: Liberals battling Conservatives, though the meanings of those two words had been slowly degraded. Even the rebel groups fighting against the way the two parties had slid toward the center were losing sight of what it was they were fighting for, but Colonel Aureliano Buendía, no matter his attempts, can’t seem to permanently step away from the fight.

## Chapter 10 Quotes

☞ From then on he was never sure who was who. Even when they grew up and life made them different, Úrsula still wondered if they themselves might not have made a mistake in some moment of their intricate game of confusion and had become changed forever.

**Related Characters:** Úrsula Iguarán , Aureliano Segundo, José Arcadio Segundo

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 182

### Explanation and Analysis

The school teacher, Don Melchor Escalona had a system for keeping track of which of the Segundo twins was which, but one day their shirts don't match their ID bracelets and Don Melchor Escalona is unable to determine which of these items the brothers have switched because they look and act so much alike. As they grow older and develop their own personalities, Úrsula sees discrepancies between their personalities and their names, since particular personality traits are so strongly tied to the names José Arcadio and Aureliano. To her (and to others), it seems that the attributes normally possessed by a character named Aureliano are present in José Arcadio Segundo, and vice versa. The confusion is never straightened out, though the brothers are buried in each other's graves, an indication that they finally return to their rightful identities only in death.

## Chapter 11 Quotes

☞☞ But when they recovered from the noise of the whistles and the snorting, all the inhabitants ran out into the street and saw Aureliano Triste waving from the locomotive, and in a trance they saw the flower-bedecked train which was arriving for the first time eight months late. The innocent yellow train that was to bring so many ambiguities and certainties, so many pleasant and unpleasant moments, so many changes, calamities, and feelings of nostalgia to Macondo.

**Related Characters:** Aureliano Triste

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 222

### Explanation and Analysis

Aureliano Triste, who had accepted financing for the train from Aureliano Segundo, had disappeared for so long without any word that the residents of Macondo thought that the plan to bring a train to town might have been a con. When the train finally does arrive, though, it's clear that it will bring many changes for Macondo, connecting the city to

many influences that it had previously kept out. The yellow of the train adds to the way Márquez uses the color to indicate change, similar to the yellow flowers that rain down when José Arcadio Buendía passes away and the yellow butterflies that accompany Mauricio Babilonia wherever he goes.

## Chapter 12 Quotes

☞☞ “Quite the opposite,” she said, “I’ve never felt better.”

She had just finished saying it when Fernanda felt a delicate wind of light pull the sheets out of her hands and open them up wide. Amaranta felt a mysterious trembling in the lace on her petticoats and she tried to grasp the sheet so that she would not fall down at the instant in which Remedios the Beauty began to rise. Úrsula, almost blind at the time, was the only person who was sufficiently calm to identify the nature of that determined wind and she left the sheets to the mercy of the light as she watched Remedios the Beauty waving good-bye in the midst of the flapping sheets that rose up with her, abandoning with her the environment of beetles and dahlias and passing through the air with her as four o'clock in the afternoon came to an end, and they were lost forever with her in the upper atmosphere where not even the highest-flying birds of memory could reach her.

**Related Characters:** Amaranta, Úrsula Iguarán , Fernanda del Carpio , Remedios the Beauty

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 236

### Explanation and Analysis

Remedios the Beauty is an ethereal presence in the book, impossibly beautiful even when she shaves her head and dresses in a sack. She sleeps deeply and performs an elaborate bathing ritual each day, and men die for love of her, though she remains totally unaware. Her family worries over her safety, as well as the safety of the men who see her and fall in love with her, but this quote shows that they have little reason to, since she ascends to heaven because she is too perfect and holy for this world. Though the family reacts with surprise, especially as the bed sheets are also brought into the sky, they do not react with the proper level of incredulity, showing the way that magic is experienced as a normal part of everyday life.

## Chapter 13 Quotes

☹☹ She did not tell anyone about it because it would have been a public recognition of her uselessness. She concentrated on a silent schooling in the distances of things and people's voices, so that she would still be able to see with her memory what the shadows of her cataracts no longer allowed her to.

**Related Characters:** Úrsula Iguarán

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 246

### Explanation and Analysis

Úrsula also suffers from the pride that plagues her son Colonel Aureliano Buendía, which is apparent in her refusal to admit her blindness to the rest of her family. She wants them to continue to see her as a vital element of the household, which she is. In the close attention she pays to people's comings and goings, she is able to help find lost objects (Fernanda's ring) and determine when members of the family are struggling with a problem (when Meme discovers she is pregnant). By learning people's habits in detail, she becomes a sort of psychic, able to see what others can't. This passage also shows how deliberate Úrsula's centrality to the family is. She is the family's matriarch, helping generation upon generation with their daily lives, and this isn't an accident: she is deliberately positioning herself to be helpful and important to her descendants. She doesn't even allow blindness to get in the way of this, which shows how strong and determined she is.

☹☹ He grew harder and harder ever since Colonel Gerineldo Márquez refused to back him up in a senile war. He locked himself up inside himself and the family finally thought of him as if he were dead.

**Related Characters:** Gerineldo Márquez, Colonel Aureliano Buendía

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 263

### Explanation and Analysis

As Colonel Aureliano Buendía nears the end of his life, his solitude grows more literal. Whereas once he felt alone in his thoughts while surrounded by the men he fought with, now he is both alone in his thoughts and his actions, shutting himself off behind a closed door and refusing

interaction with his family. When he attempts to return to the war with his closest friend, his friend's refusal to accompany him makes him feel even more alone than when his wife died prematurely. The family does such a good job of following his wishes to be ignored that they pretend as though he is dead, an example of the way a character can die while still being alive (like Rebeca) or continue living even after they are dead (as with the ghost of Melquíades).

## Chapter 14 Quotes

☹☹ Úrsula did not get up again after the nine nights of mourning for Amaranta, Santa Sofia de la Piedad took care of her. She took her meals to her bedroom and annatto water for her to wash in and kept her up to date on everything that happened in Macondo. Aureliano Segundo visited her frequently and he brought her clothing which she would place beside the bed along with the things most indispensable for daily life, so that in a short time she had built up a world within reach of her hand.

**Related Characters:** Amaranta, Aureliano Segundo, Santa Sofia de la Piedad, Úrsula Iguarán

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 283

### Explanation and Analysis

When the last of her children dies, Úrsula finally succumbs to her old age, her family members allowing her to live in a world that exists only as far as her arms can reach, a metaphor for the claustrophobic nature of isolated Macondo. Though it is assumed that she will remain in bed for the rest of her life, she actually gets out of bed for a short time before she dies to prepare the house for her absence, a last surge of effort from willful woman who supported her family for her whole life.

## Chapter 16 Quotes

☛☛ Úrsula was their most amusing plaything. They looked upon her as a big, broken-down doll that they carried back and forth from one corner to another wrapped in colored cloth and with her face painted with soot and annatto, and once they were on the point of plucking out her eyes with the pruning shears as they had done with the frogs. Nothing gave them as much excitement as the wanderings of her mind. Something, indeed, must have happened to her mind during the third year of the rain, for she was gradually losing her sense of reality and confusing present time with remote periods in her life to the point where, on one occasion, she spent three days weeping deeply over the death of Petronila Iguarán, her great-grandmother, buried for over a century.

**Related Characters:** Aureliano, Amaranta Úrsula, Úrsula Iguarán

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 327

### Explanation and Analysis

Úrsula, in her senility and immobility, is one of the only sources of amusement for young Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano as they are trapped in the house by the rain. Úrsula is able to live in all moments at once because of her dementia, which lets the children pretend that family members who had been alive at all different times are paying her visits. The presence of all time in a single instant echoes both her husband's belief that every day was Monday and Melquíades' suggestion that all of the content of his prophecy happens at once, instead of in chronological order. Úrsula's senility, then, seems to allow her to access a truth about time.

## Chapter 17 Quotes

☛☛ From very early in the morning he could be seen going through the town, even in the most outlying and miserable sections, trying to sell tickets with an anxiety that could only be conceivable in a dying man. "Here's Divine Providence," he hawked. "Don't let it get away, because it only comes every hundred years."

**Related Characters:** Aureliano Segundo

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 350

### Explanation and Analysis

Aureliano Segundo, having fallen on hard times when nearly all of his livestock died in the years of rain, takes up Petra Cotes' habit of selling raffle tickets as a way to support his family. He nicknames the raffle Divine Providence, after God's intervention in the universe, believing that he can sell people a more religious version of luck. Though he believes he is keeping his own dire health a secret from his family, anyone can see his desperation. The hundred-year cycle of divine intervention is, of course, the same length of time that Macondo will exist, as Melquíades predicted when he recorded his prophecy for the town.

## Chapter 18 Quotes

☛☛ At first he attributed it to that the fact that Aureliano could speak about Rome as if he had lived there many years, but he soon became aware that he knew things that were not in the encyclopedias, such as the price of the items. "Everything is known," was the only reply he received from Aureliano when he asked him where he had got that information from. Aureliano, for his part, was surprised that José Arcadio when seen from close by was so different from the image that he had formed of him when he saw him wandering through the house. He was capable of laughing, of allowing himself from time to time a feeling of nostalgia for the past of the house, and of showing concern for the state of misery present in Melquíades' room. That drawing closer together of two solitary people of the same blood was far from friendship, but it did allow them both to bear up better under the unfathomable solitude that separated and united them at the same time.

**Related Characters:** José Arcadio (II), Aureliano

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 373

### Explanation and Analysis

Aureliano, despite his being very well read, knows even more than the books tell him. When José Arcadio questions how this is possible, Aureliano mysteriously replies that all is known. This indicates that he has the psychic abilities of the Aurelianos who have come before him, but it could also mean that there is nothing left to discover, and so there is no more reason to continue living, as his great-great-great-grandfather worried in his own life of exploration and invention. The uncle and nephew (though they see each other more like brothers) find a sort of cooperative solitude, appreciating one another's presence while not really finding

companionship in one another.

## Chapter 20 Quotes

☛ And then he saw the child. It was a dry and bloated bag of skin that all the ants in the world were dragging toward their holes along the stone path in the garden. Aureliano could not move. Not because he was paralyzed by horror but because at that prodigious instant Melquíades' final keys were revealed to him and he saw the epigraph of the parchments perfectly placed in the order of man's time and space: *The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants.*

**Related Characters:** Melquíades, Aureliano

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 415

### Explanation and Analysis

When Amaranta Úrsula dies immediately after birthing the final Aureliano, his father, also Aureliano, becomes so stricken with grief that he accidentally abandons the child. The horrific outcome of their incestuous relationship is not, in the end, the tail of the pig the child is born with, but instead its death by the ants that have overrun the home as Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano became so distracted by their passion for one another. The cryptic epigraph Melquíades included in his prophecy one hundred years before has finally come true. It is important that the epigraph is written in the present tense, showing that the first and last of the line exist at once, in the single instant of this story, time having condensed to a single moment.

☛ Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane when Aureliano skipped eleven pages so as not to lose time with facts he knew only too well, and he began to decipher the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last page of the parchments, as if he were looking into a speaking mirror. Then he skipped again to anticipate the predictions and ascertain the date and circumstances of his death. Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth.

**Related Characters:** Aureliano

**Related Themes:**     

**Page Number:** 417

### Explanation and Analysis

Aureliano's recollection of the epigraph mentioning the last of the line being eaten by ants prompts him to return to Melquíades' transcript, which he had abandoned in pursuit of his passion for Amaranta Úrsula. As he reads, the world falls to pieces around him. He skips ahead to find out what will happen next, discovering the true relationship between himself and Amaranta Úrsula. The city of mirrors will be destroyed in the moments to come, Macondo's one hundred years of solitude having reached their end. With no other inhabitants to extend the line of Buendías and a natural disaster on the way, Macondo has finally suffered the fate Melquíades recorded for it a century before.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## CHAPTER 1

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* begins with a flashback of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, facing the firing squad, remembering when his father showed him ice for the first time. At the time, Macondo was a small village with twenty houses. Only a band of gypsies visits every year to display their inventions. A gypsy named Melquíades displays an incredibly strong magnet. José Arcadio Buendía trades livestock for two of the magnets, believing he can use them to pull gold from the earth. Úrsula Iguarán tries to dissuade him, but she cannot.

On their next visit, the gypsies bring a telescope and a magnifying glass. José Arcadio Buendía imagines using the magnifying glass as a weapon and trades in the magnets and some of the gold coins Úrsula had buried beneath her bed for the glass. He performs experiments and sends the magnifying glass and his findings on the possibility of solar warfare to the government, but the government never responds.

Melquíades, when he learns of José Arcadio Buendía's failed experiments, refunds his gold and also gives him some maps and navigation instruments. He becomes obsessed with trying to navigate the stars, and slowly discovering that the earth is round. The family rejects the idea as crazy, but Melquíades' return proves José Arcadio Buendía's theory correct and, as reward for his intelligence, he gives him an alchemist's laboratory. The old gypsy has aged rapidly, having contended with all of the world's diseases in his travels.

José Arcadio Buendía convinces Úrsula to share her gold coins with him so he might double them via his newly acquired knowledge of alchemy, but he is only able to melt them down, fusing them to other metals. When the gypsies return, Melquíades again looks youthful and healthy, but it's only his false teeth that are giving this illusion.

*The first sentence of One Hundred Years of Solitude is perhaps one of the most well-known in history, for the way it starts the story in media res, or in a moment of action. Colonel Aureliano Buendía's nostalgia in a moment of danger is a perfect example of the way that time is manipulated in the book, conflating past, present and future. The gypsies, who appear to introduce both real and imagined inventions, are an example of how magic is normal in this book.*



*The gypsies continue to introduce real technology, though José Arcadio Buendía imagines fantastic uses for the instruments, apart from their standard purpose, showing the dominance of his imagination over his common sense. The government's rejection of his invention shows its uselessness.*



*José Arcadio Buendía continues to explore new inventions in the hopes of making a discovery of his own. Though he is ridiculed by his family for his claim that the world is round instead of flat, Melquíades confirms José Arcadio Buendía's discovery when he visits him next, showing that not all of his ideas are bad ones (though Macondo's separation from the rest of civilization does prove a shortcoming when trying to determine what is, in fact, a new discovery). Melquíades' accelerated aging is an example of the way that time becomes circular, as he will proceed to die and come back to life several times over the course of the book.*



*The magic of alchemy proves a hoax, and instead of doubling Úrsula's gold, it seemingly destroys some of it by melting it down with other metals. This shows that, while some progress, like realizing the earth is round, proves worthy and well-reasoned, other attempts clearly are not. Melquíades looking young again is an example of the way that superficiality is a danger to be wary of.*



José Arcadio Buendía, who was once so cheerful and hardworking, becomes distracted by these newest technologies. Úrsula remains a hard worker, helping all the others in town establish their lives, as well. The town grows to be an orderly utopia, where no one is older than thirty and no one has yet died. José Arcadio Buendía traps all varieties of birds and it's their loud songs that draws the gypsies through the swamps to Macondo.

José Arcadio Buendía remains ignorant of the geography of the region, knowing only that there are mountains and the city of Riohacha to the east. On their search for a land to settle, they'd looked for the sea, but had no luck in finding it. The southern and western edges of Macondo are bordered by swamps. José Arcadio Buendía believes the only path to explore might be to the north, and so he and his men set out to see what they might find. After many days of trekking through the jungle, they discover a grounded Spanish galleon, filled with flowers. Four days journey beyond the ship, they find the sea and José Arcadio Buendía reasons that Macondo is a peninsula surrounded by water on all sides.

José Arcadio Buendía laments his choice of location for the city, and begins to pack to leave, but Úrsula tells him they will not leave because they had a son here. José Arcadio Buendía argues that they have not had a death, but Úrsula says she will die if it means the rest of the people stay where they are. José Arcadio (I), fourteen at the time, had been born on the way to Macondo. Aureliano Buendía, six years old, was the first human to be born in Macondo, and showed signs of being silent and withdrawn even when still in Úrsula's womb. He has the power see the future, demonstrated first when he was three and predicted that a pot of soup would soon spill, which it did.

José Arcadio Buendía recommits himself to family life, teaching the children to read, write and do math. He teaches them about the wonders of the world, making up many as he goes along. A different band of gypsies comes to town with even more fantastic inventions including a machine that makes people forget bad memories and treatment that causes time to be lost. Melquíades is revealed to have died. José Arcadio Buendía takes the children into a large tent where they see what he believes to be the largest diamond in the world, but indeed it is just ice. He pays for all three of them to touch it. José Arcadio (I) won't, but Aureliano Buendía places his hand on the block and withdraws it, afraid that it is boiling. José Arcadio Buendía pays more money so that he might touch the ice again, declaring it "the greatest invention of our time."

*Macondo lingers in a moment of utopia, before outside influence corrupts the singular vision for the city. José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula dedicated their lives to helping to grow the town, before José Arcadio Buendía becomes distracted by his solitary pursuits. It is important to note that the caged birds, isolated not by choice but by chance, are what attracts the outsiders to Macondo.*



*Despite the navigational tools given to José Arcadio Buendía by Melquíades, he remains unable to correctly determine the geography of the land they've settled. His limited knowledge leads him to assume that Macondo is situated on a peninsula that keeps them isolated from other civilizations. The discovery of the overgrown, grounded Spanish galleon provides evidence of explorers who have come to this area before, and whose civilization has been wiped out, indicating the circularity of time.*



*José Arcadio Buendía, because of his desire to be up to date on all of the newest technologies, is ready to abandon Macondo in favor of the knowledge available in a more populated area, but Úrsula insists on their remaining committed to the city they've established. Aureliano's reticence and foresight are essential personality traits of the characters named Aureliano in the novel. The fact that he is believed to have wept in the womb and predicted the future even as a youth proves that there is something innate in Aureliano that determines these features, preventing him from behaving in any other way, a fatalist view of human nature.*



*Because Macondo is as isolated as it is, and they lack proper school books, José Arcadio Buendía decides to make up history and information about faraway places and scientific discoveries. This shows the way that fantasy can be as real as reality, and also the arbitrary nature of fact, emphasizing the importance of belief over truth. The arrival of the gypsies' new and exciting machine that allows people to forget with the side effect of losing time establishes the connection between time and memory that is deepened over the course of the novel. The moment of the three men of the Buendía family touching the ice, that has previously been referenced, provides detail around an image that is harkened back to as a perfect moment of wonder and nostalgia throughout Aureliano's life.*



## CHAPTER 2

Time flashes back to Úrsula's great-great-grandmother in the sixteenth century who burned herself badly when Pirate Sir Francis Drake attacked Riohacha. Her husband, unable to find an effective treatment for her terror and burn, builds her a bedroom without windows so she will no longer fear the intrusion of the pirate and his dogs. The husband goes into business with a native tobacco planter named Don José Buendía and so their families have been tied ever since. Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía are first cousins. Their families try to discourage the union because of the threat of the defects caused by inbreeding, warning about an aunt and uncle who produced a son with the **tail of a pig**. José Arcadio Buendía makes light of the warning, and the couple is married, but Úrsula remains afraid of the warnings.

Úrsula's mother makes her a chastity belt which she wears to bed for several months, and rumors spread that a year after their marriage Úrsula is a still a virgin because José Arcadio Buendía is impotent. They go on like this for another six months, when José Arcadio Buendía wins a cock fight against Prudencio Aguilar and Aguilar insults José Arcadio Buendía's manhood publicly. José Arcadio Buendía kills Aguilar with his grandfather's spear. That night José Arcadio Buendía orders his wife to have sex with him, blaming the murder on her. Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía are haunted by the ghost of Aguilar, and they tell him that they will vacate the town to leave him peace.

The couple gathers a group of friends to set out across the mountains in search of new land. Fourteen months into the journey, Úrsula gives birth to a son without any deformations. After two years of wandering, they find themselves on the other side of the mountains, looking at the swamps spread out before them. They camp beside a river and that night José Arcadio Buendía dreams of a city built of mirrors named Macondo. In the morning, he declares that they will establish the city right then and there. He doesn't decipher his dream until the day he sees the ice and believes Macondo will eventually be built of ice. He dreams of an ice factory, but focuses on the education of his sons, moving back into the present.

