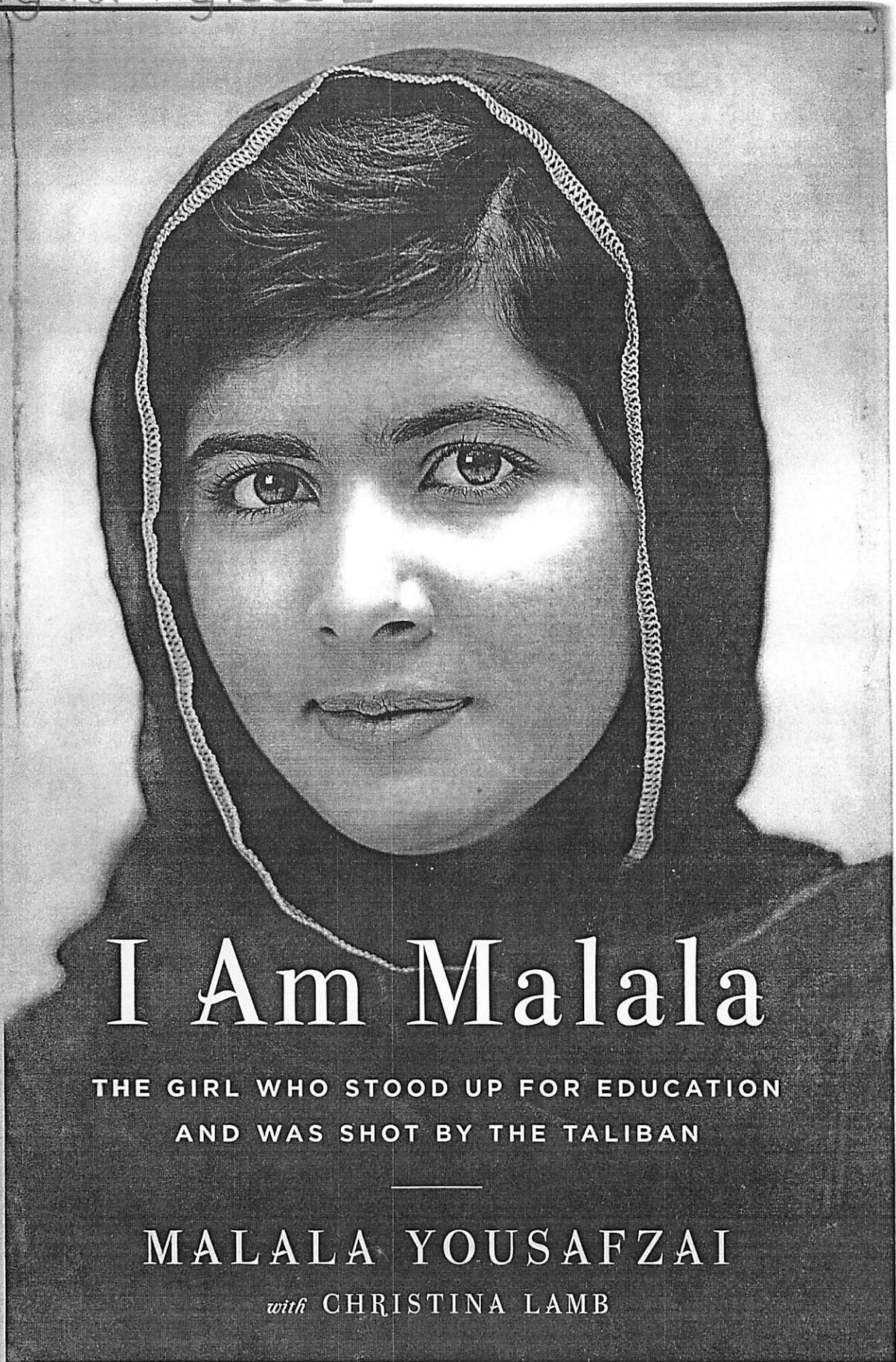


I Am Malala

THE GIRL WHO STOOD UP FOR EDUCATION AND WAS SHOT BY THE TALIBAN

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

 PITTLE, BROWN



I Am Malala

THE GIRL WHO STOOD UP FOR EDUCATION
AND WAS SHOT BY THE TALIBAN

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

with CHRISTINA LAMB

I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday.

