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This Study Guide consists of approximately 39pages of chapter summaries, quotes, character analysis, themes, and more - everything you need to sharpen your knowledge of And of Clay Are We Created. This Study Guide consists of approximately 39pages of chapter summaries, quotes, character analysis, themes, and more - everything you need to
sharpen your knowledge of And of Clay Are We Created. This section contains 941 words (approx. 3 pages at 400 words per page) The story opens abruptly, with a startling line: "They discovered the girl is thirteen-year-old Azucena, one of
thousands of villagers who lived on the slopes of a mountain in Latin America. A volcanic eruption has created enough heat to melt the ice on the mountain slopes, leading in turn to tremendous mudslides that have buried entire towns and killed more than twenty thousand people. The narrator, who is never named, watches pictures of the devastation
on the television news, described by her lover, Rolf Carl, the first television reporter on the scene. Carl and his assistant film the first attempts to rescue the girl, but when volunteers are unable to throw a rope to her, he wades up to his waist in the mud to tie the rope...(read more) This section contains 941 words (approx. 3 pages at 400 words per
page) Copyrights And of Clay Are We Created from Gale. 2005-2006 Thomson Gale, a part of the Thomson Corporation. All rights reserved. By Dr Oliver Tearle (Loughborough University) And of Clay We Are Created is a short story by the Chilean writer Isabel Allende (born 1942), included in her 1989 collection The Stories of Eva Luna. In the story, a
mountain avalanche causes a cataclysm which leads to thousands of deaths. The story follows the attempts of a newscaster who tries to save a thirteen-year-old girl who has become trapped in the mud. Before we offer an analysis of And of Clay We Are Created, it might be worth recapping the plot of Allendes story, which is concerned with death,
human connection, and the nature of grief, among other themes. Plot summaryA volcanic eruption and the ensuing mountain avalanche cause vast damage to a village, killing thousands of people when it buries them beneath mud. One girl, named Azucena, clings on for life in a mudpit, and attracts the attention of television news reporters. The first-
person narrator of the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report on the avalanche, while the narrator watches her lover report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report on the avalanche, while the narrator watches her lover report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report on the avalanche, while the narrator watches her lover report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report from the story describes how her partner and the story describes how her partner and the story describes how her partner and the story describes how her
attempt to pull her out of the mud using a rope and a life buoy fastened around her body. However, Azucena tells him that her lower body is trapped in the corpses beneath the mud; but a pump is sent for which can drain the
water. However, it wont arrive until the following day, so Carl, at the girls request, stays with her so she is not alone, and they talk. He learns she is thirteen years old and has never been outside of her village. He becomes optimistic that she will be all right as he entertains her with stories throughout the night. The narrator, who had often
accompanied Carl to the TV studios where he works, goes there to watch him talking to the girl through the night. In the morning, Carl learns that Azucena apparently has a fever, but they cannot treat her as the antibiotics are being saved for cases of gangrene. As the second night of Azucenas imprisonment in the mud arrives, both she and Carl are
clearly exhausted from lack of sleep. It is at this point that Carl, who grew up in Austria, begins to recall his childhood in a concentration camp during the Second World War, and how his father used to beat him. He also recalls his entire career
as a reporter has been an unconscious attempt to keep all of these fears at bay, but now they come flooding back to him. He realises his is Azucena: trapped and fearful, just like her. The next day, the President arrives and speaks to Azucena: trapped and fearful, just like her. The next day, the President arrives and speaks to Azucena. Watching on the television, the narrator notices that something has changed in Carl, and he has given in to
grief. When Azucena tells him that she has never been loved by any boy, he tells her that he loves her more than he has loved anyone else, and prays that her death will be quick. Although the pump is now on its way, Azucena dies before it arrives, her eyes locked with Carls. The story ends with the narrator addressing Carl directly, revealing to us that
he often watches the footage of Azucena again, looking for something he could have done to save her, but also searching, in some sense, for himself. AnalysisThis story concludes The Stories of Eva Luna: an Arabian Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller from the Original Anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller from the Original Anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller from the Original Anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller from the Original Anthology of Middle-Eastern Nights-influenced collection in which Eva
stories. And of Clay We Are Created ends the collection on a downbeat note, following the death of the girl, Azucena, in the mudslide and the subsequent change that Rolf Carl has undergone in response to the tragedy. And yet in some respects, the story is a positive one. The tragedy ends to the tragedy. And yet in some respects, the story is a positive one.
profound human connection between two unlikely companions: a teenage girl and the adult, male newscaster who had turned up to report on her plight. But in the end, Carl finds that he is unable to maintain his usual emotional detachment and must seek to help her. And although he is ultimately unsuccessful in saving the girls life, he is able to make
her feel loved and cared for during her dying days. But And of Clay We Are Created is as much a story about Azucena saving him as it is his attempts to save her. By inadvertently breaking down his emotional barriers which he has artificially put up throughout all of his adult life as a kind of protective mechanism she enables him to reconnect with his
true self, and to feel emotions he has not felt in decades. More than this, she makes it possible for him to grieve not just for her dignity, and perhaps even for all of humanity: here, the references to the Holocaust and concentration camps make
Carls grief both personal and universal at the same time. Can we label Carls emotional response to Azecunas plight an epiphany: that coming to consciousness, or realisation, which characters in modern short stories often experience? Perhaps. Epiphanies in modern fiction are often open to interpretation and analysis: ambiguous in their significance,
they can be taken as heartfelt and permanent changes of perspective or (more cynically) as short-lived and even performative shifts in response to an immediate experience, with the implication being that once the immediate experience, with the implication being that once the immediate experience is past, the character will forget its lessons and revert to their earlier attitudes. In And of Clay We Are
Created, we are convinced of the sincerity and profundity of Carls emotional change, despite the fact that we, via his lover Eva, are witnessing the change from the outside. Indeed, Carl is literally on the television, with Eva watching him via a television screen: the other side of life, as she puts it at one point. But even with the two of them separated
by the glass of that screen, she can tell that something fundamental had changed in him. Indeed, she sees a new side to him which he had never shared with her. The other side of life is a key phrase in the story, and Allende does much here with the symbolism of the television screen and the news cameras. In the modern age, we are virtually all
familiar with the experience of helplessly watching tragedy and disaster unfold on the rolling television news: separated by a screen, we are unable to do anything except watch in horror. Indeed, perhaps the Holocaust was the first really harrowing example of such things being captured on film for the world, and posterity, to see. Allendes story taps
into this. And yet she elevates the details above the squalor and horror that surround them. Although she appears to point the finger at the bureaucratic barriers which prevent help from reaching Azucena and potentially saving her life (note how that pump was meant to arrive on the second day, but it is delayed, held up by paperwork), she also
emphasises the human solidarity and connection which the catastrophe forges between Carl and Azucena. Note how Allende tells us that the two of them flew above the vast swamp of corruption and laments (the literal quagmire of mud which traps Azucena is not the only swamp which oppresses and imprisons us). Indeed, they were both saved from
despair, because they had been reminded of the good, the kindness, that individual humans are capable of offering to each other. If the mud and quagmire which traps Azucena is also, then, a symbol for the dirt and corruption which means lily is the
flower in the mud, as Allendes narrator tells us at the moment of the girls death. She is beautiful but also fragile and delicate. The mud is too powerful. And yet all of us are derived from such clay or earth, in one way or another, as the storys title reminds us. The question appears to be how to rise above it. Subscribe to get the latest posts sent to your
email. The Story Unfolds The Power of Connection The Symbolism within Clay A Reflection on Trauma The Legacy Left Behind Conclusion: Embracing Resilience In the realm of literature, few themes resonate as profoundly as human resilience. The ability to rise above adversity, to stand firm in the face of challenges, and to forge ahead despite
overwhelming odds is a narrative thread that binds countless stories together. Isabel Allende's poignant short story "And of Clay Are We Created" serves as a compelling exploration of this theme, offering not just a tale of survival but also an intimate examination of the human spirit and its capacity for endurance. The Story UnfoldsAt its core, "And of
Clay Are We Created" revolves around the tragic events following a devastating mudslide in an unnamed South American country. The narrative centers on the character of Azucena, a young girl who becomes trapped in the aftermath of the disaster. As she is buried up to her neck in mud and debris, her plight captures the attention of Rolf Carl, a
journalist sent to cover the catastrophe. What unfolds is not merely a rescue mission; it morphs into an emotional odyssey that reveals layers upon layers of human emotionship with Azucena transcends the boundaries typically found in journalistic endeavors. He becomes emotionally invested in her
fate, which leads him to confront his own past traumas and insecurities. This interaction highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastationand serve as a catalyst for self-discovery. The Power of Connection between peopleeven amidst devastationand serve as a catalyst for self-discovery. The Power of Connection between peopleeven amidst devastationand serve as a catalyst for self-discovery. The Power of Connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between peopleeven amidst devastation highlights how tragedy can forge connection between the connection between the
Rolfs growing bond with Azucena serves multiple purposes: it underscores his humanity while simultaneously illuminating Azucena's incredible strength. Even when faced with imminent deathstuck beneath heaps of clayshe exhibits remarkable fortitude. Her resilience embodies hope and defiance against her circumstances. This juxtaposition prompts
readers to reflect on their interpretations of resilience: Is it merely enduring hardship or actively fighting against it? In many ways, Azucena teaches Rolfand usthat true strength lies not just in physical survival but also in emotional courage. Her refusal to succumb entirely to despair inspires him (and us) to embrace vulnerability rather than shy away
from it. The Symbolism within ClayThe title itself carries profound symbolism; clay represents both fragility and potentiality. It mirrors our own human condition: we are molded by experiencesboth good and badand have the capacity for change and growth even after facing significant adversity. Just like clay can be reshaped after being molded into
something else entirely, so too can our lives be redefined through our struggles. This metaphor extends beyond individual experiences; it resonates with collective societal narratives surrounding resilience as well. Communities often come together during crisesbuilding each other up through shared pain while learning from one another's strengths
and weaknesses alike. A Reflection on TraumaMoreover, Allende delves into how trauma shapes individuals lives long after an event has passed reality all too familiar for many survivors worldwide today post-natural disasters or conflicts around them across various contexts throughout history! Rolfs backstory reveals deep-seated wounds from his
childhood abuse; these echoes resonate deeply within him throughout this ordeal alongside Azucena who struggles herself under duress at such tender age! This interplay between personal trauma alongside larger-scale tragedies raises questions regarding healing processes within ourselves when faced adversity head-onit reminds us about
importance addressing emotional scars if we wish truly recover fully! The Legacy Left Behind and Of Clay Are We Created complexities brought forth
traumatic moments throughout tale were reminded how interconnected everything really isfrom individual stories shaping societal landscapesto broader implications rising forth afterwards when learning come forth nurturing empathy compassion towards one another instead turning apathy indifference finding solace amidst chaos surrounding them!
