

Run Lola Run (Lola Rennt) Film Summary

Run Lola Run (Lola Rennt) by Tom Tykwer

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Context

Run Lola Run, or *Lola Rennt* in German, is an exceptional film for its cinematography and thought provoking look at life. We first see Lola as a cartoon character racing through multiple mazes as if racing for her life. The music and this scene create an atmosphere of frenetic panic and speed that remains throughout the film.

As we see Lola, she is answering a bright red phone that is sitting in the center of an otherwise empty room. Lola answers and her boyfriend, Manni, begins screaming at her on the other end of the line. Lola slows him down and learns that since she was late to pick him up, he has lost a lot of money that he owes a drug dealer named Ronnie. Manni is being tested to see if he deserves to become more powerful in the drug ring. Lola promises to find a solution before Manni is supposed to meet Ronnie.

After hurrying to the bank where her father works, Lola begs for his help. She moves on in her desperate plan and tries to stop Manni from doing something stupid. After they rob a store, Lola is killed by the police in the middle of the street. As she is dying, she remembers a conversation with Manni where she promised not even to let death come between them.

Suddenly Lola is back in the original room, and the phone is ring. We go through similar scenarios for the rest of the film. Lola or Manni dies every time, except the last time. As we watch we see that even the slightest change in a single event can completely change a person's life. Lola's actions affect not only Manni, but many others. Finally, the events fall into perfect place, and Lola and Manni survive, pay Ronnie, and have thousands of dollars for themselves.

Run Lola Run explores questions concerning chance and fate. Can life really be changed by just a few simple moments? Must things work out only in one way or are there multiple ways that life can work? Each viewer must interpret Tykwer's thoughts on his or her own from what they see in the film.

Tom Tykwer is a brilliant young German director. He is also the long time boyfriend of the Franka Potente who plays Lola. Some of Tykwer's most popular films have included *Winterschläfer* (1997), *Der Krieger und die Kaiserin* (2000), *Heaven* (2002), and *True* (2004). Tykwer's unusual use of symbolism and cinematography is an excellent trademark for his films.

Franka Potente is a young German actress who was found by a casting agent one night in a bar. Her long-time boyfriend and director Tom Tykwer created the part of Lola specifically for her. Potente is especially well known for her appearances in *The Bourne Identity* (2002) and *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004). She has also appeared in *Anatomie* (2000), *Blow* (2001), *Anatomie 2* (2003), and *Blueprint* (2003).

Lola Rennt won awards around the world. In the German film awards it won the Audience Award for German Film of the Year; Film Award in Gold Outstanding Feature

Film; Outstanding Individual Achievement: Cinematography for Frank Griebe; Outstanding Individual Achievement: Direction for Tom Tykwer; Outstanding Individual Achievement: Editing for Mathilde Bonnefoy; Outstanding Individual Achievement: Supporting Actor for Herbert Knaup; and Outstanding Individual Achievement: Supporting Actress for Nina Petri. At the Sundance Film Festival, it won the Audience Award for World Cinema, and at the Venice Film Festival, Tom Tykwer was nominated for the Golden Lion Award.

Summary and Analysis

The film starts out with a quote from T.S. Eliot: "and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time" and another by S. Herberger: "After the game is before the game." Then, the credits begin. As they show, a scary looking pendulum swings across the screen until it goes up and we see the rest of the scary looking clock and go through the mouth of a monster on the top.

Suddenly, we see man people walking across the screen and the narrator says that man is probably the most mysterious species on the planet. Man is a mystery of unanswered questions like, "Who are we?" "How do we know what we think we know?" and others. All these questions need answers that will simply create another question and so on forever. In the end, though, everything is always the same question with the same answer. A policeman says, "Soccer balls are always round, the game always lasts 90 minutes, and those are always the facts. Anything else would just be theory." He throws a soccer ball into the air and as it falls we move into an animated tunnel where an animated girl runs as the credits finish.

In her apartment, Lola gets a call on a red phone. Her boyfriend, Manni, is calling her. He's upset that she didn't meet him on time. Her moped was stolen while she was at the store, and the taxi driver went the wrong way. When she finally arrived, Manni was already gone. Manni cries, begs for help, and tells her that he screwed up.

