

'Underworld' goes under with critics

Blake Hinton
Reviewer

There have been many films that used the idea of style over substance. Notable films that come to mind are "Matrix" and "Dark City." Yet even in these

films there is a sense of a mature and complex script. It's simply that the visuals dominate the screen. It's when the script goes south that everything falls apart. This was the case for the lame-brained "Underworld."

For the most part the plot is vague and convoluted, but the main idea is that a war is going on between werewolves and vampires that has lasted centuries. The story follows a vampire named Celine (Kate Beckinsale), who is a death dealer. A death dealer is a vampire whose only job is to hunt down and destroy werewolves.

After a shoot-out in the subway, Celine notices that the werewolves are following a human. Eventually this man, Michael (Scott Speedman), and Celine are running from mercenary werewolves. A quarter through the film Michael gets bitten by one. Celine's job requires her to kill him, but she's in love with him.

The basic idea of a Romeo and Juliet story set in the culture of werewolves and vampires could have been

interesting. The problem is they muck it up with lots of plot-holes and tons of information on the mythology of vampires. The mythology also would have been interesting had it made sense. The movie seems to constantly contradict itself so one is left scratching his head in the end.

As the movie goes on it just falls apart even more. Maybe things got cut out, but there seemed to be so many scenes that just didn't make any sense. For example, at one point Michael is arrested by the cops. As he's in the car he starts to change, as it is a full moon. The cops give him an elixir that stops the transformation. Then they disappear. The movie doesn't tell the audience if they're werewolves or if they are working for werewolves. The whole scene leaves one confused.

The vampires are explored even less fully than the werewolves, if that's possible. Not all of the vampires are death dealers so what do those other vampires do during the night?

The movie decides not to tell you. What do the death dealers do when the sun comes up? The movie doesn't tell you. How do the vampires get their blood? The movie barely tells you. In fact, the movie doesn't really tell you anything.

The acting doesn't fare much better. Beckinsale gives one of the worst performances of the year, only matched by Heath Ledger in "The Order." She is blank, boring and her acting range extends to one expression. Everyone else is either embarrassingly hammy or extremely boring. Nobody does even the slightest decent job in here.

In the end, this film does have style. Its cinematography seems to be ripped off from various "Blade" movies, but it still works. Yet, even a cool set design can't overcome a laughable script, bad acting and yawn-inducing action pieces. This is easily one of the worst films of the year.



Photo courtesy of movies.com

Kate Beckinsale stars in "Underworld," which premiered over the weekend.

Elon in Hollywood

Alum Rich Blomquist won an Emmy award for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy, Variety or Music Program. Blomquist, a 2000 graduate of Elon's School of Communications, joined the writing team of The Daily Show in February.

"Basically, I read a bunch of news stories, scribble down whatever joke ideas hit me, and write them out making sure that they're not wordy or awkward to read," Blomquist said of his job at the Daily Show.

"Honestly, I'd be happy to stay at the Daily Show for 10 years. I love it there," Blomquist said. He credits professors Tom Nelson and John Duvall for encouraging him while at Elon.



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