

Unveiling the Truth Behind The Mission: A Journey of Courage, Sacrifice, and Triumph

The Mission, released in 1986, is a sweeping epic that tells the true story of an 18th-century Jesuit mission in the jungles of South America. Directed by Roland Joffé and starring Robert De Niro, Jeremy Irons, and Ray McAnally, the film portrays the struggles and triumphs of Jesuit priests as they attempt to convert the Guarani people to Christianity and protect them from Spanish enslavement.

Historical Context: The Jesuit Reductions of South America

The film is set against the backdrop of the Spanish colonization of South America. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Jesuit missionaries established a series of "reductions" in the frontier regions of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil. These reductions were essentially self-governing communities where the Guarani people lived under the guidance of Jesuit priests.



The Mission: A True Story by David W. Brown

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 17420 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 501 pages

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The Jesuits believed that the Guarani were capable of self-determination and should be allowed to practice their own culture and traditions. They taught the Guarani agriculture, crafts, and music, and encouraged them to live in peace and harmony. The reductions became a haven for the Guarani, who had been suffering from disease, warfare, and exploitation at the hands of Spanish colonists.

The Film's Depiction of the Jesuit Mission

The Mission opens with a stunning aerial shot of the Jesuit mission of San Ignacio Guazú in Paraguay. The camera pans across the beautiful church and surrounding buildings, showcasing the thriving community that the Jesuits have established. However, the peace of the mission is soon shattered by the arrival of Spanish soldiers.

The soldiers are led by Governor Mendoza (Robert De Niro), a ruthless and ambitious man who is determined to enslave the Guarani people and exploit their land. Mendoza believes that the Jesuits are interfering with his plans and orders them to leave the mission. When the Jesuits refuse, Mendoza launches a brutal attack on the mission, killing many of the Guarani and priests.

In the aftermath of the attack, the surviving Jesuits, led by Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons), are forced to flee the mission. They eventually travel to the Vatican, where they plead with the Pope to intervene and protect the Guarani. The Pope agrees to send a delegation to the mission to investigate the matter.

The delegation arrives at the mission just as Mendoza is preparing to launch another attack. With the help of the Guarani, the Jesuits and the

papal delegation fight back against the Spanish soldiers. In a climactic battle, Mendoza is killed and the Spanish are defeated.

Themes and Symbolism in The Mission

The Mission is a complex and multi-layered film that explores a wide range of themes, including the clash between civilization and nature, the conflict between good and evil, and the power of faith. The film also contains a wealth of symbolism, which can be interpreted on many different levels.

One of the most important symbols in the film is the mission itself. The mission is a representation of the Jesuit ideals of peace, justice, and self-determination. It is a place where the Guarani people can live in freedom and dignity, away from the oppression of the Spanish colonists.

Another important symbol in the film is the waterfall. The waterfall is a metaphor for the power of nature. It is a force that is both beautiful and destructive, and it can be seen as a symbol of the struggle between good and evil.

Finally, the film's use of music is also highly symbolic. The music in the film is often used to create a sense of atmosphere and to convey the emotions of the characters. The use of indigenous Guarani music also helps to connect the film to the culture and history of the region.

Legacy and Impact of The Mission

The Mission was a critical and commercial success, winning the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and being nominated for seven Academy Awards. The film has been praised for its stunning cinematography, powerful performances, and thought-provoking themes.

The Mission has also had a lasting impact on the world. The film helped to raise awareness of the plight of indigenous peoples in South America, and it inspired many people to become involved in social justice causes.

In 1993, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee designated the ruins of the Jesuit missions of San Ignacio Guazú, Santa Maria de Fe, and Santa Rosa de Lima as a World Heritage Site. This designation helped to preserve these important historical sites and to ensure that the legacy of the Jesuit mission will continue to be remembered for generations to come.

The Mission is a powerful and moving film that tells a true story of courage, sacrifice, and triumph. The film explores important themes such as the clash between civilization and nature, the conflict between good and evil, and the power of faith. The film is also a powerful reminder of the importance of social justice and the need to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.



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