

Shazam! Fury of the Gods

Shazam! Fury of the Gods is a 2023 American superhero film based on the DC character Shazam. Produced by New Line Cinema, DC Studios, and the Safran Company, and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures, it is the sequel to *Shazam!* (2019) and the 12th installment in the DC Extended Universe (DCEU). Directed by David F. Sandberg and written by Henry Gayden and Chris Morgan, it stars Zachary Levi, Asher Angel, Jack Dylan Grazer, Rachel Zegler, Adam Brody, Ross Butler, D. J. Cotrona, Grace Caroline Currey, Meagan Good, Lucy Liu, Djimon Hounsou, and Helen Mirren. In the film, Billy Batson / Shazam and his foster siblings fight the Daughters of Atlas.

A sequel to *Shazam!* began development shortly after its release in April 2019, with Gayden returning as writer, and Morgan joining soon after to revise Gayden's screenplay. Sandberg and Levi (Shazam) were also set to return by that December. The title and the rest of the returning cast were confirmed in August 2020, with Zegler, Mirren and Liu cast as the daughters of Atlas in early 2021. Filming began that May in Atlanta, Georgia, and concluded in August.

Shazam! Fury of the Gods premiered at the Fox Village Theatre in Los Angeles on March 14, 2023, and was released in the United States on March 17. The film received mixed reviews from critics, who considered it inferior to its predecessor. It was also a box-office bomb,^[a] grossing \$134 million worldwide against a production budget of \$110–125 million.

Plot

Two years after Thaddeus Sivana's defeat,^[b] Hespera and Kalypso, daughters of the Titan Atlas, break into the Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece and steal the Wizard's broken staff.^[c] They take it to the Wizard, who was imprisoned in the Gods' Realm, and force him to repair the staff to reactivate its powers.

In Philadelphia, Billy Batson and his "Shazamily" are drifting apart as they grow up and pursue their own interests. Billy is worried about being kicked out of the Vasquez family when he turns eighteen. In a dream, the Wizard warns Billy about the Daughters of Atlas, prompting the Shazamily to begin researching them.

Shazam! Fury of the Gods



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>David F. Sandberg</u>
Written by	<u>Henry Gayden</u> <u>Chris Morgan</u>
Based on	<u>Characters</u> by <u>DC</u>
Produced by	<u>Peter Safran</u>
Starring	<u>Zachary Levi</u> <u>Asher Angel</u> <u>Jack Dylan Grazer</u> <u>Rachel Zegler</u> <u>Adam Brody</u> <u>Ross Butler</u> <u>D. J. Cotrona</u> <u>Grace Caroline Currey</u> <u>Meagan Good</u> <u>Lucy Liu</u>

Freddy Freeman meets a new girl named Anne, to whom he shows off his superhero self. Hespera and Kalypso arrive with the staff and steal Freddy's powers, and Anne is revealed to be their youngest sister, Anthea. Billy and the Shazamily attempt to save Freddy, but the daughters kidnap him and place an indestructible dome around the city, trapping everyone inside. Freddy is imprisoned with the Wizard in the Gods' Realm.

The Shazamily enter the Rock of Eternity, where they encounter a sentient pen named Steve, which they use to draft a letter to negotiate with Hespera for Freddy's release. Billy meets Hespera at a local restaurant, and, while the meeting is initially cordial, she and Kalypso soon fight the Shazamily. Pedro loses his powers during the fight, while Hespera is captured and taken to the Rock. Having planned her capture, Hespera easily breaks out and steals the Golden Apple, the seed of the Tree of Life. Meanwhile, Freddy and the Wizard attempt to escape the Gods' Realm with a sympathetic Anthea's help, just as Hespera returns with the Apple. The Daughters argue as Hespera and Anthea want to use the Apple to revive their realm, while Kalypso wishes to plant it on Earth to destroy it. Freddy steals the Apple but is discovered. Billy and the Shazamily show up, and Freddy reacquires his powers.

