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Book Author: Gabriel GarcÃ-Â-a Márquez

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What people Say:

Adam

So I know that I'm supposed to like this book because it is a classic and by the same author who wrote

. Unfortunately, I just think it is unbelievably boring with a jagged plot that seems interminable. Sure, the language is interesting and the first line is the stuff of University English courses. Sometimes I think books get tagged with the "classic" label because some academics read them and didn't understand and so they hailed these books as genius. These same acade

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I know that other people love this book and more power to them, I've tried to read it all the way through three different times and never made it past 250 pages before I get so bored keeping up with all the births, deaths, magical events and mythical legends. I'll put it this way, I don't like this book for the same reason that I never took up smoking. If I have to force myself to like it, what's the point. When I start coughing and hacking on the first cigarette, that is my body telling me this isn't good for me and I should quit right there. When I start nodding off on the second page of

that is my mind trying to tell me I should find a better way to pass my time.

Meg

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I guarantee that 95% of you will hate this book, and at least 70% of you will hate it enough to not finish it, but I loved it. Guess I was just in the mood for it. Here's how it breaks down:

AMAZING THINGS: I can literally feel new wrinkles spreading across the surface of my brain when I read this guy. He's so wicked smart that there's no chance he's completely sane. His adjectives and descriptions are 100% PERFECT, and yet entirely nonsensical. After reading three chapters, it starts making sens

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The magical realism style of the book is DELICIOUS. Sure, it's an epic tragedy following a long line of familial insanity, but that doesn't stop the people from eating dirt, coming back from the dead, spreading a plague of contagious insomnia, or enjoying a nice thunderstorm of yellow flowers. It's all presented in such a natural light that you think, "Of course. Of course he grows aquatic plants in his false teeth. Now why wouldn't he?"

This guy is the epitome of unique. Give me a single sentence, ANY SENTENCE the man has ever written, and I will recognize it. Nobody writes like him. (Also, his sentences average about 1,438 words each, so pretty much it's either him or Faulkner)

REASONS WHY MOST OF YOU WILL HATE THIS BOOK: I have to engage every ounce of my mental ability just to understand what the *@ is going on! Most people who read for relaxation and entertainment will want to send Marquez hate mail.

Also, there are approximately 20 main characters and about 4 names that they all share. I realize that's probably realistic in Hispanic cultures of the era, but SERIOUSLY, by the time you get to the sixth character named Aureliano, you'll have to draw yourself a diagram. Not even the classic Russians suffer from as much name-confusion as this guy.

On an uber-disturbing note, Marquez has once again (as he did in Love in the Time of Cholera) written a grown man having sex with a girl as young as 9... which is pretty much #1 on my list of "Things That Make You Go EWW!!!" He makes Lolita look like Polyanna on the virtue chart! (Note to authors: You give ONE of your characters a unique, but disgusting characteristic and it's good writing. Give it to more than one, and we start thinking we're reading your psychological profile, ya creep!)

If you feel like pushing your brain to its max, read it. The man did win the Nobel after all, it's

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amazing. But get ready to work harder to understand something than you ever have before in your life. And may God be with you.

Chris

weirdest

The was roughly ho

weirdest

The was roughly how I felt after reading this book. This is really the only time I've ever read a book and thought, "You know, this book would be awesome if I were stoned.― And I don't even know if being stoned works on books that way.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez (which is such a fun name to say) is one of those Writers You Should Read. You know the type â€" they're the ones that everyone claims to have read, but no one really has. The ones you put in your online dating profile so that people will think you're smarter than you really are. You get some kind of intellectual bonus points or something, the kind of highbrow cachet that you just don't get from reading someone like Stephen King or Clive Barker.

Marquez was one of the first writers to use "magical realism,― a style of fantasy wherein the fantastic and the unbelievable are treated as everyday occurrences. While l'm sure it contributed to the modern genre of urban fantasy – which also mixes the fantastic with the real – magical realism doesn't really go out of its way to point out the weirdness and the bizarrity. These things just happen. A girl floats off into the sky, a man lives far longer than he should, and these things are mentioned in passing as though they were perfectly normal.

In this case, Colonel Aureliano Buendia has seventeen illegitimate sons, all named Aureliano, by seventeen different women, and they all come to his house on the same day. Remedios the Beauty is a girl so beautiful that men just waste away in front of her, but she doesn't even notice. The twins Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo may have, in fact, switched identities when they were children, but no one knows for sure – not even them. In the small town of Macondo, weird things happen

, and nobody really notices. Or if they do notice that, for example, the town's patriarch has been living for the last twenty years tied to a chestnut tree, nobody thinks anything is at all unusual about it.

This, of course, is a great example of Dream Logic â€" the weird seems normal to a dreamer, and

you have no reason to question anything that's happening around you. Or if you do notice that something is wrong, but no one else seems to be worried about it, then you try to pretend like coming to work dressed only in a pair of spangly stripper briefs and a cowboy hat is perfectly normal.

Another element of dreaminess that pervades this book is that there's really no story here, at least not in the way that we have come to expect. Reading this book is kind of like a really weird game of

Laura

More like A Hundred Years of Torture. I read this partly in a misguided attempt to expand my literary horizons and partly because my uncle was a big fan of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Then again, he also used to re-read

for fun, which just goes to show that you should never take book advice from someone whose IQ is more than 30 points higher than your own.

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I have patience for a lot of excesses, like verbiage and chocolate, but not for 5000 pages featuring three generations of people with the same names. I finally tore out the family tree at the beginning of the book and used it as a bookmark! To be fair, the book isn't actually 5000 pages, but also to be fair, the endlessly interwoven stories of bizarre exploits and fantastical phenomena make it seem like it is. The whole time I read it I thought, "This must be what it's like to be stoned.― Well, actually most of the time I was just trying to keep the characters straight. The rest of the time I was wondering if I was the victim of odorless paint fumes. However, I think I was simply the victim of Marquez's brand of magical realism, which I can take in short stories but find a bit much to swallow in a long novel. Again, to be fair, this novel is lauded and loved by many, and I can sort of see why. A shimmering panoramic of a village's history would appeal to those who enjoy tragicomedy laced heavily with fantasy. It's just way too heavily laced for me.

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