

STUDY GUIDE



CAMILA'S AWAKENING **(EL DESPERTAR DE CAMILA)**

a Film by ROSARIO JIMÉNEZ GILI

CHILE / 2018 / 88 MIN
Spanish with English subtitles



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BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a foreign film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country where that film comes from. Find two or three articles on the stories of people with disabilities and research if the country has any legislation on disability rights. If you have time, find more information on what it's like to have a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) and the kind of treatment people who suffer from paralysis must receive.

INTRODUCING THE FILM

A **film synopsis** is a piece of text designed to summarize the film's narrative, genre, style, and key participants in a way that appeals to a wide audience. The synopsis is part of the film marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this official synopsis for *Camila's Awakening*:

What would you do with a second chance? At seventeen, Camila got too used to win. Smart and beautiful, she has managed to achieve every goal. She loves swimming and doesn't know failure. However, the water that has given her success in the recent past, now leads her to the biggest setback of her life: a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) that will force her to reinvent herself with courage, humor, and love. Inspired by a true story of bravery and resilience, *Camila's Awakening* offers an enlightening way to discuss how we view disability and its portrayal in the media as well as a refreshing look at one of the world's main causes of acquired disability that is surprisingly more frequent among young people than imagined.



- From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film? From this same text, try to identify the main elements from the film's plot and the socio-political background to the film. Consider your research on disability in Chile to answer this question.
- How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- Can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about just from the marketing materials (i.e. trailer, poster, and still images)?

AFTER WATCHING THE FILM:

CINEMATIC ART/TECHNIQUES

- Analyze the opening shot where Camila is applying makeup in front of a mirror. What information do you learn from this opening shot? What kind of person is Camila at the start of the film? What assumptions can you make about her character?
- Carefully analyze the scene where Camila gets injured in the pool -- how is it shot? Why does the title card come right there? Could you tell that her life was about to change in that moment? What does the water symbolize in this scene?
- Think about the "flashbacks" shots -- how are they filmed? How can you visually tell that they are memories? Analyze color, sound, and other aspects of the **mise-en-scene**¹. Do you think flashbacks are effective plot devices?



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¹ "Mise-en-scène...is used in film to refer to everything that goes into the composition of a shot--framing, movement of the camera and characters, lighting, set design and the visual environment, and sound."
"Term Index." *The Columbia Film Language Glossary*. <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/>

CINEMATIC ART/TECHNIQUES *(continued)*

- ❑ Shots of nature are intertwined in the film's narrative. Why do you think this is? Why do the filmmakers focus heavily on the shots of trees, grass, and flowers? What does nature symbolize?
- ❑ How does **non-diegetic**² music play a role in the film? What effect does the soundtrack have in certain moments? Analyze one or two scenes where the filmmakers use music and explain what function does the music has in those moments.
- ❑ The filmmakers include many shots of a statue of angels that sits on a fountain. Why do you think this is? What about this statue is symbolic of Camila's story?



NARRATIVE

- ❑ How does Camila's life change after her cerebrovascular accident (CVA)? Try to analyze not only how she changes physically but personally, as well. How is her personality entirely different? How can you tell? Name two instances in which Camila exhibits her changed personality.
- ❑ Do you sympathize with the way Camila acts around her family in the beginning of the film? Do you think it's justified? Why or why not?
- ❑ What is the relationship between Camila and her parents like? Why do you think Camila is so frustrated with them? Do you think Camila's parents behave properly throughout the film? Do they have a character arc / do you see any evolution in their relationship with Camila?
- ❑ Do you think Berta and Luis take good care of Camila? Why or why not? Do you think they are irresponsible or do they support Camila emotionally? Do you think they genuinely care about Camila's wellbeing? Cite two different scenes as evidence for your answer.
- ❑ How does Camila's disability change the way others act around her? Do you feel as though she is mistreated by her peers? Consider the scene in which Camila asks her parents to drive away from her friends... What does it say about how trauma led her to self-sabotage her close relationships?
- ❑ Many who undergo a cerebrovascular accident develop a speech impediment due to the severity of the accident. How does this affect the way Camila interacts with others? How does it hinder communication? How does this change the way others see her?
- ❑ How does Camila's position as a teenage girl put her in a unique and tragic condition to have a stroke? How is gender and age relevant to the film's narrative?
- ❑ How did you feel when Luis and Camila first kissed? Did you find it a happy moment, or a tragic one?
- ❑ What is the relationship between Berta and Luis like? Do you think Luis should be having an affair with Camila? Why or why not?
- ❑ How did you feel about the ending? Do you think it's a happy ending?



² "Non-diegetic sound is sound whose origin is from outside the story world. Voice-overs are typically non-diegetic, since the narration does not appear in the film's story world. Usually, the music soundtrack of a film is non-diegetic." *The Columbia Film Language Glossary*. <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/>

THEMES

- ❑ Do you think the film does a good job of portraying people with disabilities? Why or why not?
- ❑ Do you think there are differences between people living with disabilities in Chile in comparison to the U.S.? Why or why not? Consider the research you did on disability rights legislation.
- ❑ Do you know of anyone living with disabilities? Are you living with a disability? How does this condition affect their/your life in terms of social relationships and school?
- ❑ How are people with disabilities discriminated against on everyday interactions? To answer this, consider the definition of equity in comparison with equality.
- ❑ There is a socio-economic commentary in the film. What is the role of social class and money in the film? Consider Berta's dream of becoming a nurse, her decision to bring a boyfriend over to her job, Camila's nonchalance at burning her passport, and her social circle at the beginning of the film.
- ❑ Rosario Jimenez Gili directed this film. How do you think that being a woman filmmaker affects the film's storytelling? Research the case of Nicole Duarte, which inspired the director to make this film, to answer this question.

