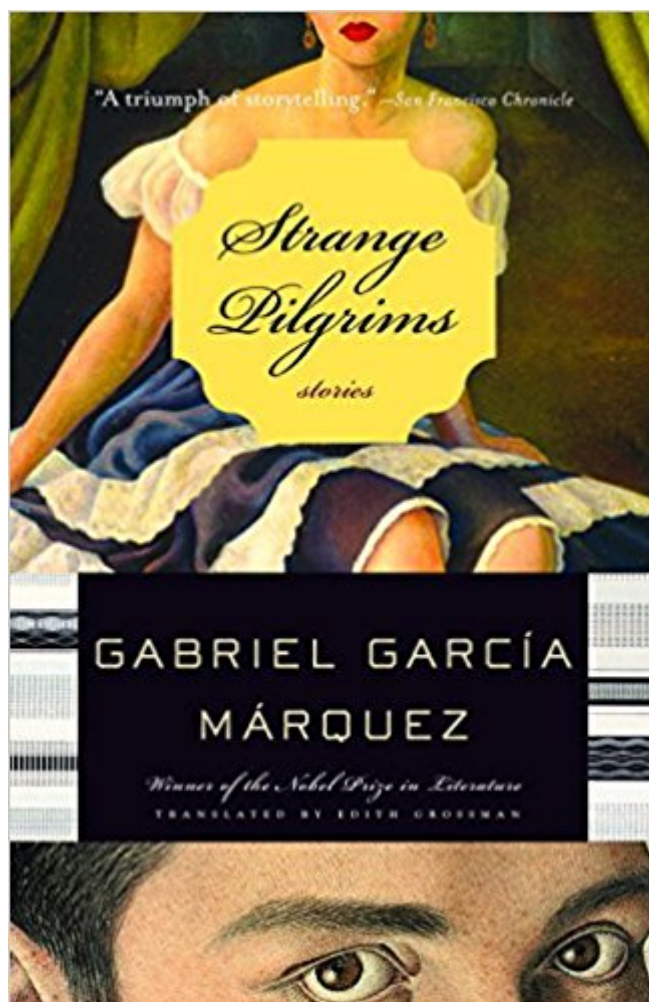


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Strange Pilgrims



Synopsis

In Barcelona, an aging Brazilian prostitute trains her dog to weep at the grave she has chosen for herself. In Vienna, a woman parlays her gift for seeing the future into a fortunetelling position with a wealthy family. In Geneva, an ambulance driver and his wife take in the lonely, apparently dying ex-President of a Caribbean country, only to discover that his political ambition is very much intact. In these twelve masterly stories about the lives of Latin Americans in Europe, García Márquez conveys the peculiar amalgam of melancholy, tenacity, sorrow, and aspiration that is the émigré experience.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (43 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I wonder if Garcia-Marquez is capable of writing a bad story. Certainly this selection of twelve are like polished gemstones. They might not be shiny or scintillating, but they are so solid, so satisfying. Each of them centers around Latin Americans, mostly Colombians, and their strange experiences in Europe. Back in South America, they move in familiar patterns, they feel at home, but in Europe, unknown and unseen forces affect them, they are prey to the pitfalls of strangeness, they can't see anything coming until it runs them over. While the gigantic geography, turbulent history, and luxuriant and untamed nature of South America fosters magical realism in authors, at least in Garcia-Marquez and some of the other greats, they also produce characters very much larger than life. Europe has always seemed to me a much tamer place, having reduced uncertainty over centuries--- more set in its ways, with fewer surprises, established, sedate. Garcia-Marquez perhaps

sees it in a similar way and it unnerves his Latin American protagonists. An ex-dictator lives in a student garret, sells his jewels, and undergoes a useless operation. A woman disappears "by accident" into a mental institution and a playboy dithers in a cheap Paris hotel, not knowing a word of French, while his young wife dies in a hospital. A postal clerk spends years trying to see the Pope to convince him of his daughter's saintly qualities. He lugs the deceased but uncorrupted daughter around in a huge case. An aged ex-prostitute feels death is at her door, but actually it is something else. Nobody really feels at home, nobody can trust their feelings, because everything works differently. Europe isn't exactly an alien place for them, but they are, each time, unwitting victims of the unexpected.

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