

Film Review: Keep Tim Burton's 'Dark Shadows' Out of the Light

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 11, 2012 - 11:42am

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CHICAGO – Tim Burton's "Dark Shadows" is one of the most inconsistent and frustrating major films in a long time. There are elements here and there that work but Burton and writer Seth Grahame-Smith seem incapable of figuring out how to wrangle them into a coherent, successful film. I like Johnny Depp and Eva Green's performances and Colleen Atwood's costumes are typically fantastic but rarely has a film more aptly proven the "more is less" theory – part comedy, part horror, part '70s spoof, part soap opera. And yet none of the genres in this mash-up are the least bit successful.



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

Depp plays the legendary Barnabas Collins, an eighteenth century son of a tycoon big enough that the town of Collinsport is named after him. Collins falls for the lovely Josette (stunning newcomer Bella Heathcote) but this infuriates the witch Angelique Bouchard (Green), who happens to be in love with the mysterious Barney. To punish him, she sends Josette hurtling off the cliff at Widow's Peak and turns Barnabas into a vampire so he will suffer the pain of his loved one's death for eternity. Then she locks him in a box, which remains buried two hundred years.



[Read Brian Tallerico's full review of "Dark Shadows" in our reviews section.](#) [14]

Flash forward to the 1970s. The Collins family is nowhere near the power clan they were when Barnabas became a bloodsucker. When construction unearths the vampire, he returns to a mansion in physical and familial disarray. Elizabeth Collins Stoddard (Michelle Pfeiffer) is trying to keep up appearances but Roger Collins (Jonny Lee Miller) is kind of a scumbag, Carolyn Stoddard (Chloe Grace Moretz) is a surly teen, and young David Collins (Gulliver McGrath) talks to the ghost of his dead mother (something that Helena Bonham Carter's Dr. Julia Hoffman is trying to cure). Into this odd dynamic enters both a revived Barnabas and Victoria Winters (Heathcote), the mirror image of Josette who has been drawn to the Collins estate for reasons unknown.

Of course, if the lovely ancestor of Josette is to return to Barnabas, so must the other corner of this love triangle. It turns out that Angelique has been living in Collinsport all this time and she's ready to either win back or destroy Barnabas. Jackie Early Haley co-stars as the caretaker of the mansion and Christopher Lee and Alice Cooper make cameos.



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"Dark Shadows" stars Johnny Depp, Eva Green, Michelle Pfeiffer, Bella Heathcote, Jackie Earle Haley, Chloe Grace Moretz, Gulliver McGrath, and Jonny Lee Miller. It was adapted by Seth Grahame-Smith and directed by Tim Burton. It opens on May 11, 2012.



Dark Shadows

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

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