

Susan Abulhawa



Susan's education is rooted in the sciences. She was a pre-med major in college and went on to a PhD program in neuroscience. Unexpected motherhood forced her to abandon her studies and she completed a master's degree instead. She went on to work in medical research for many years, raising her daughter as a single mother. In 2000, Abulhawa returned to Palestine and started a children's organization – Playgrounds for Palestine – in which she remains heavily involved. Shortly thereafter, during the second Intifada, Susan began her writing career, rather accidentally, by writing letters to the editor, then op-eds. Her public views ultimately cost her her job. As an unemployed single mother without means or family in the United States, Abulhawa mortgaged her house and started writing her first novel. It would be another eight years before it was published, and today she is a full-time writer and remains active in social justice struggles. Her daughter is now in college and Abulhawa leads a mostly solitary life. She enjoys the company of her dogs, the symphony of

Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian novelist, poet, and essayist. She was born in Kuwait to Palestinian refugees of the 1967 war. At the age of 9, she went to live in Jerusalem, at Dar el Tifl orphanage, where she remained until the age of 12. She went to the United States around that time and ultimately ended up in foster care, where she remained through high school.

Susan won international acclaim in 2010 with her debut novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, which was translated into 28 languages. Her second novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, published in 2015, was likewise an international bestseller, also translated into 28 languages. During the time between the publication of her first and second novels, she published a poetry collection and contributed to several anthologies, in addition to her ongoing essays and political commentary.



Playgrounds for Palestine: Susan Abulhawa with girls from Nahr al-Bared Refugee Camp in Lebanon.

the outdoors, reading, and gardening. She's a vegetarian, works out daily, and loves to dance and spend time with her daughter and her close friends. Most of her time lately, however, is spent working on her third novel.