



# EL CORONEL NO TIENE QUIEN LE ESCRIBA

**Gabriel García Márquez (1961)**

## INFORMATION

"No one writes to the Colonel" is a short novel published by the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez in 1961. It is one of the author's most celebrated works and its protagonist, an old colonel waiting for the pension that never comes, is considered one of the most beloved characters of twentieth century Hispanic American literature. It was included in the list of the 100 best novels in Spanish of century XX in the Spanish newspaper "El Mundo".

García Márquez himself acknowledged after writing that it was the simplest of the novels he had written to date. However, it does not detect many of the characteristic traits of this author, such as frequent jumps in the plot, the mishmash between fantastic phenomena and real situations, and some other details that usually stand out when reading. The novel tries to reflect the feeling of restlessness before the waiting, as the author expressed it.

García Márquez considered it his best book: "I think it's my best book, without a doubt. Besides, and this is not a joke, I had to write One Hundred Years of Solitude for them to read Noone Writes to the Colonel."

## SYNOPSIS

The colonel is a veteran of the Thousand-Day War who lives in a house in a village on the Colombian Atlantic coast with his asthmatic wife. The story takes place in 1956.

The story begins one morning in October in which the colonel prepares to attend a funeral and give condolences to the family that has just died.

For 15 years, the colonel stops by every Friday to the port post office in the hope of receiving confirmation with a civil war veteran's pension. His doctor, who was also in the office, gives him the newspaper, which has been censored. With no source of income, the only hope for gain is a fighting cock, inherited from his late son, whom the colonel has been raising at home for several months, with the intention of having him fight in January and winning betting money.

The doctor then visits the colonel to check on his wife, and after giving his approval, gives the colonel a letter with the information censored in the newspapers. Upon arriving home, the colonel and

his wife discuss the advisability of investing the few remaining savings in the purchase of maize for the support of the fighting cock.

After changing his lawyer, the colonel writes a letter to the government demanding his pension again. Just that day the corn for the rooster's husband is finished, and begins to feed it with old beans. His wife argues that he should sell an old watch they have to Alvaro the village tailor. As he walks to the tailor shop, he meets several of his deceased son Agustín's friends, among them Germán, whom he offers to give the rooster. Instead, they offer to feed him until the fights in January.

During a visit to his friend Don Sabas, he suggests that if he sold the rooster it would be easily bought at 900 pesos. After discovering that his wife had had to pawn her wedding rings, he decides to sell it to Don Sabas, although he says he has a client who is willing to buy it for 400 pesos. The doctor advises the colonel not to sell it, because Don Sabas would sell it later to 900 pesos.

Don Sabas goes on a trip, and they will close the deal when they return. On Friday, as usual, the colonel goes to the port where the boats stopped, and on the way, he remembers that on that day the training would begin for the fight, and when passing through the cockpit the colonel discovers that they have his cock. Then the colonel goes to pick it up and sees how the excited public cheers the cock, and in the midst of great confusion and motivation, takes the cock to his house, deciding not to sell it. During the final conversation, he argues with his wife, who reproaches him for the total lack of money and his idealism since they lack money. The novel ends with the famous final scene in which the wife asks the colonel for the possibility that the rooster loses: "Tell me, what do we eat?" To which this, released, is armed with courage and responds: "Shit."

## MAIN THEMES AND QUESTIONS

### Hope

1. Analyse this statement: "the colonel nervously lives between waiting and hoping."
2. Analyse this statement: "the colonel and his wife are both victims of the idealism of an old soldier."
3. Comment on this statement: "the colonel doesn't listen to the voice of reason."

### Relationships

1. To what extent do you believe that the colonel is mad because he doesn't want to admit that his wife has a point?
2. Who do you sympathise with more, the colonel or his poor wife? Give reasons.

### Poverty

1. Comment on the following: "this novel reflects the desperate tragedy of many poor South Americans who live in humble situation."
2. Analyse the atmosphere of threat in the novel.

## REFERENCES

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_coronel\\_no\\_tiene\\_quien\\_le\\_escriba](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_coronel_no_tiene_quien_le_escriba)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\\_One\\_Writes\\_to\\_the\\_Colonel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_One_Writes_to_the_Colonel)

WJEC Past Papers, Available: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\\_One\\_Writes\\_to\\_the\\_Colonel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_One_Writes_to_the_Colonel)





