

In the Earth

In the Earth (stylized as ***IN THE EVRTH***) is a 2021 science fiction psychological horror film written and directed by Ben Wheatley. The film stars Joel Fry, Reece Shearsmith, Hayley Squires, Ellora Torchia, John Hollingworth, and Mark Monero.

In the Earth had its world premiere at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival on 29 January 2021, was released in North America on 16 April 2021, by Neon.

Plot

Martin Lowery is a scientist sent to a government-controlled outpost while an unspecified pandemic has ravaged the country. The outpost is located in an unusually fertile forested area outside Bristol to help in the studies and experiments of his former colleague and ex-lover Olivia Wendle regarding using mycorrhiza to increase crop efficiency. After passing a physical examination and meeting his park guide Alma, he learns of the local legend of Parnag Fegg, a woodland spirit. The following morning, Martin and Alma begin their two-day hike toward Olivia's site.

Alma informs Martin that Olivia has not been heard from in months. The pair come across an abandoned tent, with the remaining items indicating it belonged to a family. The next night, Martin discovers a rash on his arm before he and Alma are assaulted by unknown assailants who also raid their camp, destroy their equipment, steal their shoes, and loot some of their supplies. Without his shoes, Martin badly cuts his foot.

They are approached by Zach, a man living in the woods who offers to lend the pair some shoes. Taking them to his own campsite, Zach disinfects and stitches Martin's wound and gives them both food and a drink. Martin and Alma begin to lose consciousness and realize they have been sedated. While they are unconscious, Zach takes ritualistic photos of them in strange clothes and positions and stitches a strange symbol and animal gut into Martin's arm.

Upon waking up Zach describes the symbol as a mark to be seen by a presence in the woods, claimed by him to have once been an ancient sorcerer who placed his essence in a standing stone

In the Earth



Release poster

Directed by	Ben Wheatley
Written by	Ben Wheatley
Produced by	Andy Starke
Starring	<div>Joel Fry<div></div>Reece Shearsmith<div></div>Hayley Squires<div></div>Ellora Torchia<div></div>John Hollingworth<div></div>Mark Monero<div></div></div>
Cinematography	Nick Gillespie
Edited by	Ben Wheatley
Music by	Clint Mansell
Production companies	<div>Neon^[1]<div></div>Rook Films<div></div>Protagonist Pictures<div></div></div>
Distributed by	Neon (United States)

somewhere in the forest. Martin's foot becomes infected from his injury and Zach sloppily amputates some of his toes with a hatchet.

Alma acquires a discarded blade to free herself and Martin before attacking Zach. Martin and Alma flee, but become separated. Zach pursues Martin, who stumbles across a pair of bodies, presumed to be the owners of the abandoned camp. After encountering the standing stone, Martin is found and rescued by Olivia. Alma independently makes her way to the camp, and Zach is driven away by the amplified sound and lights set up around Olivia's site.

The next morning, Olivia cauterizes Martin's foot as she explains her project. She reveals that Zach is her ex-husband, and that the pair were following the directions of a centuries-old book with pages even older than the book woven in. He had been helping her to try and communicate with the entity that projects through the stone, using the lights and noise from an electronic soundboard, but disapproved of her approach and left. Unable to trust Olivia and fearing that Zach is still after them, Alma tries to convince Martin that they need to leave, but he will not be drawn on the nature of his relationship with Olivia and she refuses to abandon her research.

The next morning, the site is surrounded by a thick mist containing fungal spores, trapping them. They send Alma through the mist in a hazmat suit, but the spores make it through her protective clothing and subject her to horrifying visions. That night, the mist continues to close in on the site as Zach arrives, telling them to communicate with the standing stone using the sounds and lights as well as to consume a "sacrament," a mixture of ground mushrooms alluded to in the book.

Martin agrees to drink the sacrament and waits for it to take effect. Zach ambushes Alma and prepares to sacrifice Martin. Alma makes her way back to camp, where she finds Olivia in her tent surrounded by staged photographs of her and Zach's victims. Olivia attacks Alma, but she fends her off. Zach hears their struggle and rushes back to camp, where Alma kills him. She then pursues Olivia back to the standing stone as the mist overtakes the camp, and they are all subjected to more visions, the mycorrhiza directly communing with them.

By morning, Alma and Olivia suddenly find themselves far from the stone, broken out from their trances. Olivia, overcome with awe, collapses on the ground. Alma then approaches a waking Martin by the stone and, speaking with a distorted voice, she offers to guide him out of the woods.

