

Finding My Way by Malala Yousafzai, Reviewed 02/2026

Reviewed by A.H., Class of 2029

Book - Paper or Ebook

★★★★★

Nonfiction (memoir)

What made you interested in reading/watching/playing this media?

I came across this media through social media. As I was scrolling on my phone, I saw Malala's announcement of her book and was excited. Then, I watched a few short interviews where Malala discussed the content of her book and why she felt compelled to write it. From what I had heard, it seemed like something that I would be interested in reading, and then I quickly ordered a copy off of Amazon.

Setting:

While there are multiple settings within this book, it mainly focuses on Malala's time at Oxford and her experiences during college. Malala attended Oxford from 2017 through 2020, but also traveled a lot during her time at college. She talks about her unique college experiences and how she transitioned into Oxford's environment after her time growing up in a strict Pakistani household. Malala also talks about her childhood, and depicts her home in Pakistan in contrast with her life at Oxford. Finally, she talks about her transition from her college life at Oxford to her post-graduate, adult life in the real world.

Protagonists:

The main protagonist of the book is Malala. Malala is a renowned girls and women's education activist who started to fight back against the Taliban at a young age. As a young, ambitious, and curious girl herself, all Malala wanted to do was to learn. However, she and her family had to watch her right to learn, alongside many other freedoms, be stripped away from her and other women by the Taliban. After refusing compliance to this reality, Malala was shot in the head by a Taliban member. She, miraculously, survived the attack and then went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize for her activist efforts. While Malala's story is incredible, it also forced her to grow up under the world's gaze. In her memoir, Malala manages to shed light on who she really is behind the global headlines and powerful image the world has constructed around her. She illustrates her humor, her ambition, her flaws, and her mistakes. This story is not one all about Malala's fame, but more how she learned to find herself and become who she is today. Along the way, she also illustrates other key figures in her life, like her bestfriends, parents, and loved ones, who helped shape and inspire her as she grew up.

#### Plotline:

Throughout the book, Malala opens up about how she learned to navigate college life while being a celebrity activist. As she writes, she uses a very warm and humorous tone that makes her unique life feel relatable. Malala was frequently vulnerable within the book, and often described how she faced common struggles like anxiety, time-management, and feeling behind in school. She also talked about the newfound joy and freedom that she experienced during college. Coming from a very uptight household and strict Pakistani community, she often faced endless opinions on how she should live her life. At Oxford, though, she no longer had people telling her what to do, where to go, or even how to dress. Furthermore, Malala opened up about being in love for the first time, and the struggles of feeling the societal expectations that came along with it. Finally, Malala also talked about balancing her work as an activist, and her continuing devotion to girls and women's education, even as the dynamic of her life shifted.

#### Reflection on the novel's strong points and weak points:

The best part of this book was, arguably, the narration from Malala. Her tone is very personable, humorous, and honest, which leaves the reader feeling very connected to her and her story. Although the writing can feel informal at times, the book is ultimately really well written. Her writing is incredibly descriptive and poetic, without ever over-doing. While I would argue that there are few weak points to this media, I do feel like this book is for a very specific audience as it covers very specific topics. If you don't resonate with coming of age and inspirational stories, then this book might not be the best fit for you.

#### What are some themes that come across?

Some major themes in this media include: coming of age, exploring identity, overcoming trauma and hardship, and finding love.

#### Do you feel that the cover art is true to what the media is about?

Yes. I do feel that the cover art is true to what the media is about, as it just a photo of Malala.

#### Did you enjoy it? Would you recommend it?

I personally loved reading this book, and will be recommending it to many people in my life. Although the plot of this book may feel simple, Malala manages to convey an incredible message that leaves anyone who reads the book feeling moved.

#### Readalikes/Watchalikes are:

People who like this media will also probably like any other coming of age or resilience stories.

#### Final thoughts?

This book was beautifully written. It was an easy and worthwhile read and I definitely recommend it!

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