

**Movie:** *As Above, So Below* (2014)

## **Synopsis**

The Odessa Catacombs are the backdrop for the tragic tale of Masha, an innocent partygoer who ventured down into the depths of the catacombs with some friends, took a wrong turn, and was never heard from again. Despite there being little documentation to support the legend, Masha only added to the mythology of the Ukrainian landmark. The lure of the Odessa Catacombs is multidimensional; among many, there are rumors that there's a solid gold replica of the Titanic.

In search of the legendary philosopher's stone capable of turning metal into gold and granting eternal life, Scarlett Marlowe discovers the Rose Key. With the key, Scarlett translates a headstone that leads her to believe the philosopher's stone is hidden 370 feet underneath the streets of Paris.

## **How it relates to the field of psychiatry**

The legend and film differ with regard to the motivation behind the respective ventures into the catacombs. Where as in the Ukraine, Masha's intent is unknown; Scarlett Marlowe is in search of buried treasure and eternal life. Scarlett's quest just so happens to characterize two traits that "prove the existence" of a witch (underlined). Is Scarlett Marlowe a witch? Was her character based on Adrienne d'Heur?

Similar to the movie, Adrienne d'Heur lived in France. Interestingly, she was also intelligent, well-educated, and accused of having murdered her husband (in the film, the mysterious death of the heroine's father replaces that of the husband). Scarlet's fascination with alchemy may have been inspired more by her husband, Pierre Bacqueson, being a goldsmith than a solid gold replica of the Titanic.

Films that reference witchcraft depict possession and therefore serve as metaphors for dissociation. Accordingly, these films may be viewed as illustrations of mental disorders including dissociative and related disorders (e.g. feeding and eating disorders). The Feeding and Eating Disorder section of the DSM-5 includes feeding and eating disorders of infancy or early childhood as well as 3 specific diagnoses including Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. Extensive research followed the dissemination of preliminary criteria for Binge Eating Disorder in Appendix B of DSM-IV, and findings supported the clinical utility and validity of its inclusion in the DSM-5.

**Key Words:** Odessa Catacombs; Masha; *As Above, So Below*; philosopher's stone; Rose Key; Adrienne d'Heur; Pierre Bacqueson of Montbéliard; Feeding and Eating Disorders; Anorexia Nervosa; Bulimia Nervosa; Binge Eating Disorder

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