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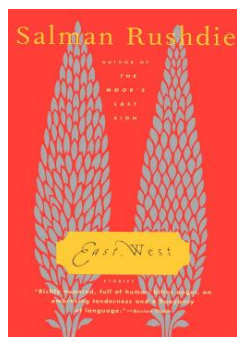
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# East, west : stories (#23733E5)

by Rushdie, Salman

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## Overview

### From Follett

Nine stories that reveal the oceanic distances and the unexpected intimacies between East and West.

### From the Publisher

From the Booker Prize-winning author of The Satanic Verses comes nine stories that reveal the oceanic distances and the unexpected intimacies between East and West. Daring, extravagant, comical and humane, this book renews Rushdie's stature as a storyteller who can enthrall and instruct us with the same sentence.

## Product Details

Publisher: Vintage International

Interest Level: AD

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## Reviews & Awards

**Booklist** starred  
**Kirkus Reviews**

**Library Journal**  
**Publishers Weekly**, 12/11/95

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## Full-Text Reviews

*Booklist* starred (Vol. 91, No. 5 (November 1, 1994))

The secluded Rushdie's first collection of short stories, his first major work of fiction since the explosive 1989 novel *The Satanic Verses*, has been much anticipated and won't disappoint. These nine delectable stories are divided into three categories, "East," "West," and "East, West." The Eastern ones have a *Thousand and One Nights* flavor and are set in Rushdie's native Pakistan. The best in this grouping is "Good Advice Is Rarer than Rubies," about a young woman who goes to the British consulate for a visa so that she may live with her husband; her charm defeats the old man she encounters at the door, who wants to supply her with fraudulent papers. Rushdie's Western stories incorporate elements of magic realism and feature European settings. The most compelling is "Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella of Spain Consummate Their Relationship," giving the affiliation between the encounterer of the New World and his regal sponsor a decided sexual angle. The stories in the "East/West" section bring the two worlds together, and the outstanding one of that beautiful trio is "The Harmony of the Spheres," about a deeply felt but tragically ended friendship between an Englishman and a Pakistani. Rushdie's brilliant style reinforces his stories' marvelous combination of dignity and poignancy. Though these stories were originally published in such periodicals as the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic*, the collection will serve for many readers as an introduction to Rushdie's talent in the short story form. Expect high demand.

*Kirkus Reviews* (1994)

Nine stories, six of which have been previously published, that successfully explore the tensions and confusions that so often muddle relations between East and West. Divided into three groups, the stories are a reminder that Rushdie (*Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, 1991, etc.), the accomplished postmodern fabulist, is also a splendid realist storyteller who describes the human heart with clear-eyed sympathy. Grouped under the heading "EAST," the first trio describes an encounter between a young Pakistani woman and an advice expert, who doesn't understand why the young woman is happy when the British Consulate rejects her application to join her aging fiancé in England ("Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies"); a poor young man, who has "the rare quality of total belief in his dreams" of moviedom success and who is sterilized because he believes the Indian government will give him a free radio ("The Free Radio"); and two children who try to have their greedy father robbed of a precious religious relic he is determined to add to his collection ("The Prophet's Hair"). Of the three stories in "WEST," the most accomplished is "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers," which describes a world where auctioneers "establish the value of our pasts, of our futures, of our lives" as they auction off movie memorabilia and cultural icons that help us be what "we fear we are not -- somebody." The stories in the final section, "EAST, WEST," are all set in England. A young Indian learns too late of a betrayal by a now-dead English friend ("The Harmony of the Spheres"); two Indian diplomats, Star Trek fans and old school chums, have a prophetic conversation while posted in England ("Chekov and Zulu"); and a young Indian, recalling the unlikely friendship between his ayah and an elderly chess player in London, refuses to choose between East and West ("The Courter"). A product of both worlds, Rushdie builds a safe passage over the seemingly unbridgeable with generous insight and wry humor in this distinguished collection.

*Publishers Weekly* (December 11, 1995)

Rushdie's collection of nine highly postmodern stories probes the differences and connections between East and West, celebrating the hybrid nature of contemporary identity. (Jan.)

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