



ALLEN & UNWIN MEDIA RELEASE



Superb stories, astonishing in their range and power; subtle, brave, unbearably moving.

HELEN GARNER

MAHJAR

EVA SALLIS

What an astonishing writer is Eva Sallis. And how fortunate we are to have this book at this moment. In Mahjar, Sallis wields her great gifts of empathy and eloquence to render human beings in full, unflinching detail. It is a book of journeys, passionate and powerful.

GERALDINE BROOKS

“The Arabic word *mahjar* refers collectively to all the lands of Arab, most often Lebanese, migration. It has overtones of separation, renunciation, estrangement and abandonment but, for the Lebanese particularly, it is a place-word redolent with pride in achievement as well as distance from homeland. Australia is one the lands of the *mahjar*.”

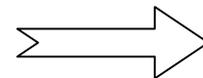
Eva Sallis, *Mahjar*

In Mahjar, a novel-in-stories, Eva Sallis uses lustrous, powerful writing to move subtly from perceived cultural stereotypes into an ongoing ethnic struggle for survival.

Weaving Arabic fables with stories of first and second generation migrants, *Mahjar* is particularly relevant today when Australia is closing its doors to the world. Vibrating with life, these stories are about the schism between Lebanese and Australian culture, between parents and children, new lives and old.

With warmth, insight and humour, Eva’s eloquent prose captures the pain as well as the joys of living in a new land.

PLEASE SEE OVER FOR BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS



EVA SALLIS IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

***Mahjar* will be published by Allen & Unwin on 4 April 2003**

\$19.95pb ISBN 1741140714

For further information, review copies or to arrange an interview, please contact
April Murdoch, Publicity Manager, Allen & Unwin, tel 02 8425 0100 & email: aprilm@allenandunwin.com
Download 300dpi cover images & author pics from our website: www.allenandunwin.com/mediacentre

EVA SALLIS



Eva Sallis was born in Bendigo and grew up in Germany and the Adelaide Hills. She studied Arabic intensively for seven years and travels regularly to the Middle East, particularly Yemen. She has an MA and a PhD, specialising in comparative literature (Arabic and English), and is a lecturer in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide.

Eva is a writer of literary fiction. Her work often gives a different view of Middle Eastern culture and people. Her first novel

Hiam won *The Australian/Vogel* Literary Award for 1997, the Nita May Dobbie Literary Award and was shortlisted for *The Courier Mail* Book of the Year in 1999 and the National Fiction Award in 2000. Her second novel, *The City of Sealions*, is set in Australia and Yemen, and explores ideas on cultural and communal alienation and belonging, a recurrent theme of her work. Other works include a book of literary criticism, *Sheherazade through the Looking Glass: the Metamorphosis of the 1001 Nights*; the libretto for 'AlieNation' a commissioned music theatre piece performed for the Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001; and a number of short stories, poems, academic and literary articles and reviews.

She has been active in recent times in raising public awareness of the rights and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers. She is one of the co-founders of Australians Against Racism, and scripted the controversial television commercial 'Faces in the Crowd', aired in 2001 on Human Rights day. The hugely successful 'Australia IS Refugees!' Schools essay/story competition, run nationwide in 2002, was her next major project. She co-edited the booklet *AIR! Winning Stories 2002* from the competition winners. She is editing a major book from the best entries.

Eva is currently working on a novel entitled *The Marsh Birds*, set in Iraq, Syria, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand.

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