*The Spanish view of Sir Francis Drake as a pirate is an important distinction from the narrative most often taught in U.S. history books, which frames Drake as a heroic sea captain to the English. Úrsula's great-great-grandmother's husband's only way of calming his wife from the trauma left behind by Drake's attack is to seclude her from all outside stimulants. He goes into business with the ancestor of José Arcadio Buendía, and, for all of these years, their families have interbred, causing the parents of Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía to discourage their union for the threat of genetic defects, specifically a child with the tail of a pig, an image that will be brought up again and again as a worst-case scenario.*



*Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía experience the conundrum of being looked down upon whether they consummate their marriage or not. José Arcadio Buendía's pride in his sexual potency causes the crime he commits, the impetus for their fleeing Riohacha to start a new life for themselves elsewhere, where they won't live with the ghost of the dead man or the shame imposed on them by their families. José Arcadio Buendía's inability to take responsibility for his actions even goes so far as to transfer the blame for the murder to his wife for having withheld sex for as long as she did.*



*The group's assumption that they might find the sea on the other side of the mountains is disproved when all they find is a swamp, a disappointment that they don't care to explore further. Instead, exhausted, José Arcadio Buendía's vision of a city of mirrors leads him to believe it's a sign that they should settle there by the side of the river. The dream establishes the metaphor of the city of Macondo as a city of mirrors, an image that is explored as generations reflect generations over and over, though José Arcadio Buendía misinterprets the image and imagines that the mirrors foreshadow the city one day being built of ice.*



Aureliano Buendía has an intuition for the art of alchemy and he and José Arcadio Buendía set out to separate Úrsula's gold from the bottom of the pot. José Arcadio (I) takes little interest, maturing into a very strong young man, whom Úrsula, pregnant again, notices has a notably large penis. A woman arrives to the house to help with chores, and she can also tell people's fortunes using her deck of cards. She reads José Arcadio's cards and he becomes obsessed with her and her smoky smell. She invites him to visit her in the night, and he goes to her house, trying to find her in the dark rooms by her smell. In a house full of people, she takes him to a corner and makes love to him, though José Arcadio feels, even in that moment, a "fearful solitude."

The woman who seduced José Arcadio (I)'s name is Pilar Ternera, one of the original inhabitants of Macondo, dragged along by her parents to separate her from a man who had raped her at fourteen and broke his promises to care for her. José Arcadio dreams of her in the daytimes and visits her at night. Aureliano Buendía and José Arcadio Buendía announce that they have separated Úrsula's gold. José Arcadio tells Aureliano about his affair with Pilar Ternera, and the two brothers talk all night with one another, until Aureliano asks his brother what an orgasm feels like and José Arcadio says, "It's like an earthquake."

Amaranta is born in January, "light and watery, like a newt." The newer gypsies return to town with a flying carpet. José Arcadio (I) and Pilar Ternera wander the amusements and she tells him he's going to be a father. José Arcadio hides from this news, becoming withdrawn. Wandering the fair alone one night he spots a gypsy girl who is the most beautiful person he's ever seen. He presses his hard penis against her and they escape to a tent where many of the gypsies are passing through and having sex. Though he is shy at first, the passion of the others awakes his own interest. Several days later, José Arcadio leaves with the gypsy band.

Úrsula tries to find José Arcadio (I), but she ends up wandering very far away. José Arcadio Buendía goes out in search of his wife, but after three days of searching, returns empty-handed. He cares for baby Amaranta and Pilar Ternera offers to do the chores, but Aureliano Buendía can tell via his psychic powers that she is to blame for José Arcadio's disappearance and so he scares her away. Magical things begin to happen in the laboratory, like objects moving on their own and water boiling without a heat source. Five months after leaving, Úrsula arrives home with a pack of people following her, having discovered that the closest civilization was just two days away on the other side of the swamp.

*José Arcadio Buendía and Aureliano are similarly motivated by the wonders of the workshop. José Arcadio, in contrast, begins to establish his strength and virility. His attraction to the woman who can tell his future can be connected to his curiosity about his brother's ability to predict events, but the attraction is primarily based in carnal interest. José Arcadio's ability to find Pilar via her scent is the first of many instances in which characters are accompanied by a sensory signal, often detectible only by their love interest. José Arcadio's feeling of solitude, even when making love, shows how loneliness is often the most acute in the company of others.*



*Pilar Ternera coming to Macondo in an attempt to escape a traumatic past is parallel to the way Úrsula and José Arcadio Buendía also attempted to leave past indiscretions behind. Father and son separating the gold from the other metals in an attempt to alchemize them shows the way that progress is made with this technology; a positive development is just reverting back to the gold's original state.*



*The way in which Amaranta is described at her birth characterizes her throughout the book. Her family is never quite able understand why she behaves in the way she does. The carpets the gypsies arrive with are another example of the magic that is accepted as real by the people of Macondo. Their knowledge of this magical thing will diminish their interest in the real flying machines that are introduced to them later in the story.*



*Úrsula's commitment to José Arcadio and the way she leaves behind her newborn daughter to try to track him down parallels the biblical story of the prodigal son. Without the grounding influence of Úrsula at home, magic is allowed free rein in José Arcadio Buendía's laboratory. Úrsula's trekking through the swamp shows how, though the people of Macondo thought themselves quite isolated, they have actually been very near to other civilization all this time, but had been unwilling to explore the uninviting path it would take to find those other people. The introduction of these new people marks a new era of Macondo, one exposed to outside influences.*



## CHAPTER 3

Pilar Ternera's son is brought to the Buendía house when he is just two weeks old and Úrsula welcomes him in at José Arcadio Buendía's urging, but they decide he will never know his true identity. They call him Arcadio. A Guajiro Indian woman named Visitación who came to town to escape a plague of insomnia in her tribe. Úrsula builds a business making candy animals and the town becomes more active with the new inhabitants Úrsula has introduced. José Arcadio Buendía sets down his alchemical work to return to the development of the town. The gypsies return, but José Arcadio (I) is not in their company. The birds that José Arcadio Buendía had once caged are traded for musical cuckoo clocks.

Aureliano Buendía stays alone in the lab teaching himself the art of silver-smithing. He tells Úrsula that he can sense someone is coming though he doesn't know who. That Sunday, an eleven-year-old orphan named Rebeca appears with a letter for José Arcadio Buendía and a bag of her parents' bones. The child is a second-cousin of Úrsula's, but neither she nor José Arcadio Buendía remember any of the names mentioned in the letter. The Buendías adopt her, with little other option. The Indians discover that Rebeca only likes to eat dirt and the whitewash from the walls. They force her to eat bitter rhubarb and beat her until eventually she eats and begins to take part in the family.

Visitación recognizes in Rebeca symptoms of the insomnia plague she had tried to outrun. She explains to the others that the danger of not sleeping is a loss of memory that reduces the people who suffer from it to a state of "idiocy that had no past." José Arcadio Buendía believes she is just being superstitious, but Úrsula takes precautions to protect the other children. Soon enough, José Arcadio Buendía, Úrsula and Aureliano Buendía all find themselves unable to sleep for several days. They dream while awake. Úrsula continues to sell her candies, and they infect the whole town with the insomnia. Visitors to Macondo are forced to ring a bell to indicate their health so that they might not be infected.

*Úrsula taking in Arcadio, but committing to keeping his identity a secret, is the first of many instances in which children are not told their true parentage, providing the opportunity for all sorts of unknowing incest. Úrsula, having taken on the responsibility to support her family financially, sees the idea of insomnia as a boon that would allow her to work more without rest, but Visitación warns against the amnesia that comes with the lack of sleep. This recalls the machine the gypsies introduced in which people would forget bad memories but lose their sense of time, as well. The live birds being traded for mechanical ones indicates the technological developments accelerating in the presence of new inhabitants immigrating into the town.*



*Aureliano continues to have premonitions, predicting the arrival of his soon-to-be adopted sister, Rebeca. Rebeca arrives with a literal representation of her past and the ghosts that haunt her in the form of her parents' bones. The Buendías take her in despite not knowing who she is, and they try to train her to eat real food rather than the earth she prefers because she suffers from pica, perhaps a sign that she lacked sufficient food in the place she came from.*



*Visitación, one of the Guajiro servants, believes that Rebeca might be from her same village, a recognition that suggests Rebeca might be trying to outrun the same plague of insomnia that Visitación and her brother fled. The insomnia's dreaminess while awake that ends up infesting the town of Macondo adds to the confusion about what is real and what is imagined. Whereas, historically, victims of the plague would need to ring a bell to indicate their presence, so that healthy people would know to steer clear of them, the situation is reversed here, because the assumption is that most people are infected rather than healthy.*



Aureliano Buendía begins to label objects with their names so that they wouldn't be forgotten. They attempt to pin down reality with language, but recognize it is a losing battle. Pilar Ternera begins to read both the past *and* future in her cards now, popularizing an imaginary reality that is sometimes more comforting than actual reality. José Arcadio Buendía attempts to invent a memory machine when a man arrives to the Buendía house, aware that he has been forgotten. He gives José Arcadio Buendía a drink that revives his memory and José Arcadio Buendía realizes the man is Melquíades, back from the dead because he could not bear the solitude.

*The forgetting becomes so exaggerated that people even forget the words for everyday objects. The labeling of objects works to a certain extent, but there are all sorts of words for things that can't be labeled that are lost or reimagined. Because the people of Macondo no longer remember their history, Pilar begins to make up both the past and future by looking at her cards, again emphasizing the arbitrary nature of history. José Arcadio Buendía tries to create a version of a memory machine, this time one that will bring back memories, but only the arrival of the resurrected Melquíades with a special elixir can restore people's abilities to remember the past.*



Melquíades has brought with him the technology to produce daguerreotypes. He takes a photo of José Arcadio Buendía and of the children. Aureliano Buendía has become a master silversmith, but the town begins to worry that he has not known a woman yet. A two-hundred-year-old troubadour visits town, singing the stories of the surrounding communities, and Úrsula learns that her mother has died. Listening to the old man's song one night at a store, Aureliano is ushered into a back room and confronted with a mixed-race girl who has been visited by sixty-three paying customers already that night. Aureliano is reluctant and learns the girl's story that her body is being sold to make up for the expense of the childhood home she accidentally burned down. Moved by her story, Aureliano decides to marry her, but when he returns to the store, she has left town.

*The new technology introduced by Melquíades is a primitive form of photography. He uses this machine to document the Buendía family. The only way for Úrsula to learn of the death of her mother is via the oral storytelling of the troubadour who comes through town, an example of the way the people of Macondo still lack access to technology like a mail service. Aureliano's empathy for the young woman forced into sexual slavery by her own grandmother causes him to seek to release her from her servitude, but he doesn't act with enough haste and loses the chance to help free her of her obligations. She is the first of many prostitutes to appear in Macondo.*



José Arcadio Buendía resolves to use the daguerreotype laboratory to take a picture of God to prove He exists. Melquíades believes he sees the future of Macondo in his interpretation of Nostradamus, but José Arcadio Buendía denies that Macondo could exist without a Buendía. Úrsula expands her business to include breads, puddings and other baked goods. She sees Amaranta and Rebeca in the courtyard and realizes they have become young women. She realizes that soon her children will begin to marry and that, if she wants to keep them nearby, she will need to enlarge the house, and sets to work doing so.

*Once again José Arcadio Buendía attempts to use Melquíades's invention for a magical purpose, trying to prove what he believes in, rather than having blind faith. José Arcadio Buendía's belief that Macondo could not exist without a resident Buendía proves accurate. Úrsula's business and her recognition that she will need to expand her house in order to keep her children close show that she is the glue of this family, acting with reason, rather than fantasy.*



An order arrives declaring that the house must be painted blue instead of white. The letter is from an authority sent by the government, Don Apolinar Moscote. José Arcadio Buendía goes to confront the supposed magistrate. He tells Don Apolinar Moscote that there are no judges needed in the town because there are no crimes to be judged, but that he may stay as an ordinary citizen. Don Apolinar Moscote warns that he is armed and José Arcadio Buendía picks him up by the lapels and carries him through town to the road out of town. Two weeks later, Don Apolinar Moscote returns with soldiers and his family.

José Arcadio Buendía, not wanting to make trouble for Don Apolinar Moscote in front of his family, goes with Aureliano Buendía to visit him in his office. Two of his daughters are there with him, one being a pretty nine-year-old named Remedios. José Arcadio Buendía tells him that he can stay under two conditions: that everyone can paint their house the color of their choosing and that the soldiers leave at once. Don Apolinar Moscote agrees to the conditions, but José Arcadio Buendía states that, despite his acquiescence, they are still enemies. The soldiers leave and José Arcadio Buendía finds a house of the Moscote family. Aureliano can't stop thinking about little Remedios.

## CHAPTER 4

Úrsula plans a dance to inaugurate the newly renovated house, ordering a pianola to provide the music. An Italian expert named Pietro Crespi arrives to set up the instrument and to teach the dances that matched the most current music. The family is awed by the music of the player piano and José Arcadio Buendía tries to take a picture of the ghost playing. Rebeca and Amaranta are enthralled by the handsome, genteel man.

José Arcadio Buendía, having determined that God does not exist because he could not take his picture, takes the pianola apart two days before the party to try to figure out how it works. Though he tries to put it back together, the instrument doesn't work when Úrsula attempts to get it to play at the party. Finally José Arcadio Buendía forces the machine to play, but the notes are out of order. The partygoers dance anyway.

*The introduction of outside governance into Macondo provides a rude awakening for the residents who have, up until now, been allowed to rule over themselves with very little law or order needed. Though José Arcadio Buendía tries to prevent this intrusion from happening, the magistrate returns with soldiers, insistent on taking Macondo by force if necessary. The nature of the first law, deciding what color the houses could be painted, establishes the arbitrary nature of laws—they're not necessary in Macondo for peaceful coexistence.*



*José Arcadio Buendía either shows great propriety in his commitment to not embarrassing Don Apolinar Moscote in front of his family, or he shows that he is not strong enough to fight back against the magistrate's presence in the town. His conditions for the magistrate remaining in town show him battling only the present threats posed by the newcomer, rather than the long-term changes that might be effected by his presence, evidencing a lack of foresight.*



*Again, José Arcadio Buendía attempts to use technology for a more fantastic purpose without success. An outsider becoming an immediate love interest for the Buendía daughters emphasizes how insular the community is and what a welcome presence an outsider is for their lives and culture.*



*José Arcadio Buendía's faith is reliant on the arbitrary proof he seeks, and when he can't get a photo of either God or the ghost, he abandons his faith readily. His interest in technology prompts him to take apart the piano, but he doesn't have the skill to put it back together properly, forcing the partygoers to dance to out-of-tune music.*



Pietro Crespi returns to repair the pianola and Amaranta and Rebeca assist him. On the last day of his visit, they hold an impromptu dance and Rebeca weeps when he leaves and goes back to eating dirt. One of the Moscote daughters, Amparo, begins to visit and secretly delivers a letter to Rebeca from Pietro Crespi. Aureliano Buendía's hopes of being joined with Remedios Moscote are revived, believing that she will accompany her sister on one of her visits. He walks through town with his best friends, also second generation Macondo residents, Magnífico Visbal and Gerineldo Márquez, looking for her, but never sees her.

One day, while making little gold fish in the workshop, Aureliano Buendía hears Remedios's voice outside and invites her in. He gives her a fish and she runs away. Aureliano, pining for Remedios Moscote, begins writing poetry. Rebeca waits for more communication from Pietro Crespi. When the mail delivery mule doesn't arrive as expected, Rebeca has a tantrum, and Úrsula forces open Rebeca's trunk, finding the letters.

Aureliano Buendía goes with his friends to Catarino's store, where rooms have been added to serve as a brothel. Aureliano is repulsed by all the women, but soon blacks out and wakes up in the company of Pilar Ternera. They have sex, but Pilar Ternera offers to talk to Remedios Moscote for him. Amaranta, too, becomes lovesick over Pietro Crespi, though her love is unreturned. Remedios Moscote accepts the idea of marrying Aureliano. José Arcadio Buendía agrees to Rebeca marrying Pietro Crespi, but Amaranta swears to herself she will stop the wedding at all costs.

José Arcadio Buendía goes to ask for the hand of Remedios Moscote. The Moscotes believe he must be confused about which daughter his son wants to marry, and when José Arcadio Buendía sees little Remedios, he goes home to confirm. When he returns to say that, yes, Aureliano Buendía would like to marry little Remedios, her parents counter that there are six older daughters more suited for marriage and that Remedios still wets the bed. Señora Moscote tells Úrsula that Remedios has not yet reached puberty and the marriage is delayed.

Melquíades dies again after suffering from a rapid process of aging that left him in a state of dementia. He drowns in the river, but José Arcadio Buendía is reluctant to bury him, believing him to be immortal. Eventually they bury him and have a wake in his honor. Amaranta confesses her love to Pietro Crespi, but he doesn't return her interest. She promises to stop their wedding and she is sent away on a trip to try to distract her, with Úrsula as company.

*The Buendía siblings here suffer from unrequited love. Though both of the Buendía daughters admire Pietro Crespi, it becomes clear that Pietro Crespi is interested in only Rebeca. Her reversion to eating dirt shows the extremity of her sorrow at losing him. Aureliano's interest in Remedios is inappropriate because of her age, but this doesn't stop him from attempting to seek her out.*



*Aureliano uses his silversmithing skills to make little gold fish that he sells and gives away, turning what was a hobby of his father's into a business that can actually benefit the family. The siblings continue to attempt to keep their love interests a secret, though Rebeca's is revealed because of her emotional behavior. The mule marks progress in Macondo in the form of news being delivered by letter, rather than just troubadour.*



*The store where Aureliano had first encountered the prostitute he hoped to marry has become a proper brothel now, showing the progression of prostitution in Macondo. Aureliano follows in his brother José Arcadio's footsteps, losing his virginity to Pilar Ternera, a relationship that can continue to satisfy his carnal desires until Remedios comes of age. Amaranta's stubbornness is revealed in her commitment to keeping her sister from marrying her true love.*



*Despite the age difference between José Arcadio Buendía and Remedios being significant, the only thing that prevents their marriage from taking place immediately is that Remedios hasn't menstruated. It is no issue that she is a child and still wets the bed. This shows an adherence to formal rules around sexuality, rather than decisions governed by common sense.*



*Melquíades dying again is more proof of the impermanence of death in this story, as characters are already haunted by ghosts from their past. The Buendía family, having already seen him come back to life, decline to bury him since he might come back to life again. This is echoed later on with José Arcadio Segundo's fear of being buried alive.*



Pietro Crespi visits often, bringing along gifts of mechanical toys that distract José Arcadio Buendía from his grief. Aureliano Buendía dedicates himself to teaching Remedios Moscote to read and write. Rebeca lives in fear of her sister's threats to stop the wedding. She goes to Pilar Ternera to read her future, and Pilar tells her that she will not be happy as long as her parents remain unburied. She is confused, but José Arcadio Buendía goes in search of the bag of her parents' bones. He summons the masons who did the remodeling and one reveals he encased the bones in a wall. They dig them out and bury them next to Melquíades. Pilar Ternera begins to visit the house again and tells Aureliano that he will be good in war.

*The mechanical toys from Pietro Crespi show how technology can be used for frivolous purposes and act as a balm that distracts people from more important goals. Aureliano follows the tradition of characters with his name teaching others, following in the footsteps of the things his own father taught him. The bones of Rebeca's parents, which have been haunting her since her childhood, are finally laid to rest, so that Rebeca might try to move on from her past—something all the characters struggle with. Pilar's predictions are trusted as fact, an example of the way fortune-telling provides the solace of certainty about the future.*



José Arcadio Buendía connects a mechanical ballerina toy to a clock mechanism and is deliriously happy when the toy dances for three days straight. He loses sleep and sees again the ghost of the Prudencio Aguilar, the man he killed. José Arcadio Buendía begins to think that every day is the same as the one before. He falls into deep grief over those who have died and smashes everything in the laboratories, speaking gibberish. Aureliano Buendía calls the neighbors to help him and twenty men are needed to overpower José Arcadio Buendía and tie him to a tree in the courtyard. Úrsula and Amaranta return and José Arcadio Buendía is still tied to the tree, totally unaware of who they are. They untie his wrists and ankles, but leave him tied at the waist, and build a shelter of palm branches to keep the sun and rain off of him.

*José Arcadio Buendía continues his pattern of altering technology, though not for any useful purpose. His return to insomnia prompts the return of his old tormentor, though it's significant to remember that prior instances of insomnia caused dreaming while awake, calling into question whether Prudencio is a ghost or just a daydream. His insomnia also produces the effect of lost time, prompting him to believe that every day is the same as the one before. Eventually, his frustration with his lived experience prompts him to react violently. By separating him from the technology which drove him out of his mind, they hope to keep the rest of the family safe, though his insomnia has also caused him to forget the ones he loves.*



## CHAPTER 5

When Remedios Moscote gets her menstrual period, she and Aureliano Buendía are married by Father Nicanor Reyna in the parlor of the house. At the ceremony, Remedios Moscote proves calm and composed, while everyone else is quite nervous. She takes the first piece of wedding cake to José Arcadio Buendía, still tied to the chestnut tree. The only unhappy person at the wedding is Rebeca, who had been set to marry Pietro Crespi on the same day. But just before, Pietro Crespi receives a letter that his mother is about to die. He hurries to the capital, missing his mother on the road, who is perfectly well. The writer of the letter remains unknown, but Amaranta is suspected.

