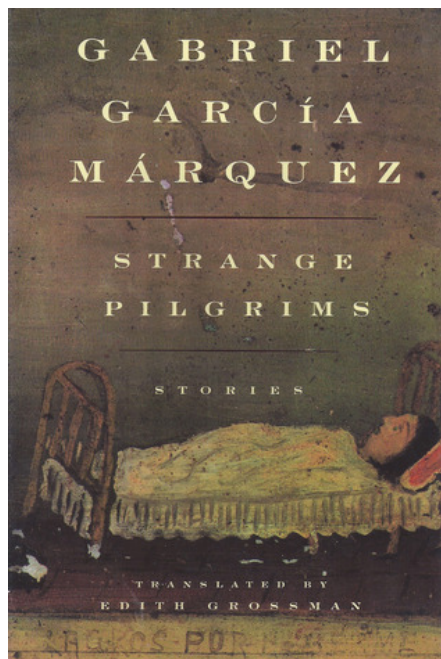




Strange Pilgrims

Gabriel García Márquez , Edith Grossman (Translator)

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In Barcelona, an aging Brazilian prostitute trains her dog to weep at the grave she has chosen for herself. In Vienna, a woman parlays her gift for seeing the future into a fortunetelling position with a wealthy family. In Geneva, an ambulance driver and his wife take in the lonely, apparently dying ex-President of a Caribbean country, only to discover that his political ambition is very much intact.

In these twelve masterly stories about the lives of Latin Americans in Europe, García Márquez conveys the peculiar amalgam of melancholy, tenacity, sorrow, and aspiration that is the émigré experience.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Strange Pilgrims Details

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Author : Gabriel García Márquez , Edith Grossman (Translator)

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Una excelente colección de cuentos, tal vez, no tan impregnados de realismo mágico (sólo algunos poseen esta característica), pero de una sugerente belleza. Los que más me gustaron fueron "El avión de la bella durmiente", cargado de tensión onírica y deseo, "Me alquilo para soñar", para mí el mejor del libro y "Sólo vine para hablar por teléfono", en el que García Márquez, como todo gran escritor, es capaz de utilizar cualquier género literario y hacerlo de maravillas, como en éste, que es un cuento de subrepticio terror. Mención especial para el que cierra el libro: "El rastro de tu sangre en la nieve", con un final realmente sorprendente.

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Franco Santos says

Me encanta cómo García Márquez en estos relatos nos esboza una fantasía, una magia y un mundo de sueños de una manera tan sutil que apenas te das cuenta de que estás ofuscado en una realidad que no cumple con su significado.

Lástima que muchos se me hicieron muy pesados. Demasiado pesados. Muchos no los soportaba. No dudo de que pueden ser considerados obras valiosas de la literatura, pero sólo me hicieron pasar un buen momento 2 historias.

El avión de la Bella Durmiente fue mi favorito, por lejos. Amé ese relato. Es tan lindo...

Natasha Castillo says

Te hace soñar. Gabriel García Márquez tiene el arte de contar cuentos y dejarnos queriendo más. Este libro tiene originales historias llenas de pasión y sensibilidad, muy buenas y variadas que producen una agradable sensación al leerlas, es totalmente recomendable para aquellos que buscan una entretenida lectura. Realmente están narrados de una forma exquisita, es un libro que no tiene página alguna de desperdicio.

El escribió el libro de cuentos que siempre quiso escribir, y yo leí el libro de cuentos que siempre quise leer.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

This was one of the books that had been on my to-read list the longest, and I chose it for my most recent speed-dating project. I was originally going to count it for my Around the World challenge, and still kind of am, but it doesn't take place in just one country. Quite the opposite, each story takes place in a different European country, often with displaced Latin Americans as characters.

It just isn't surprising that these stories come from the same author as *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, because most of these stories find the storyteller looking back, at a country or an event, and there is quite a bit of nostalgia here. It *feels* like the author is old. My impressions may be a bit off, as the author is still alive and these stories were originally published in 1992. There is also a great deal of fantasy, magical realism, and horror. You never know when it is coming, and as a reader, that makes for better adventures in the pages.

Story highlights:

The Saint - This story bleeds over into fantasy, about a child who dies but does not decay, and her father does everything to try to get her canonized.

I Sell My Dreams - A woman is remembered for her dream interpretations. I loved this!

I Only Came to Use the Phone - Don't get on the wrong bus. Terrifying.

