

Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister Study Guide

Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister by Libby Hughes

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Plot Summary

Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007) was the first woman leader of a Muslim nation and a major, influential proponent of democracy and human rights in Pakistan until her death by assassination in 2007. *Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister* is a biography of Bhutto's life up to 1990, eighteen months into her first term as Prime Minister of Pakistan. It is short and clearly written for a young adult audience, with large text and definitions for a number of words that would be inappropriate for post-secondary students studying Benazir Bhutto's life. Readers should also know at the outset that the book is heavily pro-Bhutto and mentions very few criticisms of her family's rule and her own administration.

Benazir Bhutto was born to the politically powerful Bhutto family in 1953. Raised in a privileged and non-traditional Muslim household, she was encouraged to go to college at an early age, as her father, Ali Bhutto, had. Bhutto was born in Karachi, Pakistan and was familiar with only Pakistani culture. But her father had gone to college in the United States and encouraged his daughter to do the same. At sixteen, she was admitted to Radcliffe College at Harvard. After facing great culture shock, Bhutto quickly shed her shyness and became political active, particularly for equal rights for women. After college, she studied politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford and then spent a year studying international diplomacy.

During Bhutto's college and graduate school years, her father served as Prime Minister of Pakistan in the face of great opposition from non-democratic forces like the military. But when she returned to Pakistan after completing her Oxford degree, the military staged a coup and imprisoned her father. After two years of imprisonment, the military government, led by General Zia Ul Haq, executed Ali Bhutto. After her father's death, Bhutto's mother, Nusrat Bhutto, became the leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the party her father had formed. Benazir was a major party leader as well.

Over the years the two were imprisoned many times. Bhutto was treated brutally in prison for three years by General Zia before she was able to leave the country due to health problems in 1984. After settling in London with her two brothers, she set up a PPP headquarters and began to organize an underground movement for democracy in Pakistan, which she promoted to the international media.

Many in Pakistan opposed Zia, and Bhutto was able to increase opposition. In April 1986, Bhutto returned to Pakistan. Most of the public was happy with her return, and she demanded that Zia resign. In 1988, Bhutto ran for Prime Minister on the PPP ticket against General Zia and other candidates. When General Zia died in a plane crash during the campaign, it was clear that change was coming to Pakistan. And in November of that year, Bhutto was elected Prime Minister.

The book tells this basic story throughout the first nine chapters. In the tenth chapter, the author, Libby Hughes, reviews Bhutto's struggles to make democracy work in Pakistan by fighting corruption, illiteracy and inequality.



Chapter One, A Child Without Equal

Chapter One, A Child Without Equal Summary and Analysis

When Benazir Bhutto was eight years old, she was frequently placed in charge of her younger siblings. Her parents would leave their children (Benazir, two brothers, Mir and Shah, and her sister, Sanam) in Karachi, Pakistan, placing a bit of money in Benazir's hands. The responsibility was serious but natural to Benazir and would lead her to take on leadership roles in the future. These roles would lead her in 1988, at the age of thirty-five, to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the first woman to lead a Muslim nation.

Pakistan is a small Asian nation home to 110 million people, found between Afghanistan and Iran and India and China. It was part of India until August 14th, 1947, when India gained independence from Britain and the Muslims and Hindus of the nation segregated on religious grounds. Ali Bhutto, the father of Benazir, was a representative of Pakistan from the beginning of the "partition" and represented Pakistan at the United Nations for seven years. He was at various times commerce minister, foreign minister and energy minister. Benazir would say that she would see her father in the newspaper more often than in person. But this is not to say that Ali did not love his daughter, Mohatarma, whom he lovingly called Benazir, or "without equal".

Bhutto's mother was Nusrat Bhutto, Ali's second wife, through arranged marriage. Ali only saw his first wife at family gatherings, but since Muslim men may have four wives, he married Nusrat in 1951. Apparently it was a happy marriage based on equality and was independent of Muslim tradition. Ali Bhutto's travels in the West led him to believe that many Muslim laws were unfair to women. Nusrat refused to wear the Islamic burqa, a veil that covers women's faces. Nusrat was college educated in Iran and drove her own sports car. Benazir grew up in this family and was expected to go to college. Benazir remembers respecting her mother, but more as an equal, with her father as the head of the family.

