

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 many 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, 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 leave them longing for more, Flaherty has placed in numerous screenwriting competitions, including the Nicholl Fellowship, Big Break, BlueCat, and Table Read My Script: London. *East of Mecca* was a Finalist in the 2018 Socially Relevant Film Festival in New York, a Gold Finalist in the 2016 Beverly Hills Screenplay Competition, and a Finalist in the 2005 CineStory Screenwriting Competition. In 2017, Flaherty was selected as a Top 50 Writer in ISA Fast Track Fellowship VI.

East of Mecca was awarded a Silver Nautilus Book Award in Fiction for 2015, and is IndieReader Approved with a 5-star review, was named one of the best self-published books of 2016 by IndieReader, and one of the best self-published books by Rebels Market in 2018. *East of Mecca* currently has over 100 reviews averaging 5-stars on Amazon, and is also an Amazon Best Seller in Middle Eastern Literature for three consecutive years. Flaherty has been awarded residencies at the Ragdale Foundation for her work in fiction in 2010, 2013, and 2016. Her life mission continues to be to enlighten, inspire, and empower others for the greater good.