

*I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai

Book Review by Meredith Stewart

*I am Malala* is a remarkable autobiographical novel about a girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban. What made this book particularly intriguing for me is that it's written by a 16-year old girl who, now age 18, has done more for her cause of peace and education than a history book could put into words. *I am Malala* is embedded with a personal yet historical account of what it was like to live in Pakistan and grow up there during the war on terror. The book provided me with a better understanding of the war in Afghanistan and its neighboring country Pakistan. This story, told by Malala herself, also brings a human side to the news headlines, which, regrettably, typically inform my knowledge of politics and war on the other side of the world.

Limiting girls' rights to education is not yet an outdated historical way of the past, but one we are still currently facing. With continued violence occurring in protest of girls' education and rights (219 girls were taken from their school in Nigeria in 2014), this topic is an important one for everyone to be aware. And not just to understand this issue as a statistic, but in a more personal way. In countries where we take education for granted as a right for all children, Malala's story is an important reminder of how much support and freedom we have in America. Here, we don't have to risk our lives just to have access to books.

Malala's story puts our grievances into perspective. She and I aren't that different in age, but have had incredibly different upbringings. She tells her story with such profound wisdom and is calm and courageous under pressure. While our backgrounds are dramatically different, Malala makes her story relatable, captivating me, her readers, and all those who hear her story.

I am most in awe of how outspoken she is, literally putting her life in danger for girls' education. She knows what she wants and fights for it. While I've always felt strongly about girls and women's rights, Malala takes this passion and acts on it. She was giving political speeches to UN delegates at the age of 15. She is the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She represents the possibility of making a stand and making a difference in the world. I admire her bravery in public speaking and in fighting for her cause. If I could pick one person in the world to go to lunch with, it would be Malala. In the meantime, I'd recommend this book - the story of an inspirational, courageous, intelligent young activist - to everyone.