



Lemon Tree (Etz Limon)

Film Study Guide

Director: Eran Riklis

2008 | Fiction | 106 Minutes | Israel | Arabic, Hebrew, English | Unrated

Synopsis: Salma, a Palestinian widow - living there for decades - , has to stand up against her new neighbor, the Israeli Defense Minister, when he moves into his new house opposite her lemon grove, on the green line border between Israel and the West Bank. The Israeli security forces are quick to declare that Salma's trees pose a threat to the Ministers safety and issue orders to uproot them. Together with Ziad Daud, a young Palestinian lawyer, Salma goes all the way to the Israeli Supreme Court to try and save her trees. Her struggle raises the interest of Mira Navon, the Defense minister's wife, trapped in her new home and in an unhappy life. Despite their differences and the borders between them the two women develop an invisible bond, while forbidden ties grow stronger between Salma and Ziad. Salma's legal and personal journey lead her deep into the complex, dark and sometimes funny chaos of the ongoing struggle in the Middle East, in which all players find themselves alone in their struggle to survive.

Post-Screening Discussion Questions

1. For Salma, the lemon trees were more than just trees, they held memories of her father and her husband. Think of one of your personal possessions. It could be a necklace, a stuffed animal, a picture. Write about this object and its significance? How does it make you feel? How would you feel if someone tried to take it away from you?

2. Salma, Mira and Ziad all are dealing with the absence or loss of someone they love. Mira, Salma, and Ziad are all far away from their children. Think about a family member you are far away from or have lost. How did you deal with that loss, and how did it make you stronger?
3. Discuss the use of a lemon tree as a metaphor throughout the film.
4. Throughout the film, anytime Salma is around men, she always wears a head scarf. What does this say about Palestinian culture? Discuss the use of gender roles throughout the film.
5. Although Salma and Mira come from very different worlds, they are not completely different people. Compare and contrast Salma and Mira.
6. Why do you think the writer of the film chose to have a female as the main character, instead of a male?
7. The last scene of the film depicts a Salma looking at a brick wall, and then shows the cut down lemon trees. Discuss the irony of this scene.