

planet b234

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Jorge is a photographer living in New York City. He is fascinated by planets, the stars, and outerspace. His young son, Otto, lives far away. The film opens with Jorge's return flight after dropping Otto off at his mother's home. Haunted by loneliness of a newly empty apartment, Jorge wrestles with anxiety and depression. Otto and Jorge exchange a great deal of text messages to sustain their long-distance relationship. Jorge asks if Otto wants to come stay with him for a longer period of time, but Otto doesn't respond. Jorge escapes into the news and learns that NASA has discovered a new exoplanet, planet b234, only one light year away from earth. NASA is preparing a group of young astronauts to explore planet b234. Jorge turns to the skies with his telescope- something he and Otto can do together while apart. Excited by the fantasy of a fresh start and aided by his fertile imagination, Jorge travels to planet b234 to be with Otto.

Jorge develops a meditative ritual to visit planet b234, where he constructs a dream adventure with his son. In his fantasy, he and Otto explore the planet together and have the conversations he wishes they could have in real life. They talk about religion, identity, and being Latino in the United States. Otto shares that he thinks his parents are superheroes. Jorge prefers this imagined dialogue to his painful, real life conversations with his son, who wants to know why his dad chooses to live so far away. As the news reports turbulence and concerning discoveries regarding NASA's mission to planet b234, Jorge finds his fantasy world harder to control.

On earth, Jorge and Otto make phone-dates to look at the stars through their telescopes, but take turns accidentally leaving the other hanging. They've become disconnected. Jorge's grip on reality is deteriorating and he is having trouble keeping up both his real-life and imaginary relationships with his son.

At the climax of his recurring day-trances, Jorge is confronted by a surprise third being inhabiting planet b234. It's the NASA scientist Jorge follows in the news, Dr. Hiroe Kinoshita. She holds Otto hostage on planet b234 and demands for Jorge to make a choice between fantasy and reality. Jorge chooses planet b234 and the closeness he feels to his son there. It is an act of self-preservation. We end on real-life Otto trying to reach his father on the phone, not knowing that Jorge is galaxies away and gone for good.