Keep in mind: This is only a sample. Get a custom paper now from our expert writers. Conclusion, Isabel Allende's "And Of Clay Are We Created" offers more than just a gripping story; it's an invitation for readers everywhere embark upon journeys confronting lifes tribulations embracing their own vulnerabilities
along way! By embodying both tragedy triumph intertwined throughout narrative journey inviting us reflect upon meaning behind suffering endurance helping create pathways healing ultimately leading toward renewed understanding ourselves others world around usall reminding humanity remains resilient despite obstacles encountered along
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 Attachment & Loss, Vol 1 (1969). Pinker S., The Better Angels Of Our Nature, Viking Press, (2011). Isabel Allende 1989 Author BiographyPlot SummaryCharactersThemesStyleHistorical ContextCritical OverviewCriticismSourcesFurther ReadingUnlike many novelists, Isabel Allende did not train as a fiction writer by creating short stories before
moving on to novels. Her first three works of fiction were novels, and she did not turn to the short story form until readers of Eva Lunaasked to see the stories of Eva Luna. The story is about a young girl who is trapped in a mudslide
and a reporter, Rolf Carle, who is sent in his television helicopter to cover her rescue. Unable to maintain his reporters objectivity, he joins in the unsuccessful rescue attempt, and then stays with the girl over a period of days, Carle remembers and begins to address his own youthful suffering, which he has
repressed for many years. At a further remove, the girl and the reporter are being watched on television by the narrator, Carles lover, who experiences the pain of both. Allende has often spoken about And of Clay Are We Created and its importance to her. The characters of the television reporter and his lover are both based on Allendes own
experiences in journalism. In an interview with Marilyn Berlin Snell, she explains that the plot of the story is also based on fact: This story really occurred. In 1985, we saw her on every television screen in the world, the face of Omaira Sanchez, one of the thousands of victims of Colombias Nevado Ruiz volcanic eruption. Theblack eyes of that girl have
haunted me.... She is telling me something. She is talking to me about patience, about courage. Reviewers of The Stories of Eva Lunahave praised Allendes ability to adapt historical events into fiction, as she does in And of Clay Are We Created. Author Biography Although she has traveled around the world, and has lived in the United
States for more than a decade, Isabel Allende considers Latin America her true home, and sets her fiction there. She was born on August 2, 1942, in Lima, Peru, where her Chilean father held a diplomatic post. After her parents divorced, Allende and her siblings went to live with her mothers parents in Santiago, Chile. She had no contact with her
father for the rest of her life, but kept close ties to his family, including his cousin Salvador Allende, who became president of Chile in 1970. As a child, Allende read eagerly and traveled widely. Her mother remarried, and the family lived in Bolivia, Europe, and the Middle East before returning to Chile when Allende was fifteen. Her life was rather
ordinary for the next several years: she went to school, married, had two children, and worked as a journalist on television programs and documentaries, much like her character Eva Luna, the narrator of And of Clay Are We Created. Years later she credited her journalism experience with helping develop her skills as a storyteller. In 1973, Salvador
Allende was murdered and the military took control of Chiles government, but this became too dangerous and she moved to Caracas, Venezuela, in 1975. Six years later, she received word from Chile that her grandfather was dying and sat
down to write him a farewell letter. That letter eventually became her first novel, La casa de los espiritus (The House of the Spirits), 1982. The novel traces three generations in a Latin American family, focusing on the women, and draws heavily on Allendes own experiences. The House of the Spirits, like all of Allendes fiction, was written in Spanish
and translated by others into English and other languages. It has sold over six million copies in Europe, Latin America, and the United States, and it has made Allende an international literary star. Allendes second novel, a story of political killings in Chile, was De amory de sombra (Of Love and Shadows), 1984. This was followed in 1987 by Eva Luna.
Of all Allendes characters, Eva Luna is most like her: a feminist, a journalist, and a storyteller. In fact, the character Eva Luna often refers to stories that led Allende to try her hand at short fiction and produce the volume Cuentos de Eva Luna (The Stories of Eva Luna), 1989, which
includes And of Clay Are We Created. She has repeatedly stated since then that she finds short stories much more difficult to write than novels, and her subsequent books have been in the full-length novel or memoir forms. Plot SummaryThe story opens abruptly, with a startling line: They discovered the girls head protruding from the mudpit, eyes
wide open, calling soundlessly. As soon becomes clear, the girl is thirteen-year-old Azucena, one of thousands of villagers who lived on the mountain slopes, leading in turn to tremendous mudslides that have buried entire towns and killed more
than twenty thousand people. The narrator, who is never named, watches pictures of the devastation on the television reporter on the scene. Carl and his assistant film the first attempts to rescue the girl, but when volunteers are unable to throw a rope to her, he wades up to his waist in the
mud to tie the rope under her arms himself. He smiles a charming smile and assures her that she will soon be out. But when the volunteers begin to pull on the rope, Azucena screams in pain; the mud has created such a strong suction around her that she cannot be pulled free. She can feel some kind of debris holding her legs, and while others
suggest that it must be the rubble from her crushed house, she insists that it is the bodies of her dead brothers and sisters. The narrator has watched Carle countless times as he has covered important stories, and she has always admired his ability to be strong and detached in the face of terrible events. This time, however, she can tell by watching his
eyes and hearing his voice that his objectivity is slipping, and that he isresponding emotionally to Azucena. The catch in his voice is one she has never heard before. Abandoning his task as a reporter, Carl tries everything he can think of to get the girl free, but with no success. He manages to get a tire slipped under her shoulders so that she will not
slip down any further in the mud. Finally he radios for a pump, with which he could drain the water around the girl, but none will be available until the next day. He stays beside the girl all night, giving her sips of coffee to warm her and telling her entertaining stories of his adventures to keep her calm. Back in the city, the narrator keeps her watch,
moving to the television station so that she can see Carls satellite transmissions unedited. She phones all of the important government and business people she can think of to try to locate a pump and makes appeals on radio and television, but to no avail. Watching the screen, she feels Carles pain and frustration, and weeps for the girl. She sees that
the girl, and a priest blesses her, but no one in the crowd can do anything to help her. Although the area is littered with generators and lights and wires and other technical equipment for the television crews, no one can locate a pump. As the second day closes, Azucena and Carl are still together, talking quietly and praying. Carl has run out of stories
of his own, and turns first to the stories the narrator has told him, and then to Austrian folk songs he learned as a child. While he continues to talk to the girl, he remembers scenes from his youth that he has repressed for decades: burying bodies at a concentration camp, his fathers abuse, his retarded sisters fear, his mothers humiliation. He does not
has ever been to anyone else. On the morning of the third day, Azucena and Carl are both cold, hungry, and exhausted. The president of the Republic comes to personally send a pump. But it is too late. As she watches on the screen, the narrator can tell the
precise moment when the girl and the reporter give up hoping for a rescue, the moment of peace; they stop struggling. The narrator has managed to locate a pump and arranged a way to ship it, but on the third night the girl dies. Carl takes the tire away from under her arms, and she managed to locate a pump and arranged a way to ship it, but on the third night the girl dies. Carl takes the tire away from under her arms, and she managed to locate a pump and arranged a way to ship it, but on the third night the girl dies. Carl takes the tire away from under her arms, and she managed to locate a pump and arranged a way to ship it, but on the third night the girl dies.
