

# Salman Rushdie: The Storyteller [B2]

Lo scrittore anglo-indiano pubblica un nuovo volume di memorie in cui esamina le conseguenze dell'attacco subito nel 2022. Parla anche del suo amore per la storia e la favola e si schiera a favore della libertà di espressione.

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The Indian-born British-American novelist Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 19 June 1947, just months before India became independent from Britain. Rushdie's family, Kashmiri Muslims, moved to Pakistan when he was seventeen. By this time, Rushdie was living in England. He attended Cambridge University, where he studied history.

## MAGICAL HISTORIES

Rushdie became famous after his second novel *Midnight's Children* was published. The novel is about magical children born at midnight on the night India became independent. The bestseller, which combined fantasy and reality, won the Booker Prize in 1981. Rushdie's subsequent book *Shame* was another acclaimed attempt to make sense of recent Indian and Pakistani history.

## DEEPLY OFFENSIVE

A later novel, *The Satanic Verses*, published in 1988, also initially received praise, although prominent members of the Islamic community were already giving warning signs that its content would cause trouble. The novel contains a plot partly inspired by the life of Muhammad the founder of Islam, and while fictitious, it makes suggestions offensive to many Muslims. The situation escalated, and in 1989 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of Iran, issued a fatwa — a formal ruling under Islamic law — demanding that Rushdie and others connected with the book be killed.

## EXTREME VIOLENCE

Extremist bombings, [riots](#) and killings followed: a Lebanese man trying to plant a bomb in London was killed when it exploded, and the Japanese translator of The Satanic Verses was [stabbed](#) to death at his office at the University of Tsukuba in Japan. Rushdie went into [hiding](#), but remained prolific as a writer, publishing dozens of novels for adults and children as well as [essay](#) collections.

## WHO IS JOSEPH ANTON?

Rushdie was [knighted](#) in 2007 and in 2012 he wrote an autobiographical book about his experiences. Its title Joseph Anton: A Memoir refers to the name the author used [to conceal](#) his identity while in [hiding](#); Joseph Anton is a composite of two famous authors' names: Joseph Conrad and Anton Chekhov.

## PEN AMERICA

In recent decades, things had appeared to have [cooled off](#). In 1998, Iran said that it would no longer demand that the fatwa be [carried out](#), although it did not revoke it, either. Rushdie moved to the US in 2000. He spent time as president of PEN America, a literary organisation dedicated to protecting free expression in the US and worldwide, and taught at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

## A VICIOUS ATTACK

However, on 12 August 2022, as Rushdie was about to speak at the [non-profit organisation](#) Chautauqua Institution in New York, a twenty-four-year-old New Jersey man called Hadi Matar, the son of Lebanese immigrants, [rushed](#) on stage and [stabbed](#) the writer multiple times. The attack left Rushdie blind in one eye, affected the use of one of his hands and, according to the author, still gives him "frightening nightmares."

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# Glossary

- **carried out** = eseguire
- **non-profit organisation** = organizzazione senza scopo di lucro
- **attended** = andare a lezione
- **praise** = elogi
- **plot** = trama
- **hiding** = nascondersi
- **knighted** = nominare cavaliere
- **cooled off** = raffreddarsi
- **rushed** = precipitarsi
- **stabbed** = pugnalar
- **to make sense** = dare un senso
- **Muhammad** = Maometto
- **essay** = saggio
- **riots** = sommosse, rivolte
- **to conceal** = tenere segreto