

ALLENDE, ISABEL (1942–)

Well-known to readers in contemporary times, the popular novelist, Isabel Allende, was actually born in Lima, Peru, but raised and educated in Santiago de Chile. She was a second cousin of socialist Chilean President Salvador Allende Gossens (1908–1973). The family returned to Chile in 1945 and traveled in diplomatic circles, and later, Allende attended schools in Bolivia and Beirut. Subsequently she worked as a bilingual secretary at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). She also wrote for *Paula* magazine and the humorous column “Los impertinentes.” She contributed to the children’s magazine *Mampato* and published two stories for children. In addition, Allende worked for television channels 13 and 7 in Santiago, and in 1975 Allende and her family were exiled to Venezuela, when the Salvador Allende government was overthrown. In Venezuela, she wrote for the newspaper *El Nacional* and worked as an administrator for Marroco College. In 1981, when her grandfather was about to die, Allende began to write him a letter that later became the manuscript for her first novel *The House of the Spirits* which eventually segued into a prolific writing career. After fifteen years of exile Allende moved to the United States but returned to Chile to receive the prestigious Gabriela Mistral Award. With historical novels like *Daughter of Fortune* and *Portrait in Sepia*, Allende established her Latina credentials, and remains a productive author and a best-selling novelist.