Billy and the Shazamily emerge with the Wizard in the Vasquez home, where they reveal their secret identities to their foster parents. Kalypso appears with a dragon named Ladon to acquire the Apple and destroy the Vasquez house. The family attempts to keep the apple away from Kalypso, but everyone except Billy loses their powers in the skirmish. Kalypso retrieves the Apple and uses it to plant the Tree at Citizens Bank Park, which spawns various monsters to attack the city. Hespera and Anthea object to their sister's destructive plan, but Kalypso mortally wounds Hespera and de-powers Anthea. Billy, in despair, asks the Wizard to revoke his powers, but the Wizard assures him that he is a true hero who is worthy of them.

Heeding the Wizard's words, Billy flies off to stop Kalypso, while the Shazamily enlists the help of unicorns to fend off the other monsters. Billy persuades a dying Hespera to help him stop Kalypso. Realizing the dome reacts violently to his lightning, Billy lures Kalypso to the park while Hespera shrinks the dome to contain them. Billy sacrifices himself to stop Kalypso and Ladon by overloading the staff with electricity, destroying the Tree and Kalypso's army with them. Hespera acknowledges Billy as a true god before succumbing to her wounds, causing the dome to disappear.

Anthea takes Billy's grieving family to the Gods' Realm for his burial. Diana Prince, the Amazon princess with godly powers, appears and repairs the staff, imbuing it with her power and using it to revive the Gods' Realm, restore Anthea's powers, and resurrect Billy. Billy, in turn, uses the staff to restore his siblings' powers. The Shazamily rebuild their home while Anthea and Freddy start a relationship and the Wizard takes up residence on Earth.

	<u>Djimon Hounsou</u> <u>Helen Mirren</u>
Cinematography	<u>Gyula Pados</u>
Edited by	Michel Aller ^[1]
Music by	<u>Christophe Beck</u>
Production companies	<u>New Line Cinema</u> <u>DC Studios</u> <u>The Safran Company</u>
Distributed by	<u>Warner Bros. Pictures</u>
Release dates	March 14, 2023 (<u>Fox Village Theatre</u>) March 17, 2023 (United States)
Running time	130 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$110–125 million ^{[3][4]}
Box office	\$134 million ^[5]

In a mid-credits scene, Emilia Harcourt and John Economos invite Billy into the Justice Society on behalf of Amanda Waller; he accepts, then declines because he states that he "just want[s] to be in the Wonder Woman group."

In a post-credits scene, a still-incarcerated Sivana encounters Mister Mind once again, enraged that he has not begun enacting their plan.

Cast

- Zachary Levi and Asher Angel as Billy Batson / Shazam:
The champion of an ancient wizard, who possesses "the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Hercules, the stamina of Atlas, the power of Zeus, the courage of Achilles, and the speed of Mercury".^[6]
- Jack Dylan Grazer and Adam Brody as Freddy Freeman:
Billy's physically disabled foster brother, who is a fan of superheroes. Grazer portrays Freddy's regular form, while Brody portrays his adult superhero form.^[7]
- Helen Mirren as Hespera: The oldest daughter of Atlas, who has elemental abilities.^[8]
- Lucy Liu as Kalypso: The middle daughter of Atlas, who has the power of chaos.^[9]
- Rachel Zegler as Anthea / Anne: The youngest daughter of Atlas, who has reality manipulation abilities, and Freddy's love interest.^[10]
- Ross Butler and Ian Chen as Eugene Choi:
Billy's younger foster brother who is an obsessive gamer. Butler portrays Eugene's adult superhero form, while Chen portrays his regular form.^[11]
- D. J. Cotrona and Jovan Armand as Pedro Peña:
Billy's older foster brother, who is gay,^[12] shy, and sensitive. Cotrona portrays Pedro's adult superhero form, while Armand portrays his regular form.^[11]
- Grace Caroline Currey as Mary Bromfield:
Billy's mature and academically driven older foster sister. Currey also portrays Mary's adult superhero form, replacing Michelle Borth from the first film.^{[11][13]}
- Meagan Good and Faith Herman as Darla Dudley:
Billy's good-natured younger foster sister. Good portrays Darla's adult superhero form, while Herman portrays her regular form.^[7]
- Djimon Hounsou as Shazam: The last surviving member of the Council of Wizards, who bestowed his powers on Billy Batson, after designating the boy as his champion.^[14]