Bhutto's family placed her in a private Christian school; she learned English there along with the native language in her province, Sindhi, and Persian and Urdu, Pakistan's national language. Benazir was a fair student and played sports. Later, when Bhutto's father worked in Rawalpindi in northern Pakistan, Benazir attended a local Catholic boarding school in Murree. In 1965, Pakistan and India went to war and Murree was in the war zone. But the war only lasted seventeen days because Benazir's father went to the United Nations to organize a cease fire, which he successfully achieved. But he resigned when the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, gave Kashmir back to Pakistan.

In 1967, Ali Bhutto formed his own political party called the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and was jailed by Pakistan's president for it.

When Benazir reached the end of high school, her father motivated her to apply to Radcliffe and Benazir studied hard for her 1968 exams. Her father wrote that he was praying for her success in prison. He also encouraged her to study history.



Chapter Two, Heading for Harvard

Chapter Two, Heading for Harvard Summary and Analysis

The administrators at Radcliffe were worried about Benazir's age; she was also sheltered as a member of an upper-class Muslim home. Liberal American society might be too shocking for her. So Ali Bhutto called upon the great economist John Kenneth Galbraith, who at the time was an economics professor at Harvard (though had served as an ambassador to India before), asking him to intervene. In 1969, Benazir was accepted to Radcliffe. Leaving Pakistan was hard for her, as she knew she would miss many things. Nusrat came with Benazir to help her settle in. They also visited the Galbraiths, who would become like second parents to Benazir. Benazir also met Peter Galbraith, who would be a dear friend throughout her life.

Bhutto struggled to get used to young Americans' dirty appearance in the late sixties and early seventies. She quickly had to change her dress to blue jeans and sweatshirts, though she still covered her entire body as traditional Muslims did. Bhutto decided to major in comparative government, which her father thought was good news. He had written to Radcliffe's president at the time, asking him to steer Bhutto towards politics. Benazir was happy but homesick.

However, Benazir befriended several girls near her room, such as Anne Fadiman. She helped Benazir learn to do things for herself that had always been done for her, like answering a telephone. Quickly Benazir became more outgoing and started to blend in; she joined many organizations, such as the Harvard Crimson. She led tours and demonstrated against Vietnam. Benazir was also attracted to the feminist movement in the United States. She appreciated the freedom to decide not to marry and for that choice to be acceptable publicly. Nonetheless, Benazir would wear traditional Muslim garb when Pakistani hosts visited.

Benazir did not neglect her studies and kept her grades up, but it was easy for her. In Benazir's junior year, her father held a free election, the first in thirteen years. The voters elected her father Prime Minister by a large majority. While Pakistan has a president, the Prime Minister leads the National Assembly's majority party. The President is mostly an adviser and is elected by provincial assemblies, the Senate and the National Assembly. That winter Ali Bhutto flew to the UN to challenge India's military attack against them and asked Benazir to meet him in New York to watch Security Council disputes. He wanted her to view power politics in person; he encouraged her to create doubt in her adversaries and never lay all her cards on the table.

Despite Ali Bhutto's belief that the UN would side with him, the Security Council made no decision. Ali Bhutto was furious and left for Pakistan, while Benazir returned to Harvard. Eventually East Pakistan would become an independent country called Bangladesh.

These events matured Bhutto and gave her new confidence. Her reputation began to spread. When she graduated, she was sad but she graduated cum laude and was quite happy generally. Her father wanted her to go to Oxford for graduate school, so she did.



Chapter Three, On to Oxford

Chapter Three, On to Oxford Summary and Analysis

Bhutto's father taught her diplomacy, which became a major part of her education. In her junior year, she was able to see a meeting between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India and her father, then Prime Minister of Pakistan. This occurred in 1972 and concerned who should own Kashmir. Bhutto also joined her father on a state visit to the United States in 1973 where she was seated next to Henry Kissinger, then Secretary of State.