Manni says that the guy's going to kill him. He didn't get caught, but he thinks that might have been better. He dropped off some cars, met some people, picked up the goods, and met with the Cyclops looking guy. She was the only thing off schedule when he walked out with a large bag of money. Finally, he took a train, and an old bum fell down. Investigators came in, and Manni ran away. He forgot the bag. The investigators took him, and the bum found the bag. He blames Lola for everything. He checked at the next station, and he knows the bum must have it now and be on a plane to the beach.

Manni won't tell Ronnie because he won't believe him. The bag was filled with \$100,000. Manni says this was a test. He's mad that she always tells him that "Love can do everything." He says there is no way that love will get him \$100,000 in 20 minutes when he's supposed to meet Ronnie. She tells him to run away, but he refuses. He knows Ronnie would kill either her or Manni. She screams for him to stop it and glass shatters.

Lola tells him not to go anywhere, and she'll meet him. He's in front of the Spriale Bar downtown in a phone booth. As she's talking though, Manni decides that he can go to the Bolle supermarket and steal from them. They make 200 grand a day, so they should have 100 grand by noon. She convinces Manni to wait, but if she's not there by 12, he's going to rob the store.

Lola throws the phone as she watches dominos falling on the television. Lola thinks through all the people she knows, and finally she decides to talk to her father. He



shakes her head as she runs out. We see the cartoon Lola running frantically, and then the real Lola runs down the streets. She almost runs over an old lady with a baby. We see photographs showing us that this woman has just stolen the baby.

As Lola runs, a woman takes up the screen and talks about how she can't sleep because she's afraid of the dark. Then, she says she thinks of them and she's afraid things would always continue as they are. The shot then moves, and we see that she's talking to Lola's father. She's tired of spending sleepless nights on a man who won't stand by her. Lola runs through a group of nuns as a guy calls to her and asks if she needs a bike. We then see photographs showing that he is beaten up, meets a waitress, and then they get married.

Lola runs in front of a car and causes a wreck. The guy she runs in front of is small and scared and the men he hits are big and strong. Manni is still in the phone booth calling his grandmother, but she'll only give him \$500. Outside the phone booth is a blind woman to whom he hands back her phone card, but she doesn't take her card back.

Lola's father and the woman talk, but he has to go before Myers gets there. The woman asks if he loves her, and he says he does. She tells him to decide now, and then tells him that she's pregnant.

Lola finally arrives at the bank and the security guard lets her upstairs. She almost runs into a woman who would soon be in a car wreck, survive, and then commit suicide. Back in the office the woman asks whether Lola's father wants to have a baby with her. He says that he does, and then Lola bursts in.

The woman is surprised to see his daughter, and she introduces herself as Jutta Hansen from the Board of Directors. Jutta leaves, and Lola and her father question one another. She comes to him and tells him that she needs terrible help and he's the only one that can help her. She tells him that something bad will happen in five minutes if he doesn't give her \$100,000. She tells him that her boyfriend for over a year, Manni, will be dead, but he's never heard of him. She screams, "I don't care!" and breaks the clock.

Then, her father puts his arm around her, walks her out, and tells her to go home to bed. He also tells her to tell her mother that he's leaving them and never coming back. He wants to have kids with Jutta because she wants him and won't be the scapegoat. He tells her that he would never have fathered a freak like her and tells her he wasn't her real dad. Her real father was long gone when she was born. He tells the security guard to kick her out as she cries.

Back on the street, the security guard tells her that everyone has rotten days. Then, an old woman walks up to her who tells her that it's about four minutes before noon. Lola begins running again. She crosses a courtyard on the diagonal of the stones. Manni is on the phone calling someone else, but he still can't find help. With just about four minutes until noon, he leaves the phone booth.

As Lola runs, an ambulance passes her and almost hits some men carrying a large piece of glass. Manni walks toward Bolle as the time ticks away. He stands outside and



looks around as we see Lola in the other half of the screen running as fast as she can. She sees Manni pull out his gun and walk into the store as she calls his name. He begins shooting and has everyone lie down on the floor. He demands that the cashiers take the cash from the registers.

