



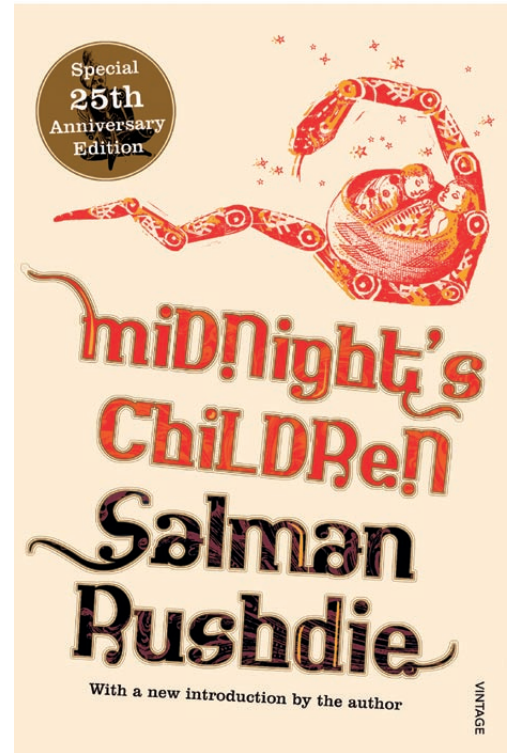
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The Best of the Booker

Readers' Guides

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

Publisher by Vintage
Paperback RRP £7.99



Winning year 1981

Other shortlisted titles in 1981

Molly Keane – *Good Behaviour*
Doris Lessing – *The Sirian Experiments*
Ian McEwan – *The Comfort of Strangers*
Anne Schlee – *Rhine Journey*
Muriel Spark – *Loitering with Intent*
DM Thomas – *The White Hotel*

1981 Judges

Professor Malcolm Bradbury (Chair),
Brain Aldiss, Joan Bakewell,
Samuel Hynes, Hermione Lee



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About the author

Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay in June 1947. His second novel, the acclaimed *Midnight's Children*, was published in 1981. It won the Booker Prize for Fiction, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction), an Arts Council Writers' Award and the English-Speaking Union Award, and in 1993 was judged to have been the 'Booker of Bookers', the best novel to have won the Booker Prize for Fiction in the award's 25-year history. His fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), led to the Iranian leadership issuing a fatwa against him. Despite the fatwa the novel was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and won the Whitbread Novel Award in 1988. Salman Rushdie continued to write and publish books, including a children's book, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) and was nominated for the Man Booker International Prize in 2007. Salman Rushdie became a KBE in 2007

Midnight's Children

Born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, at the precise moment of India's independence, the infant Saleem Sinai is celebrated in the press and welcomed by Prime Minister Nehru himself. But this coincidence of birth has consequences Saleem is not prepared for: telepathic powers that connect him with 1,000 other "midnight's children" – all born in the initial hour of India's independence – and an uncanny sense of smell that allows him to sniff out dangers others can't perceive. Inextricably linked to his nation, Saleem's biography is a whirlwind of disasters and triumphs that mirror the course of modern India at its most impossible and glorious.

Discussion points

- Saleem describes himself as 'handcuffed to history'. What do you think that this means, and do you think that this is true of him?
- The prose of *Midnight's Children* has a distinctly filmic quality. Why do you think this is, and what would be the implications of making a film of the novel?
- Saleem makes many errors in his narrative – both accidental and purposeful. Why do you think that he does this, and why does he not bother to correct his mistakes?
- In *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie uses a technique known as 'magical realism', which involves using magical elements in a realistic setting. An example of this would be the Midnight's Children Conference, who have magical powers but live in an otherwise normal world. Why do you think that Rushdie uses this technique?
- What is Padma's role in the novel?
- Which character do you consider more sympathetic, Shiva or Saleem?

Other books by Salman Rushdie

Grimus; Shame; The Jaguar Smile; The Satanic Verses; Haroun and the Sea of Stories; Imaginary Homelands; The Wizard of Oz; The Moor's Last Sigh; The Ground Beneath Her Feet; Fury; Midnight's Children Screenplay; Shalimar The Clown; The Enchantress of Florence

Further Reading

Ulysses – James Joyce
The God of Small Things – Arundhati Roy
A Suitable Boy – Vikram Seth
White Teeth – Zadie Smith

Useful links

<http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth87>
<http://www.randomhouse.co.uk/offthepage/guide.htm?command=Search&db=/catalog/main.txt&eqisbndata=0099578514>
<http://www.themanbookerprize.com/prize/books/20>