

Blu-Ray Review: Horrors of Fatherhood Examined in 'The New Daughter'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 24, 2010 - 3:53pm

- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Gattlin Griffin](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Ivana Baquero](#) [6]
- [Kevin Costner](#) [7]
- [Samantha Mathis](#) [8]
- [The New Daughter](#) [9]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [10]

CHICAGO – From “The Exorcist” to “Orphan,” the horror genre has a long history of films about a young lady becoming something truly dangerous. The latest, “The New Daughter,” comes courtesy of the man who wrote the great “[REC]” and stars Kevin Costner and Ivana Baquero (“Pan’s Labryinth”). Sadly, after a strong set-up and with gorgeous cinematography throughout, “The New Daughter” flounders in cliches and ends up too dull to be terrifying.



Blu-Ray Rating: **2.5/5.0**

Costner plays single father John James, a man who moves to an old house in South Carolina with his daughter Louisa (Baquero) and son Sam (Gattlin Griffin). Faced with the struggle of fatherhood after his wife left her family would be scary enough but Louisa also happens to be on the cusp of adolescence, which allows writer John Travis (“The Haunting of Molly Hartley”), working from a short story by John Connolly, to play with the classic genre design of working horror themes from the natural development of a young lady.



Valentine's Day was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 18th, 2010

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Most fathers feel like their pre-teen girls are “new daughters”. But what if yours was actually possessed? Louisa mopes around her new estate and director Luis Berdejo plays with a few effective chills before the poor girl becomes the apparent victim of an ancient force in the South Carolina woods. Before you know it, Louisa is coming back covered in mud, pushing the school bully down the stairs, and often acting like a zombie. John has to struggle to save his family while staying alive himself.

Berdejo has a strong sense of horror pacing and director of photography Checco Varese expertly shoots the film but “The New Daughter” too often betrays its short story roots. Its 107-minute running time feels much longer as Louisa’s descent into madness/possession is too obvious and John’s response too slow. Also a parallel to son Sam’s ant farm (think “Queen ant”) is at first cliched and eventually laughable.

As for the performances in “The New Daughter,” they aren’t bad, but the script gives Baquero too much cheesy dialogue and Costner doesn’t have the urgency as an actor to portray a man whose daughter could be borderline satanic force. Finally, the closing scenes reek of rewrites or possibly even reshoots as the film fails to end confidently.

Ultimately, “The New Daughter” might be of more interest to horror fans than its straight-to-DVD status would have you believe but not by much. Costner will clearly move on unscathed but I worry that producers don’t know how to use the great young star of “Pan’s Labyrinth”. She needs a better part than this predictable one. Sadly, she seems just as misunderstood as most teenage girls.

Special Features:

- o Deleted Scenes
- o Theatrical Trailer
- o Audio Commentary with Director Luis Berdejo
- o “The New Daughter: Behind the Scenes”

‘The New Daughter’ is released by Anchor Bay Home Entertainment and stars Kevin Costner, Ivana Baquero, Gattlin Griffin, and Samantha Mathis. It was written by John Travis and directed by Luis Berdejo. It was released on May 18th, 2010 and is rated PG-13.



[11]

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