

Poltergeist (2015)

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hours 33 min.

Our content ratings (1-10); Violence 5; Language 1; Sex/Nudity 1.

Our star rating (1-5): 3

You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day.

Psalms 91:5

Moviegoers who enjoy being scared will find plenty of scares in this remake of the 1982 Stephen Spielberg-produced original version. Eric Bowen (Sam Rockwell) and his wife, Amy (Rosemarie DeWitt) are moving with their three kids into a smaller house in a suburb of the Illinois town where Amy attended college. Searching for a job since he was let go by John Deere, Eric and Amy seek to downsize, and thus are relieved to find a house available at such an affordable price. They don't notice that many of the other houses around it are vacant.

The children are less than thrilled by the move and the new house. However, Maddy (Kennedi Clements), the youngest daughter, is excited following their first tour when she speaks with some new invisible friends in her bedroom closet. Griffin (Kyle Catlett), middle child is unsettled to be assigned the attic bedroom because through its skylight he can see a creepy willow tree hovering over him. Teenage daughter Kendra (Saxon Sharbino) is especially resentful of the move, spending much of her time texting, phoning, and video chatting talking with her best friend back at what she still considers her home town.

Soon all hell breaks forth, with little Maddy touching the

living room TV set and repeating the words from the first film, "They're here." Soon she has disappeared, Griffin has been attacked by the willow tree, and much more during the next few days. The parents don't feel they can tell the police because of the bizarreness of their story, so they turn to the head of the Department of Paranormal Research at Amy's former university, Dr. Claire Powell (Jane Adams). She and her team set up elaborate equipment, and also reveal to her that the housing developers had lied about moving the graves of the Native Americans before building on their burial ground. They had moved only the tombstones, so the angry spirits of the departed are enraged at this violation of their ground. Matters become so difficult that Powell calls in the reality TV host Carrigan Burke (Jared Harris) who is an expert in this field. There follows a savage battle that requires two of the contestants to take great risks, even to the point of sacrifice.

Despite my less than enthusiastic interest in this genre, the film held my attention, the special effects being seamlessly worked in to the natural world. Again, I must observe that the world view of both filmmakers and their characters is non-religious-spiritual, of course, but no one seems to think of praying. The savior figures are "scientists" who put their trust in their equipment and the knowledge that they gain from it.