

Short story

# Balthazar's Marvellous Afternoon

-Gabriel García Márquez

I

47

★

48

★

49

★

50

★

51

★

52

**Gabriel García Márquez**, (born March 6, 1927, Aracataca, Colombia—died April 17, 2014, Mexico City, Mexico), Colombian novelist and one of the greatest writers of the 20th century, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982, mostly for his masterpiece *Cien años de soledad* (1967; *One Hundred Years of Solitude*). He was the fourth Latin American to be so honoured, having been preceded by Chilean poets Gabriela Mistral in 1945 and Pablo Neruda in 1971 and by Guatemalan novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias in 1967. With Jorge Luis Borges, García Márquez is the best-known Latin American writer in history. In addition to his masterly approach to the novel, he was a superb crafter of short stories and an accomplished journalist.

48  
★



49  
★



50  
★



51  
★



52  
★



53  
★



- García Márquez was known for his capacity to create vast, minutely woven plots and brief, tightly knit narratives in the fashion of his two North American models, [William Faulkner](#) and [Ernest Hemingway](#).
- His novelistic world is mostly that of provincial Colombia, where [medieval](#) and modern practices and beliefs clash both comically and tragically.

49

50

51

52

53

49

50

51

52

53

49

50

51

52

53

49

50

51

52

53

49

50

51

52

53

49

50

51

52

53

49

50

51

52

53

## Characters

### 1. Balthazar- a genius, kind hearted

- Biblical allusion- one of the three wise men who travelled to Judea to pay homage to the newborn
- Appearance- that of Capuchin, a priest
- A carpenter- his passion for his craft

### 2. Ursula – practical minded, calculative

### 3. Dr Octavio Giraldo

### 4. The Montiels- Capitalist outlook

### 5. Townsfolk

## Setting

- The small provincial town
- Gossip is the main source of information

## Narration

- Third person
- Omniscient narrator

## Themes

- Greed versus generosity
- The value of art
- Money vs artistic value
- A beautiful piece of art gifted not sold
- Commercialization- alienation of the product from the producer
- Society and hypocrisy
- Class- rich and poor
- Class conflicts
- Balthazar's social status linked with his poverty

## Question raised

- Ownership of art- prerogative of the wealth
- Balthazar's moment of glory- only when his art of work is 'bought' by a wealthy, powerful person
- The dignity of an artist
- Why does Balthazar lie to the people?

53  
★



54  
★



55  
★



56  
★



57  
★

