



DOLOR Y GLORIA

A film by Pedro Almodóvar

Production Notes

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Pain and Glory tells of a series of reencounters experienced by Salvador Mallo, a film director in his physical decline. Some of them in the flesh, others remembered: his childhood in the 60s, when he emigrated with his parents to a village in Valencia in search of prosperity, the first desire, his first adult love in the Madrid of the 80s, the pain of the breakup of that love while it was still alive and intense, writing as the only therapy to forget the unforgettable, the early discovery of cinema, and the void, the infinite void that creates the incapacity to keep on making films. *Pain and Glory* talks about creation, about the difficulty of separating it from one's own life and about the passions that give it meaning and hope. In recovering his past, Salvador finds the urgent need to recount it, and in that need he also finds his salvation.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Salvador Mallo is a veteran film director, afflicted by multiple ailments, the worst of which is his inability to continue filming. His physical condition doesn't allow it and, if he can't film again, his life has no meaning.

The mixture of medications, along with an occasional flirtation with heroin, means that Salvador spends most of his day prostrate. This drowsy state transports him to a time in his life that he never visited as a narrator. His childhood in the 60s, when he emigrated with his parents to Paterna, a village in Valencia, in search of prosperity. His mother is the beacon of that era, struggling and improvising so that the family can survive. Also the first desire appears. His first adult love in the Madrid of the 80s. The pain of the breakup of that love while it was still alive and intense. Writing as the only therapy to forget the unforgettable, the early discovery of cinema when films were projected on a whitewashed wall, in the open air. The cinema of his childhood smells of piss (the children urinated behind that wall), of jasmine and of the summer breeze. And also cinema as the only salvation in the face of pain, absence and emptiness.

In recovering his past, Salvador finds the urgent need to recount it, and in that need he also finds his salvation.

TRILOGY

Quite unintentionally, *Pain and Glory* is the third part of a spontaneously created trilogy that has taken thirty two years to complete. The first two parts are *Law of Desire* and *Bad Education*. In the three films, the protagonists are male characters who are film directors, and in the three desire and cinematic fiction are the pillars of the story, but the way in which fiction is glimpsed alongside reality differs in each one of them. Fiction and life are two sides of the one coin, and life always includes pain and desire.

Pain and Glory reveals, among other themes, two love stories that have left their mark on the protagonist, two stories determined by time and fate and which are resolved in the fiction.

When the first story happens, the protagonist is unaware of living it. He only remembers it fifty years later. It's the story of the first time he felt the impulse of desire. Salvador was nine years old and the impression was so intense that he fell to the floor in a faint, as if struck by lightning. The second is a story that takes place at the height of the 80s, when the country was celebrating the explosion of freedom that came with democracy. This love story which Salvador writes so as to forget about it ends up transformed into a monologue, performed by Alberto Crespo and also signed by him because Salvador doesn't want anyone to recognize him. He cedes his authorship to the actor, giving in to his insistent demand.

The monologue is titled *The Addiction* and Alberto Crespo performs it in front of a bare, white screen as the only décor.

THE WHITE SCREEN represents everything: the cinema which Salvador saw in his childhood, his adult memory, the journeys with Federico to escape from Madrid and from heroin, how he was formed as a writer and as a filmmaker. The screen as witness, company and destiny.

THE ADDICTION

The story of *The Addiction* alludes to the passion lived by Salvador and Federico when they were young in the '80s. It also explains the reason they separated, even though they still loved each other. The theater, words performed in front of a bare screen, acts as a messenger between the former lovers, thirty years later.

Federico comes back to Madrid after more than thirty years. He goes into a theater to pass the time and, astonished, witnesses the dramatization of his story with Salvador. Their names might have been changed, but the pain, the happiness and the reasons for which he left Salvador are the substance of the show. Recounted as a monologue by Alberto Crespo, Federico recognizes Salvador in every word even though Crespo has signed the work. The monologue makes it possible for the two former lovers to meet again. The actors involved in this block of sequences, Asier Exteandía (the actor), Leonardo Sbaraglia (Federico) and Salvador (Antonio Banderas), are dazzling. I think it is one of the blocks that move me most.