In the fall of 1973, Bhutto arrived at Oxford; her father was happy for her but she had a hard first few months. England was much less friendly than the United States, and the accommodations were much more modest. But she was busy with schoolwork for her politics, philosophy and economics degrees. She also joined the Oxford Union Debating Society, which helped her practice her speaking skills. She delivered her first speech there on the need to impeach Richard Nixon. Bhutto did have some time for fun, however. Bhutto's intelligence and enthusiasm led her tutors to think she might become an ambassador's assistant to the UN, though they thought she was an ordinary student. Bhutto also encountered racial prejudice at the London airport.

After studying at Oxford for three years and graduating, Bhutto's father insisted that she spend a year there studying international law and diplomacy, so she studied at Oxford in 1976. She would run for president of the Oxford Union Debating Society, which had never had a female or non-British president. She won in 1977. On a trip home that year, Bhutto's father told her that he was going to hold parliamentary elections in March rather than August to start working on equal rights for women in the foreign and civil service. Benazir agreed with this and other plans. Bhutto later did well as president of the debating society.

Ali Bhutto's campaign had become violent and emotional in the meanwhile, though her father eventually won. There were some fears that Ali and Benazir's lives may have been in danger after the election.



Chapter Four, Caught in a Coup

Chapter Four, Caught in a Coup Summary and Analysis

Islamabad has been the capital of Pakistan since 1959; it is full of parliamentary buildings. The Pakistani government has eighty senators elected every six years by four provinces (each having an equal number); the Senate has limited power. The National Assembly is more like the American House of Representatives and can pass laws and budgets. It has 237 members that serve five-year terms. When Bhutto arrived home, her father was grateful because he wanted her help. He gave her a government job.

However, on the night of July 7th, 1977 the Brigadier General Zia led the army to stage a coup against Ali Bhutto. Bhutto contacted Zia and Zia said that he would hold an election in ninety days and that Ali was under house arrest. Bhutto's father had Nusrat and the children return to their home in Karachi. Benazir Bhutto's safe life was now in danger. It was not at all clear that Zia would follow his word and hold elections. Despite the coup, Ali Bhutto and the PPP remained popular. Zia quickly threatened to punish people by law for breaking Islamic religious rules.

During this time of stress, Bhutto learned to deal with journalists and how to correct rumors and control the media cycle. A rumor sprouted up that Ali Bhutto was responsible for summer rains that damaged farm crops, so Bhutto's father told her to go to Lahore where the people who suffered ruined crops were located. It would show that the Bhuttos cared. While Benazir was frightened, she and her brother went and were greatly received. Due to Bhutto's father's popularity, Zia released him; once this occurred, Bhutto openly expressed her feeling about Zia, but her father warned her to be quiet.

Zia quickly attempted to jail Bhutto again; five men with machine guns came to arrest Ali one night in September 1977. They pointed guns at Bhutto and smashed her things. Bhutto went with her father as she was dragged away. A judge found Bhutto's father not guilty and set him free. Even after that, Bhutto would be seized by the army and placed in jail. While Ali was being moved, Nusrat ran a campaign to replace her husband, which is a traditional step for political families in Asia. Bhutto was suddenly on stage, giving speeches. Zia was threatened and placed under house arrest for two weeks. After being released, Bhutto and her mother rented a house near Ali's trial.

Bhutto's father was eventually found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. She found ways to see him and smuggle messages about how to protest. When Bhutto turned twenty-five, she went with her mother to see her father in jail. She was now eligible for office and decided to prepare a legal case to defend her father against the death penalty and asked an Oxford friend, Victoria Schofield, to help. The plea she made was denied in February 1979; Ali was imprisoned again despite requests from the United States, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia.



