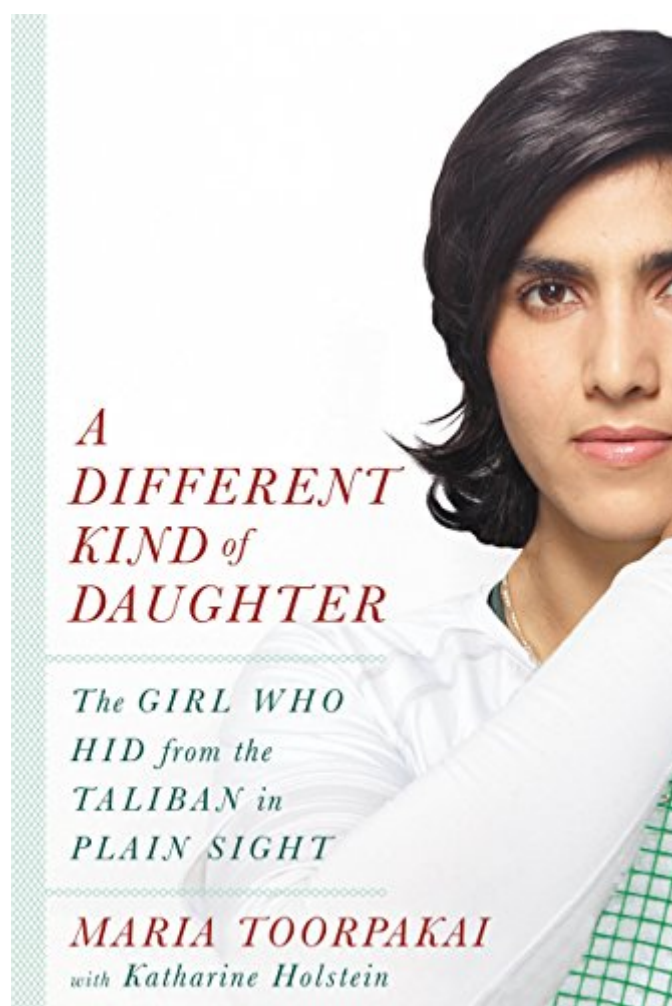


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A Different Kind Of Daughter: The Girl Who Hid From The Taliban In Plain Sight



Synopsis

Best Book of the Month"Maria Toorpakai is a true inspiration, a pioneer for millions of other women struggling to pave their own paths to autonomy, fulfillment, and genuine personhood." --Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*

Maria Toorpakai hails from Pakistan's violently oppressive northwest tribal region, where the idea of women playing sports is considered haram-un-Islamic-forbidden-and girls rarely leave their homes. But she did, passing as a boy in order to play the sports she loved, thus becoming a lightning rod of freedom in her country's fierce battle over women's rights. *A DIFFERENT KIND OF DAUGHTER* tell of Maria's harrowing journey to play the sport she knew was her destiny, first living as a boy and roaming the violent back alleys of the frontier city of Peshawar, rising to become the number one female squash player in Pakistan. For Maria, squash was more than liberation-it was salvation. But it was also a death sentence, thrusting her into the national spotlight and the crosshairs of the Taliban, who wanted Maria and her family dead. Maria knew her only chance of survival was to flee the country. Enter Jonathon Power, the first North American to earn the title of top squash player in the world, and the only person to heed Maria's plea for help. Recognizing her determination and talent, Jonathon invited Maria to train and compete internationally in Canada. After years of living on the run from the Taliban, Maria packed up and left the only place she had ever known to move halfway across the globe and pursue her dream. Now Maria is well on the way to becoming a world champion as she continues to be a voice for oppressed women everywhere.

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Customer Reviews

Where do I start here? I absolutely could not put this book down!! When I discovered that Maria's father was a Feminist, as was Maria's sister, and her mother went to college even after marrying this man she had never met before.... I knew I was in uncharted waters and things could only get better and more interesting from the start. Maria's father had a sister named Maria, who died of perhaps a broken heart? The oppression that the women had to face was awful, insurmountable in most cases, and most probably the first Maria died of a broken heart from not being allowed to be who she really was - NOT a water bearer having to dress up in voluminous heavy beaded dresses, just because she was born female. When Maria Toorpakai was VERY young, she burned all her dresses, cut off all her hair and put on her brother's clothes. Disguised as a boy, renamed Genghis Kahn by her (approving) father, she was FREE to play, to roam the countryside in Pakistan with the neighborhood boys, to play and fight, and get into fights she did indeed!! In a small way this book reminds me of my mother-- a staunch feminist from the day she was born -- 1920 (November 22, by the way!)-- and how when pregnant with me, she knitted everything blue. I popped out pink-- that did not deter her OR me. Mom's first words of advice before I went to school was "If someone hits you -- YOU hit them back!" Mom bought me boys' clothes and understood (although to a lesser degree than Maria's father) where I was "coming from". My sister was outspoken, like Maria's sister -- and so my interesting family background made me appreciate all the more, Maria's yearnings, struggles and inner flame. Maria's prose is descriptive indeed.

Maria Toorpakai was born in the 1990s in the fractious tribal lands of South Waziristan on Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. It's a conservative area, to say the least -- even in the pre-Al Queda, pre-Taliban era, women were supposed to dress pretty and stay in the home. At the time, girls could be educated, but only to an elementary level. But Maria was "a different kind of girl," as she says, one who chafed in the heavy clothes intended to hide her body and the walls that were supposed to reign in her ambitions. One who through violent acts learned all she needed to know about who she was expected to be. One day, Maria decides she would rather risk it all than continue in her smothering existence. She begins to dress as a boy in shorts and a t-shirt and go out among the boys of her valley to kick around a soccer ball, ride bikes and generally roam where she will. As

it becomes clear that the home and school room can't hold her, her parents -- both banished from their families because of their liberal ways -- encourage her. "My mother... pursued university degrees; and my father, our Baba, who also had given his wife permission to stop wearing her burqa, stood at the center of it all like a ringmaster, breaking ancient rules with the relentless daring of a hot-blooded Wazir," she writes. Maria's fighting spirit begins to get her into deadly scrapes, especially after the family is forced to relocate to the city of Peshawar, until one day her father leads her to a sports complex and allows her to begin training first as a weightlifter and then as a squash player. She keeps up the ruse of being a boy for a long time, until one day the secret gets out.

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