SELF-REFERENCE

If you write about a director (and your work consists of directing films), it's impossible not to think of yourself and not take your experience as a reference. It was the most practical. My house is the house where Antonio Banderas' character lives, the furniture in the kitchen –and the rest of the furnishings- are mine or have been reproduced for the occasion and the paintings that hang on its walls. We tried to make Antonio's image, especially his hair, look like mine. The shoes and many of the clothes also belong to me, and the colors of his clothing. When there was some corner to fill on the set, the art director sent his assistant to my house to get some of the many objects with which I live. This is the most autobiographical aspect of the film and it turned out to be very comfortable for the crew. As a matter of fact, José Luis Alcaine came to the house several times to see the light at different hours of the day, so as to reproduce it later in the studio. I remember that during rehearsals I said to Antonio: *If you think that in any sequence it'll help if you imitate me, you can do it.* Antonio said no, that it wasn't necessary. And he was right, his character wasn't me, but it was inside me.

SALVADOR

Over the course of the story we see the veteran director Salvador Mallo in three periods of his life: his childhood in the 1960s; his adulthood in the 80s in Madrid (Salvador is a character shaped in the Madrid explosion of that decade); and we also see Salvador at present, isolated, depressed, victim of various maladies, cut off from the world and from the cinema. I identify with all those eras, I know the places and the feelings the character goes through, but I never lived in a cave and I never fell in love with a laborer when I was a child, for example, although both things could have happened.

At first, I took myself as a reference but, once you start writing, fiction lays down its rules and makes itself independent of the origin, as has always happened to me when I've dealt with other themes with real references. Reality provides me with the first lines, but I have to invent the rest. At least that's the game I like to play.

THE SHROUD

Years before she died, my mother had already explained to my older sister how she wanted to be laid out. My sister listened to her with the same naturalness with which my mother talked about herself when she would be dead. I have a childish, immature relationship with mortality. I have always admired the naturalness which my mother instilled into my sister with regard to death and its rites, as befits a good Manchegan woman. In my land, there is a very rich culture of death which manages to humanize the event without it losing spirituality. Unfortunately I haven't inherited that culture, although my cinema is impregnated with it.

Every time I wrote and rewrote the sequence where the mother Jacinta says to Salvador "If they tie my feet to bury me (they usually do this so that the feet don't fall to each side), you untie them and say I asked you to. The place where I'm going, I want to go in very quickly", I'd end up crying in front of the computer.

I called Julieta Serrano to play Jacinta at 84. I'd wanted to work with her for some time and to do it again produced me the same pleasure as on our shoots in the 80s.

Old age has turned Jacinta into a slightly bitter, dry woman. She doesn't make life easy for her son Salvador.

When I was working on the fourth part of the script, on the sequence in which Salvador installs his assistant Mercedes in the bedroom which his mother had occupied, it is Jacinta who really installs herself in that part of the script and, with her, the idea of death. Death was already stalking the mother, but it was also prowling around in Salvador's life when the narrative is contemporary. Salvador sits in the armchair where his mother sat four years before and asks Mercedes for a tin box in which she kept a load of bits and pieces.

Thinking of my own mother at that age I'd shown her lovable, funny version in *The Flower of My Secret*, but for this occasion I felt that it would be more interesting if things weren't easy between mother and son, if the last conversations were bitter. Jacinta had become a hard, dour woman with the years and she talks to her son with that cruelty without apparent wickedness with which the elderly and the sick treat those closest to them.

From the first moment, Julieta Serrano's performance was so precise and genuine that it dazzled me and I wanted her contribution to be longer. So during shooting I wrote, really I improvised, several new sequences for her, which were inspired by the pleasure of seeing them performed by the actress, but which in some way were hidden in some unconscious part of myself, sequences that became essential for the film and which left me as perplexed as Salvador was. I'm talking about the sequences in the hallway and the one on the terrace.

After writing them and filming them, they seem so real to me that I wonder if between my mother and me there was something similar to that dark underlying tension. I have the impression that those improvised sequences say more about me, about my relationship with my parents and with La Mancha and the places where I lived in my childhood and adolescence than everything I've said about them to date.