On April 3rd, 1979, Bhutto and her mother were taken to see Ali for the final time; they had only thirty minutes to say goodbye. Ali Bhutto expressed his deep love for his daughter. On April 4th, Ali Bhutto was said to be hanged (though his body did not bear the signs). Nusrat then began a traditional four month period of mourning. Benazir, in the meanwhile, decided she would never give up her father's ideals or causes.



Chapter Five, A Desert Cell

Chapter Five, A Desert Cell Summary and Analysis

After Ali's death, Bhutto became determined to fight for her father's vision. She started to conduct party meetings fairly quickly thereafter, and she became leader of the party. The PPP effectively won local elections, but they were focused on the national election against Zia, deciding to oppose him without Ali Bhutto. Zia cancelled the elections. Angry at continued support for the PPP, Zia moved Nusrat and Bhutto to Larkana in 1980 and put them under strict house arrest for half a year; they could not have visitors or talk on the phone and the Bhuttos could not be mentioned in the newspaper.

Bhutto was often bored and troubled by new outside events, but she spent her time using her study of law at Oxford and her father's legal advice to make a case against her detention in court. As a result, she and her mother were set free and Bhutto again became involved with the PPP. Zia's intelligence agents followed her constantly. Due to a serious ear infection, Bhutto had to briefly stop political activism; her mother sent her to manage the family's land holdings. Her father was dead and her brothers were hiding in Afghanistan, so no one else could do it. This was unusual for a woman in Pakistan. The farm quickly prospered under her direction. Many men came to respect her and villagers asked her to help them settle their problems.

The government, however, grew stricter with time, limiting freedom of the press and arresting political activists. Nusrat decided that Zia could only be beaten in the 1980 election if the PPP united with part of an opposing party, the PNA. The outcome of their discussions was the formation of the Movement to Restore Democracy, or MRD. Bhutto initially distrusted the organization, but the people of Pakistan supported it. Nusrat and Bhutto agreed that they would never appear at a meeting together so they could not be arrested at the same time. The Bhuttos continued to encourage strikes throughout the country and the army harassed the Bhuttos' family and friends.

On March 7th, 1981, Zia arrested Nusrat and six thousand MRD supporters. Bhutto was arrested as well and kept in jail for five days. From there she was moved and became a long-term political prisoner. Bhutto started keeping a daily diary which was given to her by a friendly jailor. She recorded everything and her jailers hid the notes for safe-keeping. Bhutto read the newspaper every day. Due to a lack of food, Bhutto constantly grew thinner. Eventually her plight was reported to the British press.

In the meantime, the Pakistani newspapers were accusing Bhutto's brothers, Mir and Shah, of running a secret organization in Afghanistan called Al-Zulkifar and claimed that Nusrat and Benazir knew about this. At the time, Bhutto was being kept in a cell which would often get as hot as 120 degrees and was forced to have a poor diet. Enemy jailers started telling her that people were deserting her and encouraged her to commit suicide. Bhutto held on through prayer and thinking of her cause. In jail she turned twenty-eight and hoped for a miracle each day. One day, the jail matron released her;

while she hoped to see her mother, she was quickly placed on a plane to Karachi, dashing her hopes.



Chapter Six, Jailed and Alone

Chapter Six, Jailed and Alone Summary and Analysis

Bhutto was next moved to the Karachi Central Jail; she survived by praying constantly. She was eventually allowed to briefly visit her mother. Nusrat seemed to either have tuberculosis or lung cancer and her brothers were still missing. She continued to focus on the news. When Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in 1980, the United States began providing money to Pakistan again to prevent Soviet forces from getting to the Pakistan border. Zia kept a lot of the money for himself. The American State Department praised him.

All the while, Bhutto focused on her sister's wedding, which would be held September 8th, 1981; she received permission to go to the wedding. Her relatives embraced her and she was able to wash her body. For the next two days she read international and national publications and talked with her mother and sister. Her sister Sanam married Nasser Hussein by her free choice. The police interrupted the ceremonies several times, trying to upset the family, but the wedding continued. Afterwards, Bhutto wrote a letter to Galbraith, who had tried to see her on the order of the United States government.

