

# Academic Notes: Textbook

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## Academic Notes

### I. Introduction to Short Stories

A short story is a prose narrative of limited length that organizes action and thoughts into a plot.

The plot form may be comic, tragic, romantic, or satiric, with the central incident selected to manifest the protagonist's life and character.

The term "short story" covers a great diversity of prose fiction, from really short stories (about 500 words) to longer and more complex works.

### II. Themes in Short Stories

Thematic variation: stories deal with fantasy, reality, alienation, and the problem of choice in personal life.

Representation of writers from five cultures, including three short stories and two long ones in this section.

### III. Gabriel Garcia Marquez - Kaleidoscope

Background: brought up by grandparents in Northern Columbia due to parents' poverty and struggles; novelist, short-story writer, and journalist.

Achievements: Nobel Prize in Literature (1982), masterpieces include "One Hundred Years of Solitude" (1967) and "Love in the Time of Cholera" (1985).

Themes: violence, solitude, and the overwhelming human need for love; combines reality with fantasy in magical realism.

### IV. Short Story Example

One morning at nine o'clock: a huge wave picks up several cars, embeds one in the side of the Havana Riviera Hotel, causing panic and destruction.

Description of the incident's impact on tourists and hotel staff.

Hinted potential for more significant events to come from the wave.

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**Here are the concise academic notes:**

## **Excerpt Analysis**

The passage is an excerpt from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's work "Sell My Dreams" (1927-2014). It explores themes of memory, identity, and mortality.

## **Key Events**

A car encrusted in a wall is removed, revealing the body of a brutalized woman.

The police establish that the victim was the housekeeper for the Portuguese ambassador and his wife.

The narrator has a personal connection to the woman, having met her 34 years earlier in Vienna.

## **Important Characters**

The victim: a housekeeper with an unusual ring featuring emerald eyes shaped like a serpent.

The narrator: an unnamed individual who has a profound impact on the story.

## **Symbolic Elements**

The snake ring with emerald eyes serves as a symbol of identity, memory, and mortality.

Vienna's geographical position between rival worlds creates a "paradise" for black marketeering and espionage.

## **Recurring Themes**

Memory: the narrator reflects on past experiences, including his encounter with the woman in Vienna.

Identity: the snake ring becomes a symbol of individual identity and its connection to mortality.

Mortality: the brutalized body serves as a stark reminder of human mortality.

## **Academic Notes**

### **Introduction**

The narrator introduces Frau Frieda, a fugitive compatriot who is loyal to her origins and buys meals for others at the students' tavern.

## Story of Frau Frieda's Past

As a child, Frau Frieda had a talent for interpreting dreams and told them to her family before breakfast. She correctly interpreted a dream involving one of her brothers, which led to his demise.

Their mother became convinced of her daughter's oracular talents and enforced the warning with an iron hand.

## Development of Frau Frieda's Career

Frau Frieda did not think she could earn a living with her talent until life caught up with her during the harsh Viennese winters.

She looked for work at a house where she would like to live, and when asked what she could do, told only the truth: "I dream."

The lady of the house was impressed by this response, and Frau Frieda was hired at a salary that just covered her minor expenses.

## Life as a Dream Interpreter

Frau Frieda had a nice room and three meals a day, including breakfast when the family would learn their immediate future.

She interpreted dreams for the family, including the father, who was a refined financier; the mother, who was passionate about Romantic chamber music; and two children, aged 11 and 9.

## Superstitions and Archaisms

The family is religious and inclined to archaic superstitions.

## Here are the concise academic notes:

### Frau Frieda and her Dreams

Frau Frieda's obligation was to decipher the family's daily fate through her dreams

She did this job well, especially during war years when reality was worse than nightmares

Her predictions became the sole authority in the house, with absolute control over the family

## The Author's Encounter with Frau Frieda

The author met Frau Frieda in Vienna and later in Barcelona

She visited the author in his straitened circumstances, providing unexpected generosity

In a beery euphoria, she whispered to the author about a dream he was not supposed to know about, persuading him to leave Vienna for five years

## **The Author's Departure from Vienna**

The author boarded the last train to Rome that same night due to Frau Frieda's persuasion

He considered himself a survivor of some catastrophe he never experienced and has not returned to Vienna since then

## **Trivia Questions**

How did the author recognize the lady who was extracted from the car encrusted in the wall of Havana Riviera Hotel after the storm?

Why did the author leave Vienna never to return again?

