

Characters

Colonel Aponte

See Lazaro Aponte

Lazaro Aponte

The head of the police, Lazaro Aponte (also known as Colonel Aponte) first hears of the twins' plot to kill Santiago a little after four o'clock that morning. He has just finished shaving when one of his officers, Leandro Pornoy, tells him. He does not take the threat too seriously, because when he sees the twins, they seem fairly sober. He takes their knives away and feels assured that they will not carry out their plan.

Clotilde Armenta

Owner of the milk shop where the killers slept and awaited Santiago, Clotilde Armenta claims that Santiago already looked like a ghost when she saw him early on the morning of the murder. She makes a mild attempt to convince the twins not to kill Santiago.

Cristo Bedoya

Cristo is a friend of Santiago and of the narrator. The three young men spend the night before the murder attending Angela Vicario's wedding. The next morning, Cristo is with Margot and Santiago on the pier awaiting the bishop's arrival. Cristo and Santiago go their separate ways when they reach the village square. When Cristo hears of the murder plot, he tries, to no avail, to catch up with Santiago to warn him.

Maria Cervantes

Maria owns the brothel, or "house of mercies," where Santiago Nasar, Cristo Bedoya, Luis Enrique, and his brother, the narrator, continue their partying after the wedding. Maria has the reputation of having helped all of them lose their virginity. She is tender and beautiful, yet strict about her house rules.

Purísima del Carmen

Purísima is the mother of Angela and the twins, Pedro and Pablo. A former schoolteacher, Purísima is married to Poncio and has dedicated her life to being a wife and mother. She has raised her daughters to be good wives and mothers and her sons to be men.

Divina Flor

A young woman just entering adolescence, Divina Flor is Victoria Guzmán's daughter. Seeing Santiago always overwhelms Divina with emotions she can not yet define. Santiago touches her in ways she does not like and seems to want to harm her. She knows of the plot to kill Santiago, but like her mother, she tells him nothing. She is too young to decide to tell him on her own and is frightened enough by him to want to keep her distance.

Victoria Guzmán

Victoria Guzmán cooks for the Nasar family. Formerly Ibrahim Nasar's mistress, Victoria views Santiago with as much disdain as she does his late father. She still hates Ibrahim for keeping her as his mistress and then making her his cook when he tired of her. She thinks Santiago is exactly like his father and works diligently to keep Santiago away from her daughter, Divina Flor. Victoria learns early on the morning of the murder that Santiago is destined to die, but she says nothing to him.

Plácida Linero

Santiago's mother, Plácida Linero, interprets people's dreams. On the day of her son's death, however, she fails to recognize the significance of Santiago's dream of birds and trees the night before. She regrets that she paid more attention to the birds, which signify good health. Trees, on the other hand, are an omen. In her later

years, Plácida suffers from chronic headaches that started on the day she last saw her son. Her knowledge that she unwittingly closed the main door of the house against Santiago, where his killers caught up with him, haunts her.

Flora Miguel

Flora is Santiago's fiancée through their parents' arrangement. Her family never opens the doors or receives visitors before noon. Flora learns early on the morning of the murder that Santiago is going to die. Because she is afraid that if Santiago lives he will have to marry Angela to save her honor, Flora invites Santiago into her home and vents her frustration and rage. Flora's father, concerned about his daughter, comes to check on her and is the one who tells Santiago of the plot.

Narrator

The narrator never gives his name, but he is a member of the Santiago family, son to Luisa and brother to Margot. He is also a friend of Santiago Nasar. The narrator has returned to his village twenty-seven years after Santiago's murder and is trying to piece together the events of the day.

Ibrahim Nasar

Ibrahim Nasar, Santiago's father and Plácida Linero's husband, has been dead for three years when the story opens. His memory lives on in Santiago, however, who has his good looks and runs his ranch. Nasar had come to the Caribbean village with the last group of Arabs who arrived after the civil wars ended. A relatively wealthy man, he had purchased the warehouse—in which Plácida and Santiago live—and brought his mistress, Victoria Guzmán, to live with them as their cook. Victoria despises Ibrahim for his womanizing and hates Santiago because he so much behaves like his father.

Santiago Nasar

The son of the recently deceased Arab, Ibrahim Nasar, Santiago Nasar lives with his mother, Plácida Linero, in a small Caribbean village. Twenty-one-year-old Santiago resembles his father. He has his father's Arab eyelids and curly hair. He also possesses his father's love for horses and firearms as well as his wisdom and values. Having inherited the family ranch, The Divine Face, Santiago enjoys a comfortable life and has money to spare. From his mother, Santiago has received a sixth sense about things. On the day of his death, Santiago tells his mother of dreams that he has been having about trees and birds.