Lola gets to the window and starts yelling at Manni. He asks where she was but she says she got there as soon as she could. She asks him to just leave, but he says he can't now. She asks why he didn't wait, but he just says that she got there too late. He asks her if he's with her now. An older man holds him at gunpoint, but Lola grabs a bag from a lady outside and runs in and hits the old man on the head. He falls to the ground and the gun slides across the floor. Manni passes it back to Lola and tells her to take of the safety.

When she does, she almost shoots the man in the head. Manni makes her come over to him so that she can cover him while he gets the cash. She tells him to hurry before the cops get there. They run out of the store, but they are surrounded by the police a moment later. Manni throws the bag with the money after they tell him not to make a move, and one of the policemen accidentally shoots Lola in the chest as he watches the bag. She falls to the ground and dies. Manni goes to her and falls to his knees.

The camera zooms in on her eyes and then we see her and Manni in bed together. She asks if he loves her and he says he does. He thinks she's the best girl of any girl he knows. She feels that opinions are lame and doesn't trust him. She asks what would have happened if they had never got together, and then she says that he would be saying the same thing to some other girl. He says he feels she's the best of the best. Lola asks what feelings mean, and he says it's his heart. She can't figure out why he believes his heart, and she gets frustrated when he doesn't take her seriously. He asks if she's going to leave him, and she tells him that she has to decide.

The camera zooms out from her face again and she says that she doesn't want to leave. We see the red bag flying in the air again as well as the red phone. Then she just says, "Stop!" Then the action starts again from the moment Lola ran out of her apartment. She trips going out of the door, though.

When she runs past the lady with the baby this time tough, we see that the woman wins the lottery, still has the child, and is living a life of luxury. She runs past the nuns again and notices that one is wearing sunglasses. She sees the guy with the bike again, and now she tells him she won't take the bike because it's stolen. We see him becoming a bum on the streets and one day he follows a woman around and then dies in a bathroom.

Manni yells at his grandmother and slams the phone down. Also, this time when Lola runs in front of the car, she jumps on top of the car, but the guy still hits the bumper of the other car. This time Lola also runs into a bum on the street as she runs. In addition, after Lola's father says he wants to have a baby, Jutta asks if he would even if it wasn't his.



Lola runs through the bank, and the guy finally lets her in. This time when she runs in there are people standing outside the door listening to a fight. It's her father and Jutta. He's yelling at Jutta that this isn't a great way to start a relationship, and she accuses him of neglecting her. He tells Jutta that he can't just leave his sick wife and three kids. Jutta yells that his wife is drunk all day not sick. Then, she spots Lola and tells her to go away. Her father turns around and asks why she didn't knock.

Jutta is surprised to see his daughter, and he asks her to close the door. Lola tells him that she needs him, but he tells her that he has a problem. She cries and he tells her to leave him alone. She tells him that she needs money right away. She plans to get a job, but she needs cash immediately. Jutta tells her that she has no right to barge in, but Lola tells her to shut up. Her father slaps her, and she throws stuff at him from fruit to paintings and runs out the door. She hurries down the hall and passes the woman from earlier who just stares.

The security guard lets her out and tells her she can't have everything. She goes over to him and grabs his gun. Someone has opened the door so she hurries in and holds her father at gunpoint. She shoots to the left of her father and then walks him out. The woman in the hall tries to stop them, but Lola yells at her. We then see that she falls for a guy at work and they get together.

Lola shoots the combination lock and walks them out into the bank. She forces her father to go back into the bank. He tells her that the police will be there soon and there are cameras. She tells her father that he says the cops are always too late, and she tells the bank teller to bag \$100,000. As he does, the security guard comes in tells her not to hurt anyone. He backs out as she watches them counting the money, but the guy only has \$88,000. She sends him downstairs to get it.

As she holds her father at gunpoint, he sits down. The teller finally returns with the rest of the money and puts it in a garbage bag for her. She says goodbye to her father and runs out of the bank, but the police are already there holding her at gunpoint. They tell her to get out of the way and shove her to the side. She gets up and begins to run. She sees the old woman again and asks the time but keeps running before getting an answer. This time as she runs across the courtyard, she's following a straight path.

