



# *The wind knows my name*

*By Isabel, Allende*

*First published in 2023*

## **Genre and Subject**

*Australian fiction*

*Historical fiction*

*Sheep ranches — New South Wales — Fiction*

*Murderers — Fiction*

## **Synopsis**

Vienna, 1938. Samuel Adler was six years old when his father disappeared during Kristallnacht—the night their family lost everything. Samuel's mother secured a spot for him on the last Kindertransport train out of Nazi-occupied Austria to the United Kingdom, which he boarded alone, carrying nothing but a change of clothes and his violin. Arizona, 2019. Eight decades later, Anita Diaz, a blind seven-year-old girl, and her mother board another train, fleeing looming danger in El Salvador and seeking refuge in the United States. However, their arrival coincides with the new family separation policy, and Anita finds herself alone at a camp in Nogales. She escapes through her trips to Azabahar, a magical world of the imagination she created with her sister back home. Anita's case is assigned to Selena Duran, a young social worker who enlists the help of a promising lawyer from one of San Francisco's top law firms. Together they discover that Anita has another family member in the United States: Leticia Cordero, who is employed at the home of now eighty-six-year-old Samuel Adler, linking these two lives. Spanning time and place, *The Wind Knows My Name* is both a testament to the sacrifices that parents make and a love letter to the children who survive the most unfathomable dangers—and never stop dreaming.

## **Author Biography**

Isabel Allende is a literary living legend and phenomenon. With 74 million books sold, she's the most-read author in the Spanish language throughout the world, and a blockbuster international bestseller of adult novels. A novelist, feminist and philanthropist, Isabel won worldwide acclaim in 1982 with the publication of her first novel, *The House of the Spirits*. Her work has been translated into over 35 languages, received the PEN Center Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She lives in California. [IsabelAllende.com](http://IsabelAllende.com).

## Discussion Starters

1. What do you consider the major themes of *The Wind Knows My Name*?
2. The story. The characters. The settings. The writing style. What are your favourite parts of Isabel Allende's novel and why?
3. Readers experience the Night of Broken Glass as it happens to the Adler family. Was there anything that surprised you about this act of terror that you hadn't known? Please discuss.
4. Music saves Samuel. Why do you think music transcends tragedy and comfort souls?
5. Why do you think Leticia believed in the power of St Jude, the patron saint of lost causes, and in St Christopher, the patron saint of travelers, despite abandoning the evangelical church?
6. There are two immigrant stories in the novel. How are they similar, and how are they unique?
7. How much did you know about the El Mozote massacre before reading this book? Why do you think this tragedy isn't widely known in America?
8. After Samuel moved to California, his wife Nadine opened up their "enchanted mansion" to bohemians, frustrated artists, and simple wanderers, causing a rift in the marriage. Which side did you fall on and why?
9. What was your initial impression of hotshot lawyer Frank Angileri?
10. On page 89, Selena says "This isn't about left, right, or any other direction. It's about finding practical solutions to real problems." What do you think about her statement?
11. Did you have strong feelings about the U.S. border policies before reading this novel? Did anything about those feelings change after reading it?
12. How did you feel at the end of *The Wind Knows My Name*? What did you take away from reading this novel?

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- *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa, Lee

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