Ana says

"Tirou a máscara, abriu os olhos radiantes, endireitou a poltrona, pôs a manta de lado, sacudiu as melenas que se penteavam sozinhas com seu próprio peso, tornou a pôr a caixinha nos joelhos, e fez uma maquilhagem rápida e supérflua, o suficiente para não olhar para mim até que a porta foi aberta. Então pôs a jaqueta de lince, passou quase que por cima de mim com uma desculpa convencional em puro castelhano das Américas, e foi sem nem ao menos se despedir, sem ao menos me agradecer o muito que fiz por nossa noite feliz, e desapareceu até o sol de hoje na Amazónia de Nova Iorque." in O avião da Bela Adormecida

Fabian says

I've only read "One Hundred Years", which is beyond a doubt a true masterpiece.

Here, some stories seem irregular. That's about all I can find as detriment to this clever collection of short (some EXTREMELY so) stories. They all have several things in common: the protagonists are Latinoamericanos in olde Europa. The settings pan around the continent from Madrid to the Spanish coast, London, France, Italia... etc. The prose is good enough to inspire one to fly over there post haste... everything just seems so poetic and life-altering there. (sigh)

Also, most of the vignettes deal with an all-time favorite theme: death. Most of the citizens of the book are not youngsters & probably reflect the author's own feelings of antiquity and age.

I did like seven or so tales intensely, but some others feel like quack intros to potentially amazing plots. Instead of keeping with the ideas to elongate them into other full-length masterwork novels, Garcia Marquez seems, well, censored (?).

Reading this in Spanish makes a HUGE difference, I believe, to the overall experience. The rhetoric is often times untranslatable, and I believe that the English transfer would probably be less rich in prose, as the author loves to sprinkle Spanish sayings and laugh-inducing wit into the melting pot. The lack of overall fantastic elements (such as in, say "100 Years") is sometimes kind of a downer.

I say: Good, but probably not a milestone for the author nor, as is usually the case with Marquez's contribution to globe-wide lit, a truly remarkable work.

Tasneem says

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A truly superb short story collection. I love the short stories of Marquez and his later pieces are even better than his earlier tales. This book features twelve stories written between 1976 and 1982. The first story, 'Bon Voyage, Mr President', states the general theme of those that follow: Latin American citizens adrift (or trapped) in Europe.

Some of the stories are more fantastical than others. Two of the best are also two of the most kafkaesque: 'I Only Came to Use the Phone' and 'The Trail of your Blood in the Snow', both of which feature unwilling incarceration in hospitals. The latter story is heartwrenching as well as disturbing and written in exquisite prose.

Read this during my rabid Garcia Marquez consumption of last year and it's one of the only short story collections that I actually enjoyed. Usually, I can't get into short stories, I always find the character development lacking and then just can't relate, plus I always feel cheated at the end on the occasions that I did enjoy the story because I want more. But, I think that Gabriel Garcia Marquez is simply so good at storytelling he can wrap the whole story up in a tiny package and have it stand up to his more epic works.

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Pvw says

Marquez remains a great writer. While not every story in this bundle is equally enjoyable, they all show great mastery and the ability to draw interesting characters in a few lines, a feat in which some writers don't succeed in a whole book.

The Dutch translation that I read, had a horrible title. The poetical Spanish title (Doce Cuentos Peregrinos, Twelve Pilgrim Stories) fitted exactly, because there are 12 stories, the rough drafts have traveled with Marquez to the different places where he lived and the stories are set at distant locations throughout Europe and Middle America. In Dutch they called this bundle: "The Lucky Summer of Mrs Forbes", which is the title of just one of the stories and certainly not the best, and has no bearing whatsoever on the general content. Why? No idea.

Anyway, most stories are pleasant to read just because of the great diction. One I liked best was : "I only came to make a call". It is about a middle aged woman on her way to Barcelona, who enters a large and remote building to telephone her husband that she will be home a little later. Unfortunately, it turns out to be a mental institution for women and they mistake her for a new inmate. All attempts at escape are blocked by remorseless nurses. Together with the description of pure misery, Marquez manages to slip humour into this passage about this most heavily built nurse.

(My apologies for the bad translation, it went from Spanish to Dutch into English, I'll just try to get it as close as possible:)

"One look at her face sufficed to know that implorations would have no effect on the obsessed woman in uniform who, because of her incredible strength, was called Herculina. She was responsible for the difficult cases and two patients had already been strangled by her ice bear-like arm that was trained in 'killing by accident'. In the first case it was judged a misfortune. The second case was less clear, and a new event would result into a thorough investigation. The usual rumour was that she was a lost sheep from a notorious family who trailed behind her an obscure career of dubious incidents in several asylums in Spain."

Marquez short stories are all strong enough to stand by themselves and are entertaining to read, with subtle

humour and a touch of magic.