slips down under the mud. The last scene of the story occurs after Carl has returned home. For some time he has not worked, but he has watched the film of himself and Azucena countless times, wondering what he might have done to help her. The narrator addresses him directly, assuring him that the wounds opened by his experience with the girl
will heal in time. Characters Azucena Azucena, whose name translated into English would be Lily, is a girl who has been buried up to Media Adaptations The Stories of Eva Luna, the collection from which And of Clay Are We Created is taken, was recorded in 1991 by Elizabeth Peiia. The two-cassette set was produced by Dove Audio Books and is
distributed by NewStar Media.her neck in a mudslide. The rest of her village has been destroyed, and she says that the bodies of her dead brothers and sisters are holding her legs. As the story opens, the girl has just been found, and a rescue effort is underway. She has also been discovered by the national news media, and soon a crowd of television
reporters comes to interview her on camera. While her story is broadcast around the world, she quietly talks with RolfCarl, the first reporter on the scene, about her life. Although she is thirteen years old, she has never traveled outside her small Latin American village, and she has never known love. She does not understand that she is being featured
on international television, nor does she understand why the president of the Republic himself comes to call her an example to the nation. After three days and nights trapped in the cold mud, she dies, and sinks away beneath the surface of the clay. RolfCarlRolfCarl is a middle-aged television reporter, the first reporter to reach Azucenas side. He has
gone to her to cover the dramatic story of her rescue, but, for the first time in his career, he is unable to maintain his professional objectivity. He joins and then leads the attempts to rescue the girl talk, Carl begins to remember long-repressed memories: folk
songs from his native Austria, his abusive father, and how he and his retarded sister lived their lives in fear. Just as he realizes that the girl will not be rescued. Before she dies, he tells her how important she has been to him. As the story ends he is grieving for
Azucena and for his own wasted youth. But confronting the girls death has shown him how to confront his pain and his healing has begun. Female Narrator (also known as Eva Luna) is RolfCarls longtime lover, a woman who has many times said goodbye to him as he has gone off to cover important stories. Though she is never named in
can, stopping only to make phone calls, trying to locate a pump to help with the rescue. She knows when he begins to confront his past, and to tell the child things he has never told her or anyone else. She knows when he and the girl finally accept the reality of death. And, as she
reveals in the last paragraph of the story, the only one addressed to Carl, she knows that when he has recovered from the painful experience, he will be stronger than ever before. LilySeeAzucena. Eva LunaSeeFemale Narrator. ThemesMemory and ReminiscenceFor RolfCarl, the most important thing that happens during his days with Azucena is his
natural disasters and placing himself in danger. Talking with Azucena, he comes to realize that these risks have been attempts to build up his courage so that one day he might face his memories and his fears. Topics for Further StudyFind newspaper stories about the 1985 volcanic eruption of Colombias Nevado Ruiz Mountain, the September 1999
earthquake in Taiwan, or another large-scale natural disaster. Look especially for stories about individual children trapped and rescued. Do you think the reporters allow themselves to become? What can cause mudslides of the magnitude
described in this story? Research the geography and the geology to find an explanation. What parts of the United States and Canada are subject to this danger? Most students know about the geography and the geology to find an explanation. What parts of the United States and Canada are subject to this danger? Most students know about the concentration camps run by the Germans during World War II, but fewer know much about Russian camps. Investigate these Russian camps. Who was held in
them? What were conditions like? What happened to Russia during and after the war?Investigate the Roman Catholic Church and its teachings about humans being made from clay after deathteachings that Azucena would have been exposed to. Find out about other culturesthere are manythat also have stories about the first
human being created from clay. The process of remembering is a painful one, bringing this brave, rugged man to tears. Azucena thinks he is crying because of her suffering, but he tells her, Im crying for myself. I hurt all over. The pain continues long after the girls death. When Carl returns home, he has no interest in working, or writing, or singing. He
distances himself from everything he loves, including the narrator, and spends hours staring at the mountains and remembering. The narrator understands the process is completeCarl will return to her. Individual versus NatureThe theme of people battling
with nature runs through And of Clay Are We Created. Time and again, humans set their smartest minds and their most advanced technologies against the indifferent forces of nature and each time humans are defeated. The story is set into motion by the tremendous eruption of the volcano. Using scientific instruments called seismographs, geologists
have been able to predict that the mountain is about to erupt, but their technology can only take them so far. They cannot stop the eruption, they cannot stop the eruption will occur, and the eruption will occur, and the eruption will occur, and they c
nature are far more powerful than the forces of humans. Allende makes the point clearer when Azucena is trapped. In spite of all the technology at their disposal, a large crowd of people cannot get one small girl free from the grasp of the mud. The news media can assemble an impressive collection of spools of cable, tapes, film, videos, precision
lenses, recorders, sound consoles, lights, reflecting screens, auxiliary motors, cartons of supplies, electricians, sound technicians, and cameramen, but they cannot deliver and operate one pump to get the girl out. The narrator phones every important person she can think of, and makes appeals on radio and television, but even her superior
communications network produces no results. And while millions of people around the world are watching the girls struggle on television, they are all helpless against nature. Cycle of LifeFrom the beginning, RolfCarl is determined to rescue the girl, to snatch her from death. But although she is trapped and can barely breathe, thegirl does not
struggle and does not seem desperate. She seems to know that she will die and to accept her fate. Some of her attitude may come from her Roman Catholic faith, which teaches that life and death are both gifts of God. Faith does not seem important toCarl, who never mentions God or religion in his long talks with the girl, and he believes that he can
defeat death. Eventually, the adult man learns from and is consoled by the young girl. She teaches him to pray, and gradually he comes to accept her fate. When he leans over to kiss her goodbye, both are saved from despair, and her
body literally sinks back into the clay. Through the story, she has been in the clay, above it, and below it. The titles statement that of clay are we created holds out a promise that new life will be created from the same clay that took Azucena, and that the girls slipping into the clay is part of the cycle of life. StylePoint of View and NarrationPoint of view
is handled in an unusual way in And of Clay Are We Created. The narrator tells most of the story in the first person, and yet most readers would say that she operates only on the edges of the actionshe is an observer more than participated in, it is unusual
to have a narrator who reports what she has seen on television. On the one hand, the narrator shares with millions of others the experience of watching Azucena and RolfCarl on television; on the other viewers. The television screen
brings her closer to the reporter and the girl, and yet she is separated from them by hundreds of miles. The final section of the story is told by the same narrator, but she speaks directly to Carl, using the second person point of view. Again, the point of view is unusual. The narrator is telling Carl things about himself that he surely already knows.
recounting for him his recent actions and inactions, and there is no indication that he responds. Like the first-person point of view here creates an atmosphere that is at once intimate and distant. The narrator is physically close to Carl now, but more distant emotionally than when she was watching him on
television. For Allende herself, point of view is one of the most important elements of And of Clay We Are Created. In an interview with Farhat Iftekharuddin, she explains that when she first tried to write the story she told it from an intellectual point of view was not
presenting the proper story, and that her focus should be not on the girl but on Carl. She wrote another draft of the story from the reporters point of view, but found this unsatisfactory as well. Finally, she discovered that her focus should be not on the girl but on Carl. She wrote another draft of the story from the reporters point of view, but found this unsatisfactory as well.
story yet again, this time using the point of view of the unnamed female narrator. Epilogue as soon as Azucena sinks slowly, a flower in the mud. If the story were
concerned mainly with the girl or with the girl or with the reporter, this would be a satisfying ending. But because Allende is concerned primarily with the development of the narrator back to center stage. The epilogue is set apart and dramatically different from the rest of the story
the time, the place, and even the point of view shift abruptly between the main story and the epilogue. Dramatic irony is the contrast between what the characters in a story understand and the deeper understanding of the storys readers. Several instances of dramatic irony shape And of Clay Are We Created
For example, it is ironic that a group of people who can assemble a tremendous collection of technical gear to show a trapped Azucena to the world cannot find a pump and get her out. With the exception of RolfCarl, the media people themselves do not see the irony; there is no hint that they find the situation remarkable or frustrating. The reader,
guided by the narrator who repeatedly mentions the pump and describes the maze of cables and machines, sees the absurdity that the characters themselves do not see. Another example of dramatic irony, which may or may not be seen by the narrator is closer emotionally to Carl while she is watching him on television
than she is when they are reunited. The effect of dramatic irony in this story is that the reader finds lessons in the story that the characters themselves do not see. Historical ContextLatin America in the 1980s Although the volcanic eruption on which And of Clay Are We Created is based occurred in Colombia in 1985, Allende does not specify the date
and location in which the story is set. Like the rest of the collection The Stories of Eva Luna, the story is understood to take place somewhere in Latin America, sometime during the 1980s. The 1980s were a turbulent time for Latin America, describing the take place somewhere in Latin America, sometime during the 1980s. The 1980s were a turbulent time for Latin America, the region encompassing approximately twenty nations in South America, Central America, Mexico, and the
Caribbean where Romance languages are spoken. Politically, Latin America was a region of great instability during this period. Many countries, including Argentina, Haiti, Panama, El Salvador, Grenada, and Guatemala, were under the control of repressive military dictators. In Colombia, armed guerillas challenged the government, which they
accused of corruption, and were killed by the hundreds. Chile, Allendes native country, was ruled from 1973 until 1989 by General Augusto Pinochet, chief executive of the country and head of the armed forces. Pinochet held onto his power by torturing, killing, or banishing thousands of Chileans who opposed him. Books and magazines that were
considered unfavorable to the government were banned or burned, and their authors were punished. The effects of this political turmoil have been significant for writers and for Latin-American literature. Allende learned about the Colombian disaster the same way Eva Luna learned about Azucena by watching the television news. Allende was living in
California at the time, having been forced into exile shortly after Pinochet took control of the Spirits, is in part about the political situation in Chile, yet she wrote it while living in Venezuela. Similarly, other great Latin-American writers have
produced important work while in exile. Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez wrote about Colombia while living in Mexico. Mario Vargas Llosa wrote about Peru from exile in Paris. Other writers have shared their fate, writing about homelands in struggle and homelands they could not return to. The Boom and AfterThe period roughly
covering the 1960s and the first part of the 1970s is often referred to as The Boom in Latin-American writing, particularly novels, resembled the European works on which they were patterned. During the Boom, writers including Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Julio Cortazar, and Mario Vargas Llosa
experimented with new dramatic forms specifically intended to reflect a Latin-American consciousness. Garcia Marquez in particular became known for magical realism, a combination of realism and fantasy through which fantastical events are narrated in calm, expressionless prose, as though the narrator had no idea that anything unexpected was
occurring. Boom writers were overtly political, reflecting the shifting perceptions and instability of Latin American political and social life, and they were predominantly male. Allendes early fiction is sometimes compared with the magical realism of Garcia Marquez, but The Stories of Eva Lunareflects the writing of the post-Boom generation. The
writers of this period include many women, and their writing is less political. The new works also tend to be less dense than works from the Boom, intentionally more accessible to the general reader rather than only the intellectual elite. They feature characters from a wide spectrum of social classes, and frequently focus on themes of love and
relationships, and on issues facing women. Critical Overview Criticism about Allendes works has focused on the magical realism and the passion of The House of the Spirits, her first novel, usually considered to be her best. Although most critics admired the magical realism and the passion of The House of the Spirits, her first novel, usually considered to be her best. Although most critics admired the magical realism and the passion of The House of the Spirits, her first novel, usually considered to be her best. Although most critics admired the magical realism and the passion of The House of the Spirits, her first novel, usually considered to be her best.
