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**SHEILA FLAHERTY PROVIDES AN INTIMATE PORTRAYAL OF LIFE
BEHIND THE VEILS IN HER DEBUT NOVEL
“EAST OF MECCA”**

Flaherty Tells of Life in Saudi Arabia And The Ultimate Price of Oppression

CHICAGO - Chicago-area author Sheila Flaherty’s moving and unforgettable debut novel “East of Mecca” tells a timely, harrowing, and heartbreaking story of love and betrayal, the transcendent power of friendship, and the ultimate price of oppression. It is now an [Amazon Best Seller](#) in Middle Eastern Fiction, a recipient of the 2015 [Nautilus Silver Award Winner](#) for Fiction and is IndieReader Approved with a [5 Star Review](#). “East of Mecca” is currently available at [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#).

Driven by financial desperation, Sarah and Max Hayes are seduced by promises of a glamorous expatriate lifestyle in Saudi Arabia. Sarah surrenders her career when Max accepts a prestigious job with Ocmara Oil Company and they relocate their family to the shores of the Persian Gulf. Locked inside the heavily-guarded Ocmara compound, Sarah becomes invisible within the male dominated, fundamentalist Islamic Kingdom. Gradually, she is drawn into a clandestine, illicit friendship with Yasmeen, a Muslim Saudi woman. Together they find freedom beneath the veils and behind the walls of the Saudi women’s quarters—until inconceivable events force Sarah to make life-or-death decisions.

Told with riveting authenticity and exquisite detail, “East of Mecca” explores the abuse of absolute power with an elegant balance of cultural nuance and moral inquiry.

“One of my goals is to enlighten readers as to the plight of women living within the confines of a violent, oppressive male dominated society, as well as addressing the universal issues of domestic violence and women’s rights,” says Flaherty.

Flaherty is an Army brat who grew up to be a clinical psychologist and writer. After earning her Ph.D. from Northwestern University Medical School, she has had a thriving private practice for 34 years—including one year spent living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Her novel “East of Mecca” is inspired by her experiences in Saudi, where she secretly counseled American and Arab women.

Flaherty has placed in several screenwriting competitions including Big Break, BlueCat, CineStory and the Nicholl Fellowships, and in 2010, 2013 and 2016 she was awarded residencies at the Ragdale Foundation for her work in fiction.

Flaherty is giving a majority of all profits from the sales of “East of Mecca” toward providing funding for women and girls to meet their most profound needs. For additional information visit [East of Mecca.com](#)

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