THE WATERCOLOR / THE FIRST DESIRE

While they wait in a radiologist's office, Mercedes shows Salvador an invitation to an exhibition of anonymous popular art. The invitation shows a watercolor with a boy sitting in an interior, whitewashed patio, surrounded by flowerpots, reading a book, on a floor of hydraulic tiles with a Matisse-style design. Salvador is struck by the image, he is about to talk to Mercedes about it, but at that moment the nurse calls him, it is his turn to have a CAT scan of his neck.

Salvador slides into the CAT machine as if he were entering a spaceship. Once he has got over the initial claustrophobia, the enormous machine, shaped like a gigantic metal doughnut, acts as a time tunnel. Alone with his memories, Salvador evokes the moment in which the watercolor

he has just seen was done. He was that child, he was nine and living with his family in a cave in Paterna, a village on the Levante where he had emigrated with his family in search of prosperity. It was the 60s, Spaniards were moving inside and outside the country. It was Sunday, his mother had gone to sew at the house of the village's pious woman, his father was in the bar and he had stayed in the cave accompanied by a young laborer who was finishing off a job on the kitchen sink.

Salvador is sitting under the skylight, the only ventilation in the cave, bathed by the light shining directly on him. It forms a very beautiful, very impressionist image, along with the flowerpots, the whitewashed walls and the hydraulic floor. The young laborer –fond of painting- looks at him for a moment, fascinated by the scene, and decides to draw it on an empty cement bag and take the sketch home to finish coloring it.

This scene comes to Salvador's mind in the midst of the CAT radiations like a revelation. The scene is totally pure, the two characters act with total innocence, but from the distance of those fifty years which have led him to be trapped in the CAT machine, Salvador discovers his first sexual impulse towards another man, the young laborer. The moment, breathtaking and magical, is crystallized in that watercolor, which the laborer would send to him months later when neither of them was in Paterna. Salvador was in a seminary so he could study for his high school diploma and his mother never told him about the arrival of the watercolor with a tender note written on the back by the young laborer. She was the only one who noticed that a sentiment was arising between those two boys and it had to be aborted before it took shape and overwhelmed them. So she intercepted the communication between them. The watercolor ended up in the flea market in Barcelona and a collector of anonymous works bought it and exhibited it in a little gallery in Madrid where Salvador could buy it fifty years later.

Salvador feels an impulse again as powerful as that past desire; on this occasion it is the desire to narrate the origin and the circumstances in which the watercolor was painted, and his life in the cave, how he taught the laborer to read and write, under the vigilant eye of his mother, and in return the young man painted the cave for her and fixed the sink. A time of scarcity for the family that he always remembers as bathed by the light from the skylight that connected the cave with the exotic exterior.

Salvador races to the computer when he gets home and again feels the excitement of delving into writing, ready to live the only adventure that over the entire course of his life has given him illusion and meaning.

GEOGRAPHY AND ANATOMY

Reducing it to a list of cities and ailments, in relation to the chapters titled *Geography* and *Anatomy*, respectively, seemed to me the most concise way of establishing the poor education received by Salvador as a boy and his discovery of geography, through promotional journeys as director, and of anatomy through pain and illnesses.

In just three pages I summarized the protagonist's poor academic childhood and established his profession as a film director who had been successful, otherwise he wouldn't have traveled to promote his work. At the same time, in those same pages I informed of his many health problems, dedicating the minimum time to the matter, without the need to go back over the subject. Pain is very passive, not very cinematic and boring to recount, but I had to mention it in some way to situate the protagonist and explain his eventual self-destructive reaction, his melancholy and misanthropy.

The narrative force of these two sequences (*Geography* and *Anatomy*) is supported by the dynamic, theatrical music composed by Alberto Iglesias and by Juan Gatti's animated pieces that are both educational and original.

In addition to these pieces, I allowed myself to stress two paragraphs from two books which Salvador is reading: *The Book of Disquiet*, by Pessoa, and *Nothing Grows by Moonlight*, by

Torborg Nedreaas, to show what is seething in his mind. It isn't as lucid a recourse as that of the chapters of *Geography* and *Anatomy*, but I hope it helps to understand the protagonist's depressive mental state.