writing, some complained that the novel was an inferior imitation of the Work of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Colombian winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize for literature. The debate over Garcia Marquez influence and Allendes talent continued through the Colombian winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize for literature. The debate over Garcia Marquez influence and Allendes talent continued through the Colombian winner of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in central Colombia kills
more than 22,000 people and destroys more than 5,000 buildings. A large area is covered in mud and ash, making rescue of survivors nearly impossible. 1990s: Colombia continues to be subject to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, but none causes devastation equal to the Nevado del Ruiz eruption. 1980s: There is a large gap between the poorest
citizens of many Latin-American countries and the wealthiest citizens. Many of the wealthiest citizens are educated Europeans like RolfCarl, while the poorest tend to be of native or African descent. 1990s: As in the United States, the gap between rich and poor continues to widen in Latin America. Colombia and other countries experience significant
economic growth, but the pattern of income in Colombia is $1,650. The average per capita income in Colombia is nearly $1000, among the highest of the Latin-American countries. 1980s: The average per capita income in Colombia is $1,650. The per capita income in the United States is over $22,000.1980s: In
Colombia, over ninety percent of the citizens are Roman Catholic, a religion established there by European conquerors in the 1500s. Nearly ninety percent of Colombians are Roman Catholic, and ninety percent of all
Latin Americans are Roman Catholic. Latin American mations have autocratic governments led by military regimes and military dictators. 1990s: The South American countries are led by democratically elected presidents. Chiles
General Augusto Pinochet, forced out in 1989, is the last of the South American military dictators. discussion of her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been Allendes feminism. She has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for her next two novels, Of Love and Shadowsand Eva Luna. Another issue for critics has been heralded for heralded fo
machismo and for creating women characters who desire dangerous or otherwise inappropriate men. The third major issue for Allende criticism of And of Clay Are We Created other than mentions in reviews of The Stories of Eva
Luna, these critical issues all surface repeatedly. The foremost American critic of Allendes work is Patricia Hart, author of Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende (1989). In a review of the short stories, which she deems less successful than the novels, Hart finds three key elements: lush, hyperbolic reality, a female sensibility and some none
too-subtle parodying of male stars of the Boom. Hart insists that Allende does not imitate Boom writers, but mocks them, turning their style to her own purposes. On the other hand, Suzanne Rutas review reveals genuine irritation with Allendes echoes of the Boom, stating, Its Allendes glib, sentimental treatment ... and her cutesy allusions to other
writers inventions, that I dislike. Critics have also divided over how well Allende handles the short story form. Louise Bernikows judgment, Allende has only gotten better from one book to the next. Eleanor Bader finds the collection
touching, provocative, and entertaining, and the character of Carl memorable and captivating. Other reviewers were disappointed by The Stories of Eva Luna, feeling the short stories were too often melodramatic. Some observe that the short form did not give Allende room to create the rich characters and complex plots for which she had drawn
praise. Dan Cryer describes the stories in the collection as entertaining as long as you dont think much about them, and finds the plotting energetic but given to soap opera. Allende herself has admitted that she finds writing short stories much more difficult than writing novels, and less conducive to the embroidery she uses to steer and embellish her
writing. Interviewed by Farhat Iftekharuddin she commented, I would much rather write a thousand pages of a long novel than a short stories as some of [Allendes] finest work, Daniel Harris questions the authors political stance and her authenticity as a Latin-American writer. He
describes her as a gifted opportunist who shamelessly sentimentalizes the droll aborigines of primitive society, and ransacks South America as if it were an insipid cache of folksiness. The risk in this stance, he explains, is that the horrors and atrocities described in the stories become mere clichs. Although critics have not always been kind to Allende,
the reading public has embraced her work enthusiastically. The House of the Spirits, originally written in Spanish as is all of Allendes work, has been translated into dozens of languages. It has sold over six million copies around the world, and been made into a film starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons. Her subsequent books have also sold well,
making her the most well-known and widely read female Latin-American writer in history. Criticism Cynthia BilyBily teaches writing and literature at Adrian College in Adrian, Michigan, and writes for a variety of educational publishers. In the following essay, she looks at the development of the narrator in And of Clay Are We Created. Isabel Allendes
And of Clay Are We Created is the last story in her only collection are narrated by Eva Luna, who was also the title character of Allendes third novel. Luna tells the stories while in bed with her lover, RolfCarl, drawing her inspiration from Scheherazade, who in the
Arabian Nightssaves her sisters life and her own by telling stories for a thousand and one nights. Readers who come to And of Clay Are We Created having already read Eva Lunaand the rest of the short stories will understand all of this before they begin. They will be familiar with the characters Luna and Carl and the relationship between them, and
words; for you, language is an inexhaustible thread you weave as if life were created as you tell it. For these readers, it would be easy to ignore the narrator and to focus instead on the dramatic story of Azucena, the girl trapped in the mud, and the television reporter RolfCarl who tries to rescue her. The narrators narration, certainly, focuses on Carl
and the changes he undergoes through his experience with the girl. Any mentions by the narrator of her own reactions and emotions are intended to help her audience understand her lovers ordeal. Allende, however, has spoken frequently about her intended to help her audience understand her lovers ordeal. Allende, however, has spoken frequently about her intended to help her audience understand her lovers ordeal.
man who holds the girl. This filter of the screen creates an artificial filter and terrible distance but also a terrible proximity because you see details that you would not see if you were actually there. And so, the story is about the change in the woman who watches the man holding the girl who is dying. If this is true (and we must give Allende credit formal terrible distance but also a terrible proximity because you see details that you would not see if you were actually there.
insight into her own work), what isthe change in the narrator throughout And of Clay Are We Created, as it can be observed by a reader of this story alone? If the story is meant to demonstrate what happens to a woman watching her lover from afar, what does it ultimately reveal? What Do I Read Next? The Stories of Eva Luna (1991) is Allendes first
collection of short fiction. Like Scheherazade, Eva Luna presents twenty-three interwoven stories to her lover RolfCarl, the male protagonist of And of Clay Are We Created. The House of the Spirits (1985) is Allendes first novel. Three generations of a Latin-American family find strength through political and emotional struggle. Leaf Storm and Other
Stories (1972) is by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In seven interwoven stories, wonderful and impossible things happen to the citizens of the Latin-America (1992)
edited by Thomas Colchie, is a collection of stories by twenty-six Latin-American authors, organized by country. Includes work by Allende, Garcia Marquez, and Jorge Luis Borges, and also by newer and less well-known writers. When Carl leaves to cover the story, neither he nor the narrator understands what is to come. The narrator reports that she
had no presentiments. Carl has often been the first on the scene, and has covered dramatic and dangerous stories before with awesome tenacity. The narrator has watched him on television many times, and admired the way nothing seems to touch him or frighten him. She has learned over the years that his reporters objectivity is really a protective
mechanism that shields him from his own emotions. Knowing how unemotional he tries to hold himself, the narrator reacts strongly to the sound of his resolve slipping when he promises Azucena he will get her out: I could hear his voice break, and I loved him more than ever. Until Carls objectivity starts to give way, the narrator feels herself to be a
part of the large audience watching him. Twice she refers to herself as part of the we who seeCarl and the girl on the screen. But after he begins to change his stance, her own changes as well. Now she moves from her home to the television studio, to be near his world, and she refers to herself as his partner instead of as his audience. She has
overheard his plea for a pump, and goes on radio and television to see if there wasnt someonewho could help us. Now the us she belongs to isCarl and herself. Ironically, the television screen both emphasizes the distance between the two and brings them closer together to see if there wasnt someonewho could help us. Now the us she belongs to isCarl and herself. Ironically, the television screen both emphasizes the distance between the two and brings them closer together at least, it brings the narrator close to Carl, who is not thinking of her. It is a one-
way closeness. Though the reporter surely knows that his lover will be watching on television for any sign he might send her, he has completely forgotten the camera. Yet she feels the childs pain, and Carls frustration, and believes that she is there with him. She tries the frenzied and futile gesture of sending him encouragement through mental
telepathy. By the end of the first morning, she is reduced to tears and emotionally drained. On the second day the sensation is stronger: I had the horrible sensation that Azucena and Rolf were by my side, separated from me by impenetrable glass. She can see them, but they cannot see her. She feels what they feel, but they are unaware of her. On the
morning of the third day, the narrator can see that something fundamental has changed in Carl. The girl has touched a part of him that he himself had no access to, a part he had never shared with me. The generous and loving part of the narrator is glad to see this change, but one wonders whether there is some jealousy when Carl assures the girl that
he loves her more than all the women who had slept in his arms, more than he loved me, his life companion. There is more than the narrators heart when she says that she would have given anything to be trapped in that well in her place. Although there is hardly enough evidence in this brief story to lead to an informed opinion about two
human hearts, the relationship between the narrator and RolfCarl (she nearly always refers to him by his first and last name) seems unbalanced, as though the woman has no other purpose in her life other than to make things easier for the manas though she is always watching him through a screen while he is unaware of her. When he is called away
before dawn to cover the story of the mudslide, the narrator gets up to fix coffee while he packs, and they say goodbye as they always do. Once he is gone, she seems to be lost, a woman with nothing else to do even for one day: I sat in the kitchen, sipping my coffee and planning the long hours without him, sure that he would be back the next day. Of
course, he is not back the next day, nor the day after that. The narrator, with no children to attend to, or friends to worry with, spends the time at the National Television studio because she cannot bear the wait at home. She has often spent entire nights with her lover there, helping him with his work. At the end of the story, when Carl has returned to
her, she seems to have no responsibilities or desires other than to accompany him to the station to watch the window, staring at the mountains. Carle has passed through hell and back and is, the narrator believes, in the process of becoming more open and mature
emotionally. The narrator sees this, telling him, You are back with me, but you are not the same man. Are there ways in which the narrator is not the same woman as she was before? The changes are, at best, subtle, hard to see. Although clearly she has experienced a range of strong emotions throughout the ordeal, she does not seem to have taken
much away from her experience of seeing her relationship reflected in the glass of the television screen. IfCarl has expanded his own vision of how he might live his life, the narrator seems to be satisfied with the status quo. Her wish in the final line is the rather bleak hope that we shall again walk hand in hand, as before (italics mine). Critic Suzanne
Ruta, commenting on the full collection of The Stories of Eva Luna, explains that through the telling of her stories to Carl, Luna is trying to help him break free of the screen creates an artificial filter and terrible distance but
also a terrible proximity because you see details that you would not see if you were actually there. And so, the story is about the change in the woman who watches the man holding the girl who is dying.persona hes made for himself. The framework of a troubled man and his helpful lover gives structure to the collection, and leads naturally to And of
Clay Are We Created, in which Scheherazade falls silent, acknowledging the limits of her power. For readers of this one story alone, there is no hint that the narrators stories are intended to helpCarl, or that she feels herself to have a strength he does not have. Rather than presenting a woman who under extraordinary circumstances reaches the
limits of her power, the story seems to present a woman with no power of her own. Source: Cynthia Bily, in an essay for Short Stories for Students, Gale Group, 2001. Liz BrentBrent has a Ph.D. in American Culture, specializing in film studies, from the University of Michigan. She is a freelance writer and teaches courses in the history of American
cinema. In the following essay, Brent discusses narration, point-of-view, and the theme of intimacy and distance, in Allende is written from the perspective of awoman whose life companion, RolfCarl, a TV news journalist, has been sent on an assignment to a South American country
to cover a catastrophic avalanche which has just taken place. The story is told from the first-person point of viewof the narrator, as she learns only from television news coverage of RolfCarls experiences at the site of the catastrophe. While there, he comes to the aid of a thirteen-year-old girl, Azucena, whose body is trapped up to her neck in mud.
