

# Review: The Past (Asghar Farhadi, 2013)



Asghar Farhadi is no stranger to the beautiful art of dramatic cinema. His last feature, the Persian language 'A Separation' earned him an Oscar for a brutal depiction of a family crisis. This is undoubtedly his forte, as emphasised in *The Past*, an indelibly brooding film on so many levels.

*The day prior to the signing of his divorce papers, a man moves back into his old home with his ex-wife, stepchildren and the child of his ex-wife's new boyfriend. What should be a simple procedure is complicated by the dark progression of his family since he left.*

The ensemble cast of *The Past* bring the character's tumbling degradation to the screen with a withering, cold effectiveness. As the film takes a notably darker turn, the actors on screen lose their smiles and the colour from their cheeks. It's a thought provoking piece that owes a lot to its complex approach to a simple story. Not only does conflict exist between the leading characters (played beautifully by Bérénice Bejo and Ali Mosaffa) but heartbreaking, almost hopeless relationships exist between everyone. It's awfully sad to watch; purposely loveless, yet rewarding and impeccably executed.

Farhadi has shamelessly found his niche as a director, opting for the family drama with just about as much justification as anyone needs. *The Past* is multifaceted, mysterious and utterly compelling; an exemplary film that delves behind the door of the broken family.

*The Past is playing at The Filmhouse, Lothian Road until April 10th*