

*Foe* is a 2023 science fiction psychological thriller film directed by Australian director Garth Davis, from a screenplay he co-wrote with Canadian writer Iain Reid, based on Reid's 2018 novel of the same name. An Australian-U.S. co-production filmed in Australia, the film stars Saoirse Ronan, Paul Mescal, and Aaron Pierre. The core story concerns a young couple, Hen and Junior, having marital issues when Junior is called to serve on a space station.

*Foe* premiered at the 2023 New York Film Festival on September 30, 2023. It was released in the United States by Amazon MGM Studios on October 6, 2023, and in Australia by Transmission Films on November 2, 2023. In early 2024, the film was available to stream on Amazon Prime Video.

## Plot

The year is 2065. Fresh water and habitable land are scarce, the cities overcrowded, the rural places abandoned. A young couple, Hen and Junior, continue their life on a desolate farm. As the film opens, Hen stands in the shower, collecting water from the bathtub for reuse. She is sobbing uncontrollably. A man knocks at the front door.

The man introduces himself as Terrance. He says he represents OuterMore, a corporation organizing an off-world colony. There was a lottery, he says. Junior made the shortlist. Training takes two years. Stunned, Junior asks what will happen if he refuses. Terrance sighs. He speaks of the days. The wars. Conscription. But that, he smiles, is just a warning. Then he catches himself. This is good. Junior will be a hero.

When Terrance leaves Hen goes straight to bed. She asks Junior to sleep in the guest room. Taken aback, Junior asks: did Hen know Terrance was coming? And what of the way Terrance looked at Hen? Met with silence, Junior leaves the bedroom.

For a time Hen and Junior live almost separate lives. Then one morning Hen approaches Junior's bed. She stares at his sleeping body. She takes his hand and places it against her. They make love. Afterward, Junior says he has always been

Foe	
<span></span> <div>Theatrical release poster</div>	
Directed by	<u>Garth Davis</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Iain Reid</u> <div>Garth Davis</div>
Based on	<i><u>Foe</u></i> <div>by <u>Iain Reid</u></div>
Produced by	<u>Kerry Kohansky-Roberts</u> <div><u>Garth Davis</u> <u>Emile Sherman</u> <u>Iain Canning</u></div>
Starring	<u>Saoirse Ronan</u> <div><u>Paul Mescal</u> <u>Aaron Pierre</u></div>
Cinematography	<u>Mátyás Erdély</u>
Edited by	<u>Peter Sciberras</u>
Music by	<u>Park Jiha</u> <div><u>Oliver Coates</u> <u>Agnes Obel</u></div>

happy and has never doubted their marriage. For a time things are alright. Hen cries now and then. One day she finds herself standing in the field by the tree trying to push her face into a smile. But mostly things are alright.

Terrance returns. He says Junior is scheduled to leave in two weeks. Hen and Junior attempt to protest but Terrance is firm. He says he must stay in the house to observe Junior. Hen and Junior's protests become increasingly feeble and then, eventually, they become silent.

A montage shows Terrance living in the house, interviewing Junior, administering unusual tests. One night Terrance and Hen drink and carouse while Junior looks on helplessly. Another night, Junior notices an unusual bug. It is not moving. Junior points this out to Hen. She says nothing. They see a fire in the distance. Hen gazes, spellbound. Junior begins running toward the fire. Startled, Hen chases him. Junior keeps running and just as he appears to run into the fire two shadowy figures tackle him.

Junior awakes in bandages. Hen and Terrance are standing over him. Junior was injured, they say. The fire was started by men burning an old barn. Terrance intensifies his monitoring, explaining that Junior's replacement will need to know what Junior knows. Wandering through the house, Junior finds a recording of Terrance interviewing Hen. In the recording Hen frets over how she has lost parts of who she is and is scared she won't ever get them back. Terrance's voice is heard assuring her that the replacement will be all but identical.

Now Junior is declining, paranoid, unsure of himself. Junior sees shadowy figures on the perimeter of the property and chases them away with a shotgun. Terrance puts metal wristbands on Junior. He says they are for monitoring Junior's hydration.

