

Film Review – Night Moves (Kelly Reichardt, 2014)



Even before the shattering moment hits, Night Moves carries a startling, eerie silence with it. Kelly Reichardt has returned with this daunting, eco-terrorism thriller with a beautiful cast and script behind it.

In an effort to create a striking ecological statement, three eco-activists plot to blow up a hydroelectric dam.

You fall into the sombre, inky surroundings displayed by cinematographer Christopher Blauvelt, and drown in it. It's Oregon setting is rather bleak and icy, in turn slowing the film down to a gorgeous stasis. These moments let you appreciate every minute detail of Reichardt's work, including her tantalising, sharp script. Using very little to evoke thick emotion, she crafts a marriage between the images on screen and the words spoken over them. They are one and the same, sweating brows and lumps in your throat.

As for her cast's affecting performances. Jesse Eisenberg takes the reins for the second time this year after his efforts with Richard Ayoade's The Double. He plays the tormented man very well, but is overshadowed by the performance Dakota Fanning has been growing into since she was a young girl. Playing the headstrong Dena, Fanning embodies female strength and empowerment just as well as she presents her own degradation.

When the moment of destruction hits in Night Moves, the tables turn in a dramatic fashion that would be unethical to spoil. It's a sombre beauty, often vast and destructive and yet still something you can hold close to your heart. Very few thrillers evoke feelings with so little, quite like Night Moves does.