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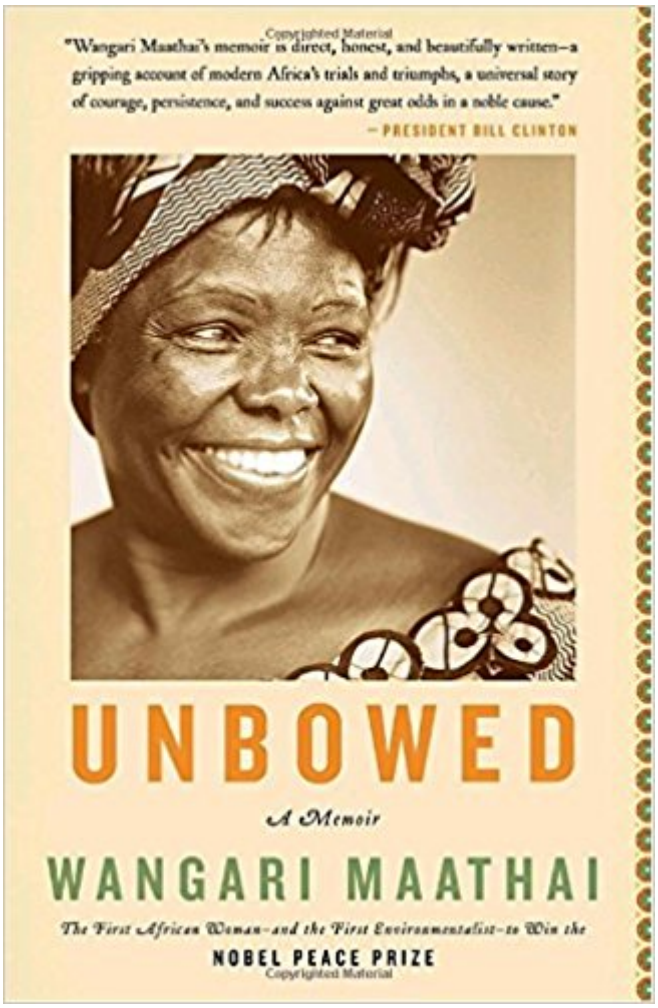
Unbowed: A Memoir



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Synopsis

In Unbowed, Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai recounts her extraordinary journey from her childhood in rural Kenya to the world stage. When Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977, she began a vital poor peopleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s environmental movement, focused on the empowerment of women, that soon spread across Africa. Persevering through run-ins with the Kenyan government and personal losses, and jailed and beaten on numerous occasions, Maathai continued to fight tirelessly to save KenyaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s forests and to restore democracy to her beloved country. Infused with her unique luminosity of spirit, Wangari MaathaiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s remarkable story of courage, faith, and the power of persistence is destined to inspire generations to come.

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Customer Reviews

Maathai, a 2004 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, presents a matter-of-fact account of her rather exceptional life in Kenya. Born in 1940, Matthai attended primary school at a time when Kenyan girls were not educated; went on to earn a Ph.D. and became head of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy at the University of Nairobi before founding Kenya's Green Belt Movement in 1977, which mobilized thousands of women to plant trees in an effort to restore the country's indigenous forests. Because Kenya's environmental degradation was largely due to the policies of a corrupt government, she then made the Green Belt Movement part of a broader campaign for democracy. Maathai endured personal attacks by the ruling powers-President Moi denounced her as a

"wayward" woman-and engaged in political activities that landed her in jail several times. When a new government came into power in 2002, she was elected to Parliament and appointed assistant minister in the Ministry for Environment and Natural Resources. Despite workmanlike prose, this memoir (after The Green Belt Movement) documents the remarkable achievements of an influential environmentalist and activist. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright Ã Â© 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.