- 1 When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.
- 2 On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive.
- 3 Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 4 *I Am Malala* is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.
- 5 *I Am Malala* will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

- 6 MALALA YOUSAFZAI came to public attention at the age of eleven by writing for BBC Urdu about life under the Taliban. Using the pen name Gul Makai, she often spoke about her family's fight for girls' education in her community.
- 7 In October 2012, Malala was targeted by the Taliban and shot in the head as she was returning from school on a bus. She miraculously survived and continues her campaign for education.
- 8 In recognition of her courage and advocacy, Malala was the winner of Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize in 2011 and was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize in the same year. She is the youngest person ever nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. She was one of four runners-up for *Time* magazine's Person of the Year and has received numerous other awards.
- 9 Malala continues to champion universal access to education through the Malala Fund, a non-profit organization investing in community-led programs and supporting education advocates around the world.
- 10 CHRISTINA LAMB is one of the world's leading foreign correspondents. She has reported on Pakistan and Afghanistan since 1987. Educated at Oxford and Harvard, she is the author of five books and has won a number of awards, including Britain's Foreign Correspondent of the Year five times, as well as the Prix Bayeux-Calvados, Europe's most prestigious award for war correspondents. She currently works for the *Sunday Times* and lives in London and Portugal with her husband and son.



For more about this book and author, visit Bookish.com.

A reading group guide to *I Am Malala* is available at littlebrown.com

Follow us @littlebrown on Twitter.

Like us at [Facebook.com/littlebrownandcompany](https://www.facebook.com/littlebrownandcompany).

Also available in audio and ebook editions
Jacket design by Mario J. Pulice and Ploy Siripant
Jacket photographs by Antonio Olmos
Jacket © 2013 Hachette Book Group, Inc.
Printed in the U.S.A.

Epilogue

One Child, One Teacher, One Book, One Pen . . .

Birmingham, August 2013

1 In March we moved from the apartment to a rented house on a leafy street, but it feels as if we are camping in it. All our belongings are still in Swat. Everywhere there are cardboard boxes full of the kind letters and cards that people send, and in one room stands a piano none of us can play. My mother complains about the murals of Greek gods on the walls and carved cherubs on the ceilings watching her

2 Our house feels big and empty. It sits behind an electric iron gate and it sometimes seems as if we are in what we in Pakistan call a sub-jail, a kind of luxury house arrest. At the back there is a large garden with lots of trees and a green lawn for me and my brothers to play cricket on. But there are no rooftops to play on, no children fighting with kites in the streets, no neighbors coming in to borrow a plate of rice or for us to ask for three tomatoes. We are just a wall's distance from the next house, but it feels miles away.

3 If I look out, I see my mother wandering around the garden, her head covered by a shawl, feeding the birds. She looks as if she is singing, maybe that *tapa* she likes: “Don’t kill doves in the garden. / You kill one and the others won’t come.” She is giving the birds the remains of our dinner from the night before and there are tears in her eyes. We eat much the same here as we did back home—rice and meat for lunch and dinner, while breakfast is fried eggs, chapatis and sometimes also honey, a tradition started by my little brother Atal, though his favorite Birmingham discovery is Nutella sandwiches. But there are always leftovers. My mother is sad about the waste of food. I know she is remembering all the children we fed in our house so they would not go to school on empty stomachs and wondering how they are faring now.

4 When I came home from school in Mingora I never found my house without people in it; now I can’t believe that I used to plead for a day of peace and some privacy to do my schoolwork. Here the only sound is of the birds and Khushal’s Xbox. I sit alone in my room doing a jigsaw puzzle and long for guests.

5 We didn’t have much money and my parents knew what it was like to be hungry. My mother never turned anyone away. Once a poor woman came, hot, hungry and thirsty, to our door. My mother let her in and gave her food, and the woman was so happy. “I touched every door in the *mohalla* and this was the only one open,” she said. “May God always keep your door open, wherever you are.”

6 I know my mother is lonely. She was very sociable—all the women of the neighborhood used to gather in the afternoons on our back porch, and women who worked in other houses came to rest. Now she is always on the phone to everyone back home. It’s hard for her here, as she does not speak any English. Our house

has all these facilities, but when she arrived they were all mysteries to her and someone had to show us how to use the oven, washing machine and the TV.