Billy's foster family also includes Marta Milans and Cooper Andrews as Rosa and Victor Vásquez, the foster parents of Billy and his siblings.^{[15][16]} Reprising their DCEU roles in the film while uncredited, Gal Gadot appears as Diana Prince / Wonder Woman,^[17] alongside Jennifer Holland as Emilia Harcourt and Steve Agee as John Economos in the mid-credits scene, and Mark Strong as Dr. Thaddeus Sivana and director David F. Sandberg as the voice of Mister Mind in the post-credits scene.^[18] Sandberg also cameos as a civilian who is attacked by one of Kalypso's monsters. Rizwan Manji, who portrayed Jamil in the DCEU television series Peacemaker, appears as an unnamed docent.^[19] P. J. Byrne briefly appears as Dr. Dario Bava, a pediatrician whom Billy confused as a therapist, while Diedrich Bader briefly appears as Mr. Geckle, a school teacher. Sandberg's wife Lotta Losten, who previously portrayed Dr. Lynn Crosby in the first film, cameos as a nurse who is saved by Shazam.^[20] Michael Gray, who portrayed Billy Batson in the

1970s television series, makes a brief cameo as a man on the street, calling the transformed Billy "Captain Marvel".^[21] Natalia Safran, wife of producer Peter Safran, cameos as a driver with kittens. CNN news anchor Wolf Blitzer makes a cameo appearance as himself.

Production

Development

With the successful opening of *Shazam!* in April 2019, Henry Gayden was revealed to be returning to write the script for a sequel. Director David F. Sandberg and producer Peter Safran were also expected to return.^[22] According to Sandberg, the plot point of Fawcett City, Philadelphia being trapped under a dome was inspired by *The Simpsons Movie* (2007).^[23] Later that month, Michelle Borth, who portrayed the adult superhero form of Mary Bromfield in the first film, said she signed a five-picture deal for the role and was expected to return for at least one sequel.^[24] Zachary Levi confirmed in June that he was returning to star as Shazam in the sequel, and revealed that writing had begun ahead of a planned filming start in mid-2020.^[25] Sandberg and much of the first film's crew were confirmed to return in December 2019, when New Line Cinema and Warner Bros. Pictures scheduled the sequel for release on April 1, 2022.^[6] This was delayed in April 2020 to November 4, 2022. due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^[26] In October 2020, the release date was once again shifted to June 2, 2023. Later release dates were December 16, 2022 and December 21, 2022. In August 2022, the final release date of March 17, 2023 was announced.



Pre-production

In June 2020, Marta Milans confirmed that she would reprise her role as foster mother Rosa Vásquez from the first film, and revealed that filming had been delayed by the pandemic.^[15] The film's title was revealed to be *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* during the virtual DC FanDome event in August 2020, with returning cast members confirmed including Asher Angel as teenager Billy Batson and Levi as his adult superhero counterpart, Jack Dylan Grazer as Frederick "Freddy" Freeman and Adam Brody as his adult counterpart, Faith Herman as Darla Dudley and Meagan Good as her adult counterpart, Grace Fulton as Mary Bromfield, Ian Chen as Eugene Choi and Ross Butler as his adult counterpart, and Jovan Armand as Pedro Peña with D. J. Cotrona as his adult counterpart.^{[7][11]} The next month, Levi said filming would begin in early 2021.^[11]