Starred Review The mother of three, the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate, and the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, Wangari Maathai of Kenya understands how the good earth sustains life both as a biologist and as a Kikuyu woman who, like generations before her, grew nourishing food in the rich soil of Kenya's central highlands. In her engrossing and eye-opening memoir, a work of tremendous dignity and rigor, Maathai describes the paradise she knew as a child in the 1940s, when Kenya was a "lush, green, fertile" land of plenty, and the deforested nightmare it became. Discriminated against as a female university professor, Maathai has fought hard for women's rights. And it was women she turned to when she undertook her mission to restore Kenya's decimated forests, launching the Green Belt Movement and providing women with work planting trees. Maathai's ingenious, courageous, and tenacious activism led to arrests, beatings, and death threats, and yet she and her tree-planting followers remained unbowed. Currently Kenya's deputy minister for the environment and natural resources, Nobel laureate, visionary, and hero, Maathai has restored humankind's innate if nearly lost knowledge of the intrinsic connection between thriving, wisely managed ecosystems and health, justice, and peace. Donna SeamanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I would recommend buying from this seller. The book was as expected, and delivered as stipulated. I am Kenyan, in USA for my studies and just wanted to read about Prof. Wangari Maathai and share with my lab mates. I have not been disappointing. A great book for people who want to understand struggles that some people go through to save a country. Kenya, a country in East Africa, where I was born, is a beautiful country, gained independence from the British in 1963, and has had self seeking leadership since. There is much glory in tribalism and those who rise above it get the wrath for abandoning their tribes. Such was the case of Wangari Maathai, who at one time got the full wrath of her tribe for not supporting their son president Kibaki. Many are the examples like Raphael

Tuju who is a great leader but defied Odingaism etc. Kenya, overall has the most humane people, they share their personal space, kids are happiest playing soccer, neighbors share even basic commodities and that is what I love about this country.Kenyans are the most sacrificing as the common people are willing to die poor and wear torn slippers for the rest of their lives to support tribe dominance and not quality leadership.This is something strange to people of developed world, where you cannot win in your state if not seen as quality in regard to policy, as was the case with Romney.Policy is not issue in places like Kenya, tribe is.But People like Maathai only make us dream that just maybe, one day, we will move above our tribes and be one Kenya. I have hope, and hope is a great thing to have.

I enjoyed reading Wangari Maathai's memoir, especially her childhood, and journey to early adulthood, and the final years of her work after she won the Nobel Prize. Her struggle to protect Kenyan forests and promote women's rights and advocate for environmental protection through the Green Belt Movement, especially under a repressive government regime, is admirable and inspiring.Two things I struggled with as I read about her work with the Green Belt Movement are her tendencies to belittle Kenyans and portray herself as an absolute victim.Because of her work, Maathai was constantly harassed by local government authorities. During these moments, she would appeal to her international networks of friends and colleagues to encourage the Kenyan Government to put the environment before destructive developmental projects, arguing that Kenyans are too busy trying to earn a living, or not as aware of environmental conservation as people in the West are. This is a contradiction with what she claims several times about generations past who had systems of protecting the environment. She even demonstrates it through stories about growing up amongst lush rivers and forested areas in the forties and fifties.Finally, in the face of constant adversity, it may be inevitable to take the tone of a victim, constantly attacking the mechanisms and institutions that prevent one from doing their work. Maathai falls into this trap, which diminishes her heroism and struggle. As a woman who achieved such prominence, she could have held her head up a little higher, especially in her lucid writing, to give a more powerful account of the years she spent building the Green Belt Movement.

One of my heroes! Kenya's Wangari Maathai was the first African woman and first environmentalist to win the Nobel peace prize; she was also a fearless activist for democracy, women's rights, and sustainable development, and a brilliant story teller, too! I used the book in a number of college courses, to great avail. Many students found her story inspirational, unique and clearly told.

Wangari Maathai was one of a handful of women who have won the Nobel Prize. The first African woman to receive a PhD she went on to start the Green Belt movement, first in her home country of Kenya and then internationally. Her story is amazing as she met and overcame one social and societal barrier after another. An excellent book about an unlikely hero - a black, African woman and mother of three. A must read. Thank you for having this available

The late Wangari Maathai started a movement in Kenya to plant millions of trees. But she was not merely an environmentalist who loved trees. She got people to plant trees as a way of healing a devastated landscape. How is a poor rural family in Africa supposed to ever rise out of poverty if the woman must walk hours each day just to get firewood from forests that recede farther and farther away each year? As Maathai said on NPR, "The situation of a woman cutting down the last tree to cook her last meal is one we must avoid." No wonder Maathai got the Nobel Peace Prize. Science, at its best, is in the service of humankind, not merely to understand the world. I have more admiration for Maathai--who had to, as described in this book, face overwhelming obstacles from corrupt government interests--than for almost anyone else in human history.

Really liked the first 3/4 of the book which shows what good parenting and support means to a growing person. She's amazing.

I really enjoyed reading about Mrs. Wangeri Maathai's life. She was totally committed to serving her country and enriching the life of women. She was also committed to her family and education. Great book, I would certainly recommend it.

Good topic and author but not written in a compelling manner. I just gave up.

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