



The Magic Hour

Film Study Guide

Director: Oscar Blancarte

2000 | Fiction | 105 Minutes | Mexico | Spanish, English | Unrated

Synopsis: This modern fairy tale magically unfolds in flashbacks as a middle-aged writer, suffering from writer's block, returns to her childhood in search of the key to the future. Minerva grows up motherless, volleyed between a sadistic Catholic school and a home divided by a terrible secret. Looming large is Uncle Alberto, whose sporadic visits bring the most charming and wondrous gifts, stories, fantasies and hope. He weaves fantastic tales and promises to take Minerva away someday – the biggest fairy tale of all. The adult Minerva makes a desperate pilgrimage home for answers to the shadowy mysteries that are a part of her, finding Uncle Alberto's greatest gift – the truth.

Post-Screening Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of examples in mythology of a hero who must overcome fears and demons from the past to face present obstacles? Can you think of any examples that apply to women in film, literature of mythology?
2. Can you think of people you know in your lifetime who have learned at an older age about secrets or mysteries from their childhood? How did they react when they learned the truth?

3. Why do you think Minerva headed back to her childhood home? What did she expect to find there? What do you see as the cause of her writer's block?
4. Does the child Minerva continue to believe Uncle Alberto's stories? If not, at what point does she stop? If so, why did she, despite the continued disappointments?
5. What do you imagine happened to Minerva between the end of her childhood tale and where the film picks up in her adult life?