

SHEILA FLAHERTY

SHEILA FLAHERTY is a writer and clinical psychologist who specializes in helping people navigate through life changes with grace and ease. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's in Behavioral Sciences from the University of Houston. Flaherty earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago.

Growing up an "Army brat" and as a young woman she lived in numerous places in the states and overseas, including Germany and Singapore. Her life experiences and extensive education make her a kind, intuitive, and life-transforming therapist. Flaherty has had a thriving private counseling practice in the Chicago area for the past 34 years, except for one year spent in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Flaherty has always been passionately drawn to righting injustice. While living in Saudi, her compassion led her to practice counseling secretly and illicitly, helping to empower the American and Saudi women she met. This experience inspired her to write *East of Mecca*, a novel about women living within the confines of a violent, oppressive, male-dominated society.

Known for her ability to immediately immerse her readers in a scene and leaving them longing for more, Flaherty has placed in several screenwriting competitions, including Big Break, BlueCat, CineStory, and the Nicholl Fellowships. In 2010, 2013, and 2016, she was awarded residencies at the Ragdale Foundation for her work in fiction. *East of Mecca* was awarded a Silver Nautilus Book Award in Fiction for 2015, and is IndieReader Approved with a 5-star review. *East of Mecca* has a 5-star review on Amazon, and is also an Amazon Best Seller in Middle Eastern Literature. Flaherty's life mission continues to be to enlighten, inspire, and empower others for the greater good.