Cast

- Joel Fry as Martin Lowery
- Reece Shearsmith as Zach
- Hayley Squires as Olivia Wendle
- Ellora Torchia as Alma
- John Hollingworth as James

	<div>Universal Pictures Focus Features^[2] (International)</div>
Release dates	<div>29 January 2021 (Sundance)</div> <div>16 April 2021 (United States)</div> <div>17 June 2021 (United Kingdom)</div>
Running time	107 minutes ^[3]
Countries	United Kingdom United States
Language	English
Box office	\$1.3 million ^{[4][5]}

- Mark Monero as Frank

Production

In September 2020, Ben Wheatley announced that he had written and directed a horror film over the course of 15 days in August.^{[6][7]} In November 2020, it was announced that the cast included Joel Fry, Ellora Torchia, Hayley Squires and Reece Shearsmith, and that Neon was set to distribute in the United States.^[1]

Clint Mansell, who has worked with the director Ben Wheatley in his previous films, composed the film score. Lakeshore Records & Invada Records has released the soundtrack.

In the Earth was then released on Blu-ray and DVD on 25 October 2021 by Universal Pictures Home Entertainment (through Warner Bros. Home Entertainment) in the UK.

Release

The film had its premiere at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival on January 29, 2021,^[3] and was released in theatres on April 16, 2021.^[8] It was released on video on demand on May 7, 2021.^[9]

Critical response

On Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 80% based on 170 reviews, with an average rating of 6.8/10. The site's critics consensus reads: "*In The Earth*'s bleak kaleidoscope of horror is a meditation on the residual pandemic fears that haunt humanity."^[10] On Metacritic, the film has weighted average score of 63 out of 100, based on 35 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".^[11]

Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian gave the film a score of 4/5 stars, writing that it "brings us back to Wheatley's classic world of occult loopy weirdness and cult Britmovie seediness, with a new topical dimension of pandemic paranoia".^[12] Mark Kermode also gave the film a score of 4/5 stars in his review for The Observer, saying that it "combines humour and horror in terrifically bamboozling fashion, not least during a gruellingly extended amputation sequence that will have you squirming, laughing and wincing all at once."^[13] Linda Marric of The Jewish Chronicle also gave the film a score of 4/5 stars, describing it as "a brilliantly imagined, well acted and thoroughly compelling offering from a writer-director who is a cut above the rest when it comes to small scale horror productions."^[14]

Clarisse Loughrey of The Independent gave the film a score of 3/5 stars, writing: "*In the Earth* is a horror film with razor-sharp teeth, even if the relative flimsiness behind that facade betrays its spur-of-the-moment inception."^[15] Robbie Collin of The Daily Telegraph gave the film a score of 5/5 stars, describing it as "an outrageously entertaining film that feels utterly rooted in the bleak era in which it was made."^[16] Barry Hertz of The Globe and Mail wrote: "While I hope to never, ever watch *In the Earth* again, I must admit to admiring parts of it, too", and praised the film's use of dark humour.^[17] Matt Zoller Seitz of RogerEbert.com gave the film a score of 3/4 stars, writing: "Even though some sections feel rushed and it falls apart at the end, every part of it is memorable."^[18]

Michael O'Sullivan of The Washington Post was more critical of the film, giving it a score of 1.5/4 stars. He wrote that the film's setting "reads more like a peaceful suburban park than the "hostile environment" of the forest primeval it's described as", and added: "the film has nothing interesting to say about pandemics."^[19] Randy Myers of The Mercury News gave the film a score of 2/4 stars, writing: "While it lacks the thematic

punch of [Ben Wheatley's] *High Rise*, *Earth* deserves points for originality, but grows wobbly by its end."^[20] Kevin Maher of *The Times* gave the film a score of 2/5 stars, describing it as ending with "a prolonged blast of rapid-fire psychedelia that seemed like an outrageous narrative cop out."^[21]

Dread Corps, a UK-based horror website, also gave *In the Earth* a more critical review with a rating of 43/100, stating: "*In the Earth* fails to leave a lasting impression and fails to reach its full potential, particularly from such a talented director and cast".^[22]

