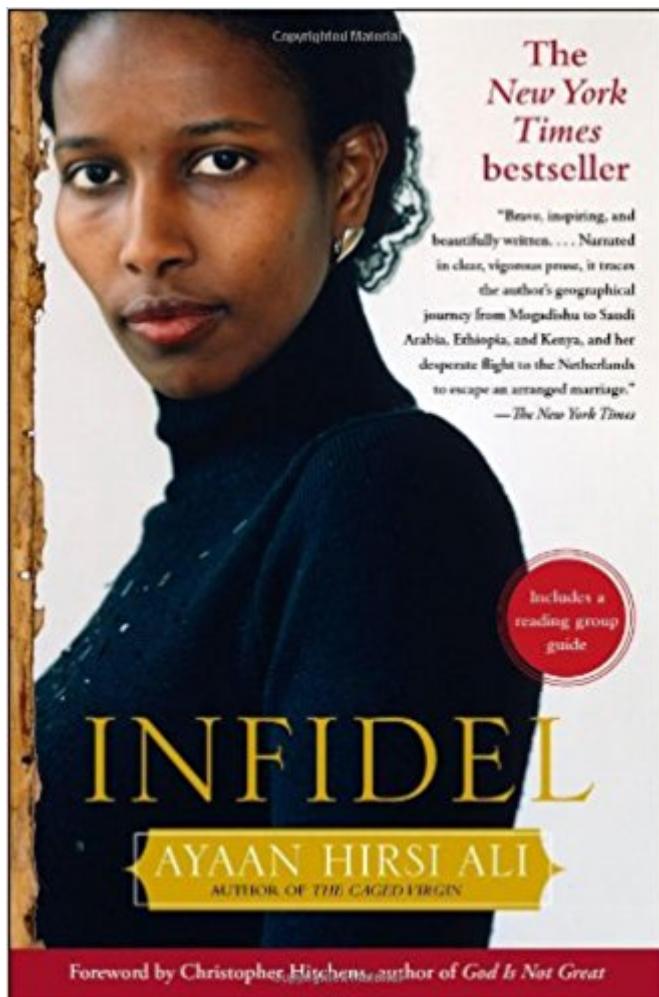


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# Infidel



## Synopsis

One of today's most admired and controversial political figures, Ayaan Hirsi Ali burst into international headlines following the murder of Theo van Gogh by an Islamist who threatened that she would be next. She made headlines again when she was stripped of her citizenship and resigned from the Dutch Parliament. *Infidel* shows the coming of age of this distinguished political superstar and champion of free speech as well as the development of her beliefs, iron will, and extraordinary determination to fight injustice. Raised in a strict Muslim family, Hirsi Ali survived civil war, female mutilation, brutal beatings, adolescence as a devout believer during the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, and life in four troubled, unstable countries ruled largely by despots. She escaped from a forced marriage and sought asylum in the Netherlands, where she earned a college degree in political science, tried to help her tragically depressed sister adjust to the West, and fought for the rights of Muslim women and the reform of Islam as a member of Parliament. Under constant threat, demonized by reactionary Islamists and politicians, disowned by her father, and expelled from family and clan, she refuses to be silenced. Ultimately a celebration of triumph over adversity, Hirsi Ali's story tells how a bright little girl evolves out of dutiful obedience to become an outspoken, pioneering freedom fighter. As Western governments struggle to balance democratic ideals with religious pressures, no other book could be more timely or more significant.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Readers with an eye on European politics will recognize Ali as the Somali-born member of the Dutch parliament who faced death threats after collaborating on a film about

domestic violence against Muslim women with controversial director Theo van Gogh (who was himself assassinated). Even before then, her attacks on Islamic culture as "brutal, bigoted, [and] fixated on controlling women" had generated much controversy. In this suspenseful account of her life and her internal struggle with her Muslim faith, she discusses how these views were shaped by her experiences amid the political chaos of Somalia and other African nations, where she was subjected to genital mutilation and later forced into an unwanted marriage. While in transit to her husband in Canada, she decided to seek asylum in the Netherlands, where she marveled at the polite policemen and government bureaucrats. Ali is up-front about having lied about her background in order to obtain her citizenship, which led to further controversy in early 2006, when an immigration official sought to deport her and triggered the collapse of the Dutch coalition government. Apart from feelings of guilt over van Gogh's death, her voice is forceful and unbowed. <sup>•</sup>like Irshad Manji, she delivers a powerful feminist critique of Islam informed by a genuine understanding of the religion. 8-page photo insert. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although Ayaan Hirsi Ali remains Public Enemy #1 for radical Muslims, she refuses to be silenced. In this captivating memoir<sup>&#x97;</sup>an act of courage itself<sup>—</sup>she shares the evolution of her values, beliefs, and identity, all propelled by an urgent mission to educate Western countries about the bigotries of other nations. Set against a terrifying geopolitical landscape of African wars and Muslim fundamentalism, Hirsi Ali addresses timely topics: the plight of refugees and women; the Muslim clan system; forced marriage; political asylum; and, perhaps most significantly, her own personal religious crisis. Written in descriptive, clear prose, *Infidel*, with its radical feminist criticism of Islam, offers a disturbing view of the modern world<sup>—</sup>and inspired every critic who read it. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Very clear, well written, and personal, Ayaan Hirsi Ali has the guts to tell everything about her very traumatic past and her inquiry into how she felt about each incident, each feeling, each perspective. Many people are angry with her, of course. She challenges views traditionally held by the extreme left and the extreme right. Raw reality is a challenge, and she presents raw reality that's sometimes tough to face squarely. Thank you, Ayaan, for sharing your life with all of us. Keep going. I wish you a long, happy life.