Manni gets ready to leave the phone booth. Lola asks the ambulance for a ride, but they refuse. She tells them to wait, but they run through the piece of glass anyway. They stop and she continues to run to meet Manni. As he waits outside the store we once again see Lola running in the other half of the screen. She keeps thinking, "Wait, Manni. I'm coming." He continues to wait until noon and then turns around. This time when she yells at him though he turns around.

Manni walks across the street toward her, and then he is run over by the ambulance. Lola drops the bag and walks toward him. She falls to her knees at his side and begins to cry. The screen zooms in on his eyes, and we see them in bed again. Manni asks her how she would do if he died. She says that she would never let him die. She tells him that she'd go to a little island and scatter his ashes.



Manni disagrees, thinking she would forget him after mourning for a couple of weeks. Then, she would be able to show her strength, and then she'll marry some new guy. She tells him that he's not about to die. As the camera zooms back out, we then see the phone drop and the action begins again from the moment Lola runs out of the apartment.

As she rounds the corner, she passes the old woman with the baby who will later become very religious. This time Lola runs in the street around the nuns and almost runs into the guy on the bike who then pulls up to a store, gets food, and the bum all dressed up and buying food. The bike guy tries to sell the bum his bike. Lola then runs and falls on top of the car. The guy is the Mr. Meier that her father is waiting on, and he recognizes her. She keeps running while the bum rides his bike away.

Jutta and Lola's father are talking again. Then, Mr. Meier arrives before she can tell him that the baby isn't his. Meier is waiting in his car, so Lola's father has to leave. The two plan to meet later.

Lola runs quickly as her father walks out of the bank on the other side of the screen. He passes the woman in the hall, Ms. Jager, and then says hello to the security guard and others. He meets Meier at the car, and they drive off before he can hear Lola screaming. Meier tells him that he saw Lola just a little earlier. The security guard comes outside as she is standing there, and he hits on her. He looks at her, and she begins to run.

Manni hands the phone card back to the blind woman, but she stops him and tells him to wait. Manni sees the bum all dressed up and riding by. He chases the bum. In the car, Meier tells Lola's father that he decided not to have kids because they'd never get to see him. As they drive they barely miss hitting the bum and Manni. Then, they run over the car that Meier kept hitting before.

One guy flies out of the white car while both Meier and Lola's father seem to be dead. Lola can't figure out what to do, but she keeps running. She asks God for help and waits. Then she runs into the road and is almost hit by a large truck. The guy tells her to keep off the streets.

Lola sees a casino in front of her, and she runs inside. She's never gambled before, but the woman she has to be dressed better. Lola says she has to, and even though she's a few cents short of 100 the woman gives her a \$100 chip. Lola goes to the roulette table and places her bet. The men in the casino watch her as she hopes for the best. She makes \$3,500 off her bet, and she places another bet on the same number.

The people working there are suspicious and ask her to come with them. She tells them that she'll play one more game. She screams a piercing scream that breaks glasses all over the casino, and the ball lands on 20. Lola turns in her chips and asks for her cash and a plastic bag as everyone watches. We see that the clock reads four minutes until twelve.



Manni continues to chase the bum and finally holds him at gunpoint in an alleyway. He demands that the man give back the money. The man asks for Manni's gun, and Manni gives it to him. Manni begins to run, and the man holds the gun.

The ambulance stops just in the nick of time to not hit the glass, and Lola climbs in the back for a ride. She sees that it's Mr. Meier who they are working on. She stays, and he begins to do better. The nurse sits down surprised. The ambulance pulls near the store, and Lola waits for Manni.

As she turns, the streets are all completely empty until a moment later she sees Manni get out of a black car and meet with Ronnie. Then, Manni comes to meet Lola. She looks at him surprised, and he asks whether she ran here. He tells her that everything's okay. He asks about the bag, and Lola just smiles.



Characters

Lola, played by Franka Potente

Description

Lola is a wild young woman who is involved in some unsavory business with her boyfriend, Manni. Manni's cousin, Ronnie, is a drug dealer who is testing Manni to see if he has what it takes to become a more important part of the drug ring. While Manni is being tested, Lola is supposed to be helping him as best she can. Due to some unfortunate circumstances, Lola arrives late to meet Manni, and the entire terrible series of events begins to unfold.

