

Our Friend is a 2019 American biographical drama film directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite and written by Brad Ingelsby, based on Matthew Teague's 2015 *Esquire* article "The Friend: Love Is Not a Big Enough Word". It stars Jason Segel, Dakota Johnson, and Casey Affleck.^{[4][5]}

Plot

In a flashback to 2000, Matt, a journalist, and Nicole, a theater performer, live in New Orleans. She introduces Matt to Dane, a friend from college working as a camera operator who dreams of becoming a stand-up comic. The 3 become close over the years. In 2008, Matt and Nicole reside in Fairhope with their daughters. Matt works as a war correspondent and spends months overseas, putting a strain on the family. Meanwhile, Dane remains in New Orleans working dead-end jobs. On Thanksgiving, Dane, unhappy with his life, decides to backpack at the Grand Canyon without telling anyone where he is going. Another backpacker recognizes his potential suicidal behavior and offers support. Her gesture of kindness, plus an unexpected voicemail from the Teague family, renews Dane's will to live. In 2010, Matt discovers that Nicole had an affair. With Dane's help, they reconcile their relationship. Dane returns home where he works as a manager at a sporting goods store and begins dating a woman named Kat.

In September 2012, Nicole receives her diagnosis and begins to undergo chemotherapy. Recognizing their need for help, Dane offers to stay with them for a few weeks. However, as Nicole's condition worsens, Dane decides to remain with them, taking on many household duties. Kat struggles to understand Dane's loyalty to the Teague family after weeks turn into months, and

Jason Segel Dakota Johnson and Casey Affleck

OUR FRIEND

"Beautiful. The film the world needs right now."

"A movie terrific performances."

COMING SOON

Official promotional poster

Directed by	<u>Gabriela Cowperthwaite</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Brad Ingelsby</u>
Based on	"The Friend: Love Is Not a Big Enough Word" by Matthew Teague
Produced by	Michael Pruss <u>Teddy Schwarzman</u> Ryan Stowell <u>Kevin J. Walsh</u>
Starring	<u>Jason Segel</u> <u>Dakota Johnson</u> <u>Casey Affleck</u>
Cinematography	Joe Anderson
Edited by	Colin Patton
Music by	<u>Rob Simonsen</u>
Production companies	<u>Black Bear Pictures</u>

they break up. On Christmas, Nicole ruptures her abdomen, and Dane is left to watch over the girls. Following her surgery, the doctor reveals to Matt that Nicole's cancer has spread and gives her approximately six months to live. Nicole decides that she does not want to tell their daughters until her quality of life declines significantly.

Nicole prepares a bucket list which Matt and Dane help her accomplish; such as sitting as Grand Marshal of the Mardi Gras parade, swimming in a historic fountain with all of her friends, and writing letters to her daughters for future life events. As 2013 closes and Nicole becomes sicker, they decide to tell their daughters and Dane listens on in sorrow as the girls cry.

By the summer of 2014, Nicole becomes increasingly irritable, hallucinates, and experiences pain. Realizing that Matt is overwhelmed, Dane takes him hiking. Upon their return, Matt realizes that they are no longer equipped to care for Nicole so he calls a hospice nurse, Faith Pruett. Nicole's friends and family visit with her one last time. One night, Faith alerts them of Nicole's slowing heart rate, and they take her to the beach to watch one final sunrise. Returning home, Nicole dies with Matt and Dane at her side.

Following Nicole's funeral, Dane confines himself to his room and grieves alone. Matt writes an article called "The Friend", which he gives to Dane. Dane finally decides to go home after putting his life on hold to live with the Teague family for over fourteen months. Matt embraces Dane, expressing that simply saying "Thank you" isn't enough. In the epilogue, it is revealed that Matt's article won an award in *Esquire* magazine and that he and his daughters remain in Fairhope. Dane remains close to the Teague family and marries in 2019.