*Remedios Moscote, despite her youth, proves to be the most reasonable and sensitive of all the people at the wedding. She shows respect to her captive father-in-law, despite his being left alone by the rest of his family. Amaranta seems to have kept to her promise to Rebeca to prevent her wedding to Pietro Crespi by forging a letter that calls Pietro Crespi away.*



The priest, appalled that the people of Macondo are living without proper religion, decides to stay for another week to do God's work, but the people tell him they are not in need of a priest, having gone without for this long. The priest decides to build a church. He begs for support and holds an open-air mass, promising proof of the power of God. He drinks a cup of chocolate and rises six inches above the ground, repeating the demonstration for several days. These demonstrations earn him enough money in a month that he can begin the construction of the church. José Arcadio Buendía is unimpressed, responding in his gibberish, which the priest recognizes as not gibberish, but Latin.

Father Nicanor Reyna tries to prove the existence of God to José Arcadio Buendía and José Arcadio Buendía tries to disprove God to the priest. The priest challenges José Arcadio Buendía to a game of checkers, but José Arcadio Buendía says there is no point in competing in a contest to which the two competitors have agreed upon the rules. The priest, believing José Arcadio Buendía to be quite lucid, asks why he is tied to the tree, and José Arcadio Buendía says it is because he is crazy. The priest returns to building the church and doesn't visit José Arcadio Buendía again.

Rebeca's hopes of marriage are revived once Pietro Crespi has returned, but Amaranta suggests that Rebeca wait until the church is built, a process that Rebeca believes might take ten years. Pietro Crespi, too, is disappointed by the delay. The two lovers are found by Úrsula, kissing in the dark, and Úrsula dedicates herself to supervising their future visits. After three months of agony, Pietro Crespi donates the money Father Nicanor needs to finish the church. Amaranta removes the mothballs protecting Rebeca's dress, but Amparo Moscote says she can sew a new dress in a week. Amaranta resolves to poison Rebeca's coffee.

Remedios Moscote wakes in the middle of the night, soon after, and dies, perhaps of a miscarriage of the twins inside of her. At this news, Amaranta thinks better of her plan to poison Rebeca, feeling responsible for Remedios Moscote's death. Remedios Moscote had been a joyful presence in the house, caring for José Arcadio Buendía and accepting the son of her husband and Pilar Ternera, Aureliano José as her own. Remedios Moscote and Aureliano Buendía had made a very content life for themselves. Úrsula institutes a mourning period. She hangs the daguerreotype of Remedios Moscote on the wall with a lamp. Out of guilt, Amaranta adopts Aureliano José as her own. Pietro Crespi visits Rebeca, but she is distraught over another delay of the wedding, and begins eating dirt again.

*In the same way that the people rejected outside governance, they also are reluctant to admit organized religion into their utopic city. The priest is able to provide proof of God's existence by levitating, an arbitrary demonstration of his power, but the display is enough to convince people to donate to his fundraiser for the church. Though José Arcadio Buendía remains unconvinced by the existence of God, he is proven not to be as crazy as his family had assumed when the priest recognizes that the language he has been speaking is Latin. Still he is not untied from the tree.*



*José Arcadio Buendía's insistence that there is no point in playing a game where the rules are agreed upon echoes his feelings about organized religion and his wish for Macondo to exist without official governance. He prefers existing without rules imposed by someone else. José Arcadio Buendía has adopted someone else's beliefs in some regard though: he believes his family when they've told him he's crazy, and has become resigned to remaining outside in the courtyard, tied to the tree.*



*Amaranta continues to prevent Rebeca's marriage by suggesting conditions for the wedding that delay it indefinitely. Her promise to poison Rebeca's coffee shows the extreme to which she is willing to go for both her love of Pietro Crespi and her jealousy of Rebeca. The young couple displays significant propriety in the chastity they display leading up to their wedding, but even their steadfast morals are challenged by their lengthened engagement.*



*The cause of Remedios's death is uncertain, but every possibility points to it being a punishment: either for Amaranta (because she attempted to poison Rebeca but accidentally poisoned Remedios, or because she simply wished for something terrible to happen to prevent the wedding), or for Aureliano for having married a woman too young to bear the burden of being pregnant. Remedios had been a blessing to the family, the first marriage to a person outside of the incestuous family, but this opportunity has been squashed. Amaranta taking her nephew Aureliano José as her ward begins the pattern of confused aunt/nephew relations.*



A huge man arrives to the Buendía house, covered in tattoos. He proceeds through the house, greeting everyone nonchalantly. Only Úrsula recognizes him as her son José Arcadio (I). When they ask where he has been, he responds only, "Out there." He sleeps for three days and then goes to Catarino's store to celebrate. He displays his genitals and the women vie for his attention. He offers to sleep with them all if they can pay him ten pesos each, an extraordinary price. He has been around the world sixty-five times making his living in this way. He is not embraced by the family because of his crudity, though Úrsula tries to reconnect with him.

Rebeca, though, is attracted to José Arcadio (I)'s masculinity. He recognizes that Rebeca has become a woman since he last saw her. With the sexual tension between them, Rebeca begins to eat dirt again. One afternoon, while the rest of the family is sleeping, she goes to José Arcadio and they have sex. Three days later they are married, after José Arcadio breaks the news to Pietro Crespi that he will marry Rebeca, despite her being his sister. Father Nicanor reveals that José Arcadio and Rebeca are not in fact biological sister and brother, but Úrsula refuses to allow the newlyweds in the house. They rent a house and, on their wedding night, a scorpion bites Rebeca, but they make love all night anyway. Aureliano Buendía brings them some furniture and money.

Pietro Crespi continues to visit the Buendía house, and he and Amaranta seem to be initiating a romance. Pietro Crespi asks Amaranta to marry him, and she agrees, but not until they know each other better. Úrsula is confused at this response, but Aureliano Buendía agrees it is not the time for a wedding. The death of Remedios Moscote has caused him to be angry and solitary instead of sad. Don Apolinar Moscote tells Aureliano that the Liberals want to go to war, because they are bad people who want to "hang priests, to institute civil marriage and divorce, to recognize the rights of illegitimate children as equal to those of legitimate ones, and to cut the country up into a federal system that would take power away from the supreme authority." The Conservatives, he says, have been given their power by God and want to protect morality.

*The Arcadios of the family tend to travel away from home before returning with a new perspective, and José Arcadio initiates this pattern. He remains mostly focused on his sexual prowess, turning this feature into a moneymaking scheme. The number of times he has circled the globe is most certainly an exaggeration, but the family accepts this account as fact. The family reacts negatively to his crudity, though Úrsula remains committed to him, again echoing the prodigal son in the bible.*



*Rebeca is attracted to José Arcadio despite her belief that they are biological sister and brother. Though not technically forbidden because she was adopted, this is still seen as distasteful by the Buendía family. Any extremity of emotion from Rebeca is signaled by her eating dirt again, and her once unassailable love for Pietro Crespi is challenged by her passion for José Arcadio, an initial instance of sexual desire taking precedence over affection. The scorpion that bites Rebeca on their wedding night is an omen that the wedding is doomed.*



*Amaranta's standoffishness toward Pietro Crespi is one of the first indications of the way she refuses both herself and others the pleasure of companionship. The death of Aureliano's wife prompting him to respond with anger initiates his pattern of solitude and violent uprising. Seeking an outlet for his anger, he listens to his father-in-law's argument that the Conservatives are the political party that is in the right because of their divine providence. The rights that Don Apolinar Moscote says that the Liberals are fighting for are rights that would benefit the members of the Buendía family, allowing illegitimate children more agency and providing the opportunity for unhappily married people to separate.*



Aureliano Buendía sympathizes with the Liberal point of view, but he can't imagine fighting over ideals. Before an election, soldiers confiscate the weapons from every house when distributing the ballots and alcohol sales and gathering are prohibited. Everyone submits their ballots and Don Apolinar Moscote seals the box, but that night they break the seal and take out all but ten of the Liberal ballots, tilting the election in favor of the Conservatives. Aureliano warns that this will prompt the Liberals to go to war. The result of the election has no impact on the town, but the failure of the soldiers to return people's weapons makes them angry.

Soon after, when Gerineldo Márquez and Magnífico Visbal ask Aureliano Buendía if he is Liberal or Conservative, he says that he is a Liberal because "Conservatives are tricky." Aureliano goes to see a doctor, at the urging of his friends, to treat a pain in his liver. The doctor is a charlatan and former terrorist, who had convinced the youth of Macondo to vote to prove that elections were a farce and violence was necessary to attain their ideals. The doctor tells Aureliano that it's his duty to assassinate Conservatives and Aureliano tells the doctor how his father-in-law rigged the election. The doctor shows Aureliano all the people he believes must be killed to exterminate Conservatism, and Aureliano thinks the doctor is "nothing but a butcher."

Aureliano Buendía promises he will not reveal the secret plan, though he won't participate. When they go to murder the Moscote family, though, he guards the door. Arcadio, an adolescent now, tells Aureliano of the way the Liberal ideology has spread amongst his classmates. In December, Úrsula announces the news that war has broken out, though she is late, as martial law has been in effect for the whole country for three months. The soldiers ransack the houses for weapons again and execute the doctor, injuring and killing the priest and a mad woman in town. Aureliano realizes that Don Apolinar Moscote is just a figurehead now, that the army is who is really in charge.

Aureliano Buendía goes to the house of Gerineldo Márquez and tells him they will go to war to prevent this destruction. They conduct an operation in which they invade the garrison and steal the Conservatives' weapons, executing the captain and four soldiers. Arcadio is named the civil and military leader of Macondo. Aureliano guarantees that Don Apolinar Moscote and his family will remain safe and asks that he call him Colonel Aureliano Buendía from now on.

*Despite his allegiance to his father-in-law, Aureliano sees the logic of the Liberal point of view. His familial ties hold him to Conservatism only until he sees the corruption of Don Apolinar Moscote's actions, at which point he transfers his allegiances. The corruption of the Conservative party remains secret, implying that other such corruption exists out of sight of the people of the village, but the influence of politics is still minor enough that the people don't recognize the discrepancy between how people voted and who won.*



*Aureliano's friends seem to know that visiting the doctor will help in the radicalization of Aureliano, making him a more dedicated follower of Liberal beliefs, but Aureliano finds the doctor to be extreme, prompting him to believe there is a more effective method of fighting for Liberal beliefs that doesn't necessitate assassinating all of the Conservative leaders. He intends, instead, to make change within the official Liberal party, an important precursor to his later separation from the party into a rebel faction.*



*Aureliano promises not to stop the actions of the radical group, but he remains committed to protecting his father-in-law, showing the way he balances both his ideals and his commitment to family. When Aureliano learns that Liberalism has spread through his nephew's class, he realizes that it is the movement of the future, appealing to the youth. Macondo remains behind the times of the rest of Colombia, and Aureliano is an example of that on an individual basis.*



*Aureliano's initial entry into the army is based around his desire to protect Macondo, though he promises to also keep his father-in-law's family safe. Power moves from Don Apolinar Moscote to young Arcadio in the hopes of having a leader in place who will rule with a more reasonable hand while the rest of the men are off fighting in the war. Aureliano's name change to Colonel Aureliano Buendía marks a change in identity, as well, that remains for the rest of the book.*



## CHAPTER 6

Colonel Aureliano Buendía loses all 32 of the armed uprisings he organizes. He fathers 17 sons with 17 different women, all of the sons killed on a single night before the oldest turns 35. He survives 14 attempts on his life, 73 ambushes, and a firing squad. He lives through a poisoning, refuses an Order of Merit offered by the president and becomes Commander of the revolutionary forces. He is never photographed. He earns money only from the little gold fishes he makes in his workshop. After signing a treaty that puts an end to 20 years of civil war, he shoots himself in the chest, but the bullet emerges on the other side of his body without harming him. He dies of natural causes, but he doesn't know that any of this will be the case when he sets out with only 21 men to join the Liberal army.

Left in charge of Macondo, Arcadio proves a despotic ruler, imposing as many as four decrees in a day, making insensible laws governing all manner of things. He has a trumpeter at Catarino's store shot for disrespecting him. Don Apolinar Moscote criticizes this "Liberal paradise," and Arcadio hears of his insult. He storms Don Apolinar Moscote's house and is about to execute him when Úrsula arrives to admonish Arcadio and tell him he'll have to kill her, too. The soldiers back down. From that time on, Úrsula is known as the one truly ruling town. She opines the failure of their home and town to her husband, still tied to the chestnut tree, but she worries that she has saddened him and tells him lies to make him feel better, inadvertently making herself feel better, too.

Amaranta and Pietro Crespi have deepened their friendship. Bruno Crespi, Pietro's younger brother, runs the music store, while Pietro manages the music school. Pietro Crespi suggests that Aureliano José might be considered their eldest child. When Pietro Crespi finally tells Amaranta that they will marry the following month, Amaranta cruelly rejects him. Pietro Crespi is heartbroken and confused. After making every attempt to reason with her, his brother finds him in his office, having slit his wrists.

*Without the military backing of the national government, the Liberal army doesn't stand much of a chance against the Conservative party. The timeline is condensed significantly when the entire life of Aureliano is revealed, stating (though not illustrating) the ways in which his life has been threatened. The lives of his 17 sons are also collapsed in the simultaneous explication of their births and deaths, making it seem as though all the events of their lives exist in a single moment, an echo of the way the past and future are predicted in the fortune teller's cards, as well as José Arcadio Buendía's belief that he was living the same day over and over.*



*The pattern of a ruler falling prey to absolute power continues when formerly mild-mannered Arcadio is seduced by his new role. Again, Úrsula serves as the voice of reason, offering up her own life to save someone else from the imprudent actions of her family members. She seeks comfort in her still-captive husband, but seeks to protect even him from the failures of the town, and is so capable of lying to him to make him feel better that she even convinces herself, suggesting the power of self-delusion that exists for many of the people of Macondo.*



*Amaranta's rejection of Pietro Crespi shows her vindictive streak. After leading him on for a significant amount of time, she is still so committed to punishing Pietro Crespi for his earlier rejection of her that she is even willing to deny herself the affection she still desires. Pietro Crespi takes his own life, so distraught at having lost both of the women he's loved.*



Amaranta burns her hand on hot coals in remorse for the trouble she's caused. She covers the burn in black gauze that she keeps in place until her death. One night in Catarino's store, someone tells Arcadio that he doesn't deserve his last name, and Arcadio responds that he is not a Buendía, though he doesn't know the truth that his mother is Pilar Ternera. On an afternoon before the war began, he'd tries to seduce her, drawn by her smoky scent in the same way his father had been. She tells him to leave his door unlocked that night for her. Pilar pays a young virgin named Santa Sofía de la Piedad fifty pesos to go in her place and Arcadio falls in love. Later, when Arcadio is named leader, the pair of them have a daughter.

*Amaranta performs her grief over Pietro Crespi's unexpected response to her rejection of him, giving herself a physical mark of her regret. She covers the burn with a black bandage, not dissimilar to the mourning bands people once wore for a length of time after the death of a loved one, but Amaranta keeps hers on for the rest of her life, mourning both the man she loved and that she is committed to never losing her virginity. Arcadio's being attracted to Pilar Ternera could have been avoided if the Buendías had been honest with him about his parentage, but Pilar, a woman who can see the truth both into the future and the past, knows who he is and sends a more suitable partner for him in her stead.*



Only José Arcadio (I) and Rebeca know about the newborn girl. José Arcadio and Arcadio had become complicit in the act of illegally taking land that belonged to other town residents. When Arcadio had suggested this crime to José Arcadio, José Arcadio defended himself by saying that his father had distributed the land and the case could be made that he had been crazy even at the time of the land distribution. Arcadio visited only with the purpose of allowing José Arcadio to take legal ownership of the land and permission for the local government to do the fee collecting.

*Because of Arcadio's corrupt rule over Macondo, he grows distant from all those in his family except José Arcadio and Rebeca. Together they use José Arcadio's physical strength and the political strength of Arcadio to steal land from the people of Macondo, justifying their actions with the reasoning that anyone with as much power as their father had in establishing Macondo would certainly have kept more, and so he must have been crazy even then.*



Úrsula suspects Arcadio is using public funds and her suspicions are confirmed. She passes his new house and sees his six-month-old daughter and the pregnant Santa Sofía de la Piedad. A woman enters town on a donkey and goes to the barracks and introduces herself to Arcadio as Colonel Gregorio Stevenson. He tells him that the last Liberal forces were being defeated and that Arcadio should surrender the town for the safety of the inhabitants. He carries a gold fish as evidence of the source of the message. Arcadio doesn't trust the source and plans to defend Macondo despite his insufficient troops. All of them die in the battle except Arcadio, but they kill 300 Conservative soldiers in the process.

*Úrsula only learns of the birth of her granddaughter when she happens by, attempting to confirm her suspicions of her grandson. Arcadio's commitment to defending Macondo, even against the recommendation of the Colonel, shows the extremity of his pride and his willingness to sacrifice the lives of others to protect himself and his reputation. This is level of pride and failure to follow the advice of the wiser elders is a pattern that will repeat itself again as the story continues.*



Arcadio is shot at dawn. His last thoughts are filled with both his family and his enemies, who he realizes he truly loved. His last wish is for his wife to **name** the unnamed eight-month-old Úrsula and that if the unborn child is a boy to name it José Arcadio after his grandfather. He tells the priest he has nothing to repent. His last thought is that if the unborn baby is a girl, she should be named Remedios, and then he dies.

*Characters throughout the novel realize their values and mistakes only at the moment of death, as in this instance where Arcadio realizes his priorities were misplaced only as he is about to die. Despite this revelation, he still believes he has nothing to be sorry for, showing the shallow nature of his reflections. Though he asks for his unnamed children to be given certain names, he realizes too late that he requested the wrong names, another confusion of inherited identities.*



## CHAPTER 7

Colonel Aureliano Buendía is taken prisoner two weeks before the end of the war. Only Colonel Gerineldo Márquez accompanies him at the final moment of defeat. He returns to Macondo with his hands bound, accompanied by an officer. Large crowds gather to watch his return. Úrsula visits Colonel Aureliano Buendía in jail. He knows all that has gone on in Macondo because of his psychic abilities, even saying that he believes he's been sentenced to death in this way before, too. He gives his poems to his mother and makes her promise to burn them. She gives him the revolver she has smuggled in.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía thinks back to the time of the war, remembering how the enemy had tried to trap him, but he used his premonitions to protect him. On another occasion his close friend Colonel Magnífico Visbal had been stabbed to death a few yards from him and he had no idea. When he was sentenced to death, he had a premonition that made him ask that the sentence be carried out in Macondo. In Macondo, the soldiers delay the execution, fearful of the crowd's rebellion.

The authorities spend the night at Catarino's store, but no one will sleep with the Captain because they are sure he will die soon. Word arrives that Colonel Aureliano Buendía must be killed in the next 24 hours. The guards lead him through the streets and stand him against the wall to the cemetery. Colonel Aureliano Buendía has a vision of his father leading him to ice. He hears a shout that breaks his memory and sees José Arcadio (I) crossing the street with his shotgun. He orders them not to shoot and another war begins. The soldiers leave with Colonel Aureliano Buendía to free the revolutionary leader in Riohacha.

They make their way, convincing Liberals in small towns to accompany them by showing them the small gold fish. When they approach Riohacha, they determine that the revolutionary leader has been shot and the troops declare Colonel Aureliano Buendía their leader. By the time he has gathered an army of 2000 well-armed Indians, the Liberal party has rejected him as their leader and the national government deems him a bandit. He returns to Macondo to establish his headquarters there and is greeted by Colonel Gerineldo Márquez. Úrsula has taken in Santa Sofía de la Piedad and her daughter and twin sons, born several months before. The girl's name is Remedios, and the boys are named José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo.

*Colonel Aureliano Buendía's ability to see the future has kept him apprised of all of the happenings in Macondo in his absence. His belief that he has already been sentenced to death harkens back to the way the timeline of the novel's events is mixed up and the way in which characters suffer the same fates in different generations: Colonel Aureliano Buendía will be saved from execution but another character later on will not be so lucky.*



*Colonel Aureliano Buendía recognizes the limits of his powers, acknowledging that, while he was able to use them to protect himself, they did not work to protect one of his closest friends from death. His request that his death sentence be carried out in Macondo ends up being the request that saves his life, despite his not knowing exactly how it will help him.*



*Once again, readers are led back to the vision of Colonel Aureliano Buendía remembering, at what he assumes to be the moment of his death, his father showing him ice for the first time, the first image in the book. José Arcadio, mostly forgotten by the rest of the Buendía family appears to defend his brother. Though the capture and execution of Colonel Aureliano Buendía was the final resolution in the loss of the Liberals to the Conservatives, the war begins again.*



*The gold fish are a symbol of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's authority and legitimacy. After the liberals disown him and he becomes a rebel, Colonel Aureliano Buendía is free to move their headquarters to a more convenient location for him. Because Arcadio had been killed, Úrsula has assumed responsibility for Santa Sofía de la Piedad and her children, all baptized with names echoing members of the Buendía family before them.*



A year after Colonel Aureliano Buendía's flight, José Arcadio (I) and Rebeca had gone to live in the home that Arcadio had built for his family. One day, returning home from working the land, José Arcadio is shot in his bedroom. Rebeca says she was in the bathroom and heard nothing. A trickle of blood leaks under the door and runs all the way across town to Úrsula in the Buendía house. Úrsula follows the trail all the way to the dead José Arcadio, though no wound can be found on his body. His body holds the scent of gunpowder, remaining even after he is buried. Rebeca barricades herself inside the house and the town forgets about her.

