



## The Wizard of Oz (BFI Film Classics)

*Salman Rushdie*

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The Wizard of Oz 'was my very first literary influence,' writes Salman Rushdie in his account of the great MGM children's classic. At the age of ten he had written a story, 'Over the Rainbow', about a colourful fantasy world. But for Rushdie The Wizard of Oz is more than a children's film, and more than a fantasy. It's a story whose driving force is the inadequacy of adults, in which 'the weakness of grown-ups forces children to take control of their own destinies'. And Rushdie rejects the conventional view that its fantasy of escape from reality ends with a comforting return to home, sweet home. On the contrary, it is a film that speaks to the exile. The Wizard of Oz shows that imagination can become reality, that there is no such place like home, or rather that the only home is the one we make for ourselves.

Rushdie's brilliant insights into a film more often seen than written about are rounded off with his typically scintillating short story, 'At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers,' about the day when Dorothy's red shoes are knocked down to \$15,000 at a sale of MGM props ...

In his foreword to this special edition, published to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the BFI Film Classics series, Rushdie looks back to the circumstances in which he wrote the book, when, in the wake of the controversy surrounding The Satanic Verses and the issue of a fatwa against him, the idea of home and exile held a particular resonance.

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