

 **PRAGDA** | SPANISH FILM CLUB

DISCUSSION GUIDE



WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

A film by Pierre Saint Martin Castellanos

Mexico / 2024 / 94 min
Spanish with English subtitles

www.PRAGDA.com

BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country that film comes from. Learning about the filmmaker is also a relevant way to gain insight on the context in which the film was produced. You can learn more about Pierre Saint Martin Castellanos at <https://pragda.com/film/we-shall-not-be-moved/>

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On October 2, 1968, around 10,000 university and high school students gathered peacefully in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City to protest the government's actions and listen to speeches. The Mexican Armed Forces responded with violence, opening fire on the crowd and causing a massacre. Estimates of the death toll range from 200 to 300, with thousands more injured. Many were imprisoned, tortured, or disappeared in the aftermath. The massacre, now known as the Tlatelolco Massacre, occurred just days before the opening of the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City.

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's marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this synopsis for *We Shall Not Be Moved*:

A mature lawyer lives with an obsession to identify the soldiers who killed her brother in 1968 during the Tlatelolco massacre. After decades of waiting, she receives the missing clue to find the culprit, leading her to conjure an absurd revenge plan that puts her assets, family, and even her own life at risk.

This Mexican debut film by director Pierre Saint Martin is shot with hypnotic black-and-white cinematography. While it may sound like a thriller, *We Shall Not Be Moved* is a fable offering a unique take on historical trauma and personal healing. Mexican actress Luisa Huertas, in one of the best roles of her career, adds humanity and sensitivity to her character, paying homage to all families trapped in mourning for the death of a relative during armed conflict.

From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film? From this same text, try to identify the main events of the film's plot and the socio-political context of the film.

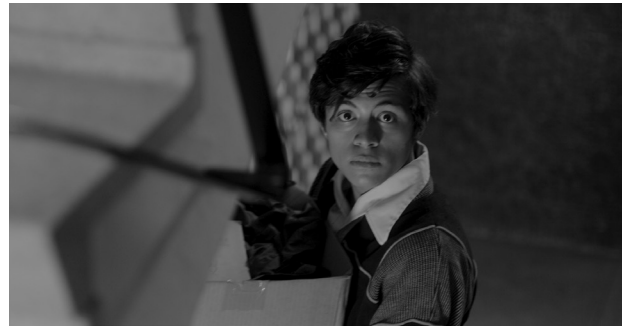
- > Do you think that the film will have a political message? Cite specific language from the synopsis to support your answer.
- > How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- > Viewing the marketing materials alone (i.e. trailer, poster, and still images available at <https://pragda.com/film/we-shall-not-be-moved/>) without the aid of the synopsis, can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about?



AFTER WATCHING THE FILM:

NARRATIVE

- What motivates Socorro to dedicate her life to seeking justice for her brother's death in the Tlatelolco massacre?
- What new clue does Socorro receive, and how does it change the course of her decades-long quest?
- How does Socorro's obsession with finding her brother's killer affect her relationships with her sister, Esperanza, and her son Jorge?
- How does the film use humor and irony to address the serious themes of justice, revenge, and trauma?
- What role does the historical context of the 1968 student massacre play in shaping the characters' actions and emotions?
- How does Socorro's character, inspired by the director's mother, reflect the experiences of families affected by violence in Mexico?
- What obstacles does Socorro face in her quest for justice, both within her own family and in society at large?
- How would you describe the relationship between Socorro and her daughter-in-law, Lucía? How does Lucía's storyline influence or impact Socorro's?
- What impact does Socorro's plan for vengeance have on those around her, and how do they react? How do you see the evolution of her relationships with Sidarta and Candiani?
- What is the climax of the film? Does it feel fulfilling? In what ways?
- How does the film connect Socorro's personal trauma with the broader collective trauma experienced by Mexican society?
- How does the film use Socorro's legal background to inform her approach to justice and revenge?



CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES

- How does the use of black-and-white cinematography enhance the storytelling and emotional tone of the film?
- The film is set almost entirely within the walls of Socorro's apartment and the building's corridors. In your opinion, how does the director, despite this economical constraint, succeed in making a film that feels rich and engaging, rather than monotonous or claustrophobic?
- How does the cinematography contribute to the film's balance between dramatic intensity and dark comedy?
- In what ways does the framing of Socorro's character reflect her emotional state and personal journey?
- How does the visual motif of burned bread function as a metaphor in the film, and how is it visually represented?
- How do the visual motifs of the white dove and the black cat function as metaphors in the film, and how are they visually represented?



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CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES *continued*

- > What role does the setting and modern urban landscape of Mexico City play in the film's visual identity?
- > How does the film's editing style (pace and rhythm) contribute to its comedic and dramatic effect?
- > How does the camera work during Socorro's moments of emotional intensity reinforce the film's themes?
- > How does the film's cinematography interact with its soundtrack and sound design to create a cohesive atmosphere? How do you interpret the scene with the dove and the cat, set to opera music?
- > In what ways do close-ups and long shots shape the audience's connection to Socorro and her family's story?



THEMES

- > What do you think is the central meaning of *We Shall Not Be Moved*?
- > How does the film explore the tension between justice and revenge in the context of historical violence?
- > How do human misery and splendor intertwine in the film? Can you give several precise examples?
- > In what ways does the film use humor and irony to address the pain and absurdity of seeking justice in a country marked by impunity?
- > How does the character of Socorro represent the struggle of those who have lost loved ones to violence and are left searching for meaning or closure?
- > What does the film reveal about the relationship between memory, history, and the present-day consequences of past atrocities?
- > In what ways does the film critique both government and civil society for their roles in perpetuating or ignoring injustice?
- > What does the film suggest about the possibility of dialogue and open reflection as paths toward healing and reconciliation?
- > How does the film challenge the audience to consider the limits of forgiveness and the possibility of redemption?