References

1. Grater, Tom (November 6, 2020). "Ben Wheatley Wraps Secret Horror 'In The Earth' With Joel Fry, Ellora Torchia; Neon & Protagonist Onboard – AFM" (<https://deadline.com/2020/11/ben-wheatley-secret-horror-in-the-earth-joel-fry-ellora-torchia-neon-protagonist-afm-1234610431/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201106165944/https://deadline.com/2020/11/ben-wheatley-secret-horror-in-the-earth-joel-fry-ellora-torchia-neon-protagonist-afm-1234610431/>) from the original on November 6, 2020. Retrieved November 6, 2020.
2. "In the Earth" (<https://www.piff.fr/2021/film-244-In-the-Earth-en>). *Paris International Fantastic Film Festival*. Retrieved August 21, 2022.
3. "In the Earth" (<https://fpg.festival.sundance.org/film-info/5fd0fb5004818b502764788b>). *Sundance Film Festival*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210117215437/https://fpg.festival.sundance.org/film-info/5fd0fb5004818b502764788b>) from the original on January 17, 2021. Retrieved December 15, 2020.
4. "In the Earth" (https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl242385665/?ref=bo_da_table_8). *Box Office Mojo*. Retrieved May 2, 2021.
5. "In the Earth" ([https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/In-the-Earth-\(2021-United-Kingdom\)#tab=summary](https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/In-the-Earth-(2021-United-Kingdom)#tab=summary)). *The Numbers*. Retrieved May 3, 2021.
6. Sharf, Zack (September 30, 2020). "Ben Wheatley Directed a Horror Movie Over 15 Days in Lockdown Ahead of 'Tomb Raider 2'" (<https://www.indiewire.com/2020/09/ben-wheatley-directed-horror-film-15-days-covid-lockdown-1234589729/>). *IndieWire*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201101190042/https://www.indiewire.com/2020/09/ben-wheatley-directed-horror-film-15-days-covid-lockdown-1234589729/>) from the original on November 1, 2020. Retrieved November 6, 2020.
7. Bramesco, Charles (September 30, 2020). "Ben Wheatley is making a COVID horror film between studio projects" (<https://lwlies.com/articles/ben-wheatley-is-making-a-covid-horror-film-on-the-sly-between-studio-projects/>). *Little White Lies*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201104044727/https://lwlies.com/articles/ben-wheatley-is-making-a-covid-horror-film-on-the-sly-between-studio-projects/>) from the original on November 4, 2020. Retrieved November 6, 2020.
8. "Ben Wheatley's Secret Horror Flick 'In the Earth' Gets a Poster and Release Date" (<https://collider.com/ben-wheatley-in-the-earth-release-date-poster-details/amp/>). *Collider*. March 13, 2021. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210318182557/https://collider.com/ben-wheatley-in-the-earth-release-date-poster-details/amp/>) from the original on March 18, 2021. Retrieved March 14, 2021.
9. @NEON (April 30, 2021). "Not all who enter into the woods survive. Ben Wheatley's hallucinogenic trip IN THE EARTH is now playing in theaters and available on Digital next Friday" (<https://x.com/NEON/status/1388270650259767301>) (Tweet). Retrieved April 30, 2021 – via [Twitter](#).

10. "In the Earth (2021)" (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/in_the_earth). *Rotten Tomatoes*. Fandango. Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20210802232758/https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/in_the_earth) from the original on August 2, 2021. Retrieved August 27, 2021.
11. "In the Earth Reviews" (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/in-the-earth>). *Metacritic*. Retrieved August 27, 2021.
12. Bradshaw, Peter (June 16, 2021). "In the Earth review – Ben Wheatley's trippy occult horror is a fine return to form" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/jun/16/in-the-earth-review-ben-wheatley>). *The Guardian*. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
13. Kermode, Mark (June 20, 2021). "In the Earth review – a breath of frightening fresh air from Ben Wheatley" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/jun/20/in-the-earth-review-ben-wheatley>). *The Guardian*. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
14. Marric, Linda (June 17, 2021). "Film review: In the Earth" (<https://www.thejc.com/culture/film/film-review-in-the-earth-1.517832>). *The Jewish Chronicle*. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
15. Loughrey, Clarisse (June 18, 2021). "In the Earth is an old-school, pandemic-set horror film with razor-sharp teeth – review" (<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/culture/in-the-earth-review-b1867646.html>). *The Independent*. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
16. Collin, Robbie (June 17, 2021). "In the Earth, review: an outrageously good folk-horror freak-out for the Covid age" (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/0/in-the-earth-review-outrageously-good-folk-horror-freak-out/>). *The Telegraph*. ISSN 0307-1235 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0307-1235>). Retrieved October 10, 2021.
17. Hertz, Barry (April 13, 2021). "Review: Ben Wheatley's pandemic-made In the Earth is a 'nature is healing' horror fit for a freak-out" (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/reviews/article-ben-wheatleys-pandemic-made-in-the-earth-is-a-nature-is-healing-horror/>). *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
18. Seitz, Matt Zoller. "In the Earth movie review & film summary (2021) | Roger Ebert" (<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/in-the-earth-movie-review-2021>). *RogerEbert.com*. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
19. "Review | Psychedelic folk-horror film is like nothing else you've seen — and that's the problem" (https://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/movies/in-the-earth-movie-review/2021/04/12/177c6cd8-9a45-11eb-b28d-bfa7bb5cb2a5_story.html). *Washington Post*. ISSN 0190-8286 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0190-8286>). Retrieved October 10, 2021.
20. "New movies: Does Netflix have another 'Tiger King' on its hands?" (<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/04/14/new-movies-does-netflix-have-another-tiger-king-on-its-hands>). *The Mercury News*. April 14, 2021. Retrieved October 10, 2021.
21. Maher, Kevin (June 18, 2021). "In the Earth review — shoestring horror with a narrative cop out" (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/in-the-earth-review-shoestring-horror-with-a-narrative-cop-out-fnmvmvpcc>). *The Times*. ISSN 0140-0460 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0140-0460>). Retrieved October 10, 2021.
22. "In the Earth (2021)" (<https://www.dreadcorps.com/posts/in-the-earth-2021>). *www.dreadcorps.com*. Retrieved May 16, 2022.

External links

- *In the Earth* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13429362/>) at IMDb
-

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=In_the_Earth&oldid=1223831572"

▪