*There is something suspicious about Rebeca not having heard the shot that killed José Arcadio, but no one is able to solve the mystery of his death. The greatest likelihood is that a representative of the Conservative party has assassinated him because he prevented the execution of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, but there is speculation that he might have taken his own life. The magic of the blood making its way to Úrsula across town before being discovered by Rebeca casts further suspicion on Rebeca and shows the intractable bond between mother and son, even when estranged. His body holding the scent of gunpowder is similar to the way Pilar Ternera smells of smoke.*



The town of Macondo is under the impression that Colonel Aureliano Buendía holds power because of his 5,000 troops, but the colonel knows different. He believes the war is at a stalemate. Colonel Aureliano Buendía asks Pilar Ternera to read him his future. She warns him to “watch out for his mouth” though she can't explain further. Two days later he drinks poisoned coffee, but Úrsula nurses him back to health. Úrsula tells him she did not burn his poetry as he requested. He starts writing again.

*Throughout the book, there are the characters who possess official titles and then there are the characters who actually hold power over the majority. Colonel Aureliano Buendía knows his weakness, even if it is not recognized by the rest of the people. Úrsula is the character with the strength to protect her son from the attempts on his life, using her healing skills to save his life and her common sense to save his poetry against his wishes.*



Colonel Aureliano Buendía asks his friend Colonel Gerineldo Márquez why he is fighting. His friend responds that he is fighting for the Liberal party, but Colonel Aureliano Buendía says that he has just realized that he is fighting only for pride. Colonel Aureliano Buendía says that knowing this is better than not knowing why one is fighting or fighting for an empty cause like Colonel Gerineldo Márquez is. He names Colonel Gerineldo Márquez the civil and military leader of Macondo, and goes to meet the rebel groups in the interior. Colonel Gerineldo Márquez establishes an “atmosphere of rural peace.”

*Colonel Aureliano Buendía becomes aware of his own pride and how it drives him to continue fighting. His commitment to the Liberal party is just a cover for his true interests. He insults his friend, thinking him either stupid or dishonest to still believe that he fights to defend Liberal values, though he himself has just awoken to this realization. Despite his feelings, he appoints his friend the leader of Macondo, and his friend is able to return Macondo to a basic level of peace.*



Colonel Gerineldo Márquez fell in love with Amaranta before his return. Úrsula advises Amaranta to marry him, but Amaranta refuses, saying he will be shot sooner or later. Indeed, the government threatens to shoot him if the rebel forces don't surrender Riohacha. Amaranta turns down his proposal and accuses him of loving Colonel Aureliano Buendía so much that it has caused him to want to marry her. He says he will continue insisting.

*Amaranta's second love interest pursues her, but Amaranta pretends to her mother that logic prevents her from growing affections for Colonel Gerineldo Márquez. Her excuse is different when she interacts directly with the Colonel, though, having grown mistrustful of the way men can transfer their love from one person to another, similar to the way Pietro Crespi moved from Rebeca to Amaranta.*



A letter arrives from Colonel Aureliano Buendía advising Úrsula to take good care of José Arcadio Buendía because he is going to die, and Úrsula believes it is a premonition. It takes seven men to move him inside to a bed, but the next morning he has returned himself to the chestnut tree. José Arcadio Buendía communicates with and is cared for mostly by the ghost of the man her killed, Prudencio Aguilar. He spends much of his day dreaming of infinite rooms that he returns to again and again. José Arcadio Buendía is found dead in bed soon after. Yellow flowers rain from the sky.

*Colonel Aureliano Buendía's foresight works from a distance, too. Though the Buendías attempt to provide an increased level of care to their patriarch on his death bed, José Arcadio Buendía is so set in his ways that he prefers to remain where he is comfortable, out by the tree, an action that seems to prove to the family that he is out of his mind. His relationship with the ghost of the man he wronged has been healed over time, as José Arcadio Buendía grows closer to joining the spirit realm. His vision of the infinite rooms, repeatedly revisited, echoes his belief that he lives the same day over and over, the way that generations repeat themselves in Macondo, and the image of Macondo as a city of mirrors. The yellow flowers that fall from the sky are a sign of the death of the man who created this place.*



## CHAPTER 8

Amaranta watches Aureliano José shave for the first time, noting that he is now a man. Aureliano José has been attracted to Amaranta for some time. When he was a boy he would crawl into bed out of fear, but he continues to sleep beside her now, no longer out of fear, but out of comfort and attraction, and Amaranta feels the same change in their dynamic. They sleep together naked, touch each other, and almost get caught kissing by Úrsula. Amaranta cuts off the relationship immediately. Aureliano José goes to Catarino's store and makes love to a woman he imagines is Amaranta. The rebel forces secretly return to Macondo on the eve of an armistice and Aureliano José leaves with them. After the opposition announces the end of the war, Colonel Aureliano Buendía attempts several more revolts and continuing on his expeditions.

*Despite her raising him as her son, the comfort Amaranta and Aureliano José find in each other has taken on a sexual aspect. Amaranta, older and having refused herself the opportunity to act on all of her more proper desires, doesn't stop Aureliano José. Though they don't go so far as to consummate their feelings for one another, they are quite intimate, which shows that they believe that respecting a technical line that they refuse to cross will spare them from their otherwise sinful behavior. Only the threat of someone finding out about what they've been doing is enough to separate them, and Aureliano José removes himself from his temptations even further by joining the army.*



Visitación, the Indian servant, dies after turning down a throne in her tribe for fear of the insomnia. She wanted her savings sent to Colonel Aureliano Buendía, but Úrsula doesn't send them, having heard a rumor that the colonel has been killed. Six months later though, news arrives that he is alive and trying to unite the federalist forces of Central America. Úrsula receives a letter from him in Cuba and shows it to the Conservative mayor, José Raquel Moncada, a man who befriended Colonel Aureliano Buendía over the years, teaching him to play chess, and brainstorming if there was a way to combine the best of the two parties. Under his rule, Macondo becomes a peaceful, less militant place.

*A second leader, José Raquel Moncada, is able to rule Macondo in a mostly peaceful way, even though he is Conservative, indicating that political party is not necessarily an indication of a person's character or the way they'll be received by the people they rule. Visitación's refusal to take the throne for fear of the insomnia accompanied by amnesia shows how a woman is uninterested in political power, especially when she knows it will threaten her decision-making abilities, a crucial skill to ruling well.*



Father Nicanor is replaced with Father Coronel, a veteran of the war. Bruno Crespi has married Amparo Moscote. Don Melchor Escalona is put in charge of the newly rebuilt school. Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo are among the first students. The young Remedios is given the **name** Remedios the Beauty. Úrsula fails to grow old, growing her business and restocking her savings in the gourds buried beneath her bed.

Aureliano José deserts the federalist troops and returns home, determined to marry Amaranta. He asks her how long she will wear the black bandage on her hand. She fails to bar the door to her bedroom, and they continue to sleep naked together. While fighting he had tried to kill her by having himself killed, but the plan did not work. One evening he heard an old man tell the story of a “man who had married his aunt, who was also his cousin, and whose son ended up being his own grandfather.” Aureliano José asks if a person can marry his aunt and the old man tells him yes, and that the war’s purpose is to allow a person to marry their own mother. Two weeks later, he deserted.

Amaranta tells Aureliano José that he needs dispensation from the pope to marry his own aunt and that any of their children would be born with **the tail of a pig**. Aureliano José goes to Catarino’s store and makes love to a prostitute. Amaranta begins to think again of Colonel Gerineldo Márquez and bars her door so that Aureliano José can no longer visit her in the night.

A woman arrives with a child she claims is the son of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, born with his eyes open and resembling his father. They christen him Aureliano with his mother’s last name, and though Úrsula offers to take over his upbringing, the woman refuses. Nine more sons arrive to be baptized, the oldest over ten years old. All of them have Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s look of solitude. In twelve years, they baptize a total of seventeen sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendía. Ursula tells General Moncada that she wishes Colonel Aureliano Buendía would return and be reunited with his sons in her house. He tells her it will happen soon enough, knowing that Colonel Aureliano Buendía is on his way to head up the bloodiest rebellion of them all.

*Macondo develops, establishing an official school and welcoming a new pastor. The children of Santa Sofía de la Piedad and Arcadio are of an age that readers start to understand their individual personalities. Úrsula remains the most hardworking of the family, putting money aside for the future, proving her prudence in addition to her work ethic.*



*Despite his status as Amaranta’s nephew, Aureliano José is committed to formalizing his love of his aunt because of the opinion of one old man he met in the war; he needed only to know that it was acceptable. His interest in her removing the black bandage from her hand echoes his interest in her virginity. She refuses to answer, but also doesn’t go so far as to refuse him their old ways of comforting one another. Aureliano José’s attempt to transfer his aunt’s death onto himself doesn’t work, an echo of the way Amaranta considered killing Rebeca, but Remedios Moscote died instead.*



*Aureliano José also transfers his passion for his aunt onto a prostitute, but it fails to sate his desire. Amaranta, worried about how close she is getting to committing a sin with her nephew, and experiencing regret over the way she refused the affections of her more appropriate suitors, again cuts off romantic contact with her nephew.*



*Though, we’ve already learned about the 17 sons that Colonel Aureliano Buendía fathered while off fighting in the war, the rest of his family is unaware until the first of the mothers and sons appears in Macondo to be baptized. Each son was born with his eyes open, indicating the gift of psychic powers that Colonel Aureliano Buendía has possessed since birth. None of the mothers agree to turn over their sons’ care to Úrsula, contrasting the way that Pilar has allowed her sons to be raised by other women. The length of time Colonel Aureliano Buendía has been gone is made clear in the fact that the 17 sons appear over the course of 12 years, indicating that he has not returned in all that time to hear the news of his progeny.*



Aureliano José begins to behave badly, sacking Úrsula's money and gadding about town. He learns that his mother is Pilar Ternera, who becomes his accomplice in solitude. She lends her rooms to people's casual affairs and Aureliano José takes naps there. She predicts his death in the cards. He goes to see a play and sees soldiers searching the audience. He tries to run, but the captain shoots him, saying he only wishes that it were Colonel Aureliano Buendía instead. The captain is immediately shot and the Liberal party believes it has gained power.

*Aureliano José's being refused the company of Amaranta can be seen as one cause of his bad behavior. He reunites with his biological mother only long enough for her to tell his fortune. Aureliano José is the first of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's sons to be murdered, though all of the rest will die in similar ways, punished for their father's actions. Again, the Liberal party is misguided in its sense that it gains power from any individual act.*



General José Raquel Moncada takes up civil and military leadership of Macondo, afraid the soldiers are too hotheaded on their own. The regime won't admit to a state of war. Colonel Aureliano Buendía seizes two states on the coast and returns to attack Macondo. General Moncada is disappointed that the rebels are fighting well, though sympathetic to his old friend's cause. He is captured trying to escape Macondo and he and Colonel Aureliano Buendía have lunch together at Úrsula's.

*Though General José Raquel Moncada has been a mostly peaceful leader up until now, he fears what will happen if he doesn't step in to provide his more level-headed military guidance. The two old friends are able to meet with one another, calling out the disparity between the relative calm of person-to-person relations and the exaggeratedly violent nature of political conflict.*



Colonel Aureliano Buendía replaces all of the Conservative laws with new ones. He reverts all the land his brother had stolen back to its original owners and visits Rebeca to tell her his plans. He can barely see her and he advises her to scale back her mourning. Rebeca, though, likes living in the house, alone with her memories.

*As a way of proving his dominance, Colonel Aureliano Buendía replaces all of the laws, refocusing the governance of Macondo, not out of necessity so much as pride. He does right by the people of Macondo when he restores the land stolen from them by his brother and nephew. Rebeca's ephemeral existence shows the way a person fades when left in complete solitude, becoming a ghost even before death.*



Court-martials demand the execution of all of the regular army officers, including José Raquel Moncada. Úrsula begs Colonel Aureliano Buendía not to follow through, saying that the town had been its most peaceful under his rule. Colonel Aureliano Buendía refuses to commute his sentence though. He visits his old friend in his cell to say that he is not the one executing him, but rather the revolution. General Moncada tells Colonel Aureliano Buendía that, out of his hatred for the military, he has become just like them. Colonel Aureliano Buendía accepts his friend's personal affects, agreeing to deliver them to his wife.

*Colonel Aureliano Buendía refuses to pardon his friend, despite their amicable relations and despite the reasonable pleas of his mother. Again he obscures his own guilt by blaming the revolution, rather than accepting that he has any personal responsibility. Even while agreeing to kill his friend, he still agrees to do him the favor of visiting his wife, a clear indication of the contradictory way he lives, which Moncada can't reconcile as being any better than the status quo against which Colonel Aureliano Buendía has claimed to fight all these years.*



## CHAPTER 9

Colonel Gerineldo Márquez can see how empty the war is through his telegraphic conversations with Colonel Aureliano Buendía. As time passes, he can no longer identify the content from Colonel Aureliano Buendía, and he begins to think of him as a stranger. He spends time watching Amaranta sew, in silence. He brings her a prayer book as a gift and she notes the irony. She does not love him, but she knows she cannot live without him.

When Amaranta turns down Colonel Gerineldo Márquez for good, he has a call with Colonel Aureliano Buendía and tells him it's raining in Macondo. Colonel Aureliano Buendía returns home, disinterested in the war. He naps and consorts with his mistresses, and little else. Colonel Aureliano Buendía calls together an assembly of the rebel commanders and is surprised by the variety of individuals that make up the group. General Téofilo Vargas stands out from the others. He is an Indian with brutal intentions, and the others recognize him as a threat that must be killed. Colonel Aureliano Buendía won't order such a command, but two weeks later, the Indian is ambushed by a group of men with machetes. Colonel Aureliano Buendía assumes power. He orders the death of the man who suggested killing General Téofilo Vargas and feels an immense solitude in his position of power.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía bristles at the way war has become normalized. A commission from the Liberal party arrives to discuss the stalemate, and they request three concessions: the renunciation of property titles, the renunciation of the fight against the clerics and the renunciation of equal rights for illegitimate children. Colonel Aureliano Buendía determines, then, that they would only be fighting for meaningless power. Despite the protests of his political adviser, Colonel Aureliano Buendía signs. Colonel Gerineldo Márquez calls the act a betrayal and Colonel Aureliano Buendía tells him to surrender his weapons and put himself in the disposition of the revolutionary court.

Colonel Gerineldo Márquez is sentenced to death for high treason. Úrsula tells her son that if he allows Márquez to be shot, she will kill her son with her bare hands. Colonel Aureliano Buendía goes to his friend's cell and releases him so that they can find a more satisfactory agreement to end the war. It takes over two years, but as an armistice approaches, Colonel Aureliano Buendía returns home. Úrsula does not believe they will have him home for long, assuming that if the war doesn't take him, death will.

*The breakdown of telegraphic communications indicates that Colonel Aureliano Buendía is now speaking a different language than his friend, one no longer grounded in the common base of knowledge they shared. A prayer book is an ironic gift because the soldiers have been fighting against the power of the church.*



*Despite the pleasure she finds in the companionship of Colonel Gerineldo Márquez, Amaranta denies herself his company, breaking his heart, too. The rain marks a turning point here, as it will again later, triggering the return of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, just as it later triggers the return of Úrsula to health. Colonel Aureliano Buendía's values seem confused in his refusal to execute a tyrant, closely followed by his insistence on killing the man who killed the tyrant. The effect of this action is Colonel Aureliano Buendía feeling the immense solitude that comes along with his power, specifically his abuse of that power.*



*Colonel Aureliano Buendía's will has been broken down, and he agrees to the concessions requested by the Liberal party because he no longer cares to fight. When his friend, who is still committed to their cause, criticizes him for signing the agreement rather than passing on his power to another leader, Colonel Aureliano's refusal to hear his longtime friend out proves his extreme lack of reason. The concessions being requested show how the fight has come full circle with the Liberal party now fighting for exactly what they used to fight against.*



*Colonel Aureliano Buendía backs down from his decision only at the behest of his mother, turning the task of finding a more suitable compromise over to his more reasonable friend. Ending the war is a lot harder than Colonel Gerineldo Márquez believed it would be, and Úrsula believes finally having him home is too good to be true.*



José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo operate as mirrors of each other. Remedios the Beauty wanders the house naked. Colonel Aureliano Buendía looks at his mother, and all that she has gone through in her life, but feels no pity for her, having been completely desensitized by the war. He thinks of his wife, but the memory is hazy enough that he might remember her as his daughter instead of his wife. He strips the house of his personal belongings, but Úrsula stops him when he tries to take down the photo of Remedios. He burns his poetry in the oven of the bakery.

Pilar Ternera visits Colonel Aureliano Buendía and he is surprised at how old she is. On the fated morning, he joins the troops to finally surrender, Úrsula bars the door behind him, intent on hiding away for the rest of her life, and searches the house for memories of her son to no success. Colonel Aureliano Buendía signs the surrender without ceremony. He goes to his tent and shoots himself in the chest. At the same moment, Úrsula takes the cover off a pot of milk to check to see if it is boiling, and sees it is full of worms, sure this is a sign they have killed her son. She goes out to the courtyard to tell her husband and is still crying there when Colonel Aureliano Buendía is brought home, wrapped in a blanket and alive.

The bullet passed cleanly through Colonel Aureliano Buendía's chest without harming any organs. He immediately threatens war again trying to get pensions for the veterans, but the government only adds more guards to prevent him from leaving his house. Úrsula puts the guards to work helping around the house, and one, driven crazy by Remedios the Beauty's lack of interest, kills himself in her honor.

## CHAPTER 10

Years later, on his deathbed, Aureliano Segundo remembers the afternoon he meets his son for the first time, **naming** him José Arcadio (II). His wife, Fernanda Del Carpio agrees with the name. Úrsula believes it might be a bad idea though, recalling that the Aurelianos of the family are typically withdrawn while the José Arcadios are impulsive and marked by tragedy. The exception is the youthful Segundo twins who were so alike in childhood that even their mother could not tell them apart. The story returns to their childhood, where they switch their clothes in an attempt to fool their teachers. They do everything at the same time, and even seem to sense what the other senses. Aureliano Segundo grows into a strapping youth like his grandfathers and José Arcadio Segundo is slight like the colonel. José Arcadio Segundo asks to witness and execution, but Aureliano Segundo can't bear the thought.

*As children, José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo are impossible to tell apart. Remedios the Beauty is a dreamy figure who prefers to walk around naked, oblivious to the effect she has on men. The confusion of mistaken identities continues with Colonel Aureliano Buendía's inability to recognize the memory of Remedios Moscote as his wife rather than his sister or daughter (though he doesn't have a daughter).*



*Colonel Aureliano Buendía's days have felt much the same because they have all been spent in battle, which echoes his father's belief that every day he lived was the same Monday as the day before. One of the only ways he can register the passing of time is by looking at the way the people in his life are aging. When the troops finally surrender, he no longer sees a purpose in living and attempts to take his own life, but a doctor has given him instructions that ensure he lives. Úrsula believes her prediction had been correct when she sees an arbitrary sign, but happily she is wrong.*



*Though Colonel Aureliano Buendía has just surrendered in the war, his new lease on life almost prompts him to return to the business of waging battles again immediately. The government tries to protect him from himself by restraining him at home. Úrsula, resourceful as ever, gives them more useful work to do.*



*Again a character recalls on their deathbed one of their most vivid memories, and it's important to note that Aureliano Segundo is the second person to do this after Colonel Aureliano Buendía because he is the second-most prominent character in the book. Generally, the Aurelianos of the book name their children after themselves and the José Arcadios do the same, but in this case Aureliano Segundo wants to name his son José Arcadio, another indication that perhaps the twins switched identities in their youth and never went back. In general, their temperaments better match the characters of the other name, showing how people's characteristics are fated from birth, not determined by a name.*



Aureliano Segundo shuts himself up on Melquíades' laboratory, reading a book of the fantastic stories he told, and Úrsula confirms that they are all true, but that the world is coming to an end, so those things don't happen in Macondo anymore. He finishes reading the book despite many of the stories not having endings because of missing pages. He begins to try to decipher Melquíades' manuscripts, but the text is indecipherable. One afternoon, the ghost of Melquíades appears and the two visit with each other every afternoon for several years. Melquíades tells Aureliano Segundo that the manuscripts won't be deciphered until they are 100 years old. Úrsula can't see Melquíades and so tells Aureliano Segundo that he is following in his great-grandfather's footsteps talking to himself.

José Arcadio Segundo witnesses a shooting and, because the man is still smiling after they shoot him, worries that they will bury him alive. This fear causes him to detest all military practices for the rest of his life. He begins to assist Father Antonio Isabel, the next in the line of priests, and his family scolds him for the Conservative practice. Úrsula hopes he might become a priest himself. Father Antonio Isabel prepares José Arcadio Segundo to make his first communion and falls asleep as the boy's confession takes so long. José Arcadio Segundo is troubled by the question of whether he has had sex with animals and, after asking around, the sexton offers to take him to the place where people have sex with donkeys.

