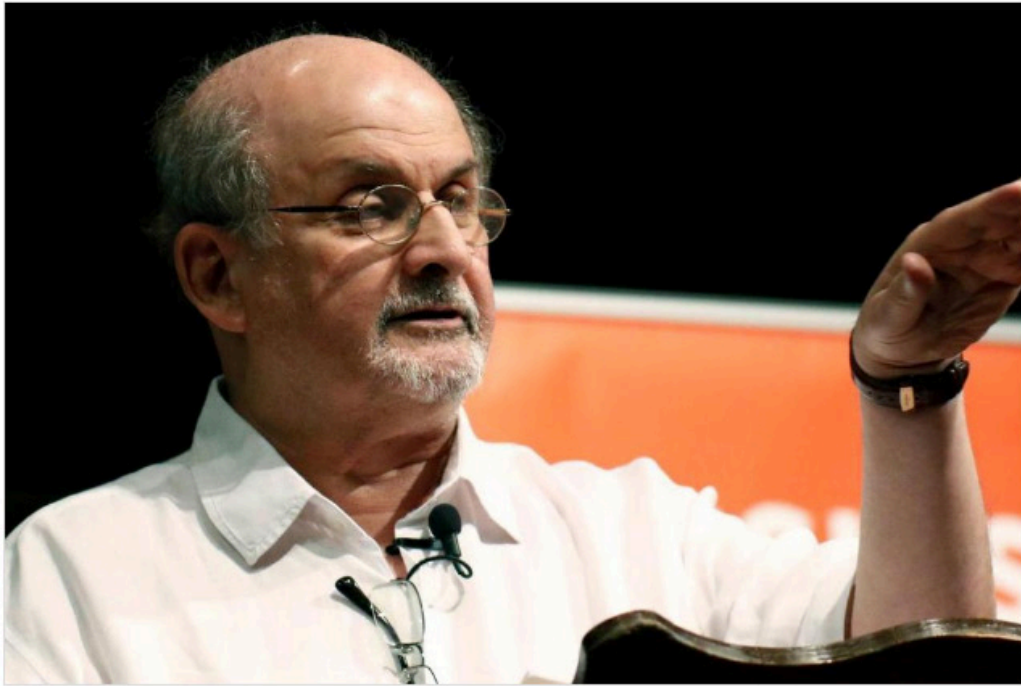


Ward, Rushdie Draw Large Crowds at Mississippi Book Fest

National Book Award winner Jesmyn Ward says she's working on two books.

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Author and social commentator Salman Rushdie talks about the start of his writing career during the Mississippi Book Festival in Jackson, Miss., Saturday, Aug. 18, 2018. Award-winning authors Jesmyn Ward and Rick Bragg joined a number of Southern writers representing nonfiction, fiction, novels, cookbooks, children's books, environmental, history and photography, at the fourth Mississippi Book Festival. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis) The Associated Press

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By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS, Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — National Book Award winner Jesmyn Ward says she's working on two books.

One is a New Orleans-based story about the slave trade. The other is a young adult novel about an African-American girl with supernatural powers.



Ward and another acclaimed author, Salman Rushdie, attracted large audiences at Saturday's [Mississippi](#) Book Festival .

Ward lives on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. She won the National Book Award in 2011 for "Salvage the Bones," and in 2017 for another novel, "Sing, Unburied, Sing."

Rushdie, born in India and educated in England, won the 1981 Man Booker Prize for his novel "Midnight's Children."

Rushdie recalled once having lunch with writer Eudora Welty, who invited him to visit her in Mississippi. She died in 2001, but Rushdie started Saturday by saying, lightheartedly: "Here I am, Eudora."

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