RolfCarl guickly drops his journalistic duties to attempt to rescue and to console the girl over a period of three days, until she dies, still trapped in the mud. In the process, the tragic situation of Azucena, and the compassion of the reporter who stays by her side, becomes an international media event. The narrator is thus able to learn of her lovers
experience only through television broadcasts of the event. In the following essay, I discuss the relationship between the narrator and her far-away companion, RolfCarl, as experienced from her limited perspective on his life-changing experience, which occurs thousands of miles away from her. And of Clay Are We Created is published in Allendes
collection entitled The Stories of Eva Luna. Although it is a book of short stories, each one is based on the fictional character of Eva Luna. A Prologue to the collection is written by the fictional
character RolfCarl, Eva Lunas lover and life companion. This Prologue is written from the second-person point of view, meaning that the narrator, RolfCarl describes a scene of passionate lovemaking between himself and Eva Luna. He represents the experience as one of intense emotional
closeness that also allows for the experience of temporary emotional distance. He says that We were too close to see one another, each absorbed in our urgent rite, enveloped in our shared warmth and scent. The idea that the lovers are too close to see one another, implies that such intense intimacy involves a loss of perspective. He goes on to
describe the experience of their lovemaking as one in which the lovers are so close that they experience solitude and distance from one another, which leads them back into a state of physical and emotional intimacy: In the final instant we glimpsed absolute solitude, each lost in ablazing chasm, but soon we returned from the far side of that fire to
find ourselves embraced amid a riot of pillows beneath white mosquito netting. This description portrays a relationship in which moments of emotional intimacytoo close to see one another. He goes on to compare his experience of their relationship to that of a
spectator looking at a photograph or painting of two lovers. He says that, From an indefinite distance I am looking at the picture, which includes me. This continues the theme that their relationship is one characterized by both intimacy and distance reinforcing the experience of intimacy, and the intimacy allowing each the freedom to
embark on their own solitary emotional voyage. He continues that T am spectator, he experiences the painting or relationship, intimately, while as spectator, he experiences the painting or relationship with a certain degree of distance. He goes on to describe the experiences the painting or relationship, intimately, while as spectator, he experiences the painting or relationship with a certain degree of distance.
bonded with his lover, and alone, both close and distant: I am there with you but also here, alone, in a different frame of consciousness. The theme of a relationship built on the simultaneous experience of intimacy and distance, union and solitude, at the emotional, psychological, and physical level, as put forth in the Prologue, sheds light on a parallel
theme in the final short story of the collection, And of Clay Are We Created. Throughout the story, the narrator, Eva Luna, bridges the temporary physical distance between the two of them. The narrator describes her experience of RolfCarls preparations
for leaving on the assignment in terms which indicate that the two routinely experience brief geographical separations throughout a relationship, which is otherwise characterized by together, once he has prepared to leave, we said goodbye, as we had so many
times before. She is both used to these routine and brief separations, and used to his subsequent returns; after he leaves for the assignment, she sat in the kitchen, sipping my coffee and planning the long hours without him, sure that he would be back the next day. Throughout the story, the narrator, Eva Luna, bridges the temporary physical distance
between herself and RolfCarl through drawing on the ongoing emotional and psychological bond between the two of them. A third-person, objective, journalistic, sometimes scientific, point-of-view is utilized by the narrator in reporting the factual events surrounding the avalanche. This creates a feeling of great distance between the narrator and the
faraway catastrophe, as if reading of it in the newspaper: Geologists had set up their seismographs weeks before and knew that the mountain had awakened again. For some time they had predicted that the heat of the eruption could detach the eternal ice from the slopes of the volcano, but no one heeded their warnings. ... The towns in the valley
went about their daily life, deaf to the moaning of the earth, until that fateful Wednesday night in November when a prolonged roar announced the end of the world, and water that descended on the villages and buried them beneath unfathomable meters of telluric vomit. She goes
on to report that the assessment of the magnitude of the cataclysm included the calculation that beneath the mud lay more than twenty thousand human beings and an indefinite number of animals, dead and decaying. Furthermore, Forests and rivers had also been swept away, and there was nothing to be seen but an immense desert of mire. Because
all of the information the narrator receives about her lovers experience of this reportage in the first person plural. Thus, although she is observing the experience of someone with whom she is personally intimate, she aligns her own
perspective with that of the massaudience of TV news spectators, describing the experience as that of a collective we. She explains that We watched on our screens the footage captured by his assistants camera, in which he was up to his knees in muck, a microphone in his hand, in the midst of a bedlam of lost children, wounded survivors, corpses
and devastation. The story came to us in his calm voice. However, even while watching him on TV, the narrator experiences the national broadcasts from the perspective of her intimate knowledge of RolfCarl: He smiled at [the girl trapped in the mud] with that smile that crinkles his eyes and makes him look like a little boy. Even via poor television
transmission, broadcast from thousands of miles away, the narrator notices intimate details of RolfCarls emotional state, and experiences increased love and intimacy with him:Dont worry, well get you out of here, Rolf promised. Despite the quality of the transmission, I could hear his voice break, and I loved him more than ever. Eva Luna also
describes RolfCarls thoughts during his three days spent by the side of the little girl. The narrator could only have obtained this information from RolfCarl, buoyed by a premature optimism, was convinced that everything would end well... Azucena
would be transported by helicopter to a hospital where she would recover rapidly and where he could visit her and bring her gifts. He thought, Shes already too old for dolls, and I dont know much about women, he concluded, amused, reflecting that although he had known many women in his
lifetime, none had taught him these details. Eva Luna experiences her relationship with RolfCarl as both geographically distant, and emotionally intimate. Her only contact with her lover is via the impersonal and public avenue of the television broadcast: Many miles away, I watched RolfCarl and the girl on a television screen. However, even at this
level of remove, she gets as close to him as possible by watching him on the TV screen from the station where I often spent entire nights with Rolf editing programs. This allows her to more intimately experience his feelings, although she has no direct contact with him:
There, I was near his world, and I could at least get a feeling of what he lived through during those three decisive days. Although her only con-tact with him is via the TV screen, she is able to bridge the geographical distance between them through their ongoing emotional intimacy with one another, and live through his experience at this emotional
level: The screen reduced the disaster to a single plane and accentuated the tremendous distance that separated me from RolfCarl; nonetheless, I was there with him. The childs every suffering hurt me as it did him; I felt his frustration, his impotence. She attempts to further bridge the distance between herself and her lover via some form of mental
telepathy: Faced with the impossibility of communicating with him, the fantastic idea came to me that if I tried, I could reach him by force of mind and in that way give him encouragement. I concentrated until I was dizzya frenzied and futile activity. She is able to maintain her emotional empathy for RolfCarls experience, to the degree that she would
be overcome with compassion and burst out crying. Yet she cannot completely overcome the tremendous distance which remains between what RolfCarl is experiencing at the site of the disaster and what she experiences from watching it on TV thousands of miles away: at other times, I was so drained I felt as if I were staring through a telescope at
the light of a star dead for a million years. At this point, she experiences the distance at an exaggeration causes her to feel removed from him by time, as well as by distance, looking at the light of a star dead for a million years. These
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exaggerated feelings include the image of her lover, like the star, as long dead, and therefore much less accessible to her. Nonetheless, even from that enormous distance, she can sense his private emotional state based on what she sees via national TV broadcast: RolfCarl had a growth of beard, and dark circles beneath his eyes; he looked near exhaustion. Even from that enormous distance I could sense the quality of his weariness, so different from the fatigue of other adventures. When equipment is brought into that much more intimate contact with her lovers experience: the distance