MUSIC

Alberto Iglesias has composed the soundtrack, as he has been doing since *The Flower of My Secret* (1995).

On this occasion he divides his score into three different sounds or atmospheres. The first is related to the protagonist's returns to the past. The pieces derive from the overhead light in the cave, they are all connected with the sunlight in Paterna and the overhead light that illuminates young Salvador's existence in the cave.

The second sound is related to the moments of pain and isolation. The suspended musical phrases cover the silences and coexist within the more dramatic dialogue, as part of it. This second sound also adopts faster, repetitive patterns (in the argument between Alberto and Salvador, for example), more frantic musical movements or little tremors. The first acceptance evokes the character in suspension (alone and prostrated), the music itself seems to be suspended, when the rhythm grows and darkens the music connects with the character's anxiety.

The third sound envelops the scenes with the elderly mother and the son, in Madrid. The music adopts the mother's attitude to death. It isn't a funereal preamble but natural and in some way luminous in its simple spirituality. "Where I am it's neither cold nor hot", she says in the hospital referring to a dead neighbor. Or "The place where I'm going, I want to go in very quickly". It's inevitable that the music has a certain (happy) melancholy to arrive at a utopian place, the preamble to a death accepted without fears.

The soundtrack is written for a string sextet, with piano and clarinet. There are moments of greater sound and orchestral magnitude but without going beyond the limits of intimacy. Alberto Iglesias, as always, has created a music that is born from the depths of the images like something organic, that envelops and accompanies them on their narrative journey.

Once again he has surprised me with his originality, his versatility, his capacity and his dedication.

SONGS

Rosalía sings the copla *A tu vera* a capella at the river, along with the choir of washerwomen. It is one of Salvador's happiest memories. Seeing his mother exultant spreading out the clothes amidst the reeds and pennyroyal bushes, on the river bank.

La vie en rose, in the legendary version by Grace Jones, at the height of disco music's splendor, appears in Alberto Crespo's monologue.

Cómo pudiste hacerme esto a mí by Alaska and Dinarama accompanies the credits of *Sabor*, the film by Salvador Mallo that is shown in the Cinematheque. The theme puts a date on the film, the mid-80s, and also pays tribute to its author, Carlos Berlanga, one of the great icons of that time and also a much loved friend.

I've looked for artists (actors, painters, musicians) with whom I am familiar and, in most cases, with whom I have grown. There are many works by the painters Guillermo Pérez Villalta, Sigfrido Martín Begué, Jorge Galindo, Manolo Quejido, Miguel Ángel Campano, Dis Berlín, etc. All from the late 70s and with whom I have been shaped in more than one sense. This is one of the most autobiographical aspects of the film. It is all familiar to me. And of course, going back to the music, the presence of Chavela Vargas and Mina, who belong to my emotional and artistic family.

From Mina I have chosen *Come sinfonia* to accompany the entire scene of the watercolor sketch. It's a theme from 1960 full of delicacy and the feeling of an idle, pleasurable summer. Chavela bursts into the middle of the monologue with a verse from *La noche de mi amor (The Night of My Love)*, exultant, infinite in its clamor. *I want the joy of a ship returning, a thousand bells of glory pealing, to celebrate the night of my love.*

THE ACTORS

It was a surprise and a discovery to work with Asier Etxeandía and Leonardo Sbaraglia. I can only show my admiration for their performances as two characters who are so important that the film wouldn't stand up without them. But the axis on which the story revolves is Antonio Banderas in his performance as the suffering, isolated Salvador Mallo. I think that this is Antonio's best work since *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down! Pain and Glory* is, in my opinion, his rebirth as an actor and the start of a new era. I hope that no one misunderstands me. Antonio is still one of the actors who is best at listening to and looking at his companions in a shot, but on this occasion the fire in his eyes comes from deeper. All of us who witnessed his performance, day by day, were moved. He has chosen, with me by the hand, the opposite attitude to that which characterizes his most important work, because the spirit of the character is the opposite to the bravura of the characters he has played to date.

Profound, subtle, with a very varied gallery of minute gestures, he has pulled off a very difficult character, full of risks.

Penélope Cruz is the mother, when the character is young in the '60s. When she is elderly, as I have already mentioned, she is played by Julieta Serrano.

