

## Document Citation

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## Angel of Fire

*Angel de Fuego*

**MEXICO** 1991, 90 min.

**DIR** Dana Rotberg

**PROD** León Constantiner, Rotberg **SCR** Omar

Alain Rodrigo, Rotberg **CAM** Toni Kuhn **ED**

Sigfrido Barjau, Rotberg

**CAST** Evangelina Sosa, Lilia Aragón, Roberto

Sosa, Noé Montealegre **PRINT** IMCINE

5/7

1:15 KAB

5/8

7:00 PFA

5/9

9:15 KAB

5/11

9:15 LPA

Rotberg describes her second feature as the story of "people wandering about in Mexico City in search of a God that watches over them. But their God is often cruel and demands the sacrifice of the innocent." Lost innocence is the tragic fate of a young teenage girl, Alma, who performs with a down-at-the-heels circus as a fire-eater on the high trapeze. Abandoned by her mother, she has an incestuous relationship with her father, an aging clown with the circus. Soon after she becomes pregnant, he dies of a heart attack. Driven out by the moral indignation of the troupe, Alma falls in with a traveling family of puppeteers that performs tableaux from the Bible. In this tiny cult dominated by the grim mother Refugio, the line between superstition and orthodox Catholicism is erased, and

the credulous Alma fears that because she sinned her baby will be born a monster (one thinks of the grotesque drawings of Juan Guadalupe Posada). Refugio offers the girl redemption through a series of harsh penances that Alma accepts, taking the burden of her parents' sins on her own shoulders. Director Rotberg's deceptively laconic cinematic technique, and art direction that draws on the chaotic, sensuous palette of the streets of Mexico City give *Angel of Fire* the flavor of "outsider" art, a startling vision painstakingly constructed from humble materials. The vision is unforgettable.

*Miguel Pendás*