

Journal 6: Paula

As I read through Isabel Allende's painful memories, I realize how depressing and remorseful a death can be. Never have I experienced such an emotional moment in my life. With her descriptive imagery and spiritual allusions, the feelings she had were clearly communicated and now I fear and dread the day when it is my turn to feel the same way. It was really surprising, however, how such a heart broken mother can find the will and strength to continue writing and describing the last moments of her daughter's life. Personally, I feel as if I would've given up; this to me showed that Allende is a strong character and very passionate about her writing.

Specifically, the way that Paula's death was welcomed was ceremonial and accepting, something else that I have never heard of. I could picture quite clearly with the help of Allende's descriptions the complete circle of family and friends, an impressive way of concluding the memoir by putting all of her people in one room. I also wonder whether this was part of her imagination as she wrote the last pages of it, or whether she truly felt this way and saw these things as Paula's death approached. Because I have learned through the reading and class that she has a vivid imagination, I question the scene: could it only be her imagination giving way as she found a conclusion to her memoir? She constantly mentions that her books are mostly dictated, like this one, which was dictated by Paula. That is pretty powerful. This extreme human connection with her daughter, along with passionate love described by Allende, seem truly out of the ordinary. It makes me want to live such an experience.

Another thing that intrigued me was how she described her motherland: I forgot that she wasn't even born there until I reread it in her "Life At a Glance" at the end of the book. The way that she described its distinct smell, language, and people was very touching and reminded me of the days that I visited my mother's mother country, El Salvador, which I would love to visit again. Before this reading, Chile as a country seemed so far away and unimportant, even irrelevant. Even with the recent earthquakes, I shoved the information to the back of my head without further interest or research. With her portrayals I realize that I need to be cultured. How is it that I am so oblivious to the mishaps and history of these countries? As a Latina, I feel that it is very important to know my culture, and this is something that I have to get a better grip on.

For some reason I expected her to be a sad figure in her picture, but yet she seems to be happily posing. One time while I was reading before physics class my Argentinean professor commented on how sad the book was; she simply described it with that one word, sad. While I feel that a large part of it is indeed sad, I remember giggling a few times at her memories and being fascinated by her act of infidelity and humanitarianism. She seemed to justify her infidelity and described it in a way that to me didn't seem to make her a bad person at all. She is biased so we might not have gotten the complete or real story, but throughout she does celebrate herself as a good and professional person. I don't know, once again because of her vigorous imagination, whether to trust this account of her life as true. Yet she was confident enough to describe her intimacy and sexual experiences with us, which can only allow us to trust that everything else she says is being described with full confidence and honesty. I do

have to admit that it is hard to believe that she would travel and live in so many places, but then again I was never rich. It'd be interesting to meet her in person.

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