	<u>Scott Free Productions</u> <u>STXfilms</u>
Distributed by	<u>Gravitas Ventures</u>
Release dates	September 6, 2019 (<u>TIFF</u>) January 22, 2021 (United States)
Running time	124 minutes ^[1]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$10 million ^[2]
Box office	\$714,255 ^{[2][3]}

Cast

- Casey Affleck as Matthew Teague
- Dakota Johnson as Nicole Teague
- Jason Segel as Dane Fauchaux
- Jake Owen as Aaron
- Gwendoline Christie as Teresa
- Cherry Jones as Faith Pruett
- Denée Benton as Charlotte
- Isabella Rice as Molly Teague
- Violet McGraw as Evangeline Evie Teague
- Marielle Scott as Kat
- Ahna O'Reilly as Gale
- Azita Ghanizada as Elizabeth
- Sampley Barinaga as Kenny

Production

In January 2019, it was announced Casey Affleck, Dakota Johnson, Jason Segel and Jake Owen had been cast in the drama film *The Friend*, with Gabriela Cowperthwaite directing from a screenplay by Brad Ingelsby, based upon an *Esquire* article by Matthew Teague.^{[6][7]} Gwendoline Christie and Cherry Jones were among additional casting announced in February.^[8]

Filming began on February 19, 2019, in Fairhope, Alabama.^{[9][10]}

Release

The film had its world premiere at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival on September 6, 2019.^[11] It also was screened at AFI Fest on November 16, 2019.^[12] In January 2020, Roadside Attractions and Gravitas Ventures acquired distribution rights to the film.^[13] It was retitled *Our Friend*, and released on January 22, 2021.^[14]

Reception

Critical response

Review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes reported that 85% of 113 critics gave the film a positive review, with an average rating of 7.3/10. The site's critics consensus reads: "*Our Friend*'s occasionally frustrating approach to dramatizing its fact-based story is often offset by a trio of starring performances led by a never-better Jason Segel."^[15] Metacritic assigned the film a weighted average score of 57 out of 100, based on 20 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".^[16]

Ella Kemp from *The Playlist* praised the performances stating: "The Friend is successfully anchored by its three leading players... The sensitivity of these performances, particularly from Affleck and Segel, offers a reckoning on sincere friendship and the limits of devotion that remains with the viewer, long after the days of waiting and the years of pain have finally come to an end."^[17]

Katey Rich of *Vanity Fair* said: "It succeeds by sticking closely to the important specifics ... It's a small-scale human story, precious few of which make it to film these days. It's also, if you're in the market for that kind of thing, an extremely effective tearjerker."^[18] Conversely, Peter Debruge of *Variety* wrote: "So much of the unpleasantness has been scrubbed from the picture, until what remains is precisely the kind of dishonest, sanitized no-help-to-anyone TV-movie version of death that inspired Teague to set the record straight in the first place."^[19]

Sheila O'Malley, writing for Roger Ebert's film criticism website, gave it a 3 star rating.^[20]

References

1. "The Friend" (<https://tiff.net/events/the-friend>). *Toronto International Film Festival*. Retrieved August 6, 2019.
2. "Our Friend" ([https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/Our-Friend-\(2020\)#tab=summary](https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/Our-Friend-(2020)#tab=summary)). *The Numbers*. Retrieved March 8, 2021.
3. "Our Friend" (https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl2321515265/?ref=bo_we_table_8). *Box Office Mojo*. Retrieved March 8, 2021.

