



The Devil Finds Work: An Essay

By James Baldwin

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The Devil Finds Work: An Essay By James Baldwin

In *The Devil Finds Work*, Baldwin turns his ever-perceptive eye to American film, offering us insights into the very nature of our society—its history, its culture, its people. Throughout the book, Baldwin gives us his personal reactions to the films discussed, revealing himself as well as the movies. In so honestly sharing with us that which he calls "the cinema of my mind," he enlarges our scope and allows us to see things in a new light:

- in the light of a small black child from Harlem awed by Joan Crawford's presence on the screen
- in the light of a somewhat older child elated to find that Bette Davis too has "pop eyes" like his own
- in the light of the still older child who knows too well the violence and hatred of the angry mob in *A Tale of Two Cities*
- in the light of the mature adult watching *The Exorcist*, perceiving that "the devil . . . does not levitate beds, nor fool around with little girls: we do."

In this provocative study, Baldwin speaks with the voice of the teacher, revealing and challenging the underlying assumptions of such films as *In the Heat of the Night*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*, and *The Exorcist*—assumptions so long deemed true in American society that we do not question them; indeed, we do not even see them. Offering us his vision, Mr. Baldwin forces us to see ourselves more clearly; we confront, as it is revealed in our films, the depth of our passion—our loves and hates, our biases, cruelties, fears, and ignorance. Written with Baldwin's superb style, this book offers new horizons in the understanding of American culture.

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The Devil Finds Work: An Essay By James Baldwin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1422375 in Books
- Published on: 1976
- Binding: Hardcover
- 122 pages

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