

Ivy Leaf Short-Stories

“A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Gabriel García Márquez

Name: _____ School: _____

Define each following vocab word in the context of the story. Use synonyms as much as possible.

1. Impeded

2. Stupor

3. Magnanimous

4. Reverence

5. Frivolous

6. Robust

7. Impertinence

8. Antiquarian

9. Prudence

10. Befuddled

11. Proliferated

12. Hermetic

13. Cataclysm

14. Providential

15. Tribulation

16. Deigned

17. Iridescent

18. Cannulae

19. Decrepitude

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20. Ungainly

Briefly answer the following questions in a sentence or two.

21. Why is Pelayo throwing crab carcasses into the sea?

22. What does the writer mean when he says “the world had been sad since Tuesday”?

23. Where do Pelayo and his wife, Elisenda, think the old man with wings came from?

24. What is the neighbor woman’s theory about why the old man is here?

25. Where does Pelayo put the old man?

26. Why does Father Gonzaga suspect the old man is “an imposter” rather than an angel?

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27. What is Elisenda’s idea for what to do about the crowd that gathers in front of their house?

28. What unfortunate invalids come to the “angel” to be cured?

29. What is the old man’s “only supernatural virtue” and why?

30. How does the mob succeed in arousing the old man?

31. What questions do the letters from Rome contain?

32. What cures Father Gonzaga’s insomnia and empties Pelayo’s courtyard again?

33. What does the couple do with the money they made from the old man?

34. How does the child treat the old man?

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Elaborate the following questions in a paragraph.

36. Describe what the winged old man looks like, using details.

37. How do the crowds of people treat the old man? Be specific.

38. Explain how the woman ended up being changed into a spider. Why are people more drawn to her than they are to the old man with wings?

39. Verbal irony is a literary technique in which the writer uses words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning. For example: “I had a stroke of genius when I decided to show up to

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the airport for my flight without any form of identification.” Find an instance of verbal irony in this story and use evidence to explain why the quote is ironic.

40. If a very old man with very enormous wings crashed and landed in the present day in your town, what do you think would happen? How would people react and treat him? What would you do?

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Students should clearly state what they think the writer’s stance on faith and religion is, based on the events of the story. Márquez is critical of the characters, the Church, and their hypocrisy, and how they do not act with the kindness or empathy that the Bible teaches. Even when a man with actual wings appears in front of the characters in the story, they do not act in a religious manner. Instead, they seek to use the old man for entertainment or money, treat the old man selfishly and cruelly, and do not seem to listen to Father Gonzaga. Students should support their argument with detailed evidence, including, but not limited to:

- How the characters treat the old man and the verbal irony Márquez uses to emphasize their cruelty
- Father Gonzaga’s criteria of what an angel should speak and look like, and his final opinion of the old man as “an imposter”
- The trivial and overly technical questions in the letters from the Roman Catholic Church, who do not seem to be in any rush to get to the truth and therefore never resolve the issue before the angel flies away on his own