José Arcadio Segundo takes a liking to having sex with donkeys and is able to avoid the gossip of Catarino's store for a long while because of it. He begins to enter cocks into fighting matches. Úrsula notes how different the twins have become despite their similar looks. Aureliano Segundo is approached on the street by a young woman who believes he is his brother, and he has sex with her without correcting her, a habit that goes on for two months. The twins become sick with a venereal disease caught from the young woman, causing José Arcadio Segundo to end the affair, but Aureliano Segundo decides to reveal his true identity to the woman and continues to see her until his death.

*Úrsula can see, before anyone except maybe Melquíades, that Macondo is coming to an end. The magic that once defined the landscape is no more because of the influx of central governance and the ravages of war. The stories not having endings likely results from the fact that the one hundred years that Melquiades said would need to pass before his prophecy could be read and understood have not passed. Melquíades returns once more from the dead, but he is invisible to everyone but Aureliano Segundo, calling back to the way Aureliano Segundo's great-grandfather was unjustly judged for being crazy.*



*José Arcadio Segundo is young when he witnesses the brutal execution of the man, and his fear of being buried alive echoes with José Arcadio Buendía's reluctance to bury Melquíades' body, believing he might come back to life a second time. Úrsula again proves her wisdom in supporting the individual interests and pursuits of her family members by supporting José Arcadio Segundo's interest in the church, though her hopes for him are quite exaggerated.*



*The taboo practice of bestiality protects José Arcadio Segundo from the brothel, but the arbitrary lines of propriety are scrutinized in the question of which of these practices is more ethical. Despite his holy occupation, he also falls prey to the lure of the cock fight, one of the only practices that was illegal when Macondo was established. The confusion between the twins continues even though their personalities have become quite different. In an echo of Colonel Aureliano Buendía and José Arcadio both sleeping with Pilar Ternera, the twins also sleep with the same woman, though they respond quite differently when they catch a sickness from her.*



The woman's name is Petra Cotes, a mixed-race widow. Úrsula bristles at the way the twins seem to embody all of the negative aspects of the family line and none of the positive. She vows that no children will receive these same two **names** again, but when Aureliano Segundo denies this request, she demands that she raise the child herself. By this point she is 100 years old and nearly blind. Úrsula declares that, with any luck, this child will grow up to be the Pope. Aureliano Segundo has had an immense amount of luck breeding fertile animals and earning a fortune, an effect of the passion he experiences with Petra Cotes, splitting his time between her home where the animals are kept and his own.

Aureliano Segundo tries to learn how to create the gold fishes from Colonel Aureliano Buendía, but he grows quickly bored and returns to his livestock and Petra Cotes. He makes such a fortune that he wallpapers both the outside and inside of the Buendía house in one peso banknotes. Úrsula has them removed, and, in the process, a statue filled with gold coins is broken. She buries the coins, hoping the men who left them there will return for them eventually.

The adobe houses of Macondo have been replaced with brick buildings. José Arcadio (I) attempts to open a boat line through the river, a near impossible task. Úrsula has a sense of déjà vu, as though she has already witnessed this same pursuit. Aureliano Segundo gives his brother the money he needs to finish the project. José Arcadio Segundo is gone for a long while, and people speculate that the request for a boat was a con, but one day a craft approaches on the river, bearing José Arcadio Segundo and numerous French matrons. The matrons close Catarino's store and promote a carnival. José Arcadio Segundo goes back to cockfighting.

Remedios the Beauty is named queen of the carnival. Úrsula thinks this is a bad idea as she has been trying to keep her great-granddaughter out of sight of the men of the town, allowing her to go only to church. A foreigner arrives to town and offers Remedios the Beauty a flower at mass. Seeing her unveiled face for only an instant, from then on he plays music outside her window, trying to woo her. Remedios the Beauty remains completely oblivious to his advances. She is a simple creature who can barely take care of herself.

Úrsula blames the repetition of names over the years for the way the bad habits of each generation seem to become more and more concentrated (here shown by Aureliano Segundo's unmarried relationship with Pilar Cotes and José Arcadio Segundo's cockfighting habit). When Aureliano Segundo insists on naming his son José Arcadio, though, Úrsula puts the hope in him that he will be the pope that his uncle never was. During Aureliano Segundo's affair with the widow Petra Cotes, their passion produces a great deal of wealth in the form of livestock, suggesting that a fruitful union could result from the improper marriage of a man to a woman already widowed.



Aureliano Segundo attempts to learn the ways of his namesake, but doesn't have the right temperament for it. His success at raising livestock prompts him to flaunt his money, wasting it by using it as wallpaper. When Úrsula, embarrassed, has them removed, she finds even more money in an unexpected place and this can be seen as a reward for her more modest ways. She hides it away for the future, rather than spending it.



The town is slowly changing, marked by the different style of buildings. José Arcadio Segundo continues his grandfather's pattern of completing impossible tasks by trying to navigate a boat through the shallow river, and Úrsula recognizes the action as an echo of her husband. The introduction of the French matrons on the boat marks another culture shift for the town, and once José Arcadio Segundo finally accomplishes his arbitrary goal, he goes back to his old ways, suggesting that the boat remains stranded inland, similar to the Spanish galleon found decades before by his great-grandfather.



Remedios the Beauty's powers of attraction have been seen as a threat and a distraction, and so Úrsula, in all her prudence, has attempted to keep her a secret. All of these efforts are made null by her being named queen of the carnival. Remedios the Beauty is so unaffected by the bold advances of her suitors that she doesn't even register their presence, causing her family to question if she possesses all of the faculties of her mind.



Colonel Aureliano Buendía remains interested in only his gold fishes, shutting down all attempts to talk to him about the state of the country. He believes that the secret to good old age is to remain solitary. He is oblivious to the merriment of the carnival.

*Colonel Aureliano Buendía has reached the ultimate state of his solitude, refusing to talk about any matters of war or politics, and sure that he can die relatively happy if he only remains alone.*



At the carnival, another queen arrives who appears to possess real authority, dressed in an emerald crown and ermine cape. Aureliano Segundo seats the two queens beside each other. A cry goes out in support of the Liberal party and rifle shots are lost in the clamor of fireworks. Many dead and wounded lie in the square and the bedouins who had accompanied the second queen are nowhere to be found. Aureliano Segundo carries the second queen to the house. Her name is Fernanda del Carpio, chosen as the most beautiful of 5000 women, and promised that in Macondo she would be named Queen of Madagascar. Six months later, after the massacre, Aureliano Segundo goes to retrieve her from her town so that he might make her his wife. They are married in a celebration that lasts 20 days.

*Rather than placing one queen above another, Aureliano Segundo attempts to give them even footing. Fernanda del Carpio's arrival from a Conservative family and the threat she poses to Liberal happiness can be interpreted as the cause of the shots fired. Aureliano Segundo attempts to protect the noble-looking second queen. The promise she received, that she would be named Queen of Madagascar in Macondo, is nonsensical and hints at how truly sheltered Fernanda has been from the rest of the world. Aureliano, despite his passion for Petra Cotes, cannot resist the allure of regal Fernanda and pursues her instead of his lover.*



## CHAPTER 11

The marriage of Fernanda del Carpio and Aureliano Segundo is nearly broken up when Aureliano Segundo allows Petra Cotes to dress as the Queen of Madagascar and takes her picture. When Aureliano Segundo married Fernanda del Carpio, Petra Cotes remained unthreatened, and indeed Aureliano Segundo returned to her immediately after his honeymoon ended. When he returns to her, naming her the lifetime ruler of Madagascar, she can tell this extravagant act of reconciliation proves he feared losing her. She can see that he is intent on keeping up the charade of his marriage, and so she keeps as a souvenir of him in her home only the patent leather boots that he wants to buried in, insuring that he will need to return at some point, if only for the boots.

*Despite Aureliano Segundo's marriage to Fernanda del Carpio, he continues to visit his mistress, even allowing her to dress in Fernanda's clothes, an action his wife sees as an insult. He also awards Petra Cotes the arbitrary distinction of lifetime ruler of Madagascar, a title he doesn't have the authority to award and which echoes his wife's nonsensical title. The extremity of his actions reveals that he is more concerned with losing his mistress because of his wife than he is of losing his wife because of his mistress. Petra Cotes holds only one item belonging to her lover, a symbol of the end of his life, indicating they will stay together until then.*



Fernanda is out of her element in Macondo. She had been raised in an insular city. Her sickly mother speaks only of the prosperous past, telling her daughter that they are rich and powerful and that one day she will be queen, despite evidence to the contrary. At twelve, she is sent to a convent for school, but she refuses to mingle with the other girls, thinking herself better than them. Eight years later she returns from the convent to her nearly empty home to weave funeral wreaths. Her trip to Macondo is her first time out of her home city and it opens her eyes to all that her parents have hidden from her throughout her life.

*Fernanda was brought up just as out of touch with the reality of the past and present as the people of Macondo. Her parents raised her believing that they prospered even as their house crumbled around them. Fernanda's erroneous sense of privilege is so extreme that she refuses to even befriend other people at her school. The family business of weaving funeral wreaths is an apt metaphor for the death of their prosperity. Fernanda, though, has been wholly unprepared for the life she now lives, very different from what she's been promised.*



After the carnival, Aureliano Segundo has little to go on in his search for Fernanda. Eventually he finds her inside the home that bears a sign advertising funeral wreaths. With her she brings her trousseau, a candelabra, a silver service and a gold chamber pot. She carries a calendar that allows for sex on only 42 days of the year. Fernanda insists on two weeks of abstinence with her new husband, and when she finally permits him into her bedroom, he finds her in a modest nightgown with a hole to allow penetration. Aureliano Segundo exclaims that the garment is the most obscene thing he has ever seen.

*The items Fernanda packs for her life in Macondo show her extreme lack of awareness of what her life will be like. The gold chamber pot is the perfect symbol of her conspicuous wealth and the foolishness of her need to appear fancy. Her Conservative adherence to the church calendar allows for sex on only 42 days of the year, a number too low for the sexually voracious Aureliano Segundo. Her nightgown points to the sex act far more lewdly than a simpler gown or even a nude body, indicating only one purpose for the garment, when it's supposed to maintain modesty.*



Shortly before their first child is born, Fernanda realizes that her husband still secretly visits Petra Cotes. Aureliano Segundo claims he must visit her so that the animals will remain fertile, and in time she is convinced of this reasoning. Fernanda is not embraced by the family though, as she refuses to assimilate. Amaranta speaks in gibberish to Fernanda, insulting her and making fun of her way of speaking, until they stop speaking to one another. Fernanda insists on formal meals where they pray the rosary beforehand. She insists the candy business is put to a stop.

*Aureliano Segundo justifies his affair to his wife by appealing to her desire for wealth, claiming that his passion for Petra Cotes is what keeps the animals procreating at such an incredible rate. Fernanda's greed is even greater than her sexual morals, and so she accepts this story as fact. Fernanda's way of talking differs from the Buendías in her propriety and her refusal to call anything the least bit improper by its real name, relying instead on often indecipherable euphemisms.*



When Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo's first daughter is born, Fernanda asks that she be called Renata, but Úrsula has already decided on Remedios. They compromise on Renata Remedios, with Fernanda calling her Renata and the rest of the family and town calling her Meme. Fernanda talks constantly and reverently about her saintly father. Each Christmas, he sends them life-size stone statues, the last of the family's possessions. On the tenth Christmas, they open the large box to discover a lead chest sealed shut. Inside is the dead Don Fernando, Fernanda's father.

*Úrsula continues to assert her influence on the family in deciding the names of her great-great-granddaughter. The distance between Fernanda and the rest of the family is reinforced in how she insists on calling her daughter by a name that no one else uses. Fernanda's regard for her father persists, even as he sends the last of their worldly possessions, including his own dead body to be disposed of, indicating the way in which her reverence for him is unwarranted.*



A jubilee is held by the government for Colonel Aureliano Buendía, but none of the family attend. Seventeen men arrive to Macondo for the celebration. Aureliano Segundo throws them a party. Colonel Aureliano Buendía is skeptical of the men claiming to be his sons, at first, but he gives them all a gold fish before they leave. Aureliano Segundo offers the opportunity for all of them to stay and work for him, but only Aureliano Triste takes him up on the offer. On Ash Wednesday they attend church with Amaranta and receive the sign of the cross on their foreheads. The marks prove permanent for the seventeen half-brothers.

*Though the Buendía family wants to participate in the jubilee held for Colonel Aureliano Buendía, his seventeen estranged sons see it as an opportunity to finally come meet their father, who is less than welcoming, though he finally acknowledges their legitimacy with gold fish. The marks they receive in church, a cross usually delivered with the words "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return," end up serving as bulls-eyes in marking them as targets for assassination, ending their lives and indeed returning them to dust as the cross predicts (a symbolic representation of the circularity of time).*



Aureliano Triste sets up the ice factory his grandfather had dreamed of on the edge of town. He looks for a home for himself and inquires about the house in the square where Rebeca and José Arcadio (I) had lived. When he breaks down the door, he finds Rebeca still alive inside, aiming a pistol at him. She mistakes him for the ghost of her dead husband and tells him to get out. When he tells the rest of the family about this, Úrsula can't believe that Rebeca, who she had forgotten, is still alive. Amaranta is the only one who knew Rebeca survived, her hatred of her adopted sister as strong as ever. Aureliano Segundo attempts to return Rebeca to the Buendía house, but she insists on remaining in her home.

*The only one of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's sons that stays in Macondo sets about fulfilling the dream of José Arcadio Buendía, creating the ice factory that represents the vision of the City of Mirrors. Though many characters have experienced solitude in the book up until this point, the discovery of Rebeca, alone in her abandoned home, is the most literal representation of this solitude, since she is forgotten by all but the vindictive Amaranta. Rebeca, similar to the way José Arcadio Buendía preferred to remain tied to his tree alone, prefers to stay alone in her home even when she is invited back to the Buendía house.*



When the sixteen sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendía return in February, Aureliano Triste recruits them to help repair the outside of Rebeca's house. She tries to pay them with coins that are no longer in circulation. On another visit of the sons to Macondo, a second son, Aureliano Centeno, remains behind to help Aureliano Triste and significantly increases the production of ice. Aureliano Triste declares that they will need to bring the railroad into Macondo so that he can sell ice to the surrounding towns. Úrsula thinks the idea of the railroad is as fanciful as her husband's vision of solar warfare, and again, deems time to be running in a circle.

*Rebeca's commitment to her solitude is so extreme that she even refuses their offer to help her fix up the interior of her house, preferring to remain alone. She is so disconnected from society that she attempts to pay with coins that were used in a different time. The increased productivity of the ice factory prompts Aureliano Triste to pursue the introduction of the railroad, an innovation that will deliver to Macondo a variety of influences and inventions that will change life in the town. The pattern of inhabitants of Macondo being incapable of distinguishing fantastic inventions from real possibilities shows the way that they remain detached from modernity.*



Aureliano Segundo donates the money needed to develop the railroad. Aureliano Triste leaves to enact his plan and Aureliano Centeno invents sherbet. A whole summer goes by with no word from Aureliano Triste, until the sound of a whistle shakes the town. Aureliano Triste waves from the newly arrived yellow locomotive.

*Aureliano Segundo finances the railroad in the same way he financed the boat's passage to Macondo, supporting new technologies no matter the likelihood of their prosperity via the money he's earned from the magical fertility of his livestock. The arrival of the yellow train echoes the yellow flowers that rained on the day of José Arcadio Buendía's death.*



## CHAPTER 12

Aureliano Triste brings in electrical power on his second visit on the train. Bruno Crespi opens a movie theater and the people riot in response to the films until the mayor explains that they are just illusions. The French matrons introduce phonographs and live musicians suffer at first. Everyone is upset when the first telephone is installed.

*The train serves as not just an advancement of technology in its own right, but also as a method of transportation for other new technologies, bringing electricity first. While the people of Macondo are accepting of some types of magic, the illusions of a movie projected on a screen are too disturbing at first. Communication has progressed from troubadours to mail to telegraphs and now to telephones. Each new invention is met with resistance and concern over how this will change the town by allowing in outside influences.*



A man named Mr. Herbert arrives to town with his hot air balloon, but the people of Macondo are not impressed, having already ridden the flying carpet of the gypsies years before. He eats a bunch of bananas and examines them closely. A group of scientists arrive to inspect the area. Mr. Jack Brown shows up, accompanied by a team of lawyers, and closely followed by a horde of gringos who live in a town they set up across the railroad tracks. The demographics of the merchants of Macondo shift to become mostly foreigners, and gambling halls and shooting galleries are established. Eight months after the arrival of Mr. Herbert, the town is almost unrecognizable.

*A white man, presumably the first in town, thinks he'll make money on the introduction of his hot air balloon, a technology surely unknown to the people of Macondo. But they are unimpressed, unable to distinguish between the magic of the prior inventions they were exposed to and the technological innovation before them. Mr. Herbert's interest in the banana, a fruit unknown to him, ushers in a slew of other white men, looking to capitalize on the products of the region, causing one of the sharpest shifts in the demographics of the town, an echo of Úrsula inviting the new inhabitants through the swamp with her decades before.*



Strangers of all sorts visit the Buendía home. All the residents of Macondo know is that the gringos plan to plant banana trees. Two more of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's fifteen remote sons return because, they say, everyone is coming to Macondo. Remedios the Beauty remains unchanged and serene. She sews herself a simple cassock to wear so that she might feel as naked as possible while technically covered and shaves her head, and she seems all the more beautiful for all of these rejections of conventional beauty. Úrsula fears that the sons of Colonel Aureliano Buendía will be attracted to Remedios the Beauty and they will produce a child with the **tail of a pig**. She keeps a close eye on all of them to be sure this doesn't happen.

*The Buendías attempt to properly welcome the new residents to Macondo, but the gringos mistake the Buendías' home and hospitality for a restaurant, showing the difference in their customs and values. Macondo has apparently become popular enough that two more of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's seventeen sons return. Úrsula retains her initial fear of incest, certain that Remedios the Beauty will ultimately be the cause of a child being born with a pig's tail, though she has remained mostly oblivious to the other larger threats of incest through past generations.*



Remedios the Beauty has no idea of the calamity she causes in the men who see her. Úrsula insists she eat in the kitchen with Amaranta, keeping her out of sight of the visitors. One day, while she performs her bathing ritual, a stranger removes a roof tile and spies on her from above. She warns him that he will fall, but doesn't mind his watching. He continues to watch, removing two more tiles so that he might let himself into the bathroom, but the drop is too far, and he falls to his death. The men who remove his body note that he does not bleed blood, but instead an amber oil that smells of Remedios the Beauty.

*Úrsula, also skeptical of the way men become destructively attracted to Remedios the Beauty, tries to keep her out of eyesight of the new arrivals. She is said to sleep so deeply and to take such long and luxurious baths that it almost seems like a ritual. The substance that leaks from the fallen man's corpse seems to be blood transformed into some sort of sacred oil by the sight of Remedios the Beauty's sacred oil, indicating her divinity.*



Remedios the Beauty and her friends go to look at the new plantings. The men working the fields begin weeping at the sight of her, and they pursue the group of young women until they take refuge in a nearby house. The four Aurelianos rescue them after one of the attackers claws at Remedios the Beauty. That night the attacker is kicked in the chest by a horse and dies. People come to believe that Remedios the Beauty bears powers of death, rather than the previously assumed powers of love. Úrsula attempts to teach Remedios the Beauty housekeeping duties, but she fails.

*When the second man dies for love of Remedios the Beauty, the town begins to fear her beauty, rather than revere it. Úrsula, ever practical, wants to give Remedios the Beauty some skills that might serve her in the long-term, so sure is she that no man could be satisfied by only the beauty of a woman (a rule we've already seen disproven), but Remedios the Beauty is so simple that she can't perform even the simplest tasks.*



One afternoon in March, folding sheets in the yard with Fernanda, Remedios the Beauty becomes pale. She rises up into the sky with the flapping sheets around her, disappearing. The only thing that overwhelms the talk of this miracle is the extermination of the Aurelianos. Colonel Aureliano Buendía had foreseen the tragedy. When he saw Mr. Brown arrive to town in the first automobile, he could see that the nature of men had changed. When the banana company appears, the local dignitaries are replaced with foreign rulers. Policemen are supplanted by assassins bearing machetes.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía thinks again that it was a mistake to end the war. A relative of his friend Magnífico Visbal and his grandson accidentally bumps into a policemen on the street and the child is cut to pieces and the grandfather beheaded. Colonel Aureliano Buendía threatens to arm his sons to exterminate the fascist gringos. Over the course of the next week, his sons are hunted down, identified by the mark of ashes on their foreheads. Amaranta records all of their deaths until only the eldest, Aureliano Amador, remains alive.

