

One Hundred Years of Solitude review – Gabriel García Márquez's classic makes for startling TV beauty

Level 1: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Discuss in pairs or groups:

- Do you know any films based on books?
- What is your favourite book?
- Would you like to see it made into a film? Why? Why not?
- What are some of the best films or TV series based on books?
- What are some of the worst films based on books? Why are they bad?

2 Key words

a. Choose the correct word to match each definition. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

- a part of a TV series, radio show, book or event
a. curse b. dream c. episode
- a group of family members born and living during the same time
a. generation b. imagination c. ghost
- the ability to make pictures in your mind
a. dream b. imagination c. announce
- the spirit of a dead person seen in the living world
a. imagination b. ghost c. dream
- thoughts or images that happen while you sleep
a. dream b. invisible c. curse
- something you cannot see
a. episode b. politics c. invisible
- to put a spell or bad luck to bring harm to someone
a. curse b. beast c. politics

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8. a large, wild animal or a mean person
a. dream b. ghost c. beast
9. things related to running a country or group of people
a. beast b. politics c. generation
10. to tell something to a lot of people
a. announce b. curse c. politics

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You may have to change the form of the word.

1. Children use their _____ when they play.
2. The latest _____ of the TV show was very exciting!
3. My grandmother belongs to a different _____ than I do.
4. I had a strange _____ last night about flying.
5. They don't like to talk about our president and our country's _____ at family dinners.
6. They will _____ the winner of the contest soon.

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This 16-part series might struggle with the novel's problematic sexual politics, but it's a big, gorgeous adaptation of a big, gorgeous book

Jack Seale
11 December, 2024

- 1 Gabriel García Márquez's 1967 novel is a famous classic. One Hundred Years of Solitude is a big, big book. Netflix made it in the novel's home of Colombia. At 16 episodes, it's a pretty big TV series.
- 2 The book takes place mostly in one place, and it moves through several generations of the same family. The filmmakers had to create images from people's imagination. Those who love the book might not think that is possible. Others think One Hundred Years of Solitude has had too many people copy it already.
- 3 We start in the middle of the 19th century, at the wedding of José Arcadio Buendía (Marco González) and Úrsula Iguarán (Susana Morales). They are cousins, so Úrsula's mother does not approve. She says their children will have pig's tails. Úrsula feels hurt by her mother, and José Arcadio is being followed by the ghost of a man he killed. So, they follow José Arcadio's dream of starting a new town: Macondo.
- 4 Macondo is a place where strange things happen. Priests and babies can float; the dead choose not to stay dead. A group of gypsies visit every year, selling alchemy, magnets, ice and a syrup that makes you invisible. All of these things are treated as normal. The people in Macondo accept the magic and strange things that happen.
- 5 The curse that says the couple's children will be beasts does not come true, at least not for a long time. However, the sons and grandsons of José Arcadio and Úrsula have a different problem. They repeat their own mistakes and those of their ancestors. This problem is shown by all the males in the family having similar names.
- 6 Politics begins to affect Macondo, bringing bad behaviour, war and opportunities for the characters to show fear or bravery. These things will be in the second part of the story. The story is split into two parts, with the next eight episodes coming next year.
- 7 A rain of yellow flowers announces the death of José Arcadio, and blood comes all the way across town to Úrsula's feet to tell her that her son is dead. These scenes are made carefully and beautifully. There's enough here to make Macondo worth revisiting.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. When did Gabriel García Márquez write *One Hundred Years of Solitude*?
2. How many episodes does the TV series have?
3. Where does the story mainly take place?
4. Who are José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán?
5. What does Úrsula’s mother say about the couple’s children?
6. Who is following José Arcadio?
7. What is the name of José Arcadio’s new town?
8. What kind of syrup do the gypsies sell in Macondo?
9. What happens to announce José Arcadio’s death?
10. How does Úrsula find out about her son’s death?

4 Key language

a. The words in the wordpool can be used as nouns and as verbs. Complete the sentence pairs. You may have to change the form of some words.

move

dream

book

place

- 1a. *The House of the Spirits* is a famous _____ by Isabel Allende.
- 1b. We need to _____ tickets for a hotel for our vacation.
- 2a. The _____ to the West Coast was difficult for her.
- 2b. When they heard the fire alarm, they _____ quickly.
- 3a. I never _____ this restaurant would be so good!
- 3b. When the little boy has a bad _____, he goes to his parents’ bed.

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- 4a. She will _____ the large family picture on the bookshelf.
- 4b. My keys aren't in the _____ I left them!

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- The book is always better than the film.
- It was important to make the episodes for this show in Colombia.
- People don't use their imagination when they watch movies.

6 In your own words

a. Write your own review of a TV show or film you have recently watched. Answer these questions.

- Why did you choose this TV show or film?
- What is the summary of the story?
- Which actors are in it?
- Describe your favourite part. What makes it special?
- Would you recommend this TV show or film to others?

b. Share your review with the class, the facts you learned about the film and your opinions of it.