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NOVEMBER 8 - 14
a film by Almodóvar
pain and glory

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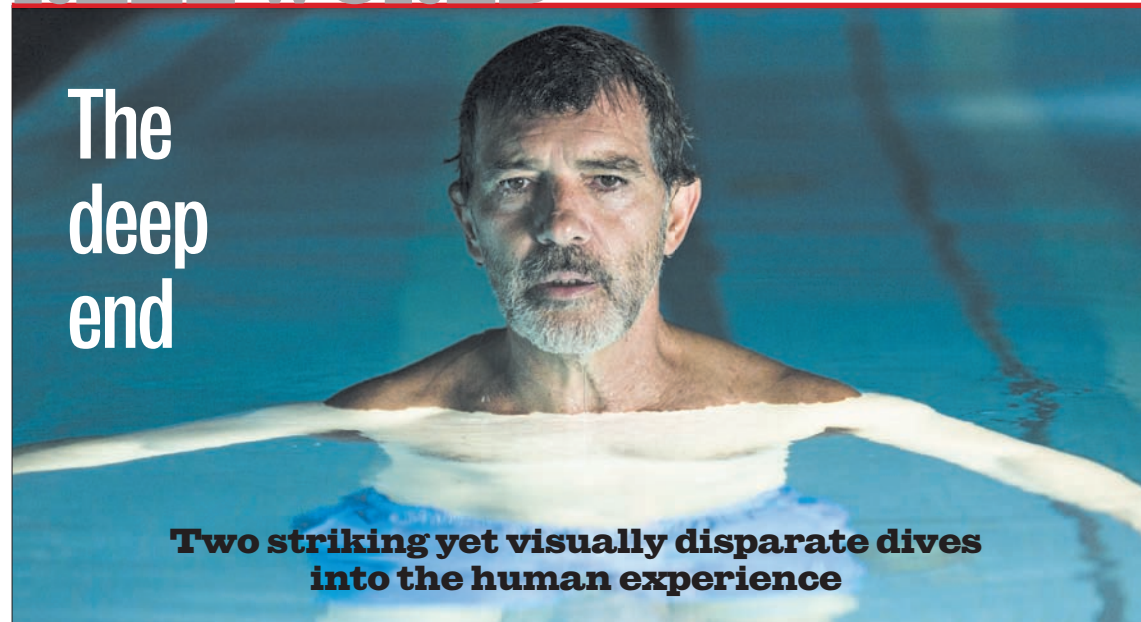
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Image by Peter Thoery

REEL WORLD



Pain & Glory may sound like an off-putting title for a movie. But the film of that name that opens in Chico Friday (Nov. 8) has much more emotional appeal and stylish beauty than even its original Spanish title—*Dolor y gloria*—might make you think.

by
Juan-Carlos Selznick



Pain & Glory
Opens Friday,
Nov. 8. Pageant
Theatre. Rated R.



The Lighthouse
Cinemark 14. Rated R.

whose glory days have begun to fade amid medical problems and emotional crises, including a bout of drug addiction. The Banderas character tries to reconcile with an actor (played by a swaggering Asier Etxeandia) with whom he feuded in the past; has a brief and unexpected reunion with a former lover (the Argentine star Leonardo Sbaraglia) who is now a married man; embraces the estranged Zulema (Roth) as temporary but much-needed assistant and caregiver; visits his ailing mother (Julieta Serrano), and intermittently immerses himself in memories of his childhood (Cruz plays his mother in the flashbacks and Asier Flores plays Salvador as a very remarkable child).

The characters played by Cruz, Roth and Serrano all have special meaning in the film, but the strong suit of *Pain & Glory* is in its offbeat, nuanced, and stereotype-averse scenes of intimacy among men. The furiously mercurial relationship with Alberto Crespo (Etxeandia) looms especially large, and the brief reunion with the Sbaraglia character is rich in small emotional surprises. And the remembered childhood relationship of Salvador

with an illiterate laborer (César Vicente) whom he taught to read and write has a delayed, restorative pay-off for the aging Salvador in the final stages of the story.

Filmmaker Robert Eggers (*The Witch*) has followed up that remarkable debut effort with another venture into artfully haunted territory wherein deeply scary stuff seems to linger nearby but just out of view. The setting this time is a very isolated lighthouse on a mass of rock somewhere off the New England coast circa 1890.

Two rather strange and sullen men are the sole occupants—Thomas Wake (Willem Dafoe), an old salt with a somewhat arcane and imperious sense of his duties and responsibilities, and Ephraim Winslow (Robert Pattinson), a new arrival who's obliged to serve as a one-man maintenance crew within the steep and narrow confines of the eponymous light house.

Furiously bad weather prevails all around them, but the main action of the film concerns the indoor storms and furies of this ill-matched pair who are stuck with each other's volatile and increasingly brutal company. A spiraling descent into disparate signs of madness ensues.

Jarin Blaschke's brilliantly gloomy black-and-white cinematography prevails, to powerful effect, as does the monstrous electronic growl of Mark Korven's musical score. Visual echoes of German Expressionism, film noir, and a few old-time documentaries from Britain exercise a certain cinematic fascination throughout the film. But the fast and loose play with mythology and madness in the two characters leaves everything in the film more or less stranded.

Still, Eggers' film scores points for sheer weirdness: Dafoe does some expressive farting and delivers a mud-spattered soliloquy while lying in an open grave; a terrifying mermaid (Valeriia Karaman) comes and goes; a demonic seagull poops on a sleeping man and then hangs around to see how he reacts when he wakes up; and Pattinson continues to seek acting adventures far, far away from the land of teenage heart throbs. □



Poor



Fair



Good



Very Good



Excellent