As a child in the ’80s, walking into the horror section at the local video store was one of life’s greatest pleasures. There was a poster of Freddy Krueger on the wall that was absolutely terrifying. I was watching horror films at the age of 7 (my older brothers conditioned me to be the blood-loving lady that I am today), but I didn’t see Wes Craven’s A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET until I was much older; I wasn’t sure I could handle the visually assaultive Mr. Krueger.

Similarly, as a “grown-up,” I was afraid to view Samuel Bayer’s remake, but for different reasons. Horror remakes are often…well, terrible, tedious and tiring. Haven’t we been through enough?

The overall plot of Bayer’s NIGHTMARE echoes the basics of Craven’s: several teenagers are killed off one by one while they slumber. Rooney Mara now plays heroine Nancy, who must find out why Freddy (Jackie Earle Haley) is killing her friends before she too falls asleep to her death. Nancy and her boyfriend Quentin (Kyle Gallner, playing an empty character with whom she shares some sexual tension) discover that Freddy has a connection to their past: He was the groundskeeper of the pre-school that they and all of their dead friends attended as young kids. Their parents murdered Freddy after he was suspected of molesting the children, and now, he wants his revenge.

There are several problems with the film. The characters are never developed to the point that you actually care if they die. Haley is definitely creepy and believable as a child predator (see LITTLE CHILDREN), but his version of Freddy seems forced, and he looks more like a wrinkly wax figure than a monster. The script is another non-selling point. The dream stalker delivered grimly amusing one-liners in the original, but the jokes in Wesley Strick and Eric Heisserer’s screenplay are awkward coming from the mouth of the new Freddy: child molester. For

example, Kris (Katie Cassidy) finds her dead dog on the porch, and Freddy says in a voiceover, “I was just petting him.” *Really?* Gross, dude.

While A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2010 is a major fail, the transfer on Warner’s Blu-ray is impeccable. The look of the film is impressive, and well-presented in widescreen. The DTS-HD 5.1 Surround soundtrack is phenomenal—all the better to hear Freddy with!—and the Blu-Ray also includes a digital copy and a DVD (the latter also available on its own).

While the director and actors do not provide commentary, there are some good bonus features. A 20-minute featurette called “WB Maniacal Movie Mode” includes interviews with cast and crew and making-of footage that offers a solid look at many technical aspects of the production (especially costumes, Freddy’s makeup and the production design). However, it’s surprising how little input there is from Bayer. The piece also contains information about the research that was done on the science of sleep deprivation, which seems a little out of place.

The Blu-ray also contains “Freddy Krueger Reborn” (the only extra also present on the DVD), which focuses on how the iconic monster was reimagined and recast for this new NIGHTMARE. A short piece called “Makeup Makes the Character” focuses on the design and implementation of the intricate prosthetics and digital enhancements that went into creating the villain’s look. There are three deleted scenes here, including an alternate beginning and ending. The latter is a reworked confrontation between Freddy, Nancy and Quentin that has some interesting ideas, including Freddy morphing his appearance, but ultimately it isn’t very effective—much like the climax used in the film proper.

And be warned—both the actual and alternate endings allow for a sequel, so this nightmare may not be over yet…

MOVIE: 💀💀💀💀

BLU-RAY PACKAGE: 💀💀💀💀

{jcomments on}