

REVIEW: Venice Film Festival's 'Don't Worry Darling' resonates with the world today



VENICE: US actress-director Olivia Wilde's second feature "Don't Worry Darling," which screened at the 79th edition of the Venice Film Festival, is stirring up controversy in the media due to rumored tensions between the cast and director.



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But, in all fairness, I must say that it is a decent work and deserves headlines for its strengths rather than the endless memes and commentary videos it has generated online. Written with sincerity by Katie Silberman and designed brilliantly by Katie

Byron, Wilde herself has nicely set the mood for her uncomfortable dream-to-nightmare story. Its luscious visuals and pop superstar Harry Styles in his first lead performance are scintillating factors, but somewhere en route the film stutters.



(Screengrab)

It is the 1950s and Florence Pugh is Alice in a seemingly happy marriage to Jack (Styles) — who has drop dead gorgeous looks and is hugely successful. The pair recently moved to Victory, a middle-class area bang in the middle of the remote Southern California desert. Jack works for Victory Project, a company that deals with “top secret affairs,” but Alice is blissfully unaware of this — she believes that her husband is an engineer focusing on development projects. But when one of the wives, Margaret (Kiki Layne), begins to find out the truth, Alice is shaken out of her reverie and she begins to view the company's charismatic leader, Frank (Chris Pine), and his glacial wife, played by Gemma Chan, with suspicion.

Pine plays a fascinating cult leader-type character and the sinister goings on begin to unfold when the happy couple attend a party at Frank's house.

The movie resonates with much of what is happening today: Frank resembles some of our de facto cult leaders and the kind of authoritarianism he deploys is glaringly similar to what we are witnessing in the world now.

Wilde is trying to say something, though in a very covert fashion that lacks originality. However, it is an interesting plot as “Don't Worry Darling” gives the viewer everything to worry about, with Alice — a superb performance by Pugh — pushing the narrative forward. Shaken out of her romantic reverie, she faces one shock after another as she is shaken to her core.