The death of his sons causes rage, not sadness, in Colonel Aureliano Buendía. He halts production of his fishes and wanders the house aimlessly. He finds Úrsula in the courtyard, kneeling at the feet of the ghost of José Arcadio Buendía, and asks what his father has to say. Úrsula tells Colonel Aureliano Buendía that his father is very sad because he thinks his son is going to die. Colonel Aureliano Buendía responds “that a person doesn’t die when he should but when he can.” He asks Úrsula where the gold from the broken statue has been hidden, but she tells him that only the man who it belongs to will be able to find it.

Colonel Aureliano Buendía goes to Colonel Gerineldo Márquez to ask for help in starting the total war. Colonel Gerineldo Márquez has kept in touch with the rebel officers, many of whom are dying of hunger, still waiting for the pensions they were promised. Colonel Gerineldo Márquez pities his old friend for thinking that he can still make a change, remarking that Colonel Aureliano Buendía is even older than he looks.

*Remedios the Beauty's divinity is proven when she rises up into heaven never to be seen again, accompanied by Fernanda's bed sheets. Ursula's attempt to teach Remedios the Beauty useful skills was unnecessary, after all, but for a different reason than readers assumed. Colonel Aureliano Buendía's sons are gunned down one by one, and Colonel Aureliano Buendía could see this coming using his foresight and observations of the growing hostility of the men and law enforcement in town.*



*Though Colonel Aureliano Buendía has taken a long break from thinking about matters of war, he begins to think again about all that was lost in their surrender when he loses his sons to the changing politics of Colombia. The permanent crosses that the sons bore on their heads marked them as the progeny of the once-enemy of the Conservative party, a blow that will be felt more deeply by the old man than his own death which he has already attempted in the past.*



*As when Remedios Moscote dies, Colonel Aureliano Buendía's grief takes the form of anger, not sadness. Úrsula, still apparently in communication with her dead husband, tells Colonel Aureliano Buendía that his father predicts he will die soon, but Colonel Aureliano Buendía is unconcerned, which echoes the book's strange timeline.*



*Colonel Aureliano Buendía's senile attempt to start a war again proves how pathetic he is to his old, wiser friend Colonel Gerineldo Márquez. Colonel Márquez now sees the awful aftermath of the war, all of the veterans dying in poverty for pensions that will never be paid. Neither of them is fit to fight any longer, but only one of them recognizes the limitations of his age.*



## CHAPTER 13

José Arcadio (II) prepares to leave for the seminary. Meme prepares to go to the convent to become a nun. Úrsula has gone almost completely blind, but has managed to keep it a secret from everyone. She sets about memorizing distances, voices, odors and becomes so adept at continuing to function that at times she herself forgets she is blind. When Fernanda loses her wedding ring, it is Úrsula who finds it. She has become aware that all of her family members follow basically the same path each day, performing the same actions and saying the same things. Only when they deviate from these habits do they tend to lose something and so she was able to predict where Fernanda had placed her ring, by registering what she had done differently that day.

Úrsula reexamines her life and comes to the decision that Colonel Aureliano Buendía never loved anyone. She determines that he fought only out of sinful pride. She sees that Amaranta's hardness of heart is actually a version of tenderness, and she pities these two children of whom she has been harshly judgmental. She remembers Rebeca and regrets their estrangement, recognizing that Rebeca is the best representative of the courage she hoped her line might produce. She wanders the house, with her right arm raised like the Archangel Gabriel, and the family assumes she is suffering from dementia, but Fernanda believes that Úrsula's words have a prophetic quality. Pilar Ternera, almost 100 years old herself, agrees that old age can provide a clearer vision of the future.

José Arcadio (II) leaves for the seminary and Meme is taken to school. Amaranta begins to sew her own burial shroud. José Arcadio Segundo gives up his fighting cocks and takes a job working for the banana company. Aureliano Segundo, his children away at school and his wife strict, moves all of his operations to Petra Cotes' house. Fernanda sends over his clothes, too, and Aureliano Segundo celebrates his freedom. He and Petra Cotes experience a revival of their initial passion for one another.

*Úrsula, even when blind, is the most practical of the bunch, tracking everyone's whereabouts and keeping her disability a secret, alone in her knowledge of her condition. Her observational skills (learning people's daily habits, sounds, and scents) teach her that it is only when patterns are broken that things go wrong or are lost. This builds on the circular patterns of the story, showing the trouble caused by broken patterns, such as the misnamed Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo.*



*In reflecting on her life, Úrsula's idealism about her children transforms into a more realistic view of their natures, but instead of this making her love them less, it prompts her to love them even more, showing wisdom and compassion she's gained in her old age. With less human interaction, she is left with her thoughts and memories, reimagining them in a way that is not dissimilar to the way that Pilar Ternera reimagined the past with her fortune telling cards in the time of amnesia. Úrsula also takes on a religious quality for those, like Fernanda, who believe—but others believe she is losing her mind, another echo of the way the family assumed José Arcadio Buendía was speaking gibberish, but it just turned out he was speaking Latin.*



*Amaranta receives a message from God telling her when to begin sewing her burial shroud, and that she will die when it is complete, though no date is given to her. Many dynamics shift around the Buendía family at this moment, allowing people to pursue new and old endeavors with new enthusiasm. While José Arcadio's transition from cockfighting to the banana company might seem like a positive move, it's worth questioning which is doing more harm to the community overall.*



Aureliano Segundo grows fat with all the revelry and spends his money carelessly. Competitive eaters show up to challenge his ability, but he triumphs over all until a woman named Camila Sagastume, known as “The Elephant” appears. Though she has the reputation of a bone crusher, she is a true lady with proper manners, who works as the director of a school of voice. She believes that a person who has their life completely in order should be able to eat all day until they are overcome by fatigue. She fears that Aureliano Segundo succeeds for the exact opposite reasons. The Elephant suggests a tie, but Aureliano Segundo goes on eating beyond his capacity and passes out.

He recovers and continues to live with Petra Cotes, visiting Fernanda every day. When Meme comes home from school, Aureliano Segundo resumes living with Fernanda to give the illusion of an intact family life. Aureliano Segundo throws parties when his daughter is home and she plays the clavichord to add to the merriment. On her third visit home, she brings along four nuns and 68 classmates. Fernanda is dismayed at the way her daughter mimics her father’s barbarism. When the girls leave, the house is left in tatters. Fernanda stores the excess of chamber pots in Melquíades’ old room.

José Arcadio Segundo begins visiting the house regularly, talking to the colonel in his workshop. Úrsula remains convinced that he and his brother swapped identities at some point, as the **name** Aureliano would fit him better. It is revealed that he has no home, staying sometimes with Pilar Ternera and often with the French matrons. Úrsula sees José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo as the only two members of the family who have a true affinity for one another.

The family pretends that Colonel Aureliano Buendía has died, until one day in October he goes to the street to watch a parade. That morning he had gone to the courtyard to relieve himself and failed to hear what the ghost of his father had said to him. In his workshop he had counted his fishes – a total of seventeen. Because he no longer sells them anymore, he has begun the habit of making 25 and then melting them down to remake them again. Rain begins to fall. After lunch he takes a nap and dreams that he is walking through a house with white walls, the first human being to enter. In the dream he remembers that he has had the dream many times before, but he knows he won’t remember it when he wakes up.

*Aureliano Segundo’s debauchery continues to follow the patterns of those named José Arcadio. Aureliano Segundo admires in his eating competition adversary the contrast of her propriety and her love of eating, an unladylike quality, combining the best of both Fernanda and Petra Cotes.*



*Meme takes after her father in her love of revelry, even bringing home dozens of girls from school without asking. They destroy the house, but Fernanda is only happy they are gone and realizes she prizes the time that Aureliano Segundo is away, leaving her alone while he parties away from her home. Their nontraditional marital arrangement, then, is mutually beneficial, despite its defiance of social norms.*



*The connection between José Arcadio Segundo and Colonel Aureliano Buendía again suggests that José Arcadio Segundo has the wrong name. His rootlessness, living temporarily with all different inhabitants of the town, mirrors the way Colonel Aureliano Buendía spent most of his life moving from place to place. Though Úrsula had hoped for a family where everyone loved one another to the limit of their capabilities, she recognizes that the truest connection has been between these two twins.*



*The family leaves Colonel Aureliano Buendía in total solitude in his workshop, totally forgetting his existence similar to the way they forgot about Rebeca in her home. He has spent the last years of his life making and remaking the same 25 gold fishes, a useless endeavor to fill time and nothing more. He dreams of a house where he revisits the same nondescript rooms over and over. The dream echoes the amnesia that characterizes the insomnia earlier in the novel, and it also evokes the image of Macondo as city of mirrors.*



When Colonel Aureliano Buendía wakes up, he sends away the barber reasoning that he can be shaved on Friday when his hair is being cut. The sun comes out and he hears the approach of a band. He's overcome by nostalgia and watches the parade pass by, thinking of the gypsies that visited when he was a child. Afterwards, he goes out to the chestnut tree to urinate, trying to remember the circus, but the memory disappears. He leans against the tree and it is not until the following day that the family finds his body.

*Though the novel opens with the statement that Colonel Aureliano Buendía's final memory is of the first time his father showed him ice, his real last moments are spent with the vision of the parade, prompting his nostalgia for the circus. His inability to remember the visit of the gypsies shows the faultlines that interrupt memory when one has lived long enough.*



## CHAPTER 14

Meme's last vacations home occur while Colonel Aureliano Buendía is still being mourned. Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo have given birth to a new daughter named Amaranta Úrsula. Meme receives her diploma as a clavichordist, and her dedicated skill in this regard is a surprising counterpoint to her otherwise frivolous nature. Her passionless playing is focused on antiquated melodies that put audiences to sleep, and though her mother invites all the town's newcomers to hear Meme play in the hopes of attracting her a suitor, no match is found. Only when Amaranta dies as Meme able to stop playing the clavichord.

*Despite Aureliano Segundo living primarily with Petra Cotes now, he and Fernanda still apparently have sex because another daughter is born. Meme's skills as a clavichordist show how the family has moved on from the player piano to this new instrument, though the new instrument is used primarily in churches. Though Meme has a talent for playing, the solemn nature of the music makes it a bore to listen to. The story jumps ahead to allude to Amaranta's death, suggesting again that characters' fates are sealed in advance.*



Meme's real joy lives in being social: gossiping and partying and seeing movies with her father. After her second vacation home she had realized that her father staying at home was only a ruse played out for her benefit. Meme returns home one night, drunk and ready to tell off her mother and Amaranta, but instead she lies, telling them how much she loves them, a lie that Amaranta sees through, but Fernanda falls for. When Meme wakes later, sick with a hangover, Fernanda calls the doctor and makes Meme stay in bed for close to a week, though Úrsula is wise to Meme's true ailment. Aureliano Segundo can also tell what Meme is suffering from and he recommits to spending more time with her.

*Fernanda worries over her daughter, enlisting the help of modern medicine, something that hasn't been used before in Macondo. Fernanda's sheltered nature continues to be revealed in new ways, including her inability to recognize Meme's hangover. Seeing the trouble his daughter might get into, Aureliano Segundo realizes he might need to increase his presence in his daughter's life, continuing the growth of the relationship that has grown between them in fits and starts on her visits home.*



Meme, similar to Amaranta, is not beautiful, but she is friendly and fun. Aureliano Segundo spoils Meme, redecorating her bedroom and giving her as much spending money as she wants, though she takes even more out of his wallet herself. Fernanda busies herself caring for the new baby and corresponding with "invisible physicians." She only cares that Aureliano Segundo never take Meme to Petra Cotes' house. Petra Cotes, however, wants nothing to do with the girl, threatened by Aureliano Segundo's affection for her.

*Meme follows in the paths of the José Arcadios, living a free-spirited life in which she is careless with money. Fernanda's interest in the benefits of modern medicine cause her to correspond with invisible doctors who attempt to diagnose and treat her telepathically, calling into question whether Fernanda is truly sick or just a hypochondriac, and suggesting a more magical interpretation of a person's relationship with doctors, further confusing the line between truth and magic.*



Among Meme's friends are three American girls, from the other side of the tracks, one of whom is the daughter of Mr. Brown. Meme is invited to the Saturday dances, the only ones where natives and Americans mingle. Fernanda is appalled that her daughter goes to these dances, but Úrsula sees no issue. Meme is invited to play the clavichord for the Americans, and after that she is also invited to the Sunday pool parties and lunch once a week. She takes to the interests of the Americans, even learning English.

Aureliano Segundo, proud, buys Meme a six-volume English encyclopedia. She spends the time she once spent gossiping, poring over the encyclopedia, seeing her former ways as juvenile and regaling Aureliano Segundo with the story of her drunken night. She tells him she liked a redheaded American boy visiting on vacation who had already returned home with his family. Aureliano Segundo returns to Petra Cotes. Amaranta continues to sew her shroud. The invisible doctors diagnose Fernanda with a tumor in her large intestine and schedule a "telepathic operation."

The death of Amaranta causes new upheaval. No one in the family has had any idea as to Amaranta's true personality. She has deprived herself of romance and happiness, suppressing her desires until she nearly acts out on them with her nephews. The way that Colonel Aureliano Buendía thought about his war until his death is the way that Amaranta thinks of her adopted sister Rebeca. She prays that she will not die before Rebeca, and one afternoon, years ahead of time, she is warned that she should begin sewing her shroud on the sixth of the following April and that she will die on the day it is completed.

Several years later, a week ahead of time, she calculates that she will take the last stitch on the night of February fourth, but a power outage prevents her from finishing. She completes her work on the morning of the fifth and announces that she will die at dusk. She offers to take letters to the dead for everyone in town. She calls for a carpenter so she can be measured for a coffin and asks that the letters be buried with her. Father Antonio Isabel arrives to deliver last rites to Amaranta, who still seems perfectly well. He asks Amaranta to confess, but she says that her conscience is clean. Fernanda asks what sin could be so bad that she declines to admit it even now, but Amaranta only makes Úrsula sweat to her virginity.

*Meme befriending white people from the banana company is seen as a betrayal of sorts, because they're seen as a blight on Macondo. Meme's sociability and musical talents are embraced by the more modern Americans, though Fernanda worries her daughter is behaving improperly.*



*The official facts in the encyclopedia contrast the history and science that José Arcadio Buendía used to make up for his own children. Aureliano Segundo, believing that he is close enough to Meme that she will tell him about her first love affair, shows that he is misguided; he believes he can control his daughter when she already makes her own rules.*



*The family's sense of confusion around Amaranta's reasons for depriving herself of pleasure and companionship over the years call back her being born watery and slippery as a newt—they've always found her internal life slippery and difficult to understand. She believes she receives premonitions about her future, similar to the ways others in the family receive visions about how to protect themselves and their family.*



*Something as simple as a power outage is capable of tacking a few extra days onto Amaranta's life, showing the way that magic and everyday life exist side by side. Amaranta is the second character, after Arcadio, to claim that she has nothing to confess upon her death. Amaranta's belief that she is pure, despite her cruel actions, is based in her belief that remaining a virgin has absolved her of all other guilt. This echoes other characters who believe that following specific social rules matters more than the spirit of goodness.*



Meme plays a concert that night and, in the middle of her piece, someone interrupts her to tell her aunt has died and the show is ended. After the nine nights of mourning, Úrsula goes to bed and does not get up again. Santa Sofia de la Piedad takes care of her. From bed, Úrsula teaches little Amaranta Úrsula to read. With all of her time to silently observe and meditate, Úrsula senses that Meme is upset and asks what is wrong, but Meme laughs off the question.

One night Meme says that she is going to the movies with Aureliano Segundo, but Fernanda hears him playing the accordion. Fernanda goes to the theater and sees Meme kissing a man. Fernanda escorts Meme home and the following day, a young mechanic for the banana company appears, trailed by yellow butterflies, to inquire about Meme. His name is Mauricio Babilonia. In flashback, we learn that Meme was made aware of the young man sometime before. She is bothered by him enough that he shows up in her dreams. The dream causes her to take an interest in him, and when she sees him next, she is nervous to talk to him at the movies. She looks for an excuse to go visit him at work, and he can tell she is interested. She is mortified at the transparency of her efforts. She recognizes that the yellow butterflies always precede his appearance.

When Mauricio Babilonia visits the house to deliver a package from Meme's friend, Fernanda notes only that she can tell by his face he is going to die. When Meme opens the package inside, she finds a note from Mauricio Babilonia saying they'll meet at the movies on Saturday. That night, he sits down beside her at the theater. She becomes obsessed and will do anything to spend time with him. She visits Pilar Ternera to have her fortune told, not knowing the woman is her great-grandmother. Pilar offers Meme the use of her bed so that she might be united with Mauricio. Amaranta's death postpones this possibility. On the first evening she is able, she arranges to meet Mauricio Babilonia at Pilar Ternera's.

*Úrsula, who has remained active up until this point, shows the power of her grief by taking to bed for what everyone assumes to be the rest of her life. Though Santa Sofia de la Piedad is also elderly at this point, and has gone mostly unmentioned for this time, the saintly woman appears to care for Úrsula, showing how even characters who are not said to be forgotten have faded to the background.*



*Meme must lie to her mother to go to the movies where she meets the mechanic Mauricio Babilonia. After they have kissed and Meme has fallen in love, his presence is indicated by the presence of yellow butterflies, similar to the way Pilar Ternera smelled like smoke or José Arcadio's body smelled of gunsmoke, and building the use of the color yellow (the yellow flowers appeared when José Arcadio Buendía died, for instance). When Meme had first met Mauricio Babilonia, she had been uncertain if she liked or disliked him, similar to the way in which many characters before have oscillated between love and hate of others. The love between the pair is apparent to all, as they all see the yellow butterflies that surround Mauricio Babilonia.*



*Fernanda believes she has a premonition about the destiny of Meme's paramour in the same way the Buendías believe they can sometimes see people's futures. As Ampara Moscote delivered a package to Rebeca secretly from Pietro Crespi earlier, here that trickery is subverted in Mauricio Babilonia saying it's from one of Meme's friends, when it's actually from him. Pilar Ternera, impossibly old, still lives in this town, but Meme doesn't realize she is her ancestor. Pilar has told so many fortunes for Buendías that she can just follow the patterns of their lives to predict someone's future instead of referencing her cards.*



Meme and Mauricio Babilonia make love twice a week for three months. On the night Fernanda catches the young couple kissing in the theater, Aureliano Segundo asks Meme to tell him what's going on, but she refuses. He believes their bond has been severed. For two months, Meme is confined to her room, seemingly unaffected. Úrsula notes, though, that Meme takes a bath at night now. At night, the yellow butterflies arrive to the house. Fernanda tries to kill them, claiming butterflies at night are bad luck. Fernanda discovers the mustard plasters Meme has been using as a contraceptive one night and requests a guard be stationed outside her daughter's window the next day. The guards shoot Mauricio Babilonia as he tries to crawl through the bathroom roof, paralyzing him. He dies of old age, alone, many years later.

*Meme is able to keep her secret relationship with Mauricio Babilonia a secret for a significant amount of time, and their being caught kissing shows the way they had begun to grow careless, marking one more instance where people are ultimately incapable of keeping their romance a secret. Only wise Úrsula, who tracks the comings and goings of all those in the house is wise enough to recognize the reason Meme would take baths at night now instead of in the morning. Fernanda believes nighttime butterflies are a bad omen, and she is not incorrect, though she doesn't realize what this actually means.*



## CHAPTER 15

Macondo is in a state of upheaval when Meme's illegitimate son is brought home, and so Fernanda is able to keep the child a secret from everyone. She locks the child in Colonel Aureliano Buendía's old workshop and tells Santa Sofía de la Piedad and Amaranta Úrsula that she found the child floating in a basket. Even Úrsula never learns the boy's true origin. Aureliano Segundo is ignorant of his grandson for three years, until he escapes his room and appears on the porch, naked and displaying a sex organ to rival the original José Arcadio (I)'s.

*Readers learn of Meme's illegitimate son even before learning that Meme has been sent away, another manipulation of the timeline of events, allowing the future to exist at once with the present, proving that the fate of the characters has already been determined. Fernanda's commitment to keeping this child a secret takes the way characters are kept from their true heritage one step further—she keeps the child secret from even the other family members.*



After Mauricio Babilonia is shot, Meme never speaks again. Fernanda takes Meme to a convent in the somber town where she had been raised. Meme thinks about Mauricio Babilonia for the rest of her life, eventually dying of old age in a "gloomy hospital in Cracow." Fernanda returns to Macondo in an armed train to learn that José Arcadio Segundo is leading the workers of the banana plantation in a strike. The plantation workers demand not to work on Sundays, a concession they're awarded. An attempt is made on José Arcadio Segundo's life, but he survives and goes into hiding.