## **Pablo Neruda's Visit**

The author had an unexpected encounter with Pablo Neruda in Barcelona

Neruda spent a morning hunting big game in second-hand bookstores and bought an old volume with a torn binding at Porter

He moved through the crowd like an invalid elephant, curious about everything he saw, viewing the world as an immense wind-up toy

## **Academic Notes:**

### **I. Introduction to Paulina's Husband**

Described as a Renaissance pope figure with refined tastes and gluttonous appetite

Always presides at the table, eating with surgeon-like skill and devouring others' plates with his eyes

Exotic foods from different regions are mentioned, demonstrating his vast culinary knowledge

### **II. The Encounter with Frau Frieda**

Frau Frieda, an intrepid woman in her old-fashioned hat and purple scarf, is sitting at a distance, staring at Paulina's husband

Recognized as Frau Frieda, who had previously traveled on the same ship as Neruda and his wife

Invited to join and discuss her dreams, which she agrees to share

### III. Frau Frieda's Life and Dreams

Reveals she sold her properties in Austria and retired to Oporto, Portugal, where she lives in a fake castle on a hill with ocean views to the Americas

Implies that she had taken over the fortune of her patrons in Vienna through her dreams; Paulina suggests this is simply a stratagem for survival

### IV. Conclusion

Frau Frieda's conversation reveals that her dreams have allowed her to accumulate wealth and live a life of comfort

Her laughter is described as irrepressible, showing she takes Paulina's words in stride

### Section 1: Notes on the Story

The story begins with Pablo Neruda talking to parrots along the Rambla de los Pájaros, and then Frau Frieda changes the subject to inform the narrator they can return to Vienna now.

Thirteen years have passed since their first meeting.

The narrator decides not to return to Vienna, saying "Even if your dreams are false, I'll never go back. Just in case."

Neruda takes a siesta at the narrator's house, falling asleep and waking up refreshed, with the monogram of the pillowcase imprinted on his cheek.

Neruda shares his dream about a woman who dreams, saying he dreamed she was dreaming about him.

The narrator comments that this is reminiscent of Borges' writing style.

### Section 2: Discussion Questions

How did Pablo Neruda know that somebody behind him was looking at him?

**\* No explanation provided in the story**

How did Pablo Neruda counter Frau Frieda's claims to clairvoyance?

\* Neruda does not directly address Frau Frieda's claims, but rather shifts the focus away from his own dreams and interests.

### Section 3: Conclusion

The story is a surreal and dreamlike sequence of events, blending elements of reality and fantasy. The narrator's interactions with Neruda and Frau Frieda are laced with hints of magic realism, leaving the reader to ponder the nature of dreams and their connection to reality.

## **Dreams**

### **Meeting with Portuguese Ambassador**

The ambassador spoke about Frau Frieda with great enthusiasm and admiration, describing her as extraordinary. He shared surprising details but didn't provide the key to understanding his account. When asked for specific examples of what she did, he replied that she "dreamed," implying nothing remarkable had occurred.

### **Understanding the Text**

Does the author believe in the prophetic ability of Frau Frieda? (No clear answer)

Why does the author think Frau Frieda's dreams were a stratagem for surviving? (Not specified)

How is Neruda compared to a Renaissance pope? (Not explained)

### **Talking about the Text**

### **Group Discussion Ideas**

Despite rational capabilities, humans are susceptible to archaic superstitions.

Dreams and clairvoyance are integral to poetic vision as much as religious superstition.

### **Appreciation**

The gold ring with emerald eyes evokes responses in the reader.

This story showcases the interweaving of imagination and reality.

Contrast between author's questioning and ambassador's disenchantment.

Ironical element present in the story ( Frau Frieda "does" nothing).

### **Kaleidoscope**

### **Language Work**

### **A.Vocabulary**

**Look up meanings for:**

**dream Sell**

**dream on Sell-by date**

**dream something away Selling-point**

**(not) dream of doing something Sell-out**

**dream something up Selling price**

**look like a dream Seller's market**

## **B.Grammar: Emphasis**

**Read this sentence carefully:**

One morning at nine o'clock, while we were having breakfast on the terrace of the Havana Riviera Hotel under a bright sun, a huge wave picked up several cars that were driving down the avenue along the seawall or parked on the pavement, and embedded one of them in the side of the hotel.

The position of words or ideas within a sentence indicates emphasis. Generally, the most emphatic place is its

## **Academic Notes:**

### **Emphasis in Sentences**

In a sentence, the most emphatic part is often its beginning, and the least emphatic is usually its middle.

The sentence structure highlights the importance of the event, where a huge wave embedded one car in the hotel.

Example Rewrite: A huge wave picked up several cars... and embedded one of them in the side of the hotel...

### **Underlining Emphasis**

**Study the following sentences and underline the part which receives emphasis:**

- I never saw her again or even wondered about her until I heard about the snake ring on the woman who died in the Havana Riviera disaster.
- That did not surprise me, however, because I had always thought her dreams were no more than a stratagem for surviving.
- Although she did not say so, her conversation made it clear that, dream by dream, she had taken over the entire fortune of her ineffable patrons in Vienna.
- Three tables away sat an intrepid woman in an old-fashioned felt hat and a purple scarf, eating without haste and staring at him.

## **Pronunciation**

### **The syllable is the basic unit of pronunciation.**

A word may have a single syllable (e.g., "will", "pen"), or more than one syllable (e.g., "willing"). Each syllable contains a vowel sound, and usually one or more consonants.

Example Syllable Division: foolish (2), agreement (3), arithmetic (4)

## **TASK**

Say your name aloud and decide how many syllables there are in it.

### **Do the same with the names of your classmates.**

Pick out five words each for two, three, and four syllable words from the lesson.

## **Suggested Reading**

One Hundred Years in Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez



