



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (110)

TEXT: *Quiero vivir mi vida / Puñal de claveles*

AUTHOR: Carmen de Burgos

EDITOR: Susan Larson

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

(Based on the Introduction by Susan Larson and critical studies of Carmen de Burgos)

1. CARMEN DE BURGOS: FEMINIST PIONEER AND SOCIAL CRITIC:

Central Figure of Modernity:

Carmen de Burgos (1867-1932) was a pivotal figure in early 20th-century Spain, a prolific author, journalist, and lecturer who championed women's rights (e.g., divorce, education, suffrage).

Paradoxical Author:

Her work ranges from serious social critique to "frivolous" literature aimed at the nascent urban bourgeoisie, reflecting the complexities of her evolving feminist thought.

2. "QUIERO VIVIR MI VIDA" AND THE SEXUAL REFORM DEBATE:

Intersexuality Theory:

This novel directly engages with Dr. Gregorio Marañón's then-influential theory of "intersexuality," which posited a biological basis for gender identity and deviation. Burgos dedicates the novel to Marañón.

Critique of Gender Roles:

The protagonist, Isabel, with her "viriloid characteristics" and desire for freedom from societal constraints, embodies the era's anxieties about modern womanhood. Her violent act challenges traditional expectations and highlights the tragic outcomes of repressed desires.

Gothic and Pathological Undertones:

The novel's ending, with Isabel's vampiric desire to "drink" her husband's male spirit, leans into gothic tropes and Marañón's concepts of psychological degeneration due to "intersexuality."

3. "PUÑAL DE CLAVELES" AND THE "CRIMEN DE NIJAR":

Reimagining a Real Crime:

This short story is based on the sensational "Crimen de Níjar" (1928), the same real-life event that inspired Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*. Burgos reinterprets the tragedy through the lens of female fantasy and liberation.

Contrast with Lorca:

Unlike Lorca's poetic tragedy, Burgos offers a more mass-market melodrama with a "happy ending" where the protagonist, Pura, successfully escapes an unwanted marriage. This reflects her engagement with popular literary forms.



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Symbolism of Carnations:

The potent scent of carnations symbolizes irresistible sexual passion, driving Pura to defy social conventions. The story explicitly explores how love and sensualism can triumph over societal constraints.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Carmen de Burgos's Feminism:

Discuss the evolution of Carmen de Burgos's feminist thought. How do these two texts reflect her concerns about women's rights, education, and autonomy?

"Intersexuality" Theory:

Analyze Dr. Gregorio Marañón's theory of "intersexuality" and its representation in *Quiero vivir mi vida*. How does Burgos use this scientific concept to explore female agency and societal anxieties about gender roles?

The "Crimen de Níjar" in Literature:

Compare Carmen de Burgos's *Puñal de claveles* with Federico García Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*, both inspired by the same event. What are the key differences in their interpretations, genres, and conclusions?

Love as a Tragic or Liberating Force:

How do both texts portray love and passion? Is it a destructive force (as in *Quiero vivir mi vida*) or a liberating one (as in *Puñal de claveles*)?

Mass Culture vs. High Culture:

Discuss Burgos's engagement with different literary forms, from academic debates to mass-market melodrama. How does her choice of genre influence her message?

Symbolism of "Carnations" and "Scissors":

Analyze the symbolism of the carnations in *Puñal de claveles* and the sewing scissors in *Quiero vivir mi vida*. How do these objects contribute to the themes of passion, gender, and violence?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burgos, Carmen de. *Quiero vivir mi vida / Puñal de claveles*. Stockcero.

García Lorca, Federico. *Bodas de sangre*. (For comparative study).

Glick, Thomas F. *Sexual Reform, Psychoanalysis, and the Left in Spain*. University of Valencia Press, 1995.

Larson, Susan. "Introducción" to *Quiero vivir mi vida / Puñal de claveles*. (This edition).

Marañón, Gregorio. *Los estados intersexuales en la especie humana*. (For context on "intersexuality").

Núñez Rey, Concepción. *Carmen de Burgos: Una biografía intelectual*. Anthropos, 2005.

PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

1. Who is the author of *Quiero vivir mi vida* and *Puñal de claveles*?

- A) Federico García Lorca
- B) Carmen de Burgos
- C) Gregorio Marañón
- D) Aurora Bertrana

Correct Answer: B

2. What scientific concept, popularized by Dr. Gregorio Marañón, is central to *Quiero vivir mi vida*?

- A) Natural selection
- B) Quantum mechanics
- C) Intersexuality
- D) Relativity

Correct Answer: C

3. *Puñal de claveles* is based on what real-life event, also inspiring Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*?

- A) The Spanish Civil War
- B) The "Crimen de Níjar"
- C) The Sack of Rome
- D) A historical duel

Correct Answer: B

4. In *Quiero vivir mi vida*, what does the protagonist Isabel ultimately do to her husband?

- A) Divorces him peacefully.
- B) Murders him with sewing scissors.
- C) Leaves him for another man.
- D) Convinces him to adopt her ideas.

Correct Answer: B

5. What is the symbolic meaning of carnations in *Puñal de claveles*?

- A) Innocence and purity.
- B) Death and mourning.
- C) Irresistible sexual passion.
- D) Friendship and loyalty.

Correct Answer: C

Explore the "Love and Tragedy" Collection: This book is part of our comprehensive collection examining the intersection of passion, social constraint, and inevitable fate in Spanish literature: *La Lozana Andaluza* (Delicado); *Bodas de sangre* (Lorca); *Quiero vivir mi vida* (Burgos); and *Viento de grop* (Bertrana).

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