



Title: **Against the Tide** (ست الكل)

Author: Taghreed Najjar

Illustrations: Gulnar Hajo

Publisher: Salwa Books, Jordan (2012)

Target age: 12+ / YA fiction

Original Language: Arabic

Awards: Shortlisted for the Etisalat Children's Literature Award 2013

Rights enquiries: Salwa Shakhshir,  
salwa@alsalwabooks.com

Rights sold: Italian (Contro corrente: Storia di una ragazza «che vale 100 figli maschi», translated into Italian by L. Mattar, published by Giunti Editore, 2018)



### About the book

Against the Tide is inspired by the true story of a young Palestinian girl named Madelein Callab, who became Gaza's first fisherwoman at the age of 15. When the course of her family's life changes forever, 15-year-old Yusra is faced with a choice. Either she accepts her new life as it is, or she defies society's expectations and does something no woman in Gaza has ever done before: support her family by becoming a fisherwoman. Notable for its strong female protagonist, complex characters and relationships, and rich details about life in Gaza, Against the Tide explores universal themes: feelings of being trapped by family restrictions, frustration with society's expectations, and eagerness for greater responsibility. Yet Yusra's circumstances are anything but ordinary, and the novel candidly addresses challenging realities of poverty, family stress, and losing a loved one. Shortlisted for the Etisalat Prize for Arabic Children's Literature and the Sheikh Zayed Book Award for Children's Literature, and featured on the list of '10 Books by Arab Women Writers that Should Be Translated', this title is not to be missed.

### Sample translation

*Translated by Elisabeth Jaquette*

Yusra knew what she needed to do. She put her fishing net in the boat along with the lunch her mother had packed and insisted that Yusra take with her. She dragged the little boat to the edge of the shore, and with Abu Ahmed's help and a final push, the boat was in the water. She started to paddle.



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"Good luck, my girl," her father called out from shore, his voice a bit hoarse. "Good luck, Sitt al-Kul."

"Remember what I taught you, Yusra," Abu Ahmed called after her excitedly. "And don't go more than three miles from shore. Because if you do..." he trailed off.

Yusra stood up in the small boat, found her balance, and then began to paddle: once on the right side, then once on the left. For weeks, she and Abu Ahmed had practiced balancing and paddling. After being away from the sea for so long, she now felt her muscles growing stronger with every day.

Yusra looked around and saw several other fishing boats heading towards the horizon, to the farthest point the Israeli naval patrol ships allowed. The fishing was better out there.

Those heading out to sea included many seasoned fishermen around her father's age and lots of young teenage boys about her age, but Yusra was the only girl, the only fisherwoman.

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For a longer translation sample, please contact Elisabeth Jaquette [ejquette@gmail.com](mailto:ejquette@gmail.com)