



# Monsieur Lazhar

Autumn  
Season  
2012

**Release:** 2011

**Cert (UK):** 12A

**Runtime:** 94 mins

**Director:** Philippe Falardeau

**Cast:** Mohamed Fellag, Sophie Nelisse



Nominated for Best Foreign Language film at the 2012 Academy Awards, *Monsieur Lazhar* is an adaptation of Évelyne de la Chenelière's stage play, and is produced by Luc Déry and Kim McCraw, the same team that gave us the Oscar-nominated "Incendies." According to the jury at the Toronto Film Festival, it is "a film that explores loss, exile, and the truths we tell our children."

"*Monsieur Lazhar*" is a low-key, low-budget, and often humorous film that observes rather than preaches, and, though the script offers many opportunities, avoids clichés and cloying sentimentality.

Marked by outstanding performances especially the children who are natural and unaffected, the characters are allowed to explore their own feelings without contrivance or manipulation. When the emotional moments come, they are all the more powerful because they arise naturally and not out of pre-designed plot points designed to provoke tears.

"*Monsieur Lazhar*" may be a bit rough around the edges but it is a story with loads of heart and humanity. By no means a feel-good film, it is, rather, a gentle example of how the pain and problems death inflicts upon us do not discriminate by age.

The director, Philippe Falardeau, started out making short films but progressed to full length films in 2000. This is his fourth film and the previous ones have made their mark at festivals around the world, without breaking into the mass market. "*Monsieur Lazhar*" is his most successful film so far.

