



## HIGH-RISE

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DIRECTED BY BEN WHEATLEY

An adaptation from J.G. Ballard's infamous 1975 novel, *High-Rise* is, at its best, a thought-provoking cinematic product of ingenuity and, at its worst, a begrudging reminder of how susceptible we are, as humans, to socially chaotic conformities and moral transgressions.

The film portrays a forty-floored luxury tower secluded from the outside world, created at the hands of Anthony Royal, the architect and building's self-appointed 'mid-wife' played by Jeremy Irons. Focal protagonist, Tom Hiddleston, plays the role of the somewhat detached Dr. Robert Laing, who resides in the high-rise to invest in "a future that had already taken place". Laing gradually partakes in the pulsating 70s social scene alongside the promiscuous Charlotte Melville, played by Sienna Miller, and Richard Wilder, played by Luke Evans, who relentlessly tries to put an end to the class-dictated injustices. As with most dystopian films overpowered by class dichotomy, each floor is symbolic of the social structure, with the poorest at the bottom and the wealthiest at the top; the breakdown of class being indicative of the floors that separate them.

The progressive degradation of human nature unfolds before our eyes as we witness the deteriorating process

of humanity, beginning with residents behaving like dogs, followed by the consumption of food created for dogs, and finally to be surpassed by the indisputable and inevitable consumption of dogs. As far as analogies go, this one is so painfully accurate that no analogy is in fact required; it's merely a statement of fact.

Perhaps what rings true of any dystopian film are the subsequent signs of insanity that appear in the wake of disaster, as seen through the residents succumbing to their most primal urges and Hiddleston's character referring to himself in third person in the latter sequences. Even more telling is how these inhabitants could leave at any moment, yet they choose to stay and revel in the disarray and disorder that they created.

The high-rise is referred to as being "prone to fits of mania, narcissism and power failure"; the holy trinity of factors leading to inexorable social and moral decline. The plot is both parts satirically sadistic and chillingly attainable, proving that, in the words of Tom Hiddleston, "human nature is too diverse and chaotic to be controlled and contained from above".