7 As usual my father doesn’t help in the kitchen. I tease him, “Aba, you talk of women’s rights, but my mother manages everything! You don’t even clear the tea things.”

8 There are buses and trains, but we are unsure about using them. My mother misses going shopping in Cheena Bazaar. She is happier since my cousin Shah came to stay. He has a car and takes her shopping, but it’s not the same, as she can’t talk to her friends and neighbors about what she bought.

9 A door bangs in the house and my mother jumps—she jumps these days at the slightest noise. She often cries then hugs me. “Malala is alive,” she says. Now she treats me as if I were her youngest rather than eldest child.

10 I know my father cries too. He cries when I push my hair to the side and he sees the scar on my head, and he cries when he wakes from an afternoon nap to hear his children’s voices in the garden and realizes with relief that one of them is still mine. He knows people say it’s his fault that I was shot, that he pushed me to speak up like a tennis dad trying to create a champion, as if I don’t have my own mind. It’s hard for him. All he worked for over almost twenty years has been left behind: the school he built up from nothing which now has three buildings with 1,100 pupils and seventy teachers. I know he felt proud of what he had created, a poor boy from that narrow village between the Black and White Mountains. He says, “It’s as if you planted a tree and nurtured it—you have the right to sit in its shade.”

11 His dream in life was to have a very big school in Swat providing quality education, to live peacefully and to have democracy in

our country. In Swat he had achieved respect and status in society through his activities and the help he gave people. He never imagined living abroad and he gets upset when people suggest we wanted to come to the UK. “A person who has eighteen years of education, a nice life, a family, you throw him out just as you throw a fish out of water for speaking up for girls’ education?” Sometimes he says we have gone from being IDPs to EDPs—externally displaced persons. Often over meals we talk about home and try to remember things. We miss everything, even the smelly stream. My father says, “If I had known this would happen, I would have looked back for a last time just as the Prophet did when he left Mecca to migrate to Medina. He looked back again and again.” Already some of the things from Swat seem like stories from a distant place, like somewhere I have read about.

12 My father spends much of his time going to conferences on education. I know it’s odd for him that now people want to hear him because of me, not the other way around. I used to be known as his daughter; now he’s known as my father. When he went to France to collect an award for me, he told the audience, “In my part of the world most people are known by their sons. I am one of the few lucky fathers known by his daughter.”

13 A smart new uniform hangs on my bedroom door, bottle-green instead of royal-blue, for a school where no one dreams of being attacked for going to classes or someone blowing up the building. In April I was well enough to start school in Birmingham. It’s wonderful going to school and not having to feel scared as I did in Mingora, always looking around me on my way to school, terrified a Talib would jump out.

14 It’s a good school. Many subjects are the same as at home, but

the teachers have PowerPoint and computers rather than chalk and blackboards. We have some different subjects—music, art, computer studies, home economics, where we learn to cook—and we do practicals in science, which is rare in Pakistan. Even though I recently got just 40 percent in my physics exam, it is still my favorite subject. I love learning about Newton and the basic principles the whole universe obeys.

15 But like my mother I am lonely. It takes time to make good friends like I had at home, and the girls at school here treat me differently. People say, “Oh, that’s Malala”—they see me as “Malala, girls’ rights activist.” Back in the Khushal School I was just Malala, the same double-jointed girl they had always known, who loved to tell jokes and drew pictures to explain things. Oh, and who was always quarreling with her brother and best friend! I think every class has a very well behaved girl, a very intelligent or genius girl, a very popular girl, a beautiful girl, a girl who is a bit shy, a notorious girl... but here I haven’t worked out yet who is who.

16 As there is no one here I can tell my jokes to, I save them and tell them to Moniba when we Skype. My first question is always “What’s the latest news at the school?” I love to hear who is fighting with who, and who got told off by which teacher. Moniba came first in class in the most recent exams. My classmates still keep a seat for me with my name on it, and at the boys’ school Sir Amjad has put a big poster of me at the entrance and says he greets it every morning before going into his office.

