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She Dared: Malala Yousafzai

Jennifer Haltli

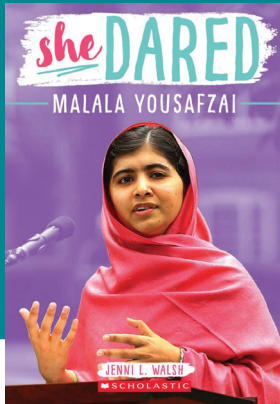
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Book Review

She Dared: Malala Yousafzai

Author

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Reviewer

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Rating

Excellent

Level

Intermediate

Pages

128

Year

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Scholastic, Inc.

When the word Taliban was spoken in the Swat Valley, ten-year-old Malala watched her dreams of becoming a doctor disappear. The long-bearded men in black turbans wandered out of the mountains, advocating for the strictest parts of Islamic law in a modernizing Pakistan and often enforcing their views at gunpoint. Because she was a top student in the all-girls school her father owned, Malala's brilliant mind starved when the Taliban forced her school to close. So, at eleven, Malala began giving covert speeches about girls' rights to education and collaborating secretly with journalists. Following her return to her war-torn city after a long evacuation, one of the Taliban members boarded her school bus and shot the fifteen-year-old point-blank in the head. Her recovery in England was long, but she continues speaking and advocating for educational rights all over the world.

This child-friendly biography has ample word spacing and a collection of colorful photos. Malala's childhood story will suck readers in as they see the similarity of pre-Taliban Pakistan to their own surroundings. By nature, Malala's story is challenging, with war scenes and medical trauma present in the book that reflect the disturbing reality of displaced peoples and civil unrest. Although not described graphically, the reader is given additional tools to deconstruct these unsettling truths through the supplemental readings and websites given in the back of the text. The journey may start with Malala's story, but there is plenty to learn about similar situations around the globe. Interested students will find that this text is a fruitful beginning to an awareness of terrorism and its effects in many lands.

*Contains moderate violence.