

# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## 'Pain & Glory' - Pedro Almodovar's latest touching self-portrait

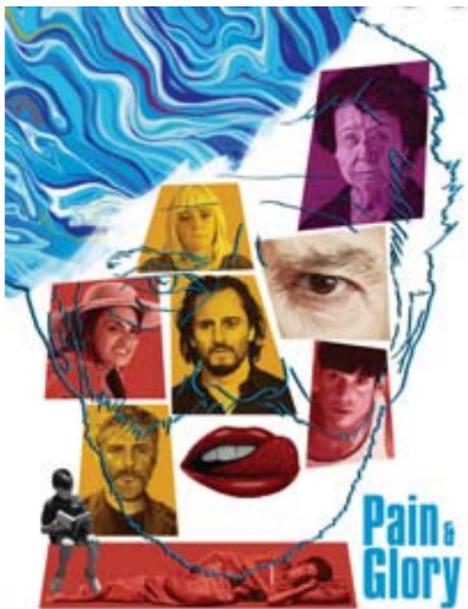


Image provided

By Sophie Braccini

"Pain and Glory" is probably the most personal of the famous director, Pedro Almodóvar. The Spanish movie scene's "enfant terrible" is now 70 years old, and with this film, part autobiography and part fiction, the director brilliantly covers his tracks for the spectators' pleasure.

Antonio Banderas plays Salvador Mallo, an aging director, riddled with pain, dealing with depression and in danger of becoming a cocaine addict. As a local theater presents the first film he made 32 years prior, he looks back on his life, holed up in his museum-like apartment.

His first memories are that of his beloved mother (played by Penelope Cruz), portrayed here as a courageous and hard working

woman. He sees himself again in a small rural Spanish village, a poor boy whose universe opens up through music and reading. Almodóvar creates an idyllic and bucolic portrait of a simple and beautiful life, close to nature and innocence, a kind of lost paradise in stark contrast with his present days.

Now the aging man in constant pain with arthritis and recurrent migraines abuses drugs and can no longer fuel his inspiration.

Every memory seems to echo Almodóvar's real life, even the physical appearance of Banderas with a grey beard and tousled hair. But all is, of course, smoke and mirrors as Almodóvar does create and is inspired to give us this calmer than usual, but delightful and poignant movie.

Those who have loved the Spanish director's previous movies will enjoy the references to these films, such as the scene between Salvador as a child and a priest that is a reminder of the 2004 film "Bad Education."

Almodóvar talks about first loves, next ones, his mother, death, people with whom he worked, the '60s, the '80s, today, the impossibility to make a difference between creation and real life, and the terrible emptiness when one realizes that it is too late to create.

It is not necessary to know the director's previous work to enjoy this movie, at times emotional, at times ironic, always very human.

"Pain and Glory" is Almodóvar's 21st movie. In the United States he is best known for films such as "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," "All About My Mother," "Talk To Her" or "Bad Education." Banderas won the Best Leading Actor award at the 2019 Cannes International Film Festival for his role as Mallo; it was a huge success in Europe. "Pain and Glory" opens Feb. 7 at the Orinda Theatre as part of the International Film Showcase for at least a one-week showing. For showtimes, visit [www.Orindamovies.com](http://www.Orindamovies.com).

## Lamorinda Cancer Crushers raise funds to crush leukemia and lymphoma



Photo provided

Riley Perlman (left) and Mitchell Franklin (right), co-candidates in Leukemia & Lymphoma Student of the Year competition to raise funds to fight blood cancers.

By Sora O'Doherty

Two high school candidates are participating in a national fundraising drive to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Under the mentorship of Jonathan Faulks, Acalanes students Riley Perlman and Mitchell Franklin are co-candidates in the very large, countrywide fundraising campaign that lasts for seven weeks. If they raise the most money in the Northern California area, they will be recognized by the L&L Society as students of the year. There are 14 teams in the greater Bay Area.

The program is designed not only to raise money to fight cancer, but also to provide the student participants with valuable assets designed to help them as they move forward in life. According to Faulks, the goal is to help them develop skills during the campaign. He tries to teach professional skills; for example, how to present to a group. As a mentor, Faulks works with the candidates to help them learn how to really communicate their mission to others. They are encouraged to build out a multi-

generational team to help them fundraise, and the co-candidates are learning how to recruit team members and how to market to sponsors. One big goal is to create a legacy team to pass on to the next year.

As co-candidates, Perman and Franklin head a team of 15-17 other students from Acalanes, Miramonte and Campolindo high schools plus a few others. The L&L Society program is aimed at students who are thinking about applying to colleges and are looking for something to differentiate themselves from others. The students have spent a couple of hours per week on the project.

"Jonathan is great," Perlman said, "he really guided us through the process, he made it so much easier."

Perlman says that cancer "devastated my family five years ago when my grandmother, Paula Katz, passed away within two weeks of her diagnosis." She adds, "I never got a chance to say goodbye and that has affected me over the past several years." Franklin chose to be a part of LLS because his grandmother, Joan Rolleen Franklin (whom his older brothers called "Lulu"), passed away from lymphoma before he could meet her. He says, "I wish I had the opportunity to meet her. I don't want others to be unnecessarily cheated from meeting their grandmothers."

Faulks is the campaign manager for the Student of the Year Campaign, Greater Bay Area. Although Faulks is new to the area, he has been a part of nonprofits for years, working for American Red Cross as well as other groups. When Faulks was 9, he overheard a doctor telling his mother that cancer cells were developing. This came about as the result of osteoporosis medication he was given following a horrendous car accident. He developed bone cancer. Following surgery, Faulks is now completely cancer free with no further issues. "It made sense for me to accept this role to help develop students and help them learn the importance of helping," he says. Faulks was also affected by losing individuals near to him from cancer.

The campaign began on Jan. 15 and the deadline to contribute is Mar. 7. Thus far, the Lamorinda team has raised over \$20,000. Last year Nuda from Danville raised over \$67,000 with Team Omar (named for her brother who had just passed away from Leukemia). The Society also has man and woman of the year programs.

For more information about Riley and Mitchell's campaign, please see <https://events.lls.org/gba/bayareasoy20/rperlman> <https://events.lls.org/gba/bayareasoy20/mfranklin>

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