The next morning Hen sits waiting in the kitchen. She is wearing a nice dress. Outside, a vehicle approaches. Junior steps into the kitchen and embraces Hen, saying how he has missed her. After a moment, they walk into the next room where Terrance and a team from OuterMore are working. Junior stares in fascination at a body shackled to the floor. It is identical to his. Terrance talks, marveling at OuterMore's success. He says they never expected Hen and the replacement to fall in love. He says people will write about it for years. Members of the OuterMore team approach the shackled figure with a syringe.

Outside, while the team from OuterMore tends to the dead body, Hen lays in the dirt weeping.

Back together, Hen and the real Junior try to rekindle their relationship. But they are different now and it is no good. One morning Junior wakes to find that Hen has left. For a time Junior goes on with his life. Terrance is seen visiting the house. After some time, Hen appears to return. Now, Hen sits still and upright and does not cry. Junior is happier and it seems Hen is happier too and they make love in the evening and drink beer on the porch. One morning Hen notices an unusual bug. It is not moving. Hen points this out. Junior says nothing.

<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Anonymous Content</u> <u>See-Saw Films</u> <u>I Am That Productions</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Amazon MGM Studios</u> (United States) <u>Transmission Films</u> (Australia)
<b>Release dates</b>	September 30, 2023 (NYFF) October 6, 2023 (United States) November 2, 2023 (Australia)
<b>Running time</b>	110 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Countries</b>	Australia United States

In the city on the other side of the valley, the real Hen gazes out the window of a plane as the crew makes preparations for take-off.

## Cast

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- [Saoirse Ronan](#) as Hen
- [Paul Mescal](#) as Junior, Hen's husband
- [Aaron Pierre](#) as Terrance

## Production

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It was announced in June 2021 that [Garth Davis](#) would be directing the film in addition to co-writing with the author of the novel, [Iain Reid](#). [Saoirse Ronan](#), [Paul Mescal](#), and [Lakeith Stanfield](#) were announced to star.<sup>[2]</sup> In October, [Aaron Pierre](#) was cast to replace Stanfield.<sup>[3]</sup>

Filming began in [Winton, Victoria](#), Australia, in January 2022<sup>[4]</sup> and wrapped in [South Australia](#) in April 2022.

## Release

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[Amazon Studios](#) entered negotiations for the distribution rights in July 2021.<sup>[5]</sup> On August 15, 2023, along with first look images of the film, it was revealed that it would be released by Amazon Studios on October 6, 2023, in the United States, before the distributor rebranded to Amazon MGM Studios following their 2022 acquisition of [Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer](#).<sup>[6][7]</sup>

The film premiered at the [2023 New York Film Festival](#) as part of the Spotlight Gala<sup>[8]</sup> on September 30.<sup>[9]</sup>

The film was scheduled to be released in Australia by [Transmission Films](#) on October 19,<sup>[10]</sup> before it was delayed to November 2, 2023.<sup>[11]</sup>

*Foe* was released on [Prime Video](#) on January 5, 2024.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Reception

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On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), 24% of 111 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4.7/10. The website's consensus reads: "Paul Mescal and Saoirse Ronan give it all they've got, but they're ultimately undone by *Foe*'s clunky sci-fi trappings and ponderous attempts to generate psychological thrills."<sup>[13]</sup> [Metacritic](#), which uses a [weighted average](#), assigned the film a score of 44 out of 100, based on 34 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.<sup>[14]</sup>

Luke Goodsell wrote for [ABC Arts](#) after its release in Australia: "Oscar nominees Ronan and Mescal are both charismatic, gripping performers, and they give Hen and Junior a rich sense of lived-in love and loathing. But despite the stars' best, hot-and-bothered exertion, Davis and Reid's screenplay eventually hangs them out to dry".<sup>[15]</sup>

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## External links

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- *Foe* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8258502/>) at IMDb
  - Interview with Garth Davis (<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/the-screen-show/the-screen-show/102961018>) on *The Screen Show*, ABC Listen, November 2, 2023
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