*Unable to control her daughter, Fernanda removes Meme from all temptation, also unknowingly removing Meme from the threats posed by the striking banana plantation workers. Just as characters before have died pining after the ones they love, Meme succumbs to this fate, as well, kept from her lover Mauricio Babilonia because of arbitrary propriety, when, if given the choice, she may well have chosen to marry the father of her child instead.*



Fernanda writes to her son José Arcadio (II) to tell him the lie that his sister has died. Fernanda postpones the telepathic operation to treat her tumor, but a nun appears with a basket containing Meme's son, baptized with the name Aureliano. Fernanda plans to drown the child in a cistern, but, in the end, she can't summon the will to do so. A year passes when the tensions of the plantation reach a peak. José Arcadio Segundo reappears to organize demonstrations. The leaders are arrested and jailed for three months, eventually released because the government and plantation cannot decide who should be responsible for feeding the prisoners.

*Fernanda feels morally okay about lying to her son that his sister has died and about disowning her nearly grown daughter, but she can't bear to kill her illegitimate grandson, even as she's allowing his existence to wreak havoc upon her family's life. This shows the strange balance of her own morality with the rules of her faith. The release of the prisoners again reiterates the struggle between official governance and more community-based organization effort.*



The workers protest against the unsanitary conditions of their living quarters, lack of medical services, poor working conditions and payment only in company stock, forcing them to buy the company provisions that were imported to ensure the profitability of the exported fruit. Legal acrobatics are used to avoid all culpability, including fake identities and faked death for the highest officials of the company. The lawyers claim that the banana company hired only temporary workers, absolving them of the need to properly accommodate the workers' needs. The strike breaks out in earnest. The fruit rots on the trees and the workers flood the town.

Soldiers are ordered to restore order in the town. They cut the bananas and load them onto the train. The workers take up their machetes to cut down trees, destroy train tracks, and cut down the lines of communication. The authorities gather the workers in a square to address the conflict. José Arcadio Segundo notices machine guns set up around the crowd. A lieutenant reads Decree No. 4 through a phonograph horn in which the army is authorized to shoot and kill all of the workers. A captain tells the crowd they have five minutes to withdraw. The crowd doesn't move and the officers tell the crowd they have one more minute. José Arcadio Segundo shouts an insult at them and the machine guns fire. He saves a single child by moving him to a side street before passing out.

When José Arcadio Segundo comes to, he is on a train lying in a heap of dead people. He paces the dark cargo car looking at all of the dead, which he realizes the soldiers intend to pitch into the sea "like rejected bananas." Rains begin to fall and José Arcadio Segundo jumps off the train and runs in the opposite direction. He finally happens around a house on the outskirts of town, and the woman who lives there lets him in, bandaging his wounds and giving him coffee. He tells her that the 3000 people who were killed were on the train, but she denies that anyone has died. He proceeds to three more houses and they all say the same thing. In the square he can find no trace of the massacre.

He returns home and Santa Sofia de la Piedad hides him from Fernanda in the chamber pot room. Aureliano Segundo is also in the Buendía house, having been trapped there by the rain. He visits his brother in Melquíades's old room, but also distrusts José Arcadio Segundo's version of events. A proclamation had claimed that the workers returned home peacefully after learning they'd been awarded better medical services and latrines for the living quarters, but Mr. Brown says the agreement will not be officially signed until the rain stops.

*The workers, having won Sundays off, try to make more requests of the company, all of which seem quite reasonable. The American company is better versed in manipulating workers and absolving themselves of guilt, which echoes manipulative American companies that exploit Latin America. The actions of the strike mirror the actions of the Liberal rebellion years as workers fight for what they believe in. In this way, too, José Arcadio Segundo's status as leader of the strike mirrors Colonel Aureliano Buendía's, suggesting he might have the wrong name.*



*When the soldiers try to break the strike by doing the workers' work, the workers prevent the soldiers from interceding by cutting off communication with civilization, reverting Macondo to its earlier state of isolation. The violence that breaks out at the reading of the decree parallels the Liberal rebellion at the Carnival. José Arcadio Segundo is responsible for the premature firing on the crowd, but he is only able to save a single child, similar to the way that Colonel Aureliano Buendía was once the only survivor of a military attack.*



*The people involved in the strike are treated like little more than rotten fruit. José Arcadio Segundo escapes, the only one alive, as the evidence of the massacre is removed out of sight of the people of Macondo. The lack of evidence prompts the people of Macondo to disbelieve José Arcadio Segundo's story, suggesting the way that history can be painted by the victors, rather than providing the grisly truth of what happened. José Arcadio represents the minority that is often silenced in their version of events.*



*Santa Sofia de la Piedad hides her son because Fernanda wouldn't want such a dangerous man living with their family. Unexpectedly, both twin brothers are trapped in their childhood home together. Even Aureliano Segundo, who was once so closely connected to his brother, distrusts José Arcadio Segundo's horrible story because official news said otherwise. The arbitrary promise to sign an agreement when the rain stops echoes Amaranta's death coinciding with finishing her burial shroud.*



The rain continues and everyone accepts that no massacre took place except José Arcadio Segundo. The search for the rebel leaders of the strike continues, but the soldiers continue to deny that anyone has been executed. In the end José Arcadio Segundo is the only one who has survived.

Soldiers arrive to the Buendía house to search for him, but when they open the padlock on Melquíades's old room, it is so perfectly in its ancient order that they fail to thoroughly search it. An officer asks if he can take a golden fish from Colonel Aureliano Buendía's workshop as a relic. They ask to search Melquíades's room again and turn on the light when they see the quantity of chamber pots. The officer, despite looking right at José Arcadio Segundo, fails to see him. The soldier closes the door and claims that no one has been in the room in a hundred years.

José Arcadio Segundo remains in hiding in the workshop, asking for the door to remain padlocked, and only Santa Sofia de la Piedad remembers that he remains inside. He peruses the inscrutable manuscripts of Melquíades. Six months later, as the rain continues, Aureliano Segundo unlocks the door, looking for someone to talk to. The smell of the chamber pots overwhelms him and he sees his brother, still studying the manuscripts and repeating that all 3000 of those gathered at the station had been killed.

## CHAPTER 16

The rain last for four years, eleven months and two days. Aureliano Segundo stays home for the entire time and slowly loses weight. Everything in the house is incredible damp, even the humans, proved when they find Úrsula's back covered in leeches. Aureliano Segundo, locked in the house with young Aureliano, knows what Fernanda has kept secret from all the others: Aureliano is a true Buendía. Aureliano Segundo shows the children the old encyclopedias, making up stories as he goes along because he does not speak English.

*José Arcadio Segundo's version of events is kept secret because everyone is trapped in their houses by the rain. The fact that no other rebel leaders of the strike have been found seems to prove that José Arcadio Segundo's version is the truth, though.*



*When the soldiers arrive at the Buendía house, they look directly at José Arcadio Segundo without seeing him. This could be an indication that the other soldiers are equally as invisible (rather than dead), that José Arcadio Segundo is protected by some magical power in Melquíades' room, or that the soldiers know he is the one survivor and feel they have already killed enough people for this cause.*



*José Arcadio Segundo asks to be locked into his solitude, like José Arcadio Buendía tied to his tree, and Santa Sofia de la Piedad cares for him just as she cared for his great-grandfather. He takes the same Aureliano-specific interest in Melquíades' manuscripts. He commits to keeping the memory of the 3000 dead alive in the same way that Colonel Aureliano Buendía remained fixated on the war.*



*Locked in the house, Aureliano Segundo takes the education of the children on himself, though he can't read the English encyclopedias, so he reverts to his great-grandfather's method of making things up as he goes along. The result of the rain is exaggerated to show it as lived experience, rather than technically factual truth, and the neglect of Úrsula (being covered with leeches) is similarly hyperbolic. The family's seclusion in the house is not dissimilar from the isolation of the Buendías in the early days of Macondo.*



Fernanda fears that Aureliano Segundo will want to have sex with her while he is trapped at home, but she is incapable, suffering from severely painful cramps. She writes to the invisible doctors, hoping for an answer. Fernanda is happy that the rain keeps people from going outside because she feels that “doors have been invented to stay closed.” Colonel Gerineldo Márquez dies and his funeral procession passes the house. The Buendía family watches the sorry spectacle. Even Úrsula is present, blessing the young man she treated like a son and telling him that she will see him again when the rain stops, predicting her own death.

*Fernanda continues to suffer from her abdominal pain and claims this as her excuse for not wanting to make love to Aureliano Segundo, showing a connection between her physical health and her desires that suggests possible hypochondria. Fernanda is happy about their solitude, though, believing that doors are meant to keep people in, rather than to allow people out. Úrsula’s claim that she will die when the rain stops marks one more instance in which a person pins their future on an event that is not specific to a particular date.*



Aureliano Segundo goes to the home of Petra Cotes to check on the animals, but they have all died in the floods. Petra Cotes has not seen him since the rain started. He stays for three months, getting up the will to go back out into the rain. He tries to seduce Petra Cotes again, but she refuses his advances. He returns home with his trunks, convinced that everyone in Macondo is waiting for the rain to stop so they might die. The Buendías run low on food. Fernanda’s protests about Aureliano Segundo’s indifference to their needs is emitted as a long drone of sound. Eventually, when Aureliano Segundo complains about the noise, Fernanda unleashes a long monologue of grievances about the life that she was been forced to live by marrying Aureliano Segundo. Aureliano Segundo listens to her all day, not saying a word, until she tells a fib, and he calls her out on it.

*Aureliano Segundo braves the rain under the pretense of checking on the livestock at Petra Cotes’ house, but he has waited too long. His excuse for staying there for three months is that he is getting up the courage to face the rain again, but the implication is that he both went to her home to visit her, and stayed with her as long as he did because he enjoys her company. Fernanda sees herself as having suffered significantly for her choice in who she would marry, believing she has no fault in their lack of harmony. Aureliano Segundo shows exceeding patience, perhaps evidencing his indifference to her arguments.*



Fernanda goes on humming. The next morning Aureliano Segundo asks for an egg, oblivious that they ran out of eggs sometime before, and Fernanda begins another monologue about men who are so self-centered as to “ask for larks’ livers” when there is no food at all. He goes to show the children the encyclopedia, even claiming that Colonel Aureliano Buendía is featured there. When he goes out to the porch to sit with Fernanda afterward, she continues her rant until he can bear it no longer and he tells her to shut up. In a rage, he smashes as many breakables as he can get his hands on, leaves the house, and returns with some food for the family.

*Their argument continues as Aureliano Segundo shows further evidence of the dire conditions in which the family is living. He tries to step away from the argument, spending time with the children, and extending his made-up account of the contents of the encyclopedia to include Colonel Aureliano Buendía, but Fernanda’s stubbornness persists until he acts out in a rage that reflects his great-grandfather’s violence just before he was declared mad and tied to a tree. When he goes out to get food for the family, it is assumed he has gathered the provisions from his mistress Petra Cotes.*



Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano think the rainy time is fun, splashing in puddles and playing with the senile Úrsula. Around the third year of the rain, Úrsula’s mind has started to confuse the present with the past, and the children play along, making up imaginary visits from relatives who lived at different time, but have been long dead. She takes incredible joy in being reunited with them all.

*While Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano are very close in age, they are, in fact, aunt and nephew. Úrsula’s confusion of past and present reflects the circular nature of time, but also allows the children to use her as a plaything, willing to go along with their pretend scenarios like a child. In this way, old age is indeed a second childhood of sorts, which shows the circularity of time.*



Aureliano Segundo remembers that there is a large fortune buried somewhere on the property, waiting for its proper owner to appear to claim it. He consults Pilar Ternera about the where the gold is buried but she can tell him only it is within a certain proximity of Úrsula who buried it. He digs up the courtyard to such a degree that the foundation of the house is weakened, but he finds nothing.

Finally, one Friday afternoon, the rain clears and it does not rain again for ten years. Macondo is in ruins. The banana plantation and city has been deserted. When Aureliano Segundo finally returns to Petra Cotes, he is so thin that she is convinced he is José Arcadio Segundo. In the bedroom, he finds a skinny mule who Petra Cotes has been feeding the fancy linens of the house when no proper food remained.

*Aureliano Segundo destroys the grounds of the house while hunting for money in an attempt to provide for the Buendía family, but Úrsula is too senile to remember the money's whereabouts, and Pilar Ternera either withholds the information for fear of Aureliano Segundo misusing it, or is also growing incapable of seeing the present clearly.*



*The exaggerated rain is followed by exaggerated drought, ensuring the demise of Macondo. The knowledge that the drought will last 10 years, though, is a prediction that seals the town's fate before the people of Macondo realize it themselves. During the rains, Aureliano Segundo has clearly grown ill, having lost a significant amount of weight in the time he was home in the Buendía house. He and his brother again look so much alike that they might be confused, which suggests the circularity of time.*



## CHAPTER 17

Úrsula needs to put great effort into dying when the rain clears, as she had promised. She is embarrassed to discover that the children treated her like a plaything for years. She gets out of bed on her own to rejoin family life, and goes to work, restoring the quality of the house, as though nothing is wrong with her body. When she finds José Arcadio Segundo still locked up with Melquíades' parchments, she insults him for living like a pig and he repeats one of her own sayings back to her: "What did you expect? Time passes." She responds with Colonel Aureliano Buendía's reply, "That's how it goes, but not so much," and realizes that time is moving in a circle.

José Arcadio (II) writes Fernanda that he plans to return to Macondo before taking his priestly vows. She commits to reviving the garden to impress her son on his return and tries to hasten her correspondence with the doctors. Úrsula orders that the house be opened to visitors again, but Fernanda insists the house remain closed. Aureliano Segundo goes around town selling raffle tickets for Petra Cotes, but he doesn't realize that the people who buy them are often doing so out of pity for him. The drawing of the raffle tickets, though, becomes a weekly fair. The relationship between Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cotes changes, until they settle into a "paradise of shared solitude."

*When the rain clears, Úrsula regains her wits and remembers that this is when she promised she would die. Before she dies, she goes back to work, as though nothing was wrong with her for the years in which she remained in bed and confused. In the same way that José Arcadio Buendía, her husband, believed that each day repeated itself, she can also see the way that time cycles on itself, as her great-grandson repeats her own wisdom to her.*



*Úrsula has always thrived by having a very social life, but Fernanda has preferred a life of solitude. Now that the rain has stopped, Aureliano Segundo takes up Petra Cotes' old occupation of selling raffle tickets. At first it seems as though those who participate are only humoring him, but all of the residents of Macondo have fallen on hard times and the hope that they might win some livestock in a raffle helps revive their spirits. Though the relationship of Aureliano Segundo and his mistress had always been built on mutual passion and companionship, in old age it, too, has turned toward solitude.*



Amaranta Úrsula is sent to a small private school and Aureliano is forbidden from attending public school, continuing his sequestration in the house. One afternoon Úrsula asks him who he is, and when he tells her his name, she mistakes him for her son, and tells him it's time to begin to learn silver-smithing. Úrsula's senility returns and the family cannot tell the difference between what she recounts as a current feeling and what she is remembering. Her body shrivels up, causing her to look as much like a newborn as an old woman. The children continue playing with Úrsula's body, declaring her dead. Úrsula tries to protest, but realizes, to her surprise, that they are correct. She estimated her age to be between 115 and 122.

Birds run into walls and break through the screens to die in the bedrooms. The townspeople assume it's a plague, but the 100-year-old Father Antonio Isabel claims that the birds are dying because of the influence of a half-billy goat, half-female heretic he refers to as the Wandering Jew. The people of the town assume he is rambling out of old age, as well, until a woman sees some hoof tracks, and the people of the town set traps for the creature, catching it and hanging it in the square for all to see.

Rebeca dies at the end of the year. Aureliano Segundo tries to fix up her house to sell it, but it proves beyond repair. With Úrsula's death, the Buendía house also falls into disrepair. The invisible doctors examine Fernanda for hours, but find nothing wrong with her that matches her symptoms. The issue might be that Fernanda continues to use the wrong words for things. Aureliano Segundo promises to send Amaranta Úrsula to school in Brussels and Aureliano shows no interest in anything outside the front door. José Arcadio Segundo teaches Aureliano how to read and write, and shows him what he's figured out in the parchments of Melquíades.

Aureliano Segundo feels a knot in his throat. He visits Pilar Ternera, now one hundred years old and running a brothel, for a remedy. She reads her cards and tells him that a tumor has formed in his throat because Fernanda has poorly performed black arts trying to get him to return home. She tells him a ritual to perform to counter the effects of the spell on him and he feels immediately better. Six months later though, he wakes up coughing and realizes the truth: he is dying. He tells no one, working as hard as he can to earn the money to send Amaranta Úrsula to school as he had promised. He organizes a raffle of the lands decimated by the rains and the celebration on the evening of the raffle rivals the biggest parties that came before.

*Amaranta Úrsula follows the pattern of girls in the family being sent away to school, but little Aureliano is left to educate himself, as Fernanda is still trying to keep his existence a secret from the rest of Macondo. Úrsula again reverts to her state of dementia, and the family struggles to communicate with her, as they did with José Arcadio Buendía when he began speaking Latin and believing that time moved in a tight circle. Her body's changes again echo the way the elderly can move into a second childhood. Úrsula does not even realize she is dead until the children declare it to be so, showing how fluid even the movement between life and death is.*



*The return of the birds to Macondo is blamed on a mythical being that is at first doubted and then punished as an example of straying from the Catholic faith. The birds, though, could be seen as a return of the wild birds who once inhabited the land, showing how Macondo is slowly breaking down and becoming wild again.*



*Rebeca, forgotten by the family entirely at this point, finally passes away, and even her house is irreparable, having gone unattended for so long. This house provides an example of what is beginning to happen to the Buendía house, as well, without Úrsula there doing the hard work of keeping it up. Fernanda's inability to communicate what's wrong with her seems to be causing her pain, which might also indicate that hypochondria is the source of her distress. José Arcadio Segundo passes on all he has learned in Melquíades' workshop to his grandnephew so that the work of deciphering the parchments might continue after his death.*



*Fernanda, a devout Catholic, is unable to put the black arts to use for her, mangling the spell. Despite the cure offered by Pilar Ternera, though, Aureliano Segundo is still vulnerable to the health problems that come with having lived a life of gluttony into old age. In the same way that Colonel Aureliano Buendía realized he was fighting for his pride all those years, Aureliano Segundo keeps his illness secret so that he might provide for his family before he goes. It is apt that he, the king of revelry, throws one more party before he goes.*



Two months later Amaranta Úrsula goes to Brussels to stay at a boarding house run by a nun recommended by Father Ángel. Fernanda has packed her baggage, trying to get her to take along the golden chamber pot, but Amaranta Úrsula refuses it. Amaranta Úrsula, waving from the train car, will be the way Aureliano Segundo remembers her a few months later, at his hour of death. On the ninth of August, José Arcadio Segundo tells Aureliano to always remember that 3000 people died in the banana massacre and were thrown into the sea, before dying with his eyes open. At the same moment, Aureliano Segundo dies in his bed.

Petra Cotes visits the Buendía house to deliver the shoes that Aureliano Segundo asked to be buried in. She asks Fernanda if she might see the body, but Fernanda won't permit it and refuses to take the shoes. Santa Sofia de la Piedad cuts the throat of José Arcadio Segundo to ensure that they are not burying him alive, his greatest fear. The twins are again as identical as the day they were born and the drunkards who carry their coffins out of the Buendía house accidentally bury the men in each other's graves.

## CHAPTER 18

Aureliano doesn't leave Melquíades's laboratory for a long time. Santa Sofia de la Piedad sees to his care and feeding. Melquíades appears to Aureliano and asks if he has discovered the language of the parchments. Aureliano has determined they are written in Sanskrit. Melquíades tells Aureliano that he can no go in peace to ultimate death because he knows that Aureliano has the time to learn Sanskrit before the parchments turn one hundred years old, at which point they can be deciphered. He directs him to the bookstore of a wise Catalanian where he can find a Sanskrit primer.

Petra Cotes sends food for the Buendías each week, even depriving herself of food so that Fernanda might eat. She continues this until she sees Fernanda's funeral procession pass. Santa Sofia de la Piedad should get some much needed rest now that the house is mostly empty. Over the years she has worked without complaint, seen more as a servant than as the matriarch she was. After Úrsula's death the house falls into a state of senility, overtaken first by moss and then by red ants. Frustrated at the lack of help she receives in trying to battle these natural forces, she packs a bag and leaves, saying, "I give up." Aureliano gives her fourteen gold fishes to support herself. She is never heard from again.