When Manni calls panicked, Lola screams at him to shut up. She promises to find a solution to the problem by the time he is supposed to meet Ronnie. Lola first runs to her father's bank to see if he will loan her the large amount of money so that they can pay Ronnie. Her father feels that she is a failure and a freak, so he throws her out of the bank. She also discovers his affair with Jutta and is completely heartbroken.

Lola becomes even more desperate throughout the different situations. At one point, she even helps Manni rob a store. As Lola runs through the streets she tries to find different ways to help Manni. In one series of events, she robs her father and his bank. In another, she gambles for the money that Manni needs. Although she never directly gets the money for him, she does win them enough money to live comfortably for a long time to come.

Analysis

Lola is a young woman in love. She is willing to do anything, legal or illegal, to help save her boyfriend Manni's life. She knows that if Ronnie finds Manni without the money, Manni will surely be murdered. Lola feels partially responsible for the mistake, and she begins to take every desperate measure available. Each time Lola tries something new, the circumstances change. Every action creates other situations until finally both she and Manni survive their experiences.

When Lola begins to die in the first scenario, she brings herself to a place where she is lying in bed talking to Manni about their love. She tells him she would do anything for him, and at that moment, she returns to the beginning of the film and begins trying a new course of action until she finds something that will save both their lives.

Lola suffers from many different situations in the film. First, she must experience her own death and later she experiences Manni's death. However, one of the most difficult experiences is learning that her father cares nothing for her or her mother. When she discovers his affair, she feels completely betrayed and becomes even more desperate.



In just a short hour, her entire life seems to start falling apart, but Lola finally discovers a series of events that brings her right where she wants to be.

Manni, played by Moritz Bleibtreu

Description

Manni is Lola's boyfriend. He is very much in love with Lola, and he tries to do his best for her. Manni has become involved in a drug ring run by his cousin, Ronnie. Ronnie has decided to test Manni to see if he has what it takes to become a major player in the ring.

After Lola runs late to meet Manni, he takes the subway to get home. He is supposed to meet Ronnie at a certain time, and he is very nervous around the police. In his haste to get off the subway, Manni forgets the money, and panicked, he calls Lola. Manni blames Lola for all his problems, but she promises to find a solution before he has to meet Ronnie.

As Manni waits, he becomes impatient, and he begins to make foolish mistakes. Manni even tries to rob a local store so that he can quickly raise the money that he owes Ronnie. Later, he is murdered by the police. Finally, he runs into Norbert, the homeless guy who took the money, and he is able to find the money and deliver it to Ronnie on time. When Lola finally sees him, he is shaking Ronnie's hand as they close the deal.

Analysis

Manni loves Lola, but when he is upset about the circumstances under which he lost the money, he becomes extremely angry with her. Manni tries to wait for Lola, but his impatient, untrusting nature causes him to quickly give up hope while waiting for her. Manni's impatience causes his death in more than one version of events.

Manni also refuses to take responsibility for himself and his mistakes during several of the scenes. Instead of being a man and accepting his own failures, he blames his failure on Lola. He claims that her lateness caused the entire problem when the truth is that had he watched the bag or been more patient, he would not be in this situation.

Through the different versions of events, Manni seems to mature. Although he is always scared when he calls Lola, he begins to accept responsibility for his actions. He also becomes more observant so that when the old woman helps him see Norbert, he actually recognizes the man and follows him. Manni finally successfully delivers the money and is congratulated on the success of his mission by Ronnie.



Lola's Father, played by Herbert Knaup

Description

Lola's father is the first person she visits in order to get money. He works at a bank, and she believes that he can loan her the money until they can recover the money that Manni lost on the subway. However, Lola's father has no intention of helping the daughter who he believes is worthless.

Her father is having an affair with Jutta, a member of the bank's Board of Directors, who he plans to marry rather than staying with Lola's mother. Lola's father becomes very angry when Lola interrupts their meeting, and he tells her to leave.

When Lola forces him to give her the money, her father calls the police on her. In the final scenes on the film, he actually meets Meier before Lola can arrive. As they start toward their destination, though, the two are involved in a car accident that likely kills Lola's father.