The film's release was delayed again in October 2020, to June 2, 2023.^[27] The following month, Mark Strong said he was waiting to hear if he would be returning as Dr. Thaddeus Sivana in the sequel.^[28] In January 2021, Good said filming would begin that May,^[29] and Rachel Zegler was cast in an undisclosed "key role" the next month.^[30] Following her exhaustive filming schedule for Maria in *West Side Story* (2021), Zegler booked a meeting with the DCEU casting director Rich Delia, who was thinking about her for Kara Zor-El / Supergirl in *The Flash* (2023). Zegler lost out to Sasha Calle, but Delia told her that he

thought that she could audition for Anthea in the *Shazam* sequel. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Zegler read on for the role through Zoom with Sandberg and Dylan Grazer, doing a chemistry test with the latter, who was instrumental in her casting due to Safran giving him the option to choose and Dylan Grazer chose Zegler out of admiration for her work in the *West Side Story* (1961) remake.^[31] Safran was producing the film through his company the Safran Company, while Geoff Johns was also set to produce.^[30] Johns was ultimately credited as an executive producer.^[32] In March, Helen Mirren was cast as Hespera, a daughter of Atlas, with Zegler reported to be playing Hespera's sister,^{[33][8]} Anthea.^[10] Lucy Liu was cast as Kalypso, another daughter of Atlas, the next month.^[9] Strong said in May that he would not appear in the sequel,^[34] and Cooper Andrews was confirmed to reprise his role as foster father Víctor Vázquez from the first film.^[16]

Chris Morgan contributed to the film's script.^[35] Early during the film's development, Sandberg wanted to bring back Mister Mind, a villainous character teased in the mid-credits scene of the first film whom Sandberg voiced, for the sequel in a bigger role, but his inclusion was ultimately dropped due to it requiring too much of the film's runtime, aside that he had to drop several other elements to not "overstuff" the film.^[36] In addition to bringing Gal Gadot back as Diana Prince / Wonder Woman, Sandberg initially planned to have cameo appearances of Kal-El / Clark Kent / Superman and Bruce Wayne / Batman by showing Superman unsuccessfully trying to break the dome while Batman just stands there and looks at Superman.^[23]

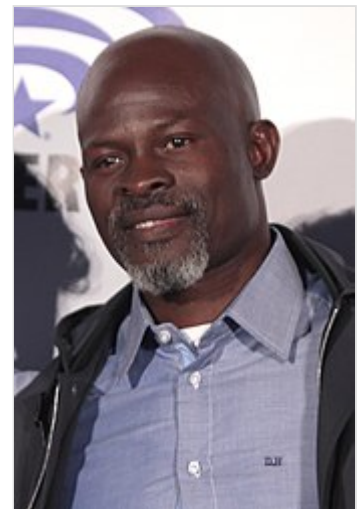
Filming

Principal photography began on May 26, 2021,^{[29][37]} in Atlanta, Georgia,^[38] with Gyula Pados serving as cinematographer.^[39] Production on the film was delayed from an initial mid-2020 start due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^{[25][26]} In June, Sandberg revealed that Fulton was also portraying the adult superhero form of Mary in the film, replacing Borth, with Fulton's hair and makeup adjusted for the superhero version.^[13] A month later, set photos revealed that Djimon Hounsou would be reprising his role as the wizard Shazam.^[14] Filming concluded on August 31, 2021.^[40]

Post-production

In March 2022, Warner Bros. adjusted its release schedule due to the impacts of COVID-19 on the workload of visual effects vendors. *The Flash* and *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom* were moved from 2022 to 2023 to allow time for their visual effects work to be completed, while *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* was moved up to *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*'s

previous release date of December 16, 2022, because it would be ready for release earlier.^[41] In April, the film's release date was pushed back five days to December 21 to avoid competition with *Avatar: The Way of Water*.^[42] Rizwan Manji was revealed to be appearing as an unnamed character in July 2022. Manji was suggested for the role by Safran, who also produced the DCEU television series *Peacemaker* in which Manji portrayed Jamil. Sandberg approved the casting, despite the series being set in the same universe as the film, because he thought Manji only had a small role in *Peacemaker*. He was surprised to learn that Manji has a significant role and appears in the opening title sequence of the series.^[19] *Peacemaker* creator James Gunn suggested that Manji's character in *Fury of the Gods* could be Jamil's brother.^[43] In August,