17 I describe life in England to Moniba. I tell her of the streets with rows of identical houses, unlike home, where everything is different and higgledy-piggledy and a shack of mud and stones can stand next to a house as big as a castle. I tell her how they are lovely solid houses which could withstand floods and earthquakes

but have no flat roofs to play on. I tell her I like England because people follow rules, they respect policemen and everything happens on time. The government is in charge and no one needs to know the name of the army chief. I see women having jobs we couldn't imagine in Swat. They are police and security guards; they run big companies and dress exactly as they like.

18 I don't often think about the shooting, though every day when I look in the mirror it is a reminder. The nerve operation has done as much as it can. I will never be exactly the same. I can't blink fully, and my left eye closes a lot when I speak. My father's friend Hidayatullah told him we should be proud of my eye. "It's the beauty of her sacrifice," he said.

19 It is still not definitely known who shot me, but a man named Ataullah Khan said he did it. The police have not managed to find him, but they say they are investigating and want to interview me.

20 Though I don't remember exactly what happened that day, sometimes I have flashbacks. They come unexpectedly. The worst one was in June, when we were in Abu Dhabi on the way to perform *Umrah* in Saudi Arabia. I went to a shopping mall with my mother, as she wanted to buy a special burqa to pray in Mecca. I didn't want one. I said I would just wear my shawl, as it is not specified that a woman must wear a burqa. As we were walking through the mall, suddenly I could see so many men around me. I thought they were waiting for me with guns and would shoot. I was terrified, though I said nothing. I told myself, *Malala, you have already faced death. This is your second life. Don't be afraid—if you are afraid, you can't move forward.*

21 We believe that when we have our first sight of the Kaaba, the black-shrouded cube in Mecca that is our most sacred place, any

wish in your heart is granted by God. When we prayed at the Kaaba, we prayed for peace in Pakistan and for girls' education, and I was surprised to find myself in tears. But when we went to the other holy places in the desert of Mecca where the Prophet lived and preached, I was shocked that they were littered with empty bottles and biscuit wrappers. It seemed that people had neglected to preserve history. I thought they had forgotten the Hadith that cleanliness is half of faith.

22 My world has changed so much. On the shelves of our rented living room are awards from around the world—America, India, France, Spain, Italy and Austria, and many other places. I've even been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, the youngest person ever. When I received prizes for my work at school I was happy, as I had worked hard for them, but these prizes are different. I am grateful for them, but they only remind me how much work still needs to be done to achieve the goal of education for every boy and girl. I don't want to be thought of as the "girl who was shot by the Taliban" but the "girl who fought for education." This is the cause to which I want to devote my life.

23 On my sixteenth birthday I was in New York to speak at the United Nations. Standing up to address an audience inside the vast hall where so many world leaders have spoken before was daunting, but I knew what I wanted to say. *This is your chance, Malala*, I said to myself. Only 400 people were sitting around me, but when I looked out, I imagined millions more. I did not write the speech only with the UN delegates in mind; I wrote it for every person around the world who could make a difference. I wanted to reach all people living in poverty, those children forced to work and those who suffer from terrorism or lack of education.

Deep in my heart I hoped to reach every child who could take courage from my words and stand up for his or her rights.

24 I wore one of Benazir Bhutto's white shawls over my favorite pink shalwar kamiz and I called on the world's leaders to provide free education to every child in the world. "Let us pick up our books and our pens," I said. "They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world." I didn't know how my speech was received until the audience gave me a standing ovation. My mother was in tears and my father said I had become everybody's daughter.

25 Something else happened that day. My mother allowed herself to be publicly photographed for the first time. As she has lived her life in purdah and never unveiled her face on camera before, it was a great sacrifice and very difficult for her.

26 At breakfast the next day, Atal said to me in the hotel, "Malala, I don't understand why you are famous. What have you done?" All the time we were in New York he was more excited by the Statue of Liberty, Central Park and his favorite game, Beyblade!

27 After the speech I received messages of support from all over the world, but there was mostly silence from my own country, except that on Twitter and Facebook we could see my own Pakistani brothers and sisters turning against me. They accused me of speaking out of "a teen lust for fame." One said, "Forget the image of your country, forget about the school. She would eventually get what she was after, a life of luxury abroad."