seemed suddenly compressed. Yet, while brought that much closer to the event via TV broadcast, she maintains the feeling of impenetrable separation from me by impenetrable glass. Withthis increased quality in the broadcasting, she is at least able to experience more fully RolfCarls actions throughout the incident: I was able to follow events hour; I knew everything my love did to wrest the girl, Eva Luna knows him well enough to guess the rest of what he has said to her. Try as he might, RolfCarl is unable to rescue the girl from the mud, and in the end can only console her. Eva Lunas emotional connection to him is so strong that, just based on what she sees him doing via TV broadcast, she intuits an almost magical knowledge of the consequences of this experience for RolfCarls emotional life: I, glued to the screen like a fortune-teller to her crystal ball, could tell that something fundamental had changed in him. I knew somehow that during the night his defenses had crumbled and he had given in to grief; finally he was vulnerable. The girl had touched a part of him that he himself had no access to, a part he had never shared with me. Rolf had wanted to console her, but it was Azucena who had given him consolation. From this great geographical distance, Eva Luna recognized the precise moment at which Rolf gave up the fight and surrendered to the torture of watching the girl die. In spite of the distance, Eva Luna experiences herself as having bridged the gap between herself and her lover, feeling herself to be fully experiencing what he and the girl are experiencing together. She says I was with them, three days and two nights, spying on them from the other side of life. However, when RolfCarl returns home from the distance has developed. Eva Luna, addressing RolfCarl directly through second-person narrative address, tells him, You are back with me, but you are not the same man. The experience has caused him to emotionally withdraw from his lover, embarking on a voyage deep within himself. Eva Luna remains physically close to him, beside you, waiting for his emotional return to their former intimacy, walking hand in hand. In the final words of the story, she tells him, Beside you, I wait for you reaffirms the voyage into yourself, for the old wounds to heal. I know that when you return from your nightmares, we shall again walk hand in hand, as before. As in the Prologue, the second-person narrative address to you reaffirms the long-term intimacy between the two lovers, despite this temporary emotional distance. And of Clay Are We Created is characterized by a shifting narrative point-of-view and address, which captures the experience of simultaneous intimacy and distance experienced throughout the relationship of the two lovers. The Prologue to the story collection describes a pair of lovers who are so physically and emotionally intimate that their lovemaking allows them the freedom to glimpse absolute solitude, each lost in a blazing chasm, and yet soon return to the far side of that fire, and find themselves in an intimate lovers embrace. The use of second-person address in the prologue RolfCarl addressing his lover directly as you increases the feeling of intimacy between them, as if inviting the reader into the fold of their relationship. The narration of the story And of Clay Are We Created describes the experience of emotional intimacy between them, as if inviting the reader into the fold of their relationship. The narration of the story And of Clay Are We Created describes the experience of emotional intimacy between them, as if inviting the reader into the fold of their relationship. The final paragraph describes the lover, returned home from this life-changing experience, to find himself emotionally distant from his life companion, despite their physical proximity. The relationship, however, is one that thrives on such fluctuations between intimacy and distance, be it geographical or emotional, and always maintains the promise of renewed closeness, the assurance that, whatever the current distance between them, we shall again walk hand in hand, as before. Source: Liz Brent, in an essay for Students, Gale Group, 2001. Ruth BeharIn the following excerpt, Behar examines Allendes inspiration for writing And of Clay Are We Created. [This text has been suppressed due to author restrictions][This text has been suppressed due to author restrictions]Source: Ruth Behar, In the House of the Spirits, in The Womens Review of Books, Vol. XIII, No. 2, November, 1991, p. 4.Bader, Eleanor J Review of The Stories of Eva Luna, in Belles Lettres: A Review of Books by Women, Vol. 6, No. 3, Spring, 1991, p. 60. Bernikow, Louise, Review of The Stories of Eva Luna, in Newsday, January 21, 1991, p. 46. Gautier, Marie-Lise Gazarian, Interviews with Latin American Writers, Dalkey Archive Press, 1989, p. 8. Harris, Daniel, Review of The Stories of Eva Luna, in Boston Review, Vol. 16, No. 2, April, 1991, pp. 28-29. Hart, Patricia, BoomTimes-II, in Nation, Vol. 252, No. 9, March 11, 1991, pp. 28-29. Hart, Patricia, BoomTimes-II, in Nation, Vol. 252, No. 9, March 11, 1991, pp. 28-29. Hart, Patricia, BoomTimes-II, in Nation, Vol. 252, No. 9, March 11, 1991, pp. 28-29. 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An excellent guide through the dozens of anthologies that include, as the title indicates, English translations of short stories by Latin-American women. Useful for locating works by Allende, and also for finding available works by her peers. Rodden, John, ed., Conversations with Isabel Allende, University of Texas Press, 1999. An extensive collection of interviews from various literary journals, originally published in English or translated from Spanish, German, and Dutch. The volume includes an index and annotated bibliography. Rojas, Sonia Riquelme, and Edna Aguirre Rehbien, eds., Critical Approaches to Isabel Allendes Novels, Peter Lang, 1991. Although it deals only with Allendes first three novels, this collection reveals and explores the central critical issues in her fiction. The essays are in English and in untranslated Spanish. The Introduction, in English, is an excellent overview of the biographical and political sources of Allendes major themes. Shaw, Donald Leslie, The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction, State University of New York Press, 1998. An analysis of Latin-American literature produced since the mid-1970s following the Boom, a period that saw an explosion of internationally important works by Latin-American society, especially with working-class and middle-class characters. By Dr Oliver Tearle (Loughborough University) And of Clay We Are Created is a short story by the Chilean writer Isabel Allende (born 1942), included in her 1989 collection The story follows the attempts of a newscaster who tries to save a thirteen-year-old girl who has become trapped in the mud. Before we offer an analysis of And of Clay We Are Created, it might be worth recapping the plot of Allendes story, which is concerned with death, human connection, and the nature of grief, among other themes. Plot summary A volcanic eruption and the ensuing mountain avalanche cause vast damage to a village, killing thousands of people when it buries them beneath mud. One girl, named Azucena, clings on for life in a mudpit, and attracts the attention of television news reporters. The first-person narrator of the story describes how her partner, Rolf Carl, is dispatched to report on the avalanche, while the narrator watches her lover report from the scene, live on the television news. Although he is known for his emotional detachment when reporting on the news, Carl seeks to help the girl who is trapped in the quagmire, and aids in the attempt to pull her out of the mud using a rope and a life buoy fastened around her body. However, Azucena tells him that her lower body is trapped in the corpses beneath the mud: the corpses of her brothers and sisters, still clinging to her legs. Carl makes numerous attempts to free Azucena from the mud; but a pump is sent for which can drain the water. However, it wont arrive until the following day, so Carl, at the girls request, stays with her so she is not alone, and they talk. He learns she is thirteen years old and has never been outside of her village. He becomes optimistic that she will be all right as he entertains her with stories throughout the night. The narrator, who had often accompanied Carl to the TV studios where he works, goes there to watch him talking to the girl through the night. In the morning, Carl learns that Azucena apparently has a fever, but they cannot treat her as the antibiotics are being saved for cases of gangrene. As the second night of Azucenas imprisonment in the mud arrives, both she and Carl are clearly exhausted from lack of sleep. It is at this point that Carl, who grew up in Austria, begins to recall his childhood in a concentration camp during the Second World War, and how his father used to beat him. He also recalls his sister, Katharina, who was born with learning difficulties and resented by their father. Carl realises that his entire career as a reporter has been an unconscious attempt to keep all of these fears at bay, but now they come flooding back to him. He realises his is Azucena: trapped and fearful, just like her. The next day, the President arrives and speaks to Azucena tells him that she has never been loved by any boy, he tells her that he loves her more than he has loved anyone else, and prays that her death will be quick. Although the pump is now on its way, Azucena dies before it arrives, her eyes locked with Carls. The story ends with the narrator addressing Carl directly, revealing to us that he often watches the footage of Azucena again, looking for something he could have done to save her, but also searching, in some sense for himself. AnalysisThis story concludes The Stories of Eva Luna: an Arabian Nights-influenced collection in which Eva plays the Scheherazade storyteller figure from the original anthology of Middle-Eastern stories. And of Clay We Are Created ends the collection on a downbeat note, following the death of the girl, Azucena, in the mudslide and the subsequent change that Rolf Carl has undergone in response to the tragedy. And yet in some respects, the story is a positive one. The traged eath of the young girl is marked by a moment of genuine and profound human connection between two unlikely companions: a teenage girl and the adult, male newscaster who had turned up to report on her plight. But in the end, Carl finds that he is unable to maintain his usual emotional detachment and must seek to help her. And although he is ultimately unsuccessful in saving the girls life, he is able to make her feel loved and cared for during her dying days. But And of Clay We Are Created is as much a story about Azucena saving him as it is his attempts to save her. By inadvertently breaking down his emotional barriers which he has artificially put up throughout all of his adult life as a kind of protective mechanism she enables him to reconnect with his true self, and to feel emotions he has not felt in decades. More than this, she makes it possible for him to grieve not just for her, but for his sister, mistreated at the hands of their father, his mother, who was humiliated and robbed of her dignity, and perhaps even for all of humanity: here, the references to the Holocaust and concentration camps make Carls grief both personal and universal at the same time. Can we label Carls emotional response to Azecunas plight an epiphany: that coming to consciousness, or realisation, which characters in modern short stories often experience? Perhaps. Epiphanies in modern fiction are often open to interpretation and analysis: ambiguous in their significance, they can be taken as heartfelt and permanent changes of perspective or (more cynically) as short-lived and even performative shifts in response to an immediate experience, with the implication being that once the immediacy of the experience is past, the character will forget its lessons and revert to their earlier attitudes. In And of Clay We Are Created, we are convinced of the sincerity and profundity of Carls emotional change, despite the fact that we, via his lover Eva, are witnessing the change from the outside. Indeed, Carl is literally on the television, with Eva watching him via a television screen; the other side of life, as she puts it at one point. But even with the two of them separated by the glass of that screen, she can tell that something fundamental had changed in him. Indeed, she sees a new side to him which he had never shared with her. The other side of life is a key phrase in the story, and Allende does much here with the experience of helplessly watching tragedy and disaster unfold on the rolling television news: separated by a screen, we are unable to do anything except watch in horror. Indeed, perhaps the Holocaust was the first really harrowing example of such things being captured on film for the world, and posterity, to see. Allendes story taps into this. And yet she elevates the details above the squalor and horror that surround them. Although she appears to point the finger at the bureaucratic barriers which prevent help from reaching Azucena and potentially saving her life (note how that pump was meant to arrive on the second day, but it is delayed, held up by paperwork), she also emphasises the human solidarity and connection which the catastrophe forges between Carl and Azucena. Note how Allende tells us that the two of them flew above the vast swamp of corruption and laments (the literal quagmire