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# Leaving Beirut



## Synopsis

“One of the most poignant testimonies to the Lebanese civil war.” —Moris Farhi  
As an uneasy peace settles over war-torn Beirut, a woman reflects: Events in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Argentina remind her of the tragedies that shaped her life. What has she achieved in her voluntary exile, and who would she have become if she had stayed? Would she have learned to forgive, like Umm Ali, or contemplated revenge, like Leila’s grandmother? And who was Said? Gentle grocery boy, bloodthirsty torturer, or both? Mai Ghoussoub (1952–2007), artist, author, and playwright, was born in Lebanon.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

‘Leaving Beirut is one of the most poignant testimonies to the Lebanese civil war.’ Moris Farhi ‘One of those rare books that leaves its readers able to breathe more deeply, with a renewed sense that life, for all its cruelties, is beautiful.’ Maggie Gee ‘A writer, artist and publisher who took her passion for life, controversy and feminism to the streets of Beirut and London.’ Malu Halasa, *The Guardian* ‘A tangled and creative mix of memoir, fiction, recollection, old-fashioned yarn-spinning, postmodern pastiche, literary criticism and methodically plotted political essay ... Required reading for anyone harbouring a love-hate fascination with the city.’ *The Daily Star* ‘An elegant chronicle of exile and conflict.’ *Buenos Aires Herald* ‘Ghoussoub was an infectious optimist and the hope that radiates from this memoir is a fitting tribute.’ *Metro* ‘[Leaving Beirut] deserves to become a classic - at once a testimony of war, a memoir of exile and a critique of man’s inhumanity, it tackles the very darkest of subjects with a compelling lightness of touch.’ Jo Glanville, *New Statesman* ‘A journey through

darkness and into light.' The Independent

Mai Ghoussoub is the author of Leaving Beirut: Women and the Wars Within as well as numerous articles on culture, aesthetics and Middle Eastern issues for international journals.

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