28 I don't mind. I know people say these things because they have seen leaders and politicians in our country who make promises they never keep. Instead things in Pakistan are getting worse every day. The endless terrorist attacks have left the whole nation in shock. People have lost trust in each other, but I would like ev-

eryone to know that I don't want support for myself, I want the support to be for my cause of peace and education.

29 The most surprising letter I got after my speech was from a Taliban commander who recently escaped from prison. His name was Adnan Rashid and he used to be in the Pakistan air force. He had been in jail since 2003 for attempting to assassinate President Musharraf. He said the Taliban had attacked me not for my campaign for education but because I tried to "malign [their] efforts to establish the Islamic system." He said he was writing to me because he was shocked by my shooting and wished he could have warned me beforehand. He wrote that they would forgive me if I came back to Pakistan, wore a burqa and went to a madrasa.

30 Journalists urged me to answer him, but I thought, *Who is this man to say that?* The Taliban are not our rulers. It's my life; how I live it is my choice. But Mohammed Hanif wrote an article pointing out that the good thing about the Taliban letter was that many people claim I wasn't shot, yet here they were accepting responsibility.

31 I know I will go back to Pakistan, but whenever I tell my father I want to go home, he finds excuses. "No, *Jani*, your treatment is not complete," he says, or, "These schools are good. You should stay here and gather knowledge so you can use your words powerfully."

32 He is right. I want to learn and be trained well with the weapon of knowledge. Then I will be able to fight more effectively for my cause.

33 Today we all know education is our basic right. Not just in the West; Islam too has given us this right. Islam says every girl and every boy should go to school. In the Quran it is written, God wants us to have knowledge. He wants us to know why the sky is blue

and about oceans and stars. I know it's a big struggle—around the world there are fifty-seven million children who are not in primary school, thirty-two million of them girls. Sadly, my own country, Pakistan, is one of the worst places: 5.1 million children don't even go to primary school even though in our constitution it says every child has that right. We have almost fifty million illiterate adults, two thirds of whom are women, like my own mother.

34 Girls continue to be killed and schools blown up. In March there was an attack on a girls' school in Karachi that we had visited. A bomb and a grenade were tossed into the school playground just as a prize-giving ceremony was about to start. The headmaster, Abdur Rasheed, was killed and eight children hurt between the ages of five and ten. One eight-year-old was left disabled. When my mother heard the news, she cried and cried. "When our children are sleeping we wouldn't even disturb a hair on their heads," she said, "but there are people who have guns and shoot them or hurl bombs. They don't care that their victims are children." The most shocking attack was in June in the city of Quetta, when a suicide bomber blew up a bus taking forty pupils to their all-girls' college. Fourteen of them were killed. The wounded were followed to the hospital and some nurses were shot.

35 It's not just the Taliban killing children. Sometimes it's drone attacks, sometimes it's wars, sometimes it's hunger. And sometimes it's their own family. In June two girls my age were murdered in Gilgit, which is a little north of Swat, for posting a video online showing themselves dancing in the rain wearing traditional dress and headscarves. Apparently their own stepbrother shot them.

36 Today Swat is more peaceful than other places, but there are still military everywhere, four years after they supposedly removed the Taliban. Fazlullah is still on the loose, and our bus driver

still under house arrest. Our valley, which was once a haven for tourists, is now seen as a place of fear. Foreigners who want to visit have to get a No Objection Certificate from the authorities in Islamabad. Hotels and craft shops are empty. It will be a long time before tourists return.

37 Over the last year I've seen many other places, but my valley remains to me the most beautiful place in the world. I don't know when I will see it again, but I know that I will. I wonder what happened to the mango seed I planted in our garden at Ramadan. I wonder if anyone is watering it so that one day future generations of daughters and sons can enjoy its fruit.

38 Today I looked at myself in a mirror and thought for a second. Once I had asked God for one or two extra inches in height, but instead he made me as tall as the sky, so high that I could not measure myself. So I offered the hundred *raakat nafl* that I had promised if I grew.

39 I love my God. I thank my Allah. I talk to him all day. He is the greatest. By giving me this height to reach people, he has also given me great responsibilities. Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country—this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world. To sit down on a chair and read my books with all my friends at school is my right. To see each and every human being with a smile of happiness is my wish.

40 I am Malala. My world has changed but I have not.