of mud which traps Azucena is not the only swamp which oppresses and imprisons us). Indeed, they were both saved from despair, because they had been reminded of the good, the kindness, that individual humans are capable of offering to each other. If the mud and quagmire which traps Azucena is also, then, a symbol for the dirt and corruption which engulfs the whole country (and perhaps all of humankind), then Azucena her flower name, which means lily is the flower in the mud, as Allendes narrator tells us at the moment of the girls death. She is beautiful but also fragile and delicate. The mud is too powerful. And yet all of us are derived from such clay or earth, in one way or another, as the storys title reminds us. The question appears to be how to rise above it. Subscribe to get the latest posts sent to your email. And of Clay Are We Created is part of the collection called The Stories of Eva Luna (1989). Eva Luna is the most famous character created by Isabel Allende, and although she is not named in this short story, Eva Luna is its narrator. And of Clay Are We Created opens with the striking image of a girls head protruding from the mud pit, eyes wide open, calling soundlessly. The girl, namedAzucena, is stranded in the mud pit that happened following avolcanic eruptionthat led to the melting of the ice on the mountain slopes, eventually forming anavalanche has buried entire villages under a load of clay, stones and water and has killed more than twenty thousand people. Rolf Carl, a journalist by profession, is at the spot to report this event. He is usually a verycalmand dispassionate reporter, able to do his job without getting too sentimental or overwhelmed by the events he reports. However, Azucenas plight somehow gets to the core of Rolf and he wades into the mud pit himself in a bid to rescue Azucena. Rolf gets to the care of Rolf and he wades into the mud pit himself in a bid to rescue Azucena. Rolf gets to the core of Rolf and he wades into the mud pit himself in a bid to rescue Azucena. Rolf gets to the task immediately, tying a rope around the girl so the others can pull her out of the pit. But this fails as the girl screams out in pain. The others think that it could be the debris from the crushed house that has kept Azucena stuck in that spot but she insists it is the corpses of herbrothers and sisters. The narrator can feel all calmness slipping away from Rolf as he becomes desperate to find a way to get Azucena out of the pit. He tries everything he can, to no avail. Eventually, he decides that they must have apumpto drain the water. The request for a pump is made but it cannot be arranged anytime soon. The night is a test for Azucena; Rolf helps her drink some coffee to keep the body warm. The coffee works as she seems warmer, and to keep her calm, Rolf tells her of the various adventures he has had in his career as a journalist. Rolf even imagines optimistically how a helicopter will take Azucena to a hospital very soon and he will visit her there. The narrator, Rolfs wife, tries to contact some important people she knows in order to arrange for a pump to be sent to the spot immediately but she obtains onlyvague promises. This entire episode takes a toll on the narrator also and she can feel Rolfs frustration, his impotence. The natural disaster has caused utter chaos in the places it has affected and the media has appropriated Azucena, bestowing on her thepathetic responsibility of embodying the horror of what has appropriated Azucena, bestowing on her thepathetic responsibility of embodying the horror of what has appropriated Azucena, bestowing on her thepathetic responsibility of embodying the horror of what has appropriated Azucena, bestowing on her thepathetic responsibility of embodying the horror of what has appropriated Azucena, bestowing on her thepathetic responsibility of embodying the horror of what has appropriated Azucena, bestowing on her thepathetic responsibility of embodying the horror of what has appropriated Azucena at a superior of the horror of what has appropriated Azucena at a superior of the horror of what has appropriated Azucena at a superior of the horror of what has appropriated Azucena at a superior of the horror of what has appropriated Azucena at a superior of the horror of what has a superior of the horror of the horror of what has a superior of the horror of the horror of what has a superior of the horror of the horr now. A doctor and a priest come to visit her. Meanwhile, Azucena sleep. Both of them are exhausted. Rolf starts ruminating about histraumatic past, involving the Holocaust, an abusive father, and his sisterKatharina, among other things. Both he and his sister were victims of their fathers abuse and Rolf starts thinking about his sisters death. The next day, the President of the country comes to visit Azucena. He says he will ensure that a pump is sent here at the earliest and yet, nothing happens. Meanwhile, the narrator can feel there is some change in Rolf, and both Rolf and Azucena have nowabandoned all hopesof rescue. Rolf kisses the little girls forehead and prays that shedies quicklyso that she does not have to suffer too much. The narrator ends by pondering how Rolf is no longer the same man but hopes that this wound too would heal in time and that they shall again walk hand in hand, as before. And of Clay Are We Created AnalysisTHEMESThe theme ofhumans versus nature is very prominent in the story. The story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and available theme of nature and its sheer indifference to humans. The narrator reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night, and a story is set in aSouth American reports how on a fateful Wednesday night. prolonged roar announced the end of the world, and walls of snow broke loose, rolling in an avalanche of clay, stones, and water that descended on the villages and buried them beneath unfathomable meters of telluric vomit. Natures fiercenessis coupled withhumans foolishness and callousness. The narrator tells us how the geologists actually predicted the calamity but their warnings wentunheededas the people dismissed them because they sounded like the tales of frightened old women. The scale of destruction caused is immense, and after the calamity, human beings, even with their best efforts, are unable to adequately tackle the situation. Memories of the past, its repression, and its eventual awakeningare themes that are effectively explored in this short story, sometimes literally and sometimes symbolically. At the end of the story, the reader understands that Rolfs plunge into the mud pit in order to save Azucena is also asymbolic plungeinto his own memories of his traumatic past. The narrator, for instance, says:That night, imperceptibly, the unyielding floodgates that had contained Rolf Carls past for so many years began to open, and the torrent of all that had blocked his consciousness for so long. The mudentrapsits victims in a net of memories, as it were This symbolic function of the mudcan be deduced from Azucenas point of view as well: she is unable to come out holding the rope that is tied around her because she says she is held by the bodies of her brothers and sisters clinging works on bothliteral and symbolic levels, for both Azucena and Rolf. Indeed, the memories of Rolfs traumatic past get a vent on the third night due to various reasons. One of them is the role that Azucena perhaps unwittingly plays. From the time Rolf decides to help Azucena himself, there are setbacks. The narrator says, The girl could not move, she barely could breathe, but she did not seem desperate, as if an ancestral resignation allowed her to accept her fate. The reporter, on the other hand, was determined to snatch her from death. Here we see aswitch of roles: the reporter who is otherwise so calm is intensely desperate here while the victim has resigned herself to fate. This calm attitude of Azucena to her ill-boding future is what perhaps enables Rolf to try and come to terms with a resigned herself to fate. his past. The shift between Rolfs past and present attitudes towards his buried memories can be understood by observing a part of the free indirect discoursethat appears towards the end of the story: There, beside that hellhole of mud, it was impossible for Rolf to flee from himself any longer, and the visceral terror he had lived as a boy suddenly invaded him. He reverted to the years when he was the age of Azucena, and younger, and, like her, found himself trapped in a pit without escape, buried in life, his head barely above ground; he saw before his eyes the boots and legs of his father, who had removed his belt and was whipping it in the air with the never-forgotten hiss of a viper coiled to strike He understood then that all his exploits as a reporter, the feats that had won him such recognition and fame, were merely an attempt to keep his most ancient fears at bay, a stratagem for taking refuge behind a lens to test whether reality was more tolerable from that perspective. But he had come face with the moment of truth; he could not continue to escape his past. He was Azucena; he was buried in the clayey mudRolfs exploits as a reporter, the reader now learns, have been adefense mechanismthroughout. The reader also sees how Rolf nowidentifies with Azucenacompletely, both trapped, one literally and one symbolically, in the mud. The general apathy among peopleis another theme of the story. The author employs ampleinstances of ironyto show how the world is comfortable with banishing Azucena to the state-machinery escapes Allendessharp critique. Let us take two examples. The first one shows the perverse act on the news medias part to try to sell Azucena to millions of people while doing nothing to actually help her: Reporters returned to photograph Azucena and ask her the same questions, which she no longer tried to answer. In the meanwhile, more television and movie teams arrived with spools of cable, tapes, film, videos, precision lenses, recorders, sound consoles, lights, reflecting screens, auxiliary motors, cartons of supplies, electricians, sound technicians, and cameramen: Azucenas face was beamed to millions of screens around the world. And all the while Rolf Carl kept pleading for a pump. In the second instance, even such a figure as the President of the country. emerges as indifference personified: Then he asked to be taken to see Azucena, the little girl the whole world had seen. He waved to her with a limp statesmans hand, and microphones recorded his emotional voice and paternal tone as he told her that her courage had served as an example to the nation. Rolf Carl interrupted to ask for a pump, and the President assured him that he personally would attend to the matter. The help, of course, never comes. Thesheer incompetence, apathy, and insensitivity of various institutions are brought forth in the story. The various parties are only willing to cast avoyeuristic gazeat Azucenas misfortunes instead of arranging help for her. This sheds some light on one of themany ironiesat the heart of civilization perhaps; humanity has the technology through which millions of people can see Azucena but somehow, people very close to her are unable to help her. The narrator uses the phrase vague promises twice in the story to say how her own efforts at arranging a pump to be sent to the spot are met only withhollow assurancesfrom officials. Thejob of news reportingis closely depicted and commented on in the story. Reporting news can create a fictive distance between the reporter and the event. Rolf has been adept at this job so far. But Azucenas misery shatters the protective shield that journalism can afford. This causes Rolf to at last stand face to face with his own traumas.LITERARY DEVICESImageries are effectively used in the story, the narrator describes Azucenas head as