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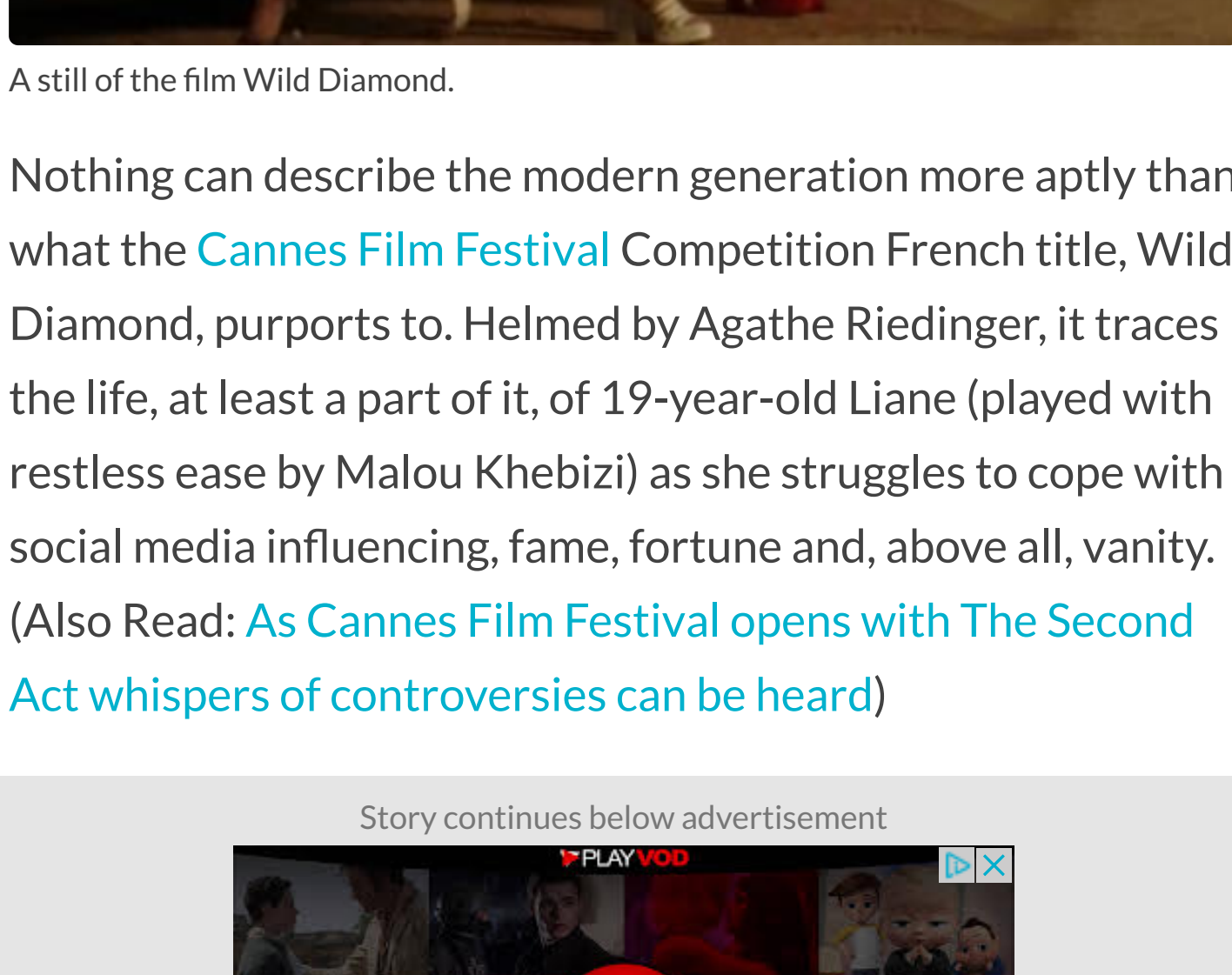
Cannes Film Festival's Wild Diamond is an apt take on the struggle of being Gen Z in a vain world

By Gautaman Bhaskaran

May 17, 2024 07:56 PM IST

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Coming from the first-time writer-director, Wild Diamond is a revealing commentary on the destructive type of wild dreams the young people sink into.



A still of the film Wild Diamond.

Nothing can describe the modern generation more aptly than what the Cannes Film Festival Competition French title, Wild Diamond, purports to. Helmed by Agathe Riedinger, it traces the life, at least a part of it, of 19-year-old Liane (played with restless ease by Malou Khebizi) as she struggles to cope with social media influencing, fame, fortune and, above all, vanity. (Also Read: As Cannes Film Festival opens with The Second Act whispers of controversies can be heard)

Living with her mother and kid sister at Frejus in southern France, her entire waking hours are geared towards climbing the social ladder through what I would call superficial sites like TikTok and Instagram. She craves for adoration, and dresses provocatively. And wolf whistles do not bother her; rather they boost her ego, although she may not show it, pretending to be displeased with such boisterous attention. Karl Marx would perhaps describe this kind of obsession as the opium of the present set of youngsters.

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Boosting her confidence is realty television whose corrupting influence eats into Liane – although she seldom seems to realise it. Or, maybe brushes it aside. To jump up this kind of devastating social ladder, she stoops at nothing. As the movie kicks into motion and movement in all its sometimes irritating restlessness, we see the teen in revealing clothes shoplifting. This is the only way she knows to survive in her world that is actually degradingly shallow.

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She has had her breasts done, her lips injected with a chemical which gives it a tarty pout. Dressing up in really short shorts and a top which hugs her body scandalously, she runs about to try and find the magic of life. She posts endless selfies on social-media sites, sometimes going to torturous extents. She even crudely tattoos her stomach that causes her excruciating pain. Khebizi reminded me of Brigitte Bardot, with her daringly sexy looks that once fetched her scandalous admiration.

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Success strikes Liane eventually, and a reality television producer ends a message saying that they were impressed with her photographs on social media and would want her to interview for a spot on Miracle Island, where 15 girls would shack up in a beach house. "We do not want goody-goody girls", the producer says and packages his show in way that the participants bitch with and claw each other. This is how they will become stars, he assures her. And Liane get completely sold on this.

Coming from the first-time writer-director, Wild Diamond is a revealing commentary on the destructive type of wild dreams the young people sink into. The film looks dramatic with a handheld camera that captures the Liane's jitteriness. It is undoubtedly as powerful as the work of Andrea Arnold or Dardenne Brothers. Liane's hundred percent selfishness is told in a compelling way, underlining her notorious narcissism .

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Vying for the Festival's top Palme d'Or, Wild Diamond may though find it a tad difficult to impress the jury lead by the American director Greta Gerwig, whose Barbie stole the show last year.

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News / Entertainment / Hollywood / Cannes Film Festival's Wild Diamond is an a..

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