

## 28 Days Later Analysis - Ed Sum

Very rarely will a movie suck audiences into its narrative. Solitary does exactly that, and to have one mystery following after one another, will only result in a blending of a psychological thriller and perhaps even a supernatural tale to boot.

Independent films rarely get theatrical justice, and the only way to see true gems is to hit the film festivals or to buy a video release. As this movie slowly becomes more emotionally charged, the feeling viewers may get are that of curiosity; who's mind are we exploring and how will this film end?

There are several solutions, but which one is it? That's the wonderful suspense Solitary builds on, since it looks into the life of, appropriately enough, solitary existence. In this movie, the trick here is to understand Sara (Amber Jaeger). She has agoraphobia, a fear of being outside alone. Her anxiety attacks happen whenever she tries to leave the house, and to overcome that is going to take a miracle.

Amber Jaeger is a relative unknown in the sea of actresses out there. And for her to carry the film successfully, that is quite the accomplishment and praise well earned. To go loose, and actually make her phobia feel real is part of the draw, because eventually, audiences start to emphasize with her.

All the other characters become unimportant. They include the husband, Mark (Kieron Elliott) sister, Gina (Kristine Sullivan), and psychiatrist, Seymour Reznik (Andrew Qamar). They all function as some kind of aspect of what she can be, if it were not for her anxiety. The psychiatrist is a voice of reason. But when she eventually becomes distrustful of him, even he comes out looking like a mad doctor. When his work fails, the onus is on Sara and what she wants to do.

She spends a lot of time wondering what's wrong, but she is clueless to the obvious. A few visual clues are placed throughout the set; an anonymous locked door could perhaps be a metaphor to a greater force that Sara has to face. Will she ever enter it?

When Mark mysteriously vanishes, and the narrative jumps around like she was in a dream, just how much missing time has gone on? This trick puts audiences into Sara's mindset, and if one doesn't pay attention while watching, one could almost expect that rising sun to be setting. Much like the classic, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, viewers are treated to a singular point of view for most of the film's running time. A few similarities do exist between these two products, but they're mostly superficial in light of this film's tight budgetary construct, than a product of artistic expressionism.

To get a sense of how long Sara's anxiety attacks have been going on is merely hinted at, the material that's explored is layered in meaning. But in terms of the final resolution, that's something best left for classic suspense master, Alfred Hitchcock, to conclude with. As he once said about the production process, "Drama is life with the dull parts left out."