Analysis

Lola's father is a selfish man who spends most of his time focusing on his work. He does not seem to know his daughter at all; we learn this from a variety of clues including the fact that he has never heard of Manni. Lola's father considers her to be a loser who is simply wasting her life, so he has no intention of helping her.

Besides showing his selfishness in his actions toward Lola, he also ignores her feelings when she discovers his affair with Jutta. He seems to have no remorse about cheating on her mother, and he seems to have lost all ability to truly love someone. Even his relationship with Jutta seems to be self-serving.

When we see Lola's father die in the final scenes, we feel no pity for him. On the contrary, most viewers will probably hold the opinion that he is simply getting what he deserves. After treating Lola and her mother so poorly, Lola's father scarcely deserves our pity.

Norbert von Au (The Homeless Guy), played by Joachim Kraul

Description

Norbert von Au is the homeless guy whose bag is switched with Manni's bag. While Manni is on the subway, he lays down the bag for a few moments next to the homeless man's similar bag. Manni does not check the bag before he gets off, and once Norbert realizes what he has found, he hurries to spend his newfound wealth.



Norbert continues to outrun Manni throughout the film. In each time sequence, Norbert is having a different experience with his new money. Each time, he rides by Manni or Lola, but neither of them notices him. Finally, the blind woman helps Manni see Norbert, and Manni is able to chase him down and get the money back.

Analysis

Norbert is a simple homeless man who is glad to find some money that he can keep for him self. Riding along the morning he meets Manni, he has no idea that he will soon be rich. Norbert can be criticized for keeping the money when he could have returned it to Manni, but at the same time, Manni got the money through illegal means, not a much better reason to have the large amount of money.

Norbert quickly begins to spend his money on the simple things of life. We realize that he only wants a few things such as a new suit, some delicious food, and a way to travel. Norbert finally returns the money after Manni chases him and becomes a homeless man once again, but at least he has a nice suit now.

Jutta Hansen, played by Nina Petri

Description

Jutta Hansen is on the bank's Board of Directors, and she is having an affair with Lola's father. Through the different scenes, we finally learn the whole story. They have been having an affair for a while, and she is now pregnant. She has arrived in Lola's father's office to tell him that she has found out that she is pregnant.

In the final scene, we learn that Jutta is not certain that Lola's father is the father of her child. She wants to know whether he would still accept a child who may not be his. Lola's father becomes angry with Jutta, but then Lola rushes in during their argument.

Analysis

Jutta's presence helps the viewer get a better picture of the type of person that Lola's father is in real life. Although Lola and her mother are not close to him because he works all the time, Lola never suspected that he would cheat on her mother. Since Lola walks in on him and Jutta during the film, she learns the truth and her father shows his true colors.



Herr Meier, played by Ludger Pistor

Description

Herr Meier is Lola's father's business associate. Lola's father is waiting for the call that Meier has arrived while he is talking with Jutta. Each time Lola enters, her father becomes angry with the disruption, because he is waiting to meet Meier.

Lola causes Meier to have a wreck several times in the film. He runs over several dangerous men of the underworld who proceed to threaten him for wrecking their car. Meier hits them again in the final scene, but this time the men are actually thrown from the car instead of being only slightly hurt and threatening Meier. During this wreck, both Meier and Lola's father look to be seriously injured or dead as well.

Analysis

Meier's presence in the film helps give us background into Lola's father's life. Not only is her father annoyed by his and Jutta's discussion being interrupted, but also he places his work life over Lola's well being. Viewers suspect that this has been the case for a long time.

The changes in Meier's wreck also show how just a moment can make a huge difference in someone's fate. As Meier continues to have bad interactions with the men over the wreck caused by Lola, we see that her timing can make a huge impact. Additionally, when he finally avoids the wreck, we are shocked to see that now fate or chance causes both him and Lola's father to be seriously injured or killed in a terrible accident involving the same men.

Frau Jager, played by Suzanne von Borsody

Description

Frau Jager is the woman who Lola continues passing in the hall. We keep seeing different scenes of her potential future play as Lola passes her.

Analysis

From the scenes of Frau Jager's potential future, we see that every action can cause many other incidents to take place and can change the course of history for many people.

