

# The Past

Cert 12A France 2013 130 mins

## Crew

Director/  
Screenplay Asghar Farhadi  
Cinematography Mahmoud Kalari  
Film Editing Juliette Welfling  
Original music Evgueni Galperine /  
Youli Galperine

## Cast

Bérénice Bejo Marie Brisson  
Tahar Rahim Samir  
Ali Mosaffa Ahmad  
Pauline Burlet Lucie  
Elyes Aguis Fouad

## Synopsis

*France, the present. Following a four year separation, Ahmad, an Iranian man returns to Paris at the request of his French in order to finalize their divorce.*

*To Ahmad's dismay Marie expects him to stay in the chaotic house she shares with her new partner Samir and their three children from previous marriages, including Samir's son Fouad and Marie's 16 year old daughter Lucie.*

*Ahmad's presence quickly exacerbates tensions in the family, particularly when he tries to investigate the reason for Lucie's anger with her mother - and discovers some uncomfortable secrets from the past.*



## Booking Information

**Distributor:** Artificial Eye

**DVD bookings:** via BFI Bookings Unit

0207 957 8935

bookings.films@bfi.org.uk

www.bfi.org.uk/distribution

**Available:** June 2014



## Reviews

.....*The Past* is Farhadi's first film since his Oscar-winning 2011 drama *A Separation*, and also the first he has made outside his native Iran, although the obvious ease with which he's relocated suggests the grand Farhadian theme – the hunt for truth in a tangle of intimate deceptions – is less of an Iranian story than a human one.

Sure enough, Ahmad soon realises that some great, unspoken sorrow is looming over Marie's household, and he discovers that his soon-to-be-ex-wife has built her new relationship on a secret too cold and sad to be shared. To say any more would be to prise apart Farhadi's watchmaker plotting: the film is less of a straight melodrama than an emotional whodunit, with Ahmad digging into the last few years of Marie and Samir's lives to make sense of their unhappy present.

Bejo is on terrifically fiery form, and the child actors' performances are intense and persuasive, but Farhadi keeps his cast on a tight rein, and every outburst is choreographed and shot with maximal control. The story plays out chronologically, with no flashbacks, which means you leave the film having never glimpsed the one thing its title promises. But even so, you can sense the weight of Marie and Samir's personal histories around their shoulders, and also their children's growing awareness that this burden is also meant for them.

Farhadi's genius is in making the past something to be passed on, like an unwanted heirloom: it sits in a cupboard, gathering dust, but is never forgotten.

**Robbie Collin, *The Telegraph*, March 2014**

.....It is an intricate and often brilliant drama, with restrained and intelligent performances; there is an elegantly patterned mosaic of detail, unexpected plot turns, suspenseful twists and revelations. The narrative structure itself is perhaps a little over-determined; there is some melodrama in the tragedy, and the continued absence from the screen of one important character perhaps makes the final scene a little easy to guess. It is often rather like a stage-play, but interestingly and bracingly so. The continuing force and intelligence of Farhadi's film-making is compelling...

**Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*, May 2013 (at Cannes Film Festival)**

## Awards, commendations, accolades

Cannes Film Festival 2013: **Best Actress (Bérénice Bejo); Prize of the Ecumenical Jury;** Nominated for Palme d'Or

Palm Springs Film Festival 2014: **FIPRESCI Prize - Best Actress**

Golden Globes 2014: Nominated - Best Foreign Language Film

## Programme notes