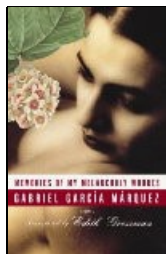


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Book Review
Memories of My Melancholy Whores
by [Gabriel Garcia Marquez](#)

Reviewer: [Geoff Wisner](#), Staff Reviewer
Posted: November 3, 2005

Don't buy *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* thinking that it's another sprawling epic like [One Hundred Years of Solitude](#). Heralded as the first work of fiction by Gabriel Garcia Marquez in ten years, *Memories* is a tiny book, perhaps not even as long as his novella [Chronicle of a Death Foretold](#). But however short it is, it is not a disappointment.

If you've read the first volume of the author's memoirs, you know that Garcia Marquez led a knockabout life in his early years as a newspaperman, with an intimate knowledge of the back alleys and disreputable establishments of Colombia. *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* could be seen as the story of how life might have turned out for him if he had had a bit less ambition, drive, or luck.

The narrator of *Memories* is nearing his 90th birthday. His life runs fairly smoothly down its decades-old ruts. "I live in a colonial house," he explains, "on the sunny side of San Nicolas Park, where I have spent all the days of my life without wife or fortune, where my parents lived and died, and where I have proposed to die alone, in the same bed in which I was born and on a day that I hope will be distant and painless." He writes a Sunday column for the newspaper and occasional music and theater reviews.

His life is not as lonely as this would suggest. He keeps company with a variety of prostitutes over the years and with his housekeeper Damiana — "Indianlike, strong, rustic" — whom he treats like a whore as well. For his 90th birthday, he announces on the book's first page, he wants more of the same but a little special: "a night of wild love with an adolescent virgin."

The tale unwinds from there, with developments you may expect and others you probably won't. Without dishonesty or sentimentality, this little novel about a 90-year-old writer, by a writer who is close to 80 himself, is more touching and hopeful than one has a right to expect.

About the Reviewer

[Geoff Wisner](#) is a freelance writer and staff member of Indigocafe.com. He is the author of [A Basket of Leaves: 99 Books That Capture the Spirit of Africa](#). Visit his website at www.geoffwisner.com.

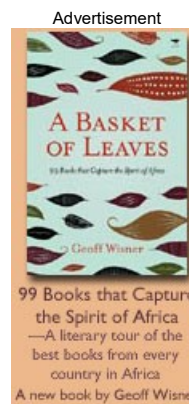


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