Djimon Hounsou returned for the role as Shazam in the sequel

after WarnerMedia merged with Discovery, Inc. to form Warner Bros. Discovery, the studio delayed the film to March 17, 2023 (again taking *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*'s previous release date), to help spread out the marketing and distribution costs for its feature films.^[44] This also moved *Fury of the Gods* away from *Avatar: The Way of Water*.^[45] By the start of November, Sandberg confirmed that the final cut was complete and ready for release.^[46]

The final wave of the film's marketing campaign revealed Gal Gadot's cameo appearance as Diana Prince / Wonder Woman, reprising her role from prior DCEU movies. Sandberg was upset by this reveal, as he intended the cameo to be a surprise. The film's mid-credits scene sees Jennifer Holland and Steve Agee reprise their DCEU roles as Emilia Harcourt and John Economos. This scene was originally the post-credits scene of *Shazam!* spin-off film *Black Adam* (2022), and featured members of the Justice Society of America from that film, but *Black Adam* star Dwayne Johnson "vetoed" both moves, forcing Safran to bring in Holland and Agee. Strong and Sandberg reprise their roles in the film's post-credits scene.^{[47][48]}

The visual effects were made by DNEG, Pixomondo, Stereo D, Weta FX, Territory Studio, Method Studios, Static Chair Productions, RISE VFX, and Scanline VFX.^[49]

Music

In June 2022, Sandberg revealed that composer and conductor Benjamin Wallfisch was unable to return from the first film due to scheduling conflicts with another DC film, *The Flash* (2023); his replacement, Christophe Beck, had already begun work by then.^[50] A single, "Shazam! Fury of the Gods (Main Title Theme)" was released as a digital single by WaterTower Music on February 23, 2023, and the soundtrack album was released on March 10.^[51]

Marketing

Sandberg promoted the sequel during a virtual panel at the August 2020 DC FanDome event, announcing the film's title and returning cast.^[7] In June 2021, after a week of filming, Sandberg released a short clip featuring Levi in his new costume for the film; this came after several set photos of the costume were leaked that week.^[52] To head off of further costume leaks, Sandberg released images of Levi, Brody, Good, Currey, Butler and Cotrona in their new superhero costumes at the end of the month.^[53] Behind-the-scenes footage and concept art was revealed during the 2021 DC FanDome event in October, with *io9*'s Rob Bricken and *Collider*'s Gregory Lawrence expressing excitement at the new cast members, characters, locations and mythology.^{[54][55]} Levi, Angel, Grazer and Mirren promoted the film at Warner Bros.' CinemaCon panel in April 2022, where new footage was shown.^[56] The film was also promoted at San Diego Comic-Con in July, where the first trailer was released.^[57]

On March 14, Skittles partnered with Warner Bros. and DC Films to create commercials for the film.^[58] McFarlane Toys also partnered to create promotional toys, including action figures and dolls.^[59]

Release

Theatrical

Shazam! Fury of the Gods premiered at Fox Village Theatre^[60] in Hollywood on March 14, 2023, and was released by Warner Bros. Pictures in the United States on March 17, 2023.^[44]

It was originally set for release on April 1, 2022^[6] before being delayed to November 4, 2022,^[26] and then to June 2, 2023, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^[27] It was then moved up to December 16, 2022, as it was ready for release sooner than other DC films delayed by the pandemic. That date was previously given to *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*.^[41] The release date was pushed back five days to December 21 in April 2022 to avoid competing with 20th Century Studios' *Avatar: The Way of Water*,^[42] before being moved to *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*'s date again (March 2023) in August 2022 when Warner Bros. Discovery was trying to spread out marketing and distribution costs.^[44] This meant **IMAX** screens occupied by *Avatar* would be available for *Shazam!*.^[45]