Ronnie, played by Heino Ferch

Description

Ronnie is the guy that Manni works for in the drug deals. Ronnie wants Manni to become a closer partner with him, but he decides to test Manni first. When Lola fails to meet Manni, the plans are ruined. Ronnie is a dangerous man who will not hesitate to murder Manni if Manni does not deliver the cash on time.

Analysis

Ronnie is the stereotypical leader of a drug ring. He is young, strong, rich, and dangerous. Ronnie has made his fortune by selling large quantities of drugs, and he decides that Manni deserves a test. Manni never underestimates Ronnie, realizing that Ronnie will not hesitate to kill him if he fails the test.



Themes

Making Choices

In *Run Lola Run*, we see the effect that one person's choices can have on an entire series of events. Lola and Manni's decisions in each series of events shown changes the final outcome of their lives or the way their lives end. From Manni's first decision to do the deal for Ronnie, the series of events becomes a series of choices and circumstances that affect a number of lives.

When Lola chooses to visit her father, she discovers secrets about him that she never knew. She finds that he has been cheating on her mother for quite some time and that he feels no remorse about the situation. In fact, he almost completely rejects Lola since she is her mother's daughter and is not the normal daughter that he wants.

When Manni decides to rob the store, he makes a choice that results in Lola's death. When Lola makes the decision to gamble to win the money, she and Manni survive. Viewers are reminded that each choice creates more choices and circumstances that can change lives.

Power of Chance

Besides the power of choice, we also see the power of chance in this film. When Lola runs late by chance, a series of events begins. Additionally, we watch Manni's chance encounter with Norbert that leads him to desperation after losing Ronnie's money. Everything changes because Manni takes the wrong bag by chance.

In one series of events, Lola trips when she is running out of her building. The moment it takes for Lola to fall down changes the entire course of the events. Her father learns that Jutta is pregnant because Lola is just a few moments late. Additionally, the entire scenario ends in death, because she and Manni are not in the places they need to be at the right moments.

Each series of events proves that one chance encounter can change an entire day and an entire life. When Lola finally fails to cause Meier to wreck, she also misses her father. Then she has to look for another solution, gambles, and Manni finds Norbert. In the end, she and Manni live while her father and Meier are seriously injured or killed in a later car accident. We are reminded that acts of chance can change everything.

Living for Love

In the first series of events, Lola is killed when the police catch her and Manni after they rob the store. A man accidentally shoots, and as Lola begins to die she remembers an earlier conversation with Manni about their love and her commitment to them. Suddenly,

Lola seems to come back alive in the name of love, and she begins the entire series of events over again.

Each time events do not go the way they want, Lola and Manni return to the moment of his phone call. Their love keeps them alive until all the events of chance and the choices of people coincide to allow them both to survive their experience. As they continue living for love, viewers are reminded that love is the most powerful of all emotions.

Style and Cinematography

Tom Twyker has one of the most unique styles in film today. He uses interesting features in every film that he creates, and *Run Lola Run* is one of his best. In this film, we see a number of symbolic features and many interesting cinematographic quirks.

When the film begins, we first see two quotations that help create the mood and background for the entire film. Then we watch as a cartoon character of Lola runs through a maze as if she is in a frantic hurry. The hectic pace of the film is set before the credits have even finished running. Throughout the rest of the film, we watch as Lola continues to run on a mission to save the man she loves.

The symbolism in the film is powerful. Many American movies lack this type of explicit but consistent symbolism throughout the film. As we watch Lola answer the bright red phone over and over again, we constantly sense the danger and death related to the color. Additionally, the ambulance and the bag of money also carry this bright color, and the viewer receives an automatic visual cue concerning the upcoming events.

Motifs

Journey

Lola Rennt is a journey story. Journeys are often used in literature and film to show the changes in a character's attitudes and life over time. Unlike many journey stories, Lola is not simply out to find a new place to live or running away from her past; she is trying to save her boyfriend's life.

Lola's boyfriend, Manni, has made some mistakes that may cost him his life. Because Lola was late to meet him, Manni blames his problems on her. She agrees to find an answer to his problem within the hour. Lola races out of their building and begins a journey to save his life, and on the way, she uncovers some new parts of herself and secrets about her family.

