Beneath
Book Review

**Title:** Beneath  
**Author:** Roland Smith  
**Reviewer:** Tessa McMillan  
**Publisher:** Scholastic Press  
**Publication Year:** 2015  
**ISBN:** 9780545564861  
**Number of Pages:** 272  
**Interest Level:** Intermediate, Young Adult  
**Rating:** Outstanding

**Review**

After waiting a year, Pat O’Toole finally receives a package from his missing brother, Coop. Inside is a digital voice recorder detailing Coop’s exploration of an unknown society beneath New York City. When Pat’s letters go unanswered, Pat makes his way to New York City’s underground. There Pat meets Kate, a girl who needs Pat’s help in rescuing Coop from her grandfather, Lod or Lord of the Deep. Together they travel to the mysterious lair of the Pod where Coop is being held captive. Kate gets all three of them out of the Pod and a friend, known as the Librarian, helps them escape to the above. However, they must stay on the run because Lod and his minions are on their trail.

Smith creates an incredibly original and thought-provoking story with *Beneath*. The book is written from the perspective of Pat as he dictates his and Coop’s voice recordings into his journal. Both Pat and Coop describe their separate descents into the Deep, except Pat has the added complication of claustrophobia. Pat’s claustrophobia was created when, as children, Coop and Pat were almost buried after a tunnel collapsed. Pat’s love for Coop helps him conquer his phobia while making his way through dangerously tight and cramped situations. Along with Pat and Coop’s story, Smith creates an intriguing idea of how easily a cult-like society can be hidden inside a normal population. Smith is currently writing a sequel called *Above*. 