

In the horror genre there is a lot that can be done. So many directions you can take to convey a message, fear or to just make people's stomachs turn. In this modern age horror seems to be dying as the expectation for fright and terror rises in this new generation. With that being the case many films are overlooked and brushed aside simply because the audience was not afraid for two hours. But in my opinion, that is not the only purpose for horror movies.

In the 2016 film 'The Neon Demon' we are thrust into an esoteric, neon lit setting that forces your mind to expand for new possibilities. Reshaping what your initial opinion of horror should be. We are presented with the main character Jesse (Elle Fanning), a sixteen year old girl from Georgia with dreams of becoming a successful model in Los Angeles. This young girl has been blessed with so much beauty that women become envious of her at first site. The film opens with this ominous, neon-techno filter scene. She is lying on a couch, blood covering her and a camera flash shining in different directions. This visually stunning scene sets the tone for the rest of the film. Showcasing Jesse's beauty even while she is seemingly dead, causing you to become obsessed with her.

During one of her shoots she meets makeup artist Ruby (Jena Malone) who instantly becomes entranced by Jesse's beauty, unable to keep from staring at her through the reflection in the mirror. At this moment we catch a glimpse of what is going through Ruby's head. You can see it in her eyes and watch it drip from her lips. The two girls end up at a party and meet two surgically enhanced models Gigi (Bella Heathcote) and Sarah (Abbey Lee) who instantly become threatened by Jesse, the jealousy leaking from the bodies. They have been working in the city for years and Jesse just arrives and lands a high end photoshoot. The visuals in the club strain your eyes and make your heart pound as the party lights flicker on and off. Quickly showing

glimpses of each girls' face as they stare at Jesse. The dark lights and thumping club music show the sinister aura surrounding the three women.

That is what I loved about this film. The time director Nicolas Winding Refn took to create these anxiety inducing scenes came across clearly in each scene. The mood was gloomy, saturated in dark colors. Never giving the audience a chance to find the light at the end of the tunnel in this story, simply because there was not one. The more successful Jesse got, the quicker her beauty got to her head and the more jealous and obsessed the other girls became. Especially Ruby who seems to be in love with Jesse, even forcing herself on her in one scene. After that pivotal scene everything starts to crumble for the sixteen year old.

As always, Elle Fanning did an amazing job in this role. It is mesmerizing to watch her act, especially in a role such as this. The supporting acts of Jena Malone, Bella Heathcote, Abbey Lee and even Keanu Reeves who makes a cameo in this psychological, neon thriller, everyone played their part convincingly. While there are a supreme lack of jump scares and scream worthy moments, 'The Neon Demon' leaves you with that feeling of "what the hell did I just watch". Which was the intention to begin with. Horror is supposed to make you nervous, question what you think you know and this film did this that. 'The Neon Demon' is available on Digital, DVD and Blu-Ray everywhere.

Score: 8/10