

Part One: Before the Taliban

Chapter 1—A Daughter Is Born

1. Explain at least three examples of how Malala's father broke from tradition before and after she was born.
2. It is important to note that Malala's early references to *Pashtunwali* explain a cultural code of ethics that is separate from the actual religion of Islam, even though both had tremendous influence in her formative years. She explains near the end of the chapter that "like all Swati's I thought of myself first as Swati and then Pashtun, before Pakistani." Explain the difference in the three terms and why she may have placed them in this order of importance.

Chapter 2—My Father the Falcon

1. In this chapter several differences were noted between the way girls and boys were treated. Some were noticed by Malala's father, Ziauddin, as he grew up, and other differences became more extreme under General Zia's regime. List several of these differences.
2. What is *jihad* and how did it grow to become a "sixth pillar" of the Islamic religion?
3. Explain how and why Malala's father eventually rejected *jihad* or what became known as "militant Islam".
4. How did Ziauddin turn his weakness into strength?

Chapter 3—Growing Up in a School

1. What was Ziauddin's reaction to the controversial parody "The Satanic Verses?"
2. When a bribe was expected in order to register his Khushal School, how did Ziauddin react?
3. In this chapter what personal qualities helped Ziauddin realize his dream of running his own school?

Chapter 4—The Village

1. In Malala's description of the trip back to their home village of Barkana, what positive images seem to contrast the deep poverty of the area?
2. In this chapter Malala begins to question some of the *Pashtuni* code, particularly the treatment of women. List some examples that bothered her.

4. Why might Malala and her co-writer, Christina Lamb, have inserted this chapter about various visits to the countryside, the home village, at this point in the biography?

Chapter 5—Why I Don't Wear Earrings and Pashtuns Don't Say Thank You

1. Why does Malala decide to stop wearing earrings?
2. What other part of *Pashtunwali* begins to trouble Malala in this chapter?
3. How does Malala associate her own lesson about greed with the ever-changing governmental regimes of Pakistan?
4. Summarize Malala's first public speaking competition. What were the results and what goal did she set?

Chapter 6—Children of the Rubbish Mountain

1. What are some examples of how Malala's family reached out to those less fortunate?
2. When Ziauddin encouraged some of the poor to come to school, Malala reports that some of the richer parents took their children out of the school, thinking it shameful for their children to mix with those from poor families. How does this example of human behavior connect with changes in education in the United States? Can you make any personal connections?
3. Even though Malala's mother had not continued her own education, in what ways did she help further her husband's dream of their school and the cause of education?
4. How did the Pakistanis view the events of 9/11, according to this account?

Chapter 7—The Mufti Who Tried to Close Our School

1. Explain the difference between the Sunnis and the Shias.
2. What objections did the *Mufti* have to the school?
3. How did Americans seem to make matters worse in this time of political and religious unrest in Pakistan?
4. Why might the authors have provided so much information about the stormy religious and political background of Pakistan in this part of the book?

Chapter 8—The Autumn of the Earthquake

1. What groups were most visible and helpful after the devastating earthquake, and why was this significant to the future?

2. During the tremors after the earthquake Ziauddin insisted the family stay home in their house and go to bed, even though his wife wanted to leave. Malala attributes this to “we Muslims believe our fate is written by God.” If Ziauddin truly believed this, why was he such a political activist? Why wouldn’t he just leave everything up to God? Or was this the reason he kept going, even when he seemed to have so much opposition?

3. Why did Part I begin with the quote “Rather I receive your bullet-riddled body with honor—Than news of your cowardice on the battlefield”?

What was the real battlefield described in this section? How did Malala and her family show their honor?