

Seriously Silly ‘Underworld: Awakening’ With Kate Beckinsale Will Put You to Sleep

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 20, 2012 - 4:49pm

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Charles Dance](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [India Eisley](#) [5]
- [Kate Beckinsale](#) [6]
- [Kris Holden-Ried](#) [7]
- [Len Wiseman](#) [8]
- [Michael Ealy](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Sandrine Holt](#) [11]
- [Stephen Rea](#) [12]
- [Theo James](#) [13]
- [Underworld](#) [14]
- [Underworld: Awakening](#) [15]



Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – There is a near-great movie opening this weekend that features a bad-ass, gun-toting chick who defeats any obstacle placed in her way. Despite what the advertising may have you believe, that movie is not “Underworld: Awakening” (Hint: It’s “[Haywire](#) [16]”). The fourth film in the “Underworld” franchise is just yet-another excuse to make money (the franchise has made almost \$300 million worldwide) with mediocre CGI, horrible dialogue, and some truly horrendous storytelling. It’s not awful enough to be considered truly dreadful but it’s just shockingly asleep for a movie subtitled “Awakening.”

Fourth films in hit franchises are often the bottom of the creative barrel – “The Final Destination,” “Fast & Furious,” and “Resident Evil: Afterlife” could compete with each other in Satan’s film festival for closing night festivities. To be fair, “Underworld: Awakening” isn’t as bad as any of those absolute stinkers. It’s bad, for sure, but there are some decent set pieces in the climax and the whole thing is over before it can get truly annoying (it runs about 80 minutes without credits...I swear the previews and commercials before ran just about as long).



Underworld: Awakening

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

The scariest thing about “Underworld: Awakening”? It took four people to write this thing (and two more are credited with character creation) – Len Wiseman (who directed the first two films in the series and must thank his agent every day for that assignment after he wakes up and looks at his wife Kate Beckinsale) & newcomer John Hlavin clearly did one draft, J. Michael Straczynski (“Ninja Assassin”) did another, and Allison Burnett (“Fame”) also took a credit. How much they did together is unclear. How many other people took their name off the project is also unclear. I sure wouldn’t want this on my resume.

“Underworld: Awakening” opens with a recap of the first and second films (the third movie was a prequel and truly horrendous) – Selene (Kate Beckinsale) was a vampire who can travel in the daytime and her eternal love Michael (Scott Speedman) was a lycan. The vampires and lycans had been in a war for centuries and the Romeo & Juliet story of the first “Underworld” turned up the heat on their battle. Selene & Michael killed the vampire elders and envisioned a world where their forbidden love could bloom. That didn’t happen. As Selene explains in narration, the human race discovered the vampire and werewolves and began a massive cleansing process that involved killing every bloodsucker and dude with a bit of a hair problem. Michael (an actor sort of pretending to be Speedman, who clearly had something better to do...like anything) is used as a trap to get the legendary Selene and the two are blown up in an underwater, 3D prologue.

Selene is captured and frozen by the notorious Antigen (led by a totally-slumming Stephen Rea), a company that is supposedly looking for a cure. Twelve years later, Selene is woken up by another test subject who turns out to be her daughter Eve (India Eisley), a hybrid that could be the answer to everything the lycans and vampires have been fighting about for centuries. Charles Dance and Theo James co-star as vampires, who are now underground, and Michael Ealy (“FlashForward”) plays the cop who will surely side with Selene in the final battle.



Underworld: Awakening

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

And that final battle is the only reason that “Underworld: Awakening” even exists. It’s like Wiseman and his new directors (a pair of gentlemen known as Marlind & Stein) crafted the explosive, bloody insanity of the final scenes and worked back about 65 minutes to create the filler to get there. “Underworld: Awakening” features GIANT chunks of nonsensical dialogue about the battle between humans, werewolves, and vampires that are simply impossible to care about in the slightest. Why do these movies take themselves so damn seriously? Why not have some fun with a movie that features giant CGI wolves and such an inherently ridiculous plotline? I get that the first movie was somewhat Shakespearian in its origins but this is the FOURTH movie. Stop being so damned straight-faced. Have some fun. Recognize that people don’t actually CARE what happens to these characters. Inject some humor in the lifeless proceedings.

The biggest problem with “Underworld: Awakening” is that, for most of the running time, there’s no villain. There’s nothing to distract from the fact that the movie is little more than Kate Beckinsale running around in a skin-tight outfit. Supporting actors like Bill Nighy and Michael Sheen have stolen films in this franchise in the past but there’s no one to fill the void here. Dance tries in a few scenes but Rea is half-asleep and James & Ealy are pretty awful. Here’s what I’ll say about the acting and storytelling – I saw the movie THIS AFTERNOON and I can’t remember a single line of memorable dialogue or an interesting character twist. I can remember a CGI werewolf being torn in half by a 12-year-old girl. Whatever that’s worth.

“Underworld: Awakening” stars Kate Beckinsale, Stephen Rea, Michael Ealy, Theo James, India Eisley, Sandrine Holt, Charles Dance, and Kris Holden-Ried. It was directed by Marlind & Stein. It is rated R and was released on January 20th, 2012.



[17]

Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [17]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 17 2024 - 4:53am*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/17173/underworld-awakening-with-kate-beckinsale-will-put-you-to-sleep>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/brian-tallerico>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/charles-dance>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/india-eisley>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/kate-beckinsale>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/kris-holden-ried>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/len-wiseman>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/michael-ealy>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/sandrine-holt>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/stephen-rea>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/theo-james>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/underworld>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/underworld-awakening>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/17154/film-review-gina-carano-ewan-mcgregor-in-steven-soderbergh-s-haywire>
- [17] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>