4. Dawn, Randee (2021-03-07). "'Our Friend' cast builds tight bonds — just don't ask about the Super Bowl" (<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/awards/story/2021-03-07/our-friend-cast-casey-affleck-jason-segel-dakota-johnson>). *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved 2024-02-19.
5. "Our Friend: a moving cancer drama that highlights the power of friendship" (<https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/entertainment/article/3126465/our-friend-movie-review-cancer-drama-starring-dakota>). *South China Morning Post*. 2021-03-22. Retrieved 2024-02-19.
6. Jason Segel, Dakota Johnson, Casey Affleck To Star In 'The Friend' (<https://deadline.com/2019/01/jason-segel-dakota-johnson-casey-affleck-gabriela-cowperthwaite-brad-ingelsby-the-friend-1202546034/>) *Deadline*
7. Huelsman, Morgan (January 16, 2019). "Jake Owen is Headed To The Big Screen With Casey Affleck & Dakota Johnson" (<https://bobbybones.iheart.com/featured/bobby-bones/content/2019-01-16-jake-owen-is-headed-to-the-big-screen-with-casey-affleck-dakota-johnson/>). *The Bobby Bones Show*. Retrieved February 11, 2019.
8. Gwendoline Christie Joins Dakota Johnson Drama 'The Friend'; Shoot Underway In Alabama On Hot-Seller For STX (<https://deadline.com/2019/02/dakota-johnson-gwendoline-christie-casey-affleck-jake-owen-the-friend-stx-1202561834/>) *Deadline*
9. Casey Affleck, Dakota Johnson star in film being shot in Fairhope (<https://www.wkrg.com/news/baldwin-county/casey-affleck-dakota-johnson-star-in-film-being-shot-in-fairhope/1776565601>) *WKRG*
10. "The Friend" (<https://productionlist.com/production/the-friend-2/>). *Production List*. 18 February 2019. Retrieved February 18, 2019.
11. Lang, Brent (July 23, 2019). "Toronto Film Festival: 'Joker,' 'Ford v Ferrari,' 'Hustlers' Among Big Premieres" (<https://variety.com/2019/film/news/toronto-film-festival-joker-ford-v-ferrari-hustlers-lineup-1203275868/>). *Variety*. Retrieved July 23, 2019.
12. "The Friend" (<https://fest.afi.com/2019/special-screenings-2019/the-friend#elevent>). *AFI Fest*. Retrieved October 30, 2019.
13. Hipes, Patrick (January 23, 2020). "Toronto Title 'The Friend' Lands At Roadside Attractions And Gravitas Ventures , Will Hit Theaters In Fall" (<https://deadline.com/2020/01/the-friend-release-date-dakota-johnson-jason-segel-casey-affleck-movie-roadside-attractions-gravitas-ventures-1202838104/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Retrieved January 23, 2020.
14. D'Alessandro, Anthony (November 23, 2020). "'Our Friend' Trailer Offers First Look At Heartbreaking Dramedy With Dakota Johnson, Casey Affleck And Jason Segel; Gravitas Ventures Sets Release Date" (<https://deadline.com/video/our-friend-trailer-gravitas-ventures-dakota-johnson-casey-affleck-jason-segel-gabriela-cowperthwaite-brad-ingelsby-matthew-teague-release-date/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Retrieved November 23, 2020.
15. "Our Friend (2019)" (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/our_friend), *Rotten Tomatoes*, Fandango, retrieved October 10, 2021
16. "Our Friend Reviews" (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/our-friend>). *Metacritic*. Retrieved January 27, 2021.
17. "'The Friend': An Affecting Look At Love, Cancer & Heartbreaking Limits Of Devotion [TIFF Review]" (<https://theplaylist.net/friend-segel-affleck-johnson-review-20190907/>). *theplaylist.net*. Retrieved 2019-10-16.
18. "The Friend Is a Radically Empathetic Cancer Drama" (<https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/09/the-friend-movie-review-casey-affleck-dakota-johnson-jason-segel>). *Vanity Fair*. Retrieved 2019-10-16.
19. Debruge, Peter (2019-09-07). "Toronto Film Review: 'The Friend' " (<https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/the-friend-review-1203326629/>). *Variety*. Retrieved 2019-10-16.
20. O'Malley, Sheila. "Our Friend movie review & film summary (2021) | Roger Ebert" (<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/our-friend-movie-review-2021>). *rogerebert.com*. Retrieved 2022-07-11.

External links

- *Our Friend* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9608818/>) at IMDb
 - "The Friend: Love Is Not a Big Enough Word" (Esquire article that served as source for film) (<https://www.esquire.com/lifestyle/a34905/matthew-teague-wife-cancer-essay/>)
-

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Our_Friend&oldid=1209001782"

▪