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Film Review: Ghost Stories

By: Gursimran Hans

Ghost Stories tells the story of Professor Phillip Goodman (Andy Nyman), who is called upon by his old mentor Charles Cameron (Leonard Byrne) who has been missing for 15 years.

Goodman is a sceptical paranormalist and is presented with three cases, which Cameron believes proves the existence of paranormal spirits. He begs Goodman to prove him wrong.

The professor thus explores the cases of a night-watchman (Toby Whitehouse) during a night at a former women's "nuthouse", a young student (Alex Lawther) whose car breaks down and a business man (Martin Freeman) home alone while his wife (Emily Carding) is at a clinic days before she is due to give birth.

Naturally, the three cases are not what they seem. They combine with the health condition of Goodman's comatose father (Daniel Hill) as well as incidents from Goodman's childhood related to the anti-Semitic bullying he received to play with the character's head, spooking both him and the audience at every turn.

Directed by Nyman and James Dyson, based on their stage play of the same name, the play does an excellent job at building up tension until the point it becomes unbearable and sometimes shocking you but at the same time also making you laugh.

We all get annoyed with our phone service providers; well try that while you are being chased by a tree demon in a dark forest after your father has just given you an earful down the phone.

The acting is superb. Nyman shows Pullman pushed to the edge of his sanity, constantly threatening to be tipped over. Lawther shows a broken, paranoid mind, Whitehouse – a defeated one. Freeman's character is perhaps the most upbeat – but the reasons why would be ruin the film.

These characters are haunted by something terrifying, yet unknown, with twist at every corner.

The final twist is underwhelming and loses the all-important fifth star, despite being subtly foreshadowed, it is anti-climactic and somewhat of a cop-out, not the thrilling ending the rest of the film deserves.

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However, if you want to be scared, and want to explore just how the mind makes you create images and responds to emotions and stimulus, this is the film to see.

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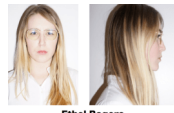
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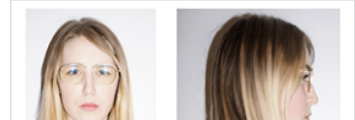
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