As Lola travels, we see the life stories of everyone she passes. Depending on when and how she sees them, the way their lives turn out are slightly different. Even the slightest change from previous experiences can completely change a life. Lola also learns that her father is having an affair; she is devastated by this discovery, but she also finds that she is stronger than she ever knew.

Turning Back Time

Many films use the motif of time travel, but this film is unique in that each series of events occurs after time is turned back. Instead of actually traveling to the past or the future, Lola journeys into her own past and relives her life from the moment that Manni calls.

As time is turned back, we see that a single event in a long series of events can actually change everything for not only one person but many people. For example, the time Lola trips as she runs out the front door, she is only seconds behind, but those seconds change the course of many peoples' lives.

We also notice as time is turned back that Lola is actually the one turning back time. Because of her love for Manni, she refuses to die in the first episode and refuses to let him die later. Her love brings her back to save Manni.

People's Stories

Each time Lola passes someone whether it's on the street, in her building, or in the bank, we see a flash of their stories told through photographs. At first, the photographs seem extremely random, but we see that their stories change through each episode of events.

As Lola's routine changes only slightly each time she runs, she impacts the lives of other people, even the random people she passes. For example, the lady with the baby carriage has different scenes of her past and potential futures that flash on the screen as Lola passes. Based on where she is or how long she stops to look at Lola, the woman's life changes.

Frau Jager, the woman in the hall, also experiences life events that change based on Lola's activities. At one point, she is lonely while at another she is having an affair with another man at the bank. When and how she interacts with Lola makes all the difference in the final events in her life.

Symbols

Red

The color red is commonly used as a symbol in film and literature. In *Run Lola Run*, red is used to symbolize danger and death. Not only does the film use red, it uses an intense, vivid shade of the brightest red. We are easily able to see the color on different objects as it stands out and catches our eye as we watch.

The first time we see the color red, it is the phone that Lola answers in her apartment. Sitting in the middle of the room, the bright red phone seems to be the bearer of bad news - news of danger and death. After Lola answers the phone, we realize that we were correct as Manni gives her the disastrous news.

Red is used several other times in the film as well. The ambulance that carries Mr. Meier is also this vivid shade of red. Lola's hair, although lighter, is also this same color of urgency. Finally, the bag that Lola carries for the money is a bright, vivid red. As Manni throws it in the air in the first scene, our eyes are captured by it. In the last scene, when Lola throws the bag to him, we once again focus on it but this time we feel a sense of relief.

Square

As Lola runs through the streets, she is always running through the same square to get to Manni. Each time Lola runs through the square, she is always running a different direction. We can tell how she is running by how she passes the large blocks in the square. These directions are symbolic and tip us off as to how this series of events will end.

In the first series of events, Lola runs across the square diagonally from the right to the left. We realize that the events will not end happily since she is not in line with the blocks in the square. In the second series of events, Lola runs diagonally across the square from the left to the right. Once again, events do not turn out as Lola hoped.

Finally, we see Lola running in line with the blocks in the square. She runs down the pathway that seems to be made just for her journey. Soon after, the series of events turns out correctly with both Lola and Manni surviving.

Cartoon Character

Lola's cartoon character is a symbolic representation of her. From the first scenes where we see the character running through the maze of tunnels, the urgent pace of the film and our expectations are set.

The cartoon character helps viewers see how every tunnel in the maze can bring Lola to a different place. She is constantly making choices that will affect her life and the lives of those around her.

Additionally, since Lola is the only person who is made into a cartoon character for the film, viewers automatically recognize her as the main character. Although everyone else has an important role in the film, Lola's journey, her feelings, and her experiences are the most important for understanding the themes of the film.



Essay Questions

How is the cartoon used throughout the movie to tell the story?

Who calls Lola and what is his problem?

Why do we see people's stories told through photographs as Lola runs?

Who is her father talking to when Lola arrives? What is their situation?

Why does Manni go ahead into the store?

After Lola dies the first time, why does the film seem to start over?

What is the significance of how Lola runs across the courtyard?

What is the symbolism of the red phone, the red bag, and the red ambulance?

How does the old woman help Manni the final time?

Describe one theme of the film.