*Amaranta Úrsula's refusal of the golden chamber pot reinforces the ways that she and her mother are different, turning down such an ostentatious display of wealth to be used for such a disgusting purpose. Again, readers flash forward to the memory that appears to a character, this time Aureliano Segundo on his death bed. That José Arcadio Segundo dies with his eyes open seems like proof that he and his brother switched identities in their youth. The connection between the twins is evident in the fact that they die at the same time.*



*Petra Cotes, Aureliano Segundo's lifetime companion, is denied all respect and sympathy from Fernanda upon the death of her lover. Fernanda bears such resentment that she won't even accept the shoes her husband wished to be buried in. The men's bodies being buried in each other's graves continues the confusion around their identities even after death, but ultimately returns each body to its rightful name, so that, perhaps, they can rest in peace.*



*Santa Sofia de la Piedad's saintly name has proven perfectly apt over the course of the novel in that she is clearly the one doing much of the silent, unacknowledged work of keeping the family running, especially tending to the characters who remain locked up in the house or in their bodies. Melquíades remains undead. The language of the manuscripts, once thought to be an elaborate code, is revealed to be Sanskrit, similar to the way José Arcadio Buendía was actually speaking Latin when the family thought it was gibberish.*



*Petra Cotes' act of revenge on Fernanda takes the form of extreme kindness and self-deprivation, an act that echoes Amaranta's refusal to accept the affections of any of her suitors, though Petra Cotes is much more selfless. The loss of Úrsula's housekeeping skills causes the house to begin breaking down and transitioning back into a natural environment, overrun with insects and greenery. Santa Sofia de la Piedad finally walks away from the family, though the Buendías hardly notice, a more active form of the forgetting they've feared throughout.*



Fernanda and Aureliano continue living in the house, completely separate from one another. Fernanda perceives the presence of elves because it seems as though items are moving on their own. The children write to say their studies are taking longer than expected because they are doing so well. Aureliano has worked for three years translating the Sanskrit of Melquíades' prophecy. Fernanda continues to dress up in the moth-eaten Queen of Madagascar dress from time to time. Her greatest vice is her need to feel sad. Aureliano leaves her food by the fire each day, but one day it is untouched and when he goes to check on her, he finds her dead in her bed, her skin as smooth as an ivory casing.

Four months later, when José Arcadio (II) finally returns, Fernanda remains intact because Aureliano has boiled mercury to preserve her body. José Arcadio kisses the corpse and takes a key out of her pocket. He unlocks a box and reads a long letter Fernanda had written and learns that Aureliano is Meme's son. José Arcadio calls Aureliano a bastard and tells him to go to his room, which he does, not even emerging for Fernanda's funeral. When Fernanda died, he had gone to gather the books he needed from the Catalanian's store, offering a golden fish for payment, but the Catalanian allowed him to have the books for free.

José Arcadio (II) restores much of the house, worrying only over the saints on the family altar, which he burns down one afternoon. While he was away, he was not at seminary, but living with friends. At night, he sees the ghosts of his family wandering the house. A year after his return home, having sold the silver candlesticks and golden chamber pot for food, his only joy is to welcome the children of the neighborhood to the house to play. One afternoon, while Aureliano is in the kitchen, the children are about to shred the manuscripts in his workshop, when an angelic force suspends them in the air, separating them from the documents until Aureliano returns. Some of the children arrive earlier than others each day to groom and pamper José Arcadio.

*The last two inhabitants of the Buendía house don't interact, instead living alone in the same place. While it's possible that items are moving on their own, readers also know that Fernanda has lost things before when she breaks her routine, and without Úrsula to help her find them, it could be that she is just growing forgetful. Perhaps she has even forgotten that there is someone else in the house who could be moving things. The image of the moth-eaten dress harkens back to Rebeca's wedding dress, destroyed by moths because of Amaranta's treachery. These dresses were never worn for their intended purpose.*



*Aureliano uses the same process of boiling mercury to preserve the body as José Arcadio Buendía used to preserve Melquíades when he died. Though José Arcadio has learned about the true parentage of Aureliano, he doesn't explain this to Aureliano, who remains unaware that Meme was his mother. He takes no issue when José Arcadio sends him to his room because he has all he needs to be happy in his solitude: his books.*



*José Arcadio burning the saints on the family altar is the first clue that he has not spent his time away growing his faith as he claimed to. In the same way his great-great-grandfather before him saw the ghost of his former rival Prudencio Aguilar, José Arcadio also sees the ghosts of his family wandering the house. While he is not technically alone in the house, the ghostliness of these beings highlights how truly alone he feels, having lost all of these generations of family. José Arcadio's interest in spending time with younger people shows his lack of maturity and his attempts to hold on to the frivolity of his youth, denied to him because he was sent away to seminary school so early.*



One night, José Arcadio (II) discovers the sacks of gold that Úrsula had hidden under his bed, and he uses them to turn the house into a “decadent paradise.” One night he and the four eldest children have a wild party, filling the pool with champagne. The children tear down the curtains to dry themselves off and break the rock crystal mirror. He chases the children out of the house and suffers an asthma attack, begging Aureliano to go to the pharmacy to get him his medicine. Aureliano leaves the house for the second time. Aureliano is indifferent to the outside world, and so José Arcadio ends his imprisonment. José Arcadio realizes that Aureliano can speak knowledgeably about things he can’t possibly know and his response to José Arcadio’s inquiries as to how that might be is just to say: “Everything is known.”

*Úrsula’s prediction that there would be gold in the house as long as she was alive proves true, as the gold is finally found after her death, and it’s almost immediately taken from the house and spent by José Arcadio. The destruction of the house by the children echoes the way that Meme had brought home her schoolmates who destroyed the house entirely, and also, in a more minor way, the José Arcadios who attacked the house in a rage. Aureliano, though he has studied many books, knows things that they don’t contain, showing the foresight of the Aurelianos before him, while also resonating with the way characters have made up what they didn’t know about the world throughout.*



One morning, a man with a cross of ashes on his forehead arrives in tatters, kept alive only by fear. It is Aureliano Amador, the only surviving son of Colonel Aureliano Buendía. José Arcadio (II) and Aureliano do not understand who he is though and refuse him entry. Two policemen appear out of nowhere and shoot Aureliano Amador’s cross of ashes.

*History has been forgotten by the remaining Buendías enough that they are unwilling to provide asylum to their miraculously still living ancestor. The permanent cross of ashes remains all these years later, and the vindictive commitment to killing Colonel Aureliano Buendía’s sons somehow still stands, despite most people not even remembering the colonel.*



One September morning, the children with whom José Arcadio (II) had been spending time with invade the house and drown him in the pool, stealing the rest of the gold. Aureliano finds him later that afternoon, and finally realizes how much he had grown to love his brother.

*As is the firmly established pattern at this point in the book, Aureliano realizes how much he loved the man he sees as a brother only once he is dead.*



## CHAPTER 19

Amaranta Úrsula returns home from Brussels, leading her husband, Gaston, on a silk leash. She arrives with loads of luggage including a cage of 50 canaries and her husband’s velocipede. She wastes no time in trying to fix up the house again, getting rid of many of the old family relics, with the exception of the daguerreotype of Remedios on the wall. She is vibrant and beautiful and social compared to the solitary young man living in the house. It becomes clear that she intends to remain in Macondo for the rest of her life, despite it being a dead town.

*Amaranta Úrsula’s strength is illustrated in her dominance over her husband, and that strength seems to have allowed her to break the family pattern, becoming the first Buendía daughter to marry successfully outside of the family. Her carrying a cage of canaries is reminiscent of the caged birds her great-great-grandfather kept at the beginning of Macondo’s existence. The velocipede is a sign of the changing transportation technologies of the times. Despite her having successfully escaped Macondo, she cannot help but be drawn back to the magical place where she grew up.*



Even a year after her return, having made no friends and thrown no parties, Amaranta Úrsula remains convinced she can revive Macondo. Gaston can tell that his wife is lost in a nostalgic memory of the town, rather than the true and present state of it. He delays putting together his bicycle, sure that Amaranta Úrsula will awaken from her nostalgia any minute, but when she doesn't, he puts the bike together and begins gather bug specimens to send home to his natural history professor.

The couple is passionate about each other, making love wherever and whenever the mood strikes. Gaston's true passion is aviation, and they met when he rode his biplane over the convent where Amaranta Úrsula went to school. While Gaston takes to the native food and culture, Amaranta Úrsula eats only imported frozen fish and shellfish and canned meats and continues dressing in the European style. They have resolved to wait five years to have children.

Gaston visits Aureliano and gets the sense that he uses the books he buys at the Catalanian's store to verify the knowledge he already innately knows, rather than to teach himself something new. Aureliano is hermetic though and unwilling to participate in family life with the couple, and so Gaston seeks out a new interest for himself, devising a plan for an airmail service. He had conceived of it prior to his arrival in Macondo, but had envisioned it being put to use in the Belgian Congo where his family had investments in palm oil. He reconnects with his Belgian partners and prepares a landing field. His partners agree to ship the first airplane and a mechanic, but a year later, the plane still has not arrived.

Aureliano wanders Macondo, trying to reconstruct a memory of what the town might have been like at its height. He talks to the remaining residents and no one can remember the Buendía family, except a single old black man. The man's granddaughter, Nigromanta, makes them soup and they continue their friendship even after the old man dies, until Nigromanta warns Aureliano that he is scaring off her customers.

Aureliano, still a virgin, feels an attraction to Amaranta Úrsula, who he now knows to be his aunt. Overcome with the agony of listening to his aunt and Gaston make love, he asks Amaranta Úrsula to give him some money and takes it to purchase Nigromanta's services. They become lovers and Nigromanta dreams of marrying Aureliano, until he tells her he is in love with Amaranta Úrsula. After this, Nigromanta requires Aureliano pay for her services.

*Despite all external clues indicating the opposite, Amaranta Úrsula remains convinced that she can help turn Macondo into a vibrant city again, proving her sentimentality regarding the city. Nostalgia is another way that time can be confused, trapping a person in an idealized past rather than the reality of the present.*



*Finally, a married couple who is unrelated is clearly passionate about one another. It seems as though the curse on the Buendía family has finally been broken. Gaston is interested in the most up-to-date transportation even while living in Macondo, an echo of the way José Arcadio Buendía wanted to leave Macondo to have access to the newest technology available in bigger cities.*



*Aureliano's psychic abilities are apparent to even someone as disconnected from the family and traditionally educated as Gaston. The promise of the Belgian partners to ship the airplane and mechanic clearly parallels the arrival of the Italian pianola accompanied by Pietro Crespi back in the first generation of Macondo residents, but this influx of a new invention never comes to fruition in the same way, indicating that new people are no longer traveling to Macondo to establish a life.*



*Aureliano tries to summon his psychic powers alongside his knowledge of history to imagine a more vibrant version of the dying city he lives in. The Buendía family, the town's founders, have gone forgotten, harkening back to Melquíades vision of a Macondo without a Buendía family, something José Arcadio Buendía didn't believe could exist.*



*Following a firmly established pattern, Aureliano transfers his desire for Amaranta Úrsula onto a prostitute, though he isn't asked to pay for her services until she learns that he loves someone more. Even when she asks him to pay, there is not actually money exchanged; instead she keeps track of the times they've made love, seeing each visit as a debt owed.*



One afternoon at the Catalanian's store, Aureliano joins the conversation of four young men discussing methods of killing cockroaches in the Middle Ages. He gathers with these young men each afternoon for the rest of his life. The afternoon of their meeting, the young men go to a brothel, which they continue to frequent together. When Aureliano discusses Colonel Aureliano Buendía, only his friend Gabriel Márquez believes him because he knows the man was a close friend of his own great-great-grandfather Colonel Gerineldo Márquez. Similarly, when Aureliano brings up the history of the massacre, people deny that even the banana company ever existed.

Lonely, one day Amaranta Úrsula appears in Aureliano's room wearing a dress and a fish vertebra necklace she's made. Aureliano tells her about the prophecies and puts his hand on hers. They remain like that until Amaranta Úrsula remembers that today is the day to put quicklime on the ants and she runs off to take care of the task. She continues to visit Aureliano occasionally and Aureliano begins to have meals with the couple. Gaston's Belgian partners claim the plane was shipped, but the plane never arrives. Gaston mentions the possibility of going to Brussels to clear up the confusion and hasten the arrival of the plane. One afternoon, Amaranta Úrsula cuts herself on a can and Aureliano kisses the wound and reveals his love for her. She calls him a fool, and tells him she's leaving for Belgium soon.

One of Aureliano's friends tells them about a zoological brothel which they go to visit. Outside the entrance, an old woman exclaims, "Aureliano!" thinking she has seen Colonel Aureliano Buendía. It is Pilar Ternera, over 145 years old. Aureliano begins to visit her regularly to hear about the history of Macondo. On the afternoon that Amaranta Úrsula rebuffs him, Aureliano runs to the comforts of Pilar Ternera. When he tells her who he is crying over, she laughs at the predictable repetitions of the Buendía family. She assures him that Amaranta Úrsula is waiting for him. Back home, Aureliano follows Amaranta Úrsula out of the bath. At first Amaranta Úrsula resists, but then she gives in, enjoying herself.

## CHAPTER 20

Pilar Ternera dies in her rocking chair, buried in the same position in a hole dug into the center of the dance floor. The Catalanian auctions off his bookshop and returns to his home on the Mediterranean. Many letters and pictures arrive from him, showing a growing nostalgia for life in Macondo, while he had previously been nostalgic for his old home in Barcelona. He writes telling them to forget everything he taught them and to leave Macondo. All of the young men, with the exception of Aureliano, follow his advice. The last to remain is Gabriel, who enters a contest to go to Paris and wins.

*Aureliano's knowledge of the history of Macondo is matched only by one of his friends, but this isn't due to their academic credentials: it's because their great-grandfathers were best friends. Of course the name of this friend should also be recognized as the name of the author of the book, a way of personalizing the history laid out here and adding a metafictional element to the story, establishing a self-awareness of the story as a story.*



*Amaranta Úrsula fleeing Aureliano's company could be prompted by her recollection that she has chores to do to keep the house in working order, but it could also be her attempt at remaining faithful to her husband. Only when Aureliano begins to sense that Amaranta Úrsula is receptive to his advances does he permit himself to grow closer to the couple. An opportunity presents itself for Gaston to leave them alone for a while, but when Aureliano hints at his intentions in Gaston's absence, Amaranta Úrsula, reluctant to cheat on her husband, threatens to go to Belgium, too, to avoid this indiscretion, showing her attempt at maintaining her morals and resisting falling into the family pattern.*



*The zoological brothel run by Pilar Ternera is possibly the extension of the place that Aureliano José visited to have sex with donkeys, and is also an echo of the way that Petra Cotes and Aureliano Segundo's passion caused extreme fertility in livestock. Pilar Ternera's age is an impossibility, but it is important that this woman, who predicted both the past and future and knew the Buendía family better than anyone is still alive to interact with the final generation, as the prophecy laid out 100 years before is finally fulfilled.*



*Macondo slowly empties of its last residents. Even the Catalanian leaves, though the nostalgia he once felt for Barcelona, he now feels for Macondo, suggesting that people always long for what they can't have. Aureliano is left in complete isolation, but rather than following the instructions of the Catalanian, he remains so that he might keep the company of Amaranta Úrsula and continue learning Sanskrit so he can translate Melquíades prophecy.*



In the town, now so sparsely populated, overrun with noisy red ants and suffocated by dust and heat, only Aureliano and Amaranta Úrsula are happy, but they are so happy they are believed to be the happiest people on earth. Gaston goes to Brussels to bring back the plane. Aureliano and Amaranta Úrsula grow delirious with their passion for one another, walking around naked and destroying the house with their lovemaking. Aureliano abandons the manuscripts. They enjoy their periods of rest, worshipping each other's bodies, almost more than the moments of having sex. They cover each other in jam, licking it off one another on the floor of the porch and wake to the bites of the carnivorous red ants.

Both of the remaining Buendías cannot imagine the return of either Gaston or Gabriel Márquez and lose themselves in a universe empty of anything but love. Suddenly a letter arrives with the news of Gaston's imminent return. Amaranta Úrsula writes Gaston a letter saying she loves him very much, but that she cannot live without Aureliano. Gaston sends them a calm letter back warning them about the dangers of passion, but wishing them the very best. Six months later another letter arrives from Gaston saying he has found his plane and asking them to ship him his bicycle.

Aureliano and Amaranta Úrsula discover they are expecting a child. Amaranta Úrsula tries to make a business selling her fish vertebra necklaces, but there is only one buyer interested. Aureliano realizes he has no skills that can earn them money. They sit with the uncertainty of how they will live and think back to their blissful childhood together. They reexamine the stories of their youth and question the truth of Aureliano's having arrived in a basket, but they have no way of knowing his actual origins. Aureliano worries that he is Amaranta Úrsula's brother, but he can find no record to indicate this. The priest tells him he is likely **named** after a street in town. When Aureliano confronts the priest about his skepticism regarding the origin of his name, the priest responds that he cannot be certain because it is enough for him to be sure that the two of them exist in that moment.

A letter arrives from Barcelona in a hand other than the Catalan's and Aureliano refuses to open it, not wanting to know the news it contains. No additional letters arrive from Barcelona, proving Aureliano's assumption right.

*Aureliano and Amaranta believe they need only their love for one another to be happy. The house is destroyed once again by their revelry and passion, as it has been many times before. Aureliano no longer takes interest in his studies when he has the companionship of the woman he loves, suggesting that scholarship is a practice of the lonely. The way they worship each other's bodies recalls Remedios the Beauty's bathing rituals, and their killing the ants echoes her killing of the scorpions.*



*Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano are now experiencing a solitude of love. While they are together, love is alone, absent of any other emotions or people or dynamics. Gaston's response to Amaranta Úrsula breaking up with him is reasonable. His world was not consumed with her passion and so he can imagine building his life around his other interests, perhaps with another person, whereas the passion between the two Buendías is so strong that there is no alternative to being together.*



*No business can succeed in Macondo because no one lives there. Aureliano comes to the realization that many academics do: he has no useful survival skills, only knowledge of the history of Macondo. Despite their not knowing Aureliano's true parentage, they suspect that they could be related, though they have no way of knowing for sure. The Buendía family names are known only because of the geography of the town, pointing to how fully the Buendía family has been forgotten. The certainty of any knowledge is called into question by the priest who possesses so much doubt he cannot even be certain they both exist, an echo of the amnesia that spread long ago in Macondo.*



*Aureliano, who often possesses knowledge that he has no way of having learned, can intuit the meaning of something as simple as a letter in a hand he does not recognize, no magic needed.*



At night, the couple holds each other, listening to the ants and moths and weeds growing and the ghosts traversing the house. One Sunday, Amaranta Úrsula goes into labor. When their son is born, Amaranta Úrsula wants to name him Rodrigo, but Aureliano says they will **name** him Aureliano. When the midwife cleans off the newborn, they find the **tail of a pig**. Aureliano and Amaranta Úrsula are unaware of the precedent in the family though, and they didn't remember Úrsula's fears. The midwife assures them it is no big deal, and they don't have time to worry about it because Amaranta Úrsula cannot stop bleeding. She assures Aureliano that "people like her were not meant to die against their will," but the light in her slowly fades. She dies the next day.

Aureliano covers her face, puts the child in a basket and wanders town, looking for a path back to the past. He consoles himself by talking to a bartender in the last open salon of the red-light district. Nigromanta finds him and takes him in so he can sleep off his drunkenness. When he wakes, soon after, he remembers the child, but he cannot find the basket. He wonders if, perhaps, Amaranta Úrsula might not be dead, and might have found the child to care for it, but he finds he body, heavy as stones. He finds the child in the garden, being eaten by the ants. In his mind, he remembers the epigraph from Melquíades' parchments: "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants."

He goes to the manuscript and can read it clearly; it is the history of Buendía family written 100 years in advance. Melquíades had written it all as though it had happened in a single instant instead of in the order of conventional time. Aureliano skips ahead, impatient to learn his own destiny. The winds pick up. Aureliano is so absorbed in the story that he doesn't notice the doors and windows are being blown off their hinges. He discovers that Amaranta Úrsula is his aunt and the roof flies off. He sees the parchment's delivery of the present moment like a mirror. He understands that the city of mirrors is being wiped out by the wind and will never be remembered. All that has happened is unrepeatable because a race "condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth."

*The couple's sense of hearing is heightened by this point, allowing them to note even the quietest sounds in their solitary nights. Amaranta Úrsula's attempt to give the child a name that doesn't come from the family follows the pattern of women trying to break away from fate. When they see that the child has been born with the long-feared tail of a pig, though, enough time has passed that they are unaware of the warnings that have been passed down for generations and they don't realize it to be an indication of the child being a product of incest.*



*Aureliano, in the haze of his grief over Amaranta Úrsula's death, an unanticipated result of the birth of a child born with the tail of a pig, abandons the child, something a Buendía has yet to do. His finding comfort in Nigromanta is an echo of Pilar Ternera and Petra Cotes before him. The child being a victim of the ants is a way for the landscape of Macondo to reclaim the last heir of the family that developed the it, beginning the final process of returning it to its original state and fulfilling the prophecy of Melquíades, which Aureliano had only started to translate.*



*The secret manuscript, unreadable for all these years, is finally revealed to be precisely the book we are reading, accounting for the history of the Buendía family in all the years it lived isolated in Macondo, each character experiencing their solitude in their own way. When Aureliano finally realizes that Amaranta Úrsula is his aunt and that the true incest predicted generations before has finally been committed, the house is destroyed and he sees that the mirrors that were predicted by his great-great-great-grandfather were actually metaphorical, indicating the ways the generations of individuals kept repeating each other's lives.*





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