

Lesson Name : 25

Lesson Title : A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, Section 2

Course Name : English 2 Part 3 [Honors]

Task Id : 57051384

Course Id : 15021



Essential Instruction

Read "[A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings](#)" from the line "Father Gonzaga held back the crowd's frivolity..." through the end of the story.

It is a good idea to use your digital notebook to keep notes on new vocabulary and definitions that you may need to reference later.

Reading and Literary Skills

When reading a narrative, many people are often tempted to skip to the end or ask a peer to tell them the ending of the story. Readers are curious and often anxious to figure out the ending of the story. As you read paragraphs 9 through the end of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," you may have been curious and asking yourself, "What will be the final judgment from Rome?" "Will the old man turn out to be an angel or will he die as just an ordinary man?" Try to not read ahead; instead, make predictions, or logical guesses, about the story's ending. As you read, you should also notice the differences in character motivations in this story. What was it that changed the people's motivations to come and visit the supposed angel? What motivates the doctor to take a listen to the old man's lungs? Did you notice as the story moves along, the changes in Pelayo and Elisenda's decisions to house the angel?

In many of Marquez' stories, especially that of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," there is a mystery for the people to figure out. Many people in this story have differing opinions about the old man and his identity and what to do with the old man. Synthesize the information from all of these differing sources in order to determine your own opinion about the old man. For example, here is what we know about the old man in this section of the reading.

- The consolation miracles performed from the old man seemed like mocking fun
- The courtyard goes back to being empty
- The old man's patience continued
- The doctor seemed that it was impossible he could be alive
- The logic of his wings seemed extremely natural to the doctor
- It seemed to Pelayo and Elisenda that the man could duplicate himself
- Stiff feathers began to grow on his wings
- Eventually, he was able to gain altitude and fly away

So, using the information from numerous sources in the story, do you think the old man is an angel?

Understanding Magic Realism

Often, stories with supernatural elements are written to convey a message about our realistic life. This is a genre known as **magic realism**. Read the following lines from the story:

It so happened that during those days, among so many other carnival attractions, there arrived in the town the traveling show of the woman who had been changed into a spider for having disobeyed her parents. The admission to see her was not only less than the admission to see the angel, but people were permitted to ask her all manner of questions about her absurd state and to examine her up and down so that no one would ever doubt the truth of her horror. She was a frightful tarantula, the size of a ram and with the head of a sad maiden. What was most heartrending, however, was not her outlandish shape but the sincere affliction with which she recounted the details of her misfortune. While still practically a child, she had sneaked out of her parents' house to go to a dance, and while she was coming back through the woods after having danced all night without permission, a fearful thunderclap rent the sky in tow and through the crack came the lightning bolt of brimstone that changed her into a spider. Her only nourishment came from the meatballs that charitable souls chose to toss into her mouth. A spectacle like that, full of so much human truth and with such a fearful lesson, was bound to defeat without even trying that of a haughty angel who scarcely deigned to look at mortals..

Can you think of a time that news has spread so rapidly that it drew dangerous attention?

In addition to the people's opinions about whether the man was an angel or just an old man with enormous wings, there is also another aspect on which the people disagreed. In this section of the reading, the old man begins to get even more ill. The doctor can't seem to figure out how he is still alive. Then Elisenda and Pelayo seem to feel that the man is capable of duplicating himself. They also notice his eyes begin to get foggy and his temperature rises at night. Even the neighbor can't tell them what to do with the angel if he dies. Are these ideas facts or opinions? Based on these ideas, what do you think might be happening to the old man?

Analyzing Theme

When reading a narrative, a person should also be understanding, analyzing, and comparing universal **themes** of the piece and also comparing **themes** across the genre. **Theme** refers to an author's message about a given subject which is conveyed in a written work. Often in pieces of magic realism, the author uses elements of the supernatural to more strongly convey a message about realistic life. Could it be that Marquez is communicating a message, or **theme**, about how rumors can overrun a population's imagination causing a frenzy which is only based on opinions rather than fact? Re-read the section of the reading about the young girl who had the body of a tarantula. How does her story contribute to this **theme**?

Word Analogies and Semantic Maps

When learning new vocabulary, there are several techniques which may help. One technique is to complete **word analogies**. A **word analogy** is a word problem that consists of two word pairs. You should look at the first pair of words and decide how they relate to each other. Then, select the most appropriate term that makes the second pair of words have the same relationship.

For example:

Question: Christmas: December; _____: February

Answer: Christmas: December; Valentine's Day: February.

(Notice how the first word in each pair is a holiday found in the month of the second word.)

You should also consider creating **semantic maps** for each of your vocabulary words. A **semantic map** is a method to conceptually explore your knowledge of a new word by mapping it with other related words or phrases similar in meaning to the new word.

View an example of a [semantic map](#).

Words with Multiple Meanings

Often words may carry **multiple meanings**. You may notice that when you look a word up in a dictionary, hard back or online, there are several definitions for each word. Consider looking up four of your vocabulary words in the dictionary and scanning through to see if they carry **multiple meanings**. Consider completing a chart like the one you see below.

| Vocabulary Word | Definition #1 | Definition #2 | Definition #3 |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |



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Vocabulary

Understanding the words used in a story can aid your understanding of the story itself. Here are some words from paragraph 9 to the end of “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”:

1. **providential** – adj. – opportune, fortunate, or lucky
2. **tribulations** – noun – great afflictions, trials, or distresses; sufferings
3. **tarantula** – noun – a large, hairy spider
4. **brimstone** – noun – damnation to hell
5. **spectacle** – noun – a visually striking performance or display
6. **rabbit warren** – noun – an overcrowded residential area
7. **unhinged** – adj. – unsettled, disordered, or distraught
8. **decrepitude** – noun – a state of being run down or ruined
9. **chanteys** – noun – sailors' songs
10. **ungainly** – adj. – not graceful; awkward; unwieldy

11. **senile** – adj. – showing a decline or deterioration of physical strength or mental functioning
12. **consolation** – comfort received by a person after a loss or disappointment