

## ‘As Above/So Below’ Scrapes Bottom of Barrel

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 29, 2014 - 5:16pm

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Rating: **0.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “As Above/So Below” is strictly the pits. It’s a found footage horror film set in the Paris catacombs that defies logic, and relentlessly keeps digging itself into a hole until it’s dragged everyone in the audience down with it. It’s a movie that starts at stupid and then somehow proceeds to get progressively dumber and dumber, until it’s completely nonsensical and insane – and not in a good way. It’s quite simply the longest 90 minutes I’ve spent in a theater all year.

By this point, the “found footage” horror genre has become as formulaic as a mad slasher movie. Its beats are familiar, its tropes increasingly annoying and ridiculous. It takes either a fresh new twist, or a master stylist to wring shocks out of this kind of premise, but “As Above, So Below” doesn’t even seem to be trying. It barely manages a single jump-scare.



Down in the Depths: George (Ben Feldman) and Scarlett (Perdita Weeks) in As Above/So Below’

*Photo credit: Universal Pictures*

Perdita Weeks stars as Scarlett, a sort of Indiana Jones-type “urban archeologist.” She’s continuing the sometimes quixotic quest of her father for the alchemists holy grail – it’s an ancient metal which depending on the needs of the script at that particular moment is either a stone with magical healing powers, or one that can turn ordinary metal into gold.

The quest drove her father to madness and then suicide, and she is determined to devote her life to the pursuit. She leads a documentary

filmmaker, her skittish American friend (Ben Feldman), and a team of Parisian underground explorers down deep into the catacombs to look for the secret chamber full of treasure. But the catacombs quickly become a hall of horrors as they each enter the gates of their own personal hells thousands of feet beneath the Paris streets.

Weeks has a great smile, a cute accent, and her teeth are brushed, but I wouldn't follow her across the street much less into the depths of the earth. She's supposed to be the smartest girl in the tomb, but her words of advice amount to just shouting "keep moving" over and over again. This is one stupid, stupid collection of people. Together they don't have a half a brain, and they only prolong the torture of this insipid travelogue by going around in circles.



The Catacombs in 'As Above/So Below'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Co-writer/director John Erick Dowdle takes as many wrong turns with his direction and his screenplay as his characters do while trying to find their way out. Attempts at psychological terror start out as lame and then quickly go from laughable to downright insulting. And when Weeks literally leads the team through a tunnel that is literally marked "The Gates of Hell," I was so annoyed with each and every one of the colorless, cardboard and incredibly stupid characters, I wished for a cave-in right then and there.

It's only fitting this is being buried in the doldrums of late August where it's likely to disappear from theaters never to be seen or heard from again. Good riddance, at least until it's time for my worst of the year list.

*"As Above/So Below" opens everywhere on August 29th. Featuring Perdita Weeks, Ben Feldman, Edwin Hodge, Marion Lambert, Ali Marhyar and Francois Civil. Written by John Erick Dowdle and Drew Dowdle. Directed by John Erick Dowdle. Rated "R"*



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