I am moved by Ayaan's story. The book is easy to read in style, though content saddens me, as no one should experience what this woman endured. At the same time, I feel concerned that readers who view Islam only through her experience, will see only a small and tragic side of this particular spiritual path. It is my hope that this book will be widely read, and that to balance Ayaan's story, readers will seek other stories of life on this path, from a variety of areas on the planet, so it is understood that this is not, in anyway, a complete story of what is experienced for women in Islam.

As quite a few people, I had some knowledge of Islam, but after reading Miss Ali's book I now know a lot more. This book was a real eye opener and it makes one wonder how in his day and age some people can be centuries behind the times and be so cruel, especially to women and children. I really admire Miss Ali and think she is very brave to have written this book and others really risking her life by doing it.

This is a really wonderful and important book. It is a memoir how a woman born in Somalia, then later living in Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Somalia observes the practices of her religion, especially as they apply to girls and women and without much education continues to question what she observes. Ultimately fleeing to Holland via Germany to escape an arranged marriage. Her life in Holland opens her up to education and seeing how life is in a a peaceful society where people use reason to solve issues. The on going questioning of her religious beliefs (over a number of years) till she frees herself from the "mental cage" of it is really enlightening. Her perceptions of Holland and the wonderful defence of her and her role as a politician there speak volumes about tolerance in that country. Given the huge immigration issues currently in Europe and the incredible fear of Islamisation makes this an important book. Ayaan Hirsi Ali has totally rejected her religion and rejects western tolerance of it and particularly what it does to women. Her arguments are so well reasoned that it is not like the Islamaphobia or hysteria of the anti-immigration parties or some press and the fact she freed herself from it gives hope for others given a different example to follow.

What bravery as well as wisdom to come out from her horrible beginnings, It was so interesting to see her gradual awareness of how the rest of the sane world lives. She delivers a clear message to all, that we must heed. Everyone needs to understand what this political system means for women. Enlightenment is the best way to undermine this struggle to subjugate the masses. Reminds me of the Nazis and their reign of terror. Well written! Thank you Ayaan for putting a face on it all.Judy

## Hodges

WOW. Infidel is truly an amazing, and incredibly thought-provoking book. Ayaan Hirsi Ali defied all odds, coming from a Muslim family in Muslim Somalia and miraculously ending up in Western culture (accompanied with Western ideology). I chose to read this book so I could learn about Islam. I was curious about something I knew nothing about, yet heard about all the time. This was an excellent book to read on the subject. Raised Muslim, Ali is as expert as a person can be. She's very insightful, giving a brutally honest account of what it was like to grow up Muslim. It was interesting to see her religious transformation throughout the book. (She was finally forced to make a decision regarding her religion after 9/11, after years of questioning Islam). It was truly eye-opening. I admire her courage, will, ambition, and most of all, her heart. She is an amazing woman, with a spirit that cannot be broken. I particularly found this analogy very powerful: "When I was asked for my opinion, I explained that Islam was like a mental cage. At first, when you open the door, the caged bird stays inside; it is frightened. It has internalized its imprisonment. It takes time for the bird to escape, even after someone has opened the doors to its cage" (p. 285). She also draws thought-provoking conclusions based on her observations of how religion affects government and modernization, declaring, "Every society that is still in the rigid grip of Islam oppresses women and also lags behind in development. Most of these societies are poor; many are full of conflict and war. Societies that respect the rights of women and their freedom are wealthy and peaceful" (p. 296). Of course, these are just excerpts from a very well-written chronicle of Ali's life. I highly, highly recommend this book to anyone and everyone. If religion isn't your thing, there is still MUCH to take away from this book, no doubt.

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