

Pedro Paramo
List of characters

Abundio Martinez- He is the burro driver who leads Juan to Comala. He is also the son of Pedro Paramo. Juan learns later that Abundio has been dead for a long time.

Comala- A town in the state of Jalisco, in Mexico, where Juan Preciado arrives searching for his father.

Damiana Cisneros- She works at the Media Luna and she meets Juan on his journey in Comala. She is murdered by Abundio Martinez at the end of the book.

Dolores Preciado- (Doloritas) Mother of Juan Preciado. She was the owner of the “Rancho de Enmedio”. Pedro Paramo married her and took the ranch from her. Then he sent her away to her sister’s house. They never met again.

Donis and sister/wife- Juan encounters this couple while wandering in Comala. They take him in and shortly after Juan dies.

Dorotea- A crazy woman who lives off the charity of the town. She provided girls for Miguel Paramo. She is buried with Juan in the same coffin and tells him the story of Pedro Paramo, Susana San Juan, and the rest of Comala.

Eduviges Dyada- Owner of a house in Comala where Juan arrives. Juan spends the night there and he then learns that she has been dead for decades.

Father Renteria- He is the town priest. He doesn’t fulfill his job by not giving absolution to the dying. As a consequence, those who didn’t die in grace wander around looking for salvation.

Fulgor Sedano – Administrator of the Media Luna. He helped Pedro Paramo obtain the lands that made him the cacique. He is killed by revolutionaries at the beginning of the Mexican revolution (1911)

Juan Preciado – One of many sons of Pedro Paramo. He arrives in Comala and dies there. He is buried in the same coffin as Dorotea. Most of the narration is Juan telling the story of his arrival in Comala to Dorotea.

Miguel Paramo- He is another son of Pedro Paramo. He was taken in by his father when he was an infant. He gets killed in a horse accident when he around 17, but he was already guilty of a murder and numerous rapes.

Pedro Paramo- Father of Juan Preciado, “cacique” of Comala, desperately in love with Susana San Juan. His death means the end of Comala and is also the last scene of the book.

Possible Sequence of Events

1. Pedro Paramo and Susana play together as children
2. Susana's mom dies
3. Bartolome takes Susana to Andromeda mine
4. Death of Pedro's mom
5. Death of Pedro's dad
6. Arrival of Fulgor Sedano, the Administrator
7. Marriage of Pedro and Dolores. Incorporation of the Enmedio ranch into the Media Luna ranch.
8. Death of Toribio Aldrete. Incorporation of his property into the Media Luna
9. Eduviges commits suicide
10. Death of Miguel Paramo
11. Confession of Dorotea to Father Renteria
12. Susana comes back to Comala
13. Bartolome goes back to the mine, where he dies, leaving Susana with Pedro
14. Beginning of the Mexican Revolution
15. Death of Fulgor Sedano
16. Pedro sends men to "help the revolution"
17. Death of Susana San Juan
18. The Cristeros War
19. Comalans leave the town
20. Death of Abundio's wife
21. Death of Damiana
22. Death of Pedro Paramo
23. Death of Abundio
24. Death of Dolores Preciado
25. Death of Juan
26. Death of Dorotea

The following summary provides you with a general overview of the text. My hope is that given this initial boost, you will be better able to approach the story at an analytical level. The journal assignment follows the summary.

Pedro Páramo tells the stories of three main characters: Juan Preciado, Pedro Páramo, and Susana San Juan. From the point of view of Juan Preciado, the novel is the story of a son's search for identity and retribution. Juan's mother, Dolores Preciado, was Pedro Páramo's wife. Although he does not bear his father's name, Juan is Pedro's only legitimate son. Juan has returned to Comala to claim "[j]ust what's ours," as he had earlier promised his dying mother. Juan Preciado guides readers into the ghost story as he encounters the lost souls of Comala, sees apparitions, hears voices, and eventually suspects that he too is dead. We see through Juan's eyes and hear with his ears the voices of those buried in the cemetery. Along with Juan Preciado, readers piece together these fragments of lives to construct an image of Comala and its demise.

Interspersed among the fragments recounting Juan's story are flashbacks to the biography of Pedro Páramo. Pedro is the son of landowners who have seen better days. He also loves a young girl, Susana San Juan, with a desire that consumes his life into adulthood. However, Susana moves away. His loneliness grows as his father dies and eventually the rest of his family passes away. Ambitious young Pedro is left to take charge of the family estate and its debts. Through chicanery, wiles, and violence, Pedro builds an empire. He begins by marrying the heir of his largest creditor, Dolores Preciado. Once marriage allows Pedro to usurp Dolores' land and wealth, he sends her off to live with her sister, in a place where her interests will not disturb his designs. What follows is the story of a ranch, the Media Luna, and its dramatic success, expanding without restraint and weathering with ease the assault of the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920. But Pedro, the greedy land baron, also suffers. He begins to pay for his sins when the only bastard son he recognized and to whom he gave his name, Miguel Páramo, has a fatal accident. Next, news arrives that Susana San Juan and her father are back in the region. Although Pedro arranges for the death of Susana's father and for his reunion with her, he is unable to win back Susana. She dies emotionally beyond his grasp in the throes of madness. In the end, as Comala is withering, another son, Abundio Martínez, an unrecognized heir, comes to ask Pedro for money to bury his own dead wife. When refused, in a drunken rage, Abundio Martínez kills his father.

Journal Questions

There are 36 points possible on this assignment. Please submit your responses to turnitin.com by _____.

1. How is the concept of time handled in the novel? (2 points) Why does Rulfo manipulate time in the structure of the story? (2 points)
2. What is the role of Juan Preciado in the story (beyond being the narrator)? (3 points) What finally happens to him? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer. Include both a quote and a page number. (2 points)
3. What hints do we get that the beings Juan encounters are ghosts? List at least 4 different hints **using words taken directly from the text**. Include page #s. (2 points each)
4. List eight examples of the author's use of rain. Include the complete quote for each example and its page #. (1 point each) Explain how Rulfo uses the rain. What is its purpose in the novel? (4 points)
5. Make a general statement about the role of women in the society represented in this story. (2 points) How is Susanna San Juan somewhat different? (2 points)
6. Who is Abundio Martinez and what action is he responsible for at the end of the novel? (2 points)
7. List one example of excellent description (Scenery, event, etc. quoted from the text) (1 point) You do not need to provide a written analysis of your quote, but you will need to provide an oral analysis of the quote at some point during the first week of school.