From we started working together I've always seen Penélope as the paradigm of the Spanish mother in her film version. In *Pain and Glory* the mother she plays is different, for example, from the mother in *Volver*. Both are of rural origin and have an infinite capacity for struggling and surviving, but the times in which they live are very different. In *Volver* she was a contemporary mother and in *Pain and Glory* she is a post-war mother. Badly dressed, with a worse hair style, it is perhaps inevitable to think again of Sophia Loren, the mother of all mothers. But in *Pain and Glory*, as well as struggling to survive each day, like all the women of her generation, there is a quiet bitterness, something like humiliation, which Penélope resolves with delicacy and without gesticulations. I know that kind of woman, I grew up with them. Although we have stripped her of all glamour, Penélope's beauty emerges, if possible, even more strongly.

Thank you from here to Raúl Arévalo, who plays Penélope Cruz's husband, a cameo appearance that he defends as if he were the protagonist. And to Nora Navas, Susi Sánchez and Cecilia Roth, perfect in their roles as assistant, the village's pious woman and an actress.

The film has the good fortune to have been the baptism of two actors for whom I predict a brilliant future. They make their debut in *Pain and Glory*. I mean Asier Flores—who plays Salvador as a child- and young César Vicente.

Having a nine year old child actor is a blessing, and watching the spontaneity, depth and purity of César Vicente is a privilege. They both ooze truth and the camera adores them. Discovering the birth of two actors and being the first to witness their blossoming is one of the great rewards of being a film director.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Once again I have relied on José Luis Alcaine as director of photography. José Luis is the DP to whom I have remained most faithful, I have made more than half my films with him. Perhaps because of that we don't talk much before doing the camera tests. In any case, I offer him

beforehand in the sets the range of colors that I want to predominate in each film. The fact is we have the same criterion without having to talk much about it.

For *Pain and Glory* I gave him two indications, the chiaroscuros, to mark not only the night but the darkness in which the protagonist lives, and the depth of focus. I wanted the backgrounds to have the maximum focus possible. Antonio Banderas' character lives in isolation and, if the elements that surround him and the backgrounds appear in focus, the sensation of solitude is greater.

In addition to the occasional chiaroscuros, although the character is going through a very dark period, the objects that surround him are full of color, he is surrounded by beauty and art. This shows that before suffering this crisis, the character has been successful in his work (this is my only comment on the *Glory* in the title), that he is a character with eclectic tastes, formed in the years of the post-modern Madrid.

Alcaine has always been inspired by painting in illuminating his films. We coincide in the references to Velázquez, Rembrandt, Edward Hopper... In *Pain and Glory* he also makes reference to Bacon's light and to his solitary men. I'm delighted with this latest collaboration.

CAST LIST

Antonio Banderas	Salvador
Asier Etxeandia	Alberto
Leonardo Sbaraglia	Federico
Nora Navas	Mercedes
And Julieta Serrano	Jacinta, old
Introducing César Vicente	Eduardo
Introducing Asier Flores	Salvador as a kid
And the special collaboration of Penélope Cruz	Jacinta, young
Cecilia Roth	Zulema
Susi Sánchez	Pious Woman
Raúl Arévalo	Venancio
Pedro Casablanc	Doctor Galindo
Julián López	Director of the Cinematheque
Rosalía	Rosalía

CREW LIST

Written and directed by	Pedro Almodóvar
Producers	Agustín Almodóvar
Executive Producer	Esther García
Original score	Alberto Iglesias
Director of photography	José Luis Alcaine
Editing	Teresa Font
Graphic Design	Juan Gatti
Producer Design	Antxon Gómez
Casting Directors	Eva Leira & Yolanda Serrano
Associate producers	Bárbara Peiró & Diego Pajuelo
Production manager	Toni Novella
Art Director	Clara Notari
Costumes	Paola Torres
Make-up	Ana Lozano
Hair-stylist	Sergio Pérez Berbel
Sound	Sergio Burman
Sound Mixer	Marc Orts
Digital Effects	Eduardo Díaz & Inma Nadela
Special Effects	Óscar Abades & Montse Ribé