



I am Malala

By Malala Yousafzai

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Genre & subject

Biography

Young women

Pakistan

Synopsis

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.

On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive.

Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I Am Malala is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.

Author biography

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani school pupil and education activist from the town of Mingora in the Swat District of Pakistan's north western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. She is known for her education and women's rights activism in the Swat Valley, where the Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school.

In early 2009, at the age of 11-12, Yousafzai wrote a blog under a pseudonym for the BBC detailing her life under Taliban rule, their attempts to take control of the valley, and her views on promoting education for girls. The following summer, a New York Times documentary was filmed about her life as the Pakistani military intervened in the region, culminating in the Second Battle of Swat. Yousafzai rose in prominence, giving interviews in print and on television, and she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by South African activist Desmond Tutu.

On 9 October 2012, Yousafzai was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus. In the days immediately following the attack, she remained unconscious and in critical condition, but later her condition improved enough for her to be sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK for intensive

rehabilitation. On October 12, 2012, a group of 50 Islamic clerics in Pakistan issued a fatwa against those who tried to kill her, but the Taliban reiterated its intent to kill Yousafzai and her father.

Discussion starters

- Would you have had the bravery that Malala exhibited and continues to exhibit?
- Talk about the role of Malala's parents, especially her father, Ziauddin. If you were her parents, would you have encouraged her to write and speak out?
- How does Malala describe the affect of the growing Taliban presence in her region? Talk about the rules they imposed on the citizens in the Swat valley. What was life like?
- Mala has said that despite the Taliban's restrictions against girls/women, she remains a proud believer. Would you—could you—maintain your faith given those same restrictions? *
- Talk about the reaction of the international community after Malala's shooting. Has the outrage made a difference...has it had any effect?
- What can be done about female education in the Middle East and places like Pakistan? What are the prospects? Can one girl, despite her worldwide fame, make a difference? Why does the Taliban want to prevent girls from acquiring an education—how do they see the female role? *
- This is as good a time as any to talk about the Taliban's power in the Muslim world. Why does it continue to grow and attract followers...or is it gaining new followers? What attraction does it have for Muslim men? Can it ever be defeated?

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