Home media

Shazam! Fury of the Gods was released on premium video-on-demand services on April 7, 2023,^[61] ten days earlier than its scheduled April 17 release date.^[62] It was released on **Ultra HD Blu-ray**, **Blu-ray** and **DVD** on May 23, 2023.^[63] It began streaming on **Max** on the same day, becoming one of the launch titles of the rebranded service.^[64]

Reception

Box office

Shazam! Fury of the Gods grossed \$57.6 million in the United States and Canada, and \$76.4 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$134 million.^[5] Due to its \$125 million production budget, the film was labeled a **box-office bomb**.^[a]

In the United States and Canada, *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* was initially projected to gross \$35–40 million from 4,071 theaters in its opening weekend.^[69] The film made \$11.7 million (including \$3.4 million from Thursday night previews), lowering weekend estimates to \$30 million. It went on to debut to \$30.1 million (52.2% of total gross), topping the box office but marking a 44% drop from the first film's opening weekend (\$53.5 million) and the third-worst of the DCEU (though the two lower films, *The Suicide Squad* and *Wonder Woman 1984*, had their releases affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and were simultaneously released on **HBO Max**).^{[70][71]} *Boxoffice Pro*'s Shawn Robbins called the debut "a soft start, there's no other way to put it," noting the recent underperformances of other comic book films.^[72] *The Hollywood Reporter* called the domestic opening "one of the worst starts for a major Hollywood superhero film" and also lamented the film's \$35 million international opening from 78 countries (including "bombing" in China with \$4.3 million).^[3] *The A.V. Club* noted that it premiered on a weekend where other films experienced dull box office numbers.^[73]

In its second weekend, the film dropped 69% to \$9.3 million, finishing second behind newcomer *John Wick: Chapter 4*.^[74] It made \$4.6 million in its third weekend, dropping to sixth place.^[75]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website **Rotten Tomatoes**, 48% of 260 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.6/10. The website's consensus reads: "More unfocused and less satisfying than its predecessor, *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* still retains almost enough of the source material's silly charm to save the day."^[76] **Metacritic**, which uses a **weighted average**, assigned the film a score of 47 out of 100,

based on 49 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[77] Audiences surveyed by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B+" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled by PostTrak gave it a 78% positive score, with 64% saying they would definitely recommend it.^[70]

Frank Scheck of *The Hollywood Reporter* gave the film a mixed review, writing: "Like some children who aren't so cute anymore after they've grown up a little, this follow-up lacks much of the appeal of its predecessor. While the film provides the elaborate action-set pieces, colorful villains and save-the-world plot mechanics expected of the comic-book-movie genre, some of the magic is missing."^[78] *Chicago Sun-Times*'s Richard Roeper gave the film two out of four stars, writing, "As we pick up Billy/Shazam's story about four years later, it quickly becomes apparent this is just going to be a by-the-numbers, second-tier adventure with only a few small chuckles and one or two genuinely touching moments. The rest is just noise."^[79]

Accolades

Shazam! Fury of the Gods received nominations for Golden Fleece and Best Wildposts at the 2023 Golden Trailer Awards.^{[80][81]} At the 44th Golden Raspberry Awards, the film was nominated for Worst Picture, Worst Actress for Mirren, Worst Supporting Actress for Liu and Worst Screenplay.^[82]

Future

In January 2023, DC Studios co-CEOs James Gunn and Safran said there was potential for Levi to reprise his role in the new franchise, the DC Universe (DCU), but a decision on the character had not been made.^[83] Sandberg said the next month that he was told his films did not contradict Gunn and Safran's plans and that the character's potential return would depend on the film's reception.^[84] Following the film's disappointing box-office returns, Levi cast doubt on his return.^[85]

Notes

- a. Attributed to multiple references.^{[3][65][66][67][68]}
- b. As depicted in *Shazam!* (2019)
- c. The staff was broken in half by Billy Batson in *Shazam!* (2019)

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External links

- Official website (<https://www.shazam-movie.net/>) 
- Shazam! Fury of the Gods* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10151854/>) at *IMDb*

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