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Reel Reading

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Last Night in Soho Breakdown

Hey, hey, welcome back to “Breaking Down A Scene”. Today we’re going to analyze the movie *Last Night in Soho* by Edgar Wright. It’s in the genre of horror and drama. *The story of Last Night in Soho* is about a fashion design student Ellie who is able to enter into the 1960s mysteriously from her rented room. She encounters a dazzling wannabe singer, Sandie. Glamour, confidence, and excitement is not all appear to be, the dreams of the past start to crack and splinter into something far darker (summary from Next Best Picture). Let’s go deep dive into the movie together!

In the New York Times’ anatomy of a scene for an earlier scene in the movie, the director Edgar Wright said that the blue and red flashing lights transitioning to all red lights show the transition from the present to the past, to the 60s. Earlier in the movie, the landlady says that the phone should be only used for emergencies.

As we can see here, everything in this scene and on the set is covered in red light except for the green phone, symbolizing that the green [phone] is the only thing that can get her out of this horrible past and get her back to reality.

We can see from this scene all the men that are grabbing Ellie and all the men are from the wall in the room. They are all the men who have been killed by Sandie (which is Miss Collins). From a review we saw on CinemaBlend, they refer to the men as the 100 deaths of Alexandra Collins. Alexandra Collins is also known as Sandie, who is the Landlady as well.

All the men in the room are the ones in the 1960s that have slept with Sandy. As we can see the quick shots right here with the knife and the man and Sandy, that's what happened after Sandy had slept with the men. She just killed it all so she can erase the memory between the men and her.

Mirrors symbolize reflection and they also show the real person. Mirrors come up all throughout the film, they're the reason we know that Ellie turns into Sandie (there's a pretty cool shot in an earlier scene of this). This also brings up that mirrors are the bridge between modern times and the 60s or the past. It's significant that they show up here because they seem very much is that bridge where a few seconds ago they were all in the past where everything was in red and the men were coming up coming out and now it seems that they're more in the present times because the older Sandie is here. Another thing that the mirrors show is the real person. The reason that Ellie dyed her hair to look like Sandie, we can infer that Ellie sees a lot of herself in Sandie. They're both trying to make it big in a city where they've seen a lot of struggle and people have been pretty mean to them. The mirror helps them realize that they reflect each other.

As the reflections and hugging we see here, how girls help girls. From a review we had seen on Digital Mafia Talkies, it talked about the theme of the movie is also forgiveness, acceptance, and healing. With the hugs, they both hug each other, they understand how it feels and they try to help each other to accept whatever had happened and healing each other. That's how we read the scene of hugging.

There's not a good ending here. This scene is the first and last time they knowingly talk to each other. As we can see that the fire is burning and it's increasing as the design is burning out and her name is too. Everything that represents Sandie/Ms. Collins is fully burning out, also representing that Sandie's death is fully being erased and gone.

We chose this scene because clearly, it's the turning point, the big climax. It's a pretty slow-paced movie until this point until we figure out that Miss Collins, the landlady, is Sandy—this person that Ellie has also mysteriously grown a connection to. I really like how the fire builds up as well as well as the tensions and the emotions. There's not a lot of dialogue in this scene but you can see how the tension rises [in other ways] throughout it. It's also filled with cinematic, theatrical, and literary elements. As we covered, the red lighting is a very purposeful choice as well as the actors' emotions and the hugging and the pushing away, and how terrified they are of each other. As well as the more common literary symbols of the phones and the mirrors representing the reality, what is reality?, and the reflection of each other. Thanks for watching!!

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