budding like a black squash from the clay. The avalanche is described as unfathomable meters of telluric vomit. Also, the President is described as waving to Azucena with a limp statesmans hand. The imageries, hence, create not only vivid pictures in the minds of the readers but also contribute to the story, thecharacters arc of Rolfis indicated when the reader is told how Rolf went to work on that particular event never suspecting that he would find a fragment of his past, lost thirty years before. Similarly, Azucenas tragic fate is hinted at early on in the story thus: The mud was like quicksand around her, and anyone attempting to reach her was in danger of sinking. The use of symbolismin the story has already been noted. NARRATIVE STYLE AND TECHNIQUESThe story is narrated as are collection, and it itself often takes the form of journalism. However, though the narrated as are collection, and it itself often takes the form of journalism. due to its reporting of a highly emotionally charged event, its tone is rarely bald and objective. Rather, various emotions pertaining to the characters are beautifully brought out through asimple yet sympathetic narration. The closing passage of the story marks ashift in the narrationas the narrator now addresses Rolf, her husband, directly. This shift lends an air of authenticity to the narrators sentiments and also shows the psychological struggles of Rolf and the narrators intense wishes for his betterment from a verypersonal viewpoint. TITLE OF THE STORYClay in the story standsfor predicament, burden, and most importantly, entanglement. Taken as a whole, claysymbolizes the past and its various unpleasant memoriesthat suck people downward. The title of the story seems to suggest that all human beings have some miserable past memories or other buried inside them. It is perhaps a universal human condition. However, the last lines of the story are fused without mism, a tool that can act as acounter-forceto the suction of the mud and clay. ABOUT THE AUTHORIsabel Allende was born on August 2 1942. She lived in several countries as a child before leaving Chile soon after the assassination of her uncle Salvador Allende, the then President. She worked as a journalist. Allende mainly wrote novels and is most famous as the creator of the character Eva Luna who, incidentally, is the narrator of this short story. Isabel Allendes And of Clay Are We Created is the final piece in her short story collection. The Stories of Eva Luna tells her lover Rolf Carl as they rest in bed. Allende fashions Eva Luna after Scheherazade, a key character in the framing narrative for the multi-tale Middle Eastern epic One Thousand and One Nights. The Stories of Eva Luna received widespread critical and commercial acclaim, further establishing the best-selling author as a contemporary literary giant. Though the stories in the collection traverse the spheres of magical realism, fantasy, and realism, And of Clay Are We Created belongs to the latter genre. The pieces opening, with one of its primary characters suspended in mud while much of the world mills uselessly about her, seems to invite ones suspension of disbelief. Yet Allende largely bases this story on the true predicament of 13-year-old Omayra Snchez Garzn, a Colombian girl who became trapped up to her waist in a 1985 mudslide and died days later, the systems around her unable to rescue her in time. This guide refers to the paperback edition produced by Atria, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. The first sentences of And of Clay Are We Created hook its audience with a central, clearly delineated conflict: [T]hey discovered the girls head protruding from the mud pit, eyes wide open, calling soundlessly (Paragraph 1). A recent mudslide along a local mountain has buried the small villages that cling to the mountainside, killing most inhabitants and interring some survivors in meters of wet earth. The young girl whose head juts from the mud pit, 13-year-old Azucena, is alive at this point of the storya startling circumstance to those who witness it. The pieces unnamed narrator tells us that her lover, the reporter Rolf quickly befriends the girl. Rolf requests a pump to remove some of the muds water, hoping that this will counteract the suction and allow him to free Azucena. However, there is no available transport for the pump, and it cannot be sent until the following morning. Rolf remains with Azucena overnight and consoles her. He imagines a future for her, where [S]he would recover rapidly and [...] he could visit her and bring her gifts (Paragraph 15). On the second day, the narrator goes to the National Television broadcasting headquarters to watch coverage of Azucenas mud pit because she cannot bear to do so at home. She begins to feel Rolfs same dedication to and compassion for the girl, calling on the citys influential figures to expedite the delivery of a pump. Though reporters, television crews, and movie teams come to the site and broadcast Azucenas face to millions, Rolf and the narrators requests for a pump go ignored. As Rolf keeps the girl company, her situation reminds him of his tragic childhood during World War II, when Russian forces deployed him to a concentration camp to bury captives who had starved to death. The narrator finally contacts a general who says he will send a pump the next morning on a military cargo plane, but it is too late; Azucena sinks into the mud. The experience forever changes Rolf, and he becomes pensive. Nevertheless, the narrator is confident that Rolf will eventually recover from this deeply traumatic ordeal. And of Clay We Are Created is a poignant short story written by the renowned Chilean author, Isabel Allende (born 1942), and it appears in her 1989 collection, The Stories of Eva Luna. The narrative revolves around a catastrophic mountain avalanche that claims thousands of lives in its wake. Amidst the devastation, the story follows the endeavors of a newscaster who becomes determined to rescue a young girl, only thirteen years old, trapped in the suffocating embrace of mud. Plot Summary: And of Clay We Are Created, Isabel AllendeThe story begins with a volcanic eruption, followed by a destructive mountain avalanche that wreaks havoc on a village, leaving countless individuals buried beneath layers of mud. One of the victims, Azucena, finds herself clinging desperately to life in a mudpit, drawing the attention of television news reporters. The narrator, who is the partner of a newscaster named Rolf Carl, witnesses her loved one's assignment to report on the devastating avalanche. As Carl delivers the live news from the scene, he is typically known for his emotional detachment. However, upon seeing Azucena trapped in the quagmire, he feels an innate urge to help her. Together with others, they attempt to pull her out of the mud using ropes and a life buoy, only to discover that her lower body is ensnared by the corpses of her own brothers and sisters, still clinging to her legs. Despite their efforts, Azucena remains trapped. The arrival of a water-draining pump is delayed until the following day, leaving Carl to spend the night by Azucena's side, fulfilling her request for companionship. Throughout the night, they converse, and Carl learns about her life - a thirteen-year-old girl who has never ventured beyond her village. Despite the dire circumstances, Carl remains optimistic, entertaining her with stories, trying to keep her spirits up. Struggles and GriefThe narrator, who has often accompanied Carl to the TV studios, watches him closely as he converses with the trapped girl throughout the night. By morning, they are both visibly exhausted from the lack of sleep. As Carl's weariness sets in, memories of his own traumatic past resurface. He reflects on his childhood in a concentration camp during the Second World War, marked by the cruelty of his father and the struggles of his mentally challenged sister, Katharina. Carl realizes that his career as a reporter has been, unconsciously, an attempt to repress these painful memories. As time goes on, Carl's emotional barriers start to crumble, and he relates deeply to Azucena's predicament. He sees a reflection of himself in her both trapped and burdened by fear. The arrival of the President to the scene adds to the intensity of emotions. Watching the televised encounter, the narrator notices a significant change in Carl, who surrenders to grief. Tragic EndAzucena confides in Carl, sharing for her suffering to end swiftly. Although the pump is finally on its way to rescue her, it arrives too late. Tragically, Azucena passes away, her eyes locked with Carl's until her last breath. The story concludes with the narrator directly addressing Carl, revealing that he frequently revisits the footage of Azucena, searching for any missed opportunity to save her. However, amidst this search for redemption, he is also, in some way, seeking to understand himself better through this poignant experience of loss and connection. Conclusion'And of Clay We Are Created' is a profoundly moving narrative that delves into themes of death, human bonds, grief, and self-reflection. Through the emotional journey of Rolf Carl and the tragic fate of Azucena, Isabel Allende brings to light the complexities of human compassion and the profound impact of shared experiences in the face of tragedy. Critical Analysis: And of Clay We Are Created, Isabel AllendeContext and Collection The Stories of Eva Luna, which draws inspiration from the Arabian Nights anthology. In this collection, Eva Luna plays the role of Scheherazade, the storytelling figure, and the profound changes it brings to Rolf Carl. Human Connection Amid TragedyDespite its melancholic tone, the story also highlights a positive aspect - the genuine and profound human connection formed between Azucena and Rolf Carl. This unexpected bond evolves between a teenage girl and an adult male newscaster, who initially only sought to report on her plight. The tragedy prompts Carl to break free from his emotional detachment and wholeheartedly try to help her. Azucena's impact on Carl goes beyond her physical rescue attempts. She enables him to confront his suppressed emotions and memories, leading to a significant transformation in his outlook on life. Through their connection, he finds the capacity to grieve not only for Azucena but also for the painful past he had long buried, making it a profoundly personal and universal experience. An Epiphany and SymbolismCarl's emotional response to Azucena's situation can be seen as an epiphany - a moment of profound realization often found in modern short stories. Allende portrays this change from the outside, the narrator, Eva, Rolf's lover, can perceive the shift in him through the television and news cameras to depict how modern society helplessly witnesses tragedy unfold, separated by screens, unable to intervene directly. The story also points to bureaucratic barriers hindering timely aid, which parallels the swamp of corruption and oppression that engulfs not only the country but humanity as a whole. The 'Flower in the Mud'Azucena's name, which means 'lily,' is significant in symbolizing her beauty, fragility, and delicacy. She becomes the 'flower in the mud,' reflecting her vulnerability amidst the overwhelming forces of the mudslide and the corruption plaguing society. The title, 'And of Clay We Are Created' offers a powerful and thought-provoking conclusion to The Stories of Eva Luna. Through the transformative experience of Rolf Carl, Isabel Allende explores themes of human connection, grief, and the struggle to rise above adversity. The story leaves readers contemplating the resilience of the human spirit in the face of overwhelming challenges and the potential for empathy and solidarity even in the darkest times.

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