

A FAREWELL  
TO  
GABO AND MERCEDES

*A Son's Memoir of  
Gabriel García Márquez  
and Mercedes Barcha*

RODRIGO GARCIA



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# PHOTOGRAPHS



Gabo at 13 or 14. He was already a *chévere*. A dandy.



Mercedes at 17.  
That face says it all.



In the late 1960s, when  
smoking was still good for you.



October 12th, 1982,  
the morning the Nobel prize was announced.



October 12th, 2012,  
thirty years later, same place, same tree,  
same robe for the occasion.





Calle Fuego 144.  
The worst-kept secret in town.



Gabo at home, taking his Tuesday nap  
under a large Colombian ruana.



Gabo's study since 1976.



Mercedes's 80th birthday celebration.



With my brother, Gonzalo, our families,  
and Mercedes, aka *El Cocodrilo Sagrado*  
(The Sacred Crocodile), *La Madre Santa* (The Holy  
Mother), *La Jefa Máxima* (The Boss Supreme).



Gabo leaves home.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1927 Gabriel García Márquez is born on March 6, 1927, to Gabriel Eligio García and Luisa Santiaga Márquez in Aracataca, Colombia. The eldest child of a large family, he spends his early years living with his maternal grandparents. His grandfather, a former colonel, would later inspire García Márquez's novella *No One Writes to the Colonel*.
- 1936 After his grandfather's death, García Márquez goes to live with his parents in Sucre.
- 1940 García Márquez moves with his family to the port city of Barranquilla and starts high school.
- 1947 García Márquez studies law at the National University in Bogotá. Two of his short stories are published in the newspaper *El Espectador*.
- 1948–50 After two years of political conflict in Colombia, riots force the National University to close. García Márquez returns to Barranquilla, where he works as a journalist. He starts writing his first novel, *Leaf Storm*.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1954    García Márquez is hired to write for *El Espectador*. He publishes a series of articles about a Colombian sailor who survived a high-seas shipwreck, which causes controversy in Colombia.
- 1955–57    *Leaf Storm* is published in 1955. García Márquez moves to Paris to work as a foreign correspondent. During this period, he travels to the Eastern bloc countries to report on various issues.
- 1958    García Márquez returns to Colombia. He marries Mercedes Barcha in Barranquilla. They remain married until his death.
- 1959    García Márquez travels to Cuba as a rank and file journalist to cover the Cuban Revolution for a Colombian newspaper. Mercedes gives birth to their first son, Rodrigo.
- 1960–61    García Márquez lives in NY briefly as correspondent of the Cuban press agency Prensa Latina before moving his family to Mexico. His novel *No One Writes to the Colonel* is published in 1961.
- 1962–66    The couple's second son, Gonzalo, is born in 1962. García Márquez spends eighteen months writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.
- 1967    *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is published in June. The book is an immediate success, selling millions of copies worldwide and earning García Márquez much acclaim. The family moves to Spain.
- 1975    *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is published.



## CHRONOLOGY

- 1979–81 García Márquez divides his time between Colombia and Mexico. He begins writing *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.
- 1982 García Márquez wins the Noble Prize for Literature.
- 1983–87 *Love in the Time of Cholera* is published in 1985. García Márquez helps establish the International Film School in Cuba. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is adapted for film, directed by Francesco Rosi.
- 1989 *The General in His Labyrinth* is published.
- 1994 García Márquez helps establish the Foundation for New Ibero-American Journalism to support democratic, independent journalism in Latin America.
- 1996 *News of a Kidnapping*, a nonfiction account of several kidnapping cases in Colombia by drug lord Pablo Escobar, is published.
- 1999 García Márquez battles lymphatic cancer. He goes into remission.
- 2002–04 His memoir, *Living to Tell the Tale*, is published in 2002. His final novel, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, is published two years later.
- 2010–12 Rumors circulate that García Márquez is writing a new novel, but his younger brother, Jaime, denies the reports. It is revealed to the public that the author is suffering from dementia and can no longer write.
- 2014 García Márquez dies at his home in Mexico City.
- 2020 Mercedes Barcha dies in Mexico City.

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