

Into to One Hundred Years of Solitude Annotation Activity

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.

Comment on the effect of the shifting tenses of the opening sentence:

At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point.

IMAGERY – Consider: What images are especially vivid? To what sense do these appeal? What effect do these images have on your mood as a reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author's tone?

Every year during the month of March a family of ragged gypsies would set up their tents near the village, and with a great uproar of pipes and kettledrums they would display new inventions. First they brought the magnet. A heavy gypsy with an untamed beard and sparrow hands, who introduced himself as Melquíades, put on a bold public demonstration of what he himself called the eighth wonder of the learned alchemists of Macedonia.

DETAILS – Consider: What details has the author specifically included? What details has the author apparently left out? What effect do these included and excluded details have on your mood as a reader? What do these included and excluded details seem to indicate about the author's tone?

He went from house to house dragging two metal ingots and everybody was amazed to see pots, pans, tongs, and braziers tumble down from their places and beams creak from the desperation of nails and screws trying to emerge, and even objects that had been lost for a long time appeared from where they had been searched for most and went dragging along in turbulent confusion behind Melquíades' magical irons. "Things have a life of their own," the gypsy proclaimed with a harsh accent. "It's simply a matter of waking up their souls."

Characterization – Consider: What can you infer about Melquíades' character from his characterization here. What devices contribute to this characterization?

José Arcadio Buendía, whose unbridled imagination always went beyond the genius of nature and even beyond miracles and magic, thought that it would be possible to make use of that useless invention to extract gold from the bowels of the earth. Melquíades, who was an honest man, warned him: "It won't work for that." But José Arcadio Buendía at that time did not believe in the honesty of gypsies, so he traded his mule and a pair of goats for the two magnetized ingots.

Characterization – Consider: What can you infer about Jose Arcadio Buendia's character from his characterization here. What devices contribute to this characterization?

Úrsula Iguarán, his wife, who relied on those animals to increase their poor domestic holdings, was unable to dissuade him. "Very soon well have gold enough and more to pave the floors of the house," her husband replied. For several months he worked hard to demonstrate the truth of his idea. He explored every inch of the region, even the riverbed, dragging the two iron ingots along and reciting Melquíades' incantation aloud.

Characterization – Consider: What can you infer about Ursula Iguarán's character from his characterization here. What devices contribute to this characterization?

The only thing he succeeded in doing was to unearth a suit of fifteenth century armor which had all of its pieces soldered together with rust and inside of which there was the hollow resonance of an enormous stone-filled gourd. When José Arcadio Buendía and the four men of his expedition managed to take the armor apart, they found inside a calcified skeleton with a copper locket containing a woman's hair around its neck.