Slim and pale, Santiago wears his clothes well—typically a khaki outfit and boots when he is working. On special occasions, such as the day of the Bishop's arrival at the beginning of the story, Santiago looks especially handsome in his white linen shirt and pants. Women appreciate Santiago's good looks and fortune as well as his pleasant disposition. They consider him a man of his word. Men, too, admire Santiago. When his father dies, Santiago has to leave his studies to manage the family business, yet he never complains and is always willing to join with his friends in celebrations of any kind. They know Santiago to be a man who is careful with his guns and ammunition and who has no reason to arm himself except when he is working in the country.

Santiago is to marry Flora Miguel at Christmas time. He seems happy with the arrangement and is content to live life as it is. He appears to have no enemies. Santiago's happy-go-lucky lifestyle ends, however, when Angela Vicario accuses him of taking her virginity.

Pura

See Purísima Del Carmen

Bayardo San Román

The insulted bridegroom Bayardo San Román returns Angela Vicario to her parents' home when he discovers that she is not a virgin. San Román acts very much the gentleman whom people have come to know since he

appeared in their small community. Having only been a resident for six months, San Román still has people guessing about his background. The women, however, love his looks and do not worry about who he is. He arrives dressed in a short calfskin jacket, tight trousers, and gloves to match, with silver decorating his boots, belt, and saddlebags. His physique matches that of a bullfighter's, and his skin glows with health. When Bayardo's family arrives for the wedding, the townspeople discover that Bayardo is the son of a wealthy civil war hero.

General Petronio San Román

Bayardo's father, the General, arrives for the wedding in a Model T Ford with an official license. Famous for his leadership in the past century's civil wars, he is immediately recognizable. The General wears the Medal of Valor on his jacket and carries a cane that bears the nation shield. The people of the village no longer question Bayardo's honor and understand that because of who he is, Bayardo can marry anyone.

Luisa Santiaga

Luisa, the narrator's mother, typically knows everything that is going on. On the morning of the killing, however, she goes about her business at home without any inkling of Santiago's fate. When her daughter, Margot, arrives home and begins to relate what she has heard on the docks, however, Luisa suddenly knows before Margot has finished telling her. Luisa is Santiago's godmother but is also a blood relative of Pura Vicario, Angela's mother; therefore, the knowledge of the plan to kill Santiago poses a problem for Luisa.

Margot Santiaga

The narrator's sister and Luisa's daughter, Margot envies Santiago's fiancée. To spend time with Santiago, Margot often invites Santiago to breakfast at her parents' home. Having felt a premonition about Santiago on the day of the murder, she urges Santiago to go home with her immediately. Later, she learns about the plot to kill Santiago while she is awaiting the arrival of the bishop. She is distressed by the news and hurries home to tell her mother.

Angela Vicario

The sister to twins Pedro and Pablo, Angela suffers great humiliation when her newlywed husband discovers that she is not a virgin. Angela is the youngest daughter of the Vicario family, who have raised her to marry. Even though she is prettier than her sisters, she somewhat resembles a nun, appearing meek and helpless. The Vicarios have watched over her carefully, so Angela has had little chance to develop social skills or to be alone with men. Everyone expects Angela to be chaste. When they discover Angela's secret, the family reacts violently to the knowledge that Santiago Nasar is responsible for her disgrace.

Pablo Vicario

Even though twenty-four-year old Pablo is the older of the Vicario twins by about six minutes, he assumes the role of the obliging younger brother. When Pedro leaves for the military, Pablo stays home to mind the business and take care of the family. Upon Pedro's return, however, Pablo is happy to depend on his brother's leadership. Pedro claims the responsibility for making the decision to kill Santiago. Pablo, however, actually gets the knives and convinces Pedro to carry out his plans after the mayor has disarmed them once.

Pedro Vicario

Pedro Vicario, pig slaughterer by trade, is the twin to Pablo. Pedro and Pablo are responsible for Santiago's murder. Pedro is the "younger" of the twins, having been born about six minutes after Pablo. Twenty-four years old, Pedro and Pablo have lived a hard life. They have a reputation for heavy drinking and carousing. Pedro started their slaughtering business after his father lost his eyesight. While Pedro is the more sensitive of the two, his time in the military has made him hard. He likes to give people orders. Pedro claims to have made the decision to kill Santiago. In addition to acquiring in the military his tendency to command, Pedro also contracted blennorrhoea, a medical condition that makes urination difficult and painful.

Poncio Vicario

Poncio Vicario heads the Vicario household. As a former goldsmith who spent years doing close work, he has lost his eyesight. While the family still holds him in high esteem, he is not accustomed to being blind and appears confused and anxious most of the time.

The Widower Xius

Bayardo convinces the widower Xius, an old man living alone in the prettiest house in town, to sell it. He does not decide to relinquish his home, though, until Bayardo offers him ten thousand pesos. Although extremely sentimental about his home and unhappy to be put in such a position, the widower gives in. He dies only two months later.