On December 11th, 1981, Bhutto was taken away, this time to Larkana. She was only briefly allowed to visit her home there. She heard again that her mother's health was not good. Nusrat needed medical care but Zia would not allow her to leave to receive it. Eventually Nusrat's physician refused to follow Zia's orders, as did other doctors on the medical board. Nusrat was allowed to leave to Western Germany and Switzerland for treatment on November 20th, 1982. Bhutto was then placed under house arrest in Karachi for another fourteen months.

When Ronald Reagan visited Pakistan in December 1982, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee challenged him with reports of abuse of political prisoners in Pakistan. When they asked about Bhutto's condition, he became angry and said that she lived under great conditions. To challenge the statement, Galbraith called Bhutto at her home and was forbidden to speak to her. 1983 began with Bhutto sick and tense. But the Senate Foreign Relations Committee pressed on through Galbraith's pressure. When they spoke to Pakistan's foreign minister, he was shocked.

Bhutto was told that the Movement to Restore Democracy still resisted the military; she wrote to them in her mother's name. By June 1983 her ear infection was constant and her doctor told the authorities Bhutto needed treatment in Europe. In December, the government allowed her to go to Switzerland. After seven years, she was excited to leave.



Chapter Seven, Politics in Exile

Chapter Seven, Politics in Exile Summary and Analysis

In January 1984, Bhutto entered Geneva, Switzerland. Her mother and sister greeted her at the airport. She was very happy. Her brother Mir now lived in Switzerland and Bhutto could meet his daughter, Fathi, who was eighteen months old. Shah was in the south of France but could not come to meet her. Bhutto wanted to stay with family but she had to go to London for treatment. She also wished to continue opposing Zia, which she could do in England with the 378,000 Pakistanis living there. Sanam traveled with her and a crowd awaited her when she arrived. She told that Pakistanis that she would never give up on them. Pakistanis started following her, some of whom were suspicious.

Bhutto found it hard to adjust to freedom. She had a fear of crowds, of being followed and of feeling closed in, though she hid her fears. When she arrived in London, Galbraith met with her. He noticed that she had a new self-confidence. Bhutto had surgery in late January and it took nine months for her to recover. Nusrat's health had improved and she rented an apartment in London to help Bhutto recover. All the while, Bhutto developed the idea of a publicity campaign to the international press. She wanted to expose the brutal mistreatment of political prisoners there.

Bhutto provided information to Amnesty International, an organization that works to free political prisoners. She spoke to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in March 1984. She also visited State Department officials. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee asked if aid should be stopped, but she thought it would only create misunderstanding. Instead, the aid should be used to restore human rights and democracy to Pakistan. Bhutto then found a small apartment in London which became the headquarters of the Pakistan People's Party and worked to produce a news magazine in Urdu and English. She also traveled Europe, speaking to Pakistanis, slowly establishing opposition to Zia.

In response, Zia killed many prisoners and Bhutto protested by appealing to Elliot Abrams, the assistant secretary of state for human rights, along with speaking to Members of Parliament. US leaders started to pressure Zia to hold general elections and he scheduled them for March 1985, though he announced a referendum on December 20th, 1984 to see if the Pakistanis wanted to hold elections. He then told them that if they voted for a general election, they were voting against Islam.

Bhutto used her magazine, a secret organization Pakistan and the PPP to inform voters about the referendum and encouraged people to boycott the vote. Only ten percent of Pakistanis voted. But general elections were still scheduled for March. PPP leaders wanted Bhutto to return to Pakistan to challenge Zia, but Bhutto learned that her home was surrounded by the army and that warrants to arrest her and her mother were outstanding. Zia won in March with low turnout. He then declared that he would convert



the government into a civilian one. But the execution of political prisoners went on and Bhutto continued to speak out, addressing the Council on Foreign Relations and the members of the European Parliament.

During a vacation to France in mid-1985, Bhutto was reunited with her brother, Shah. Shah wanted Nusrat to allow him to return to Islamabad to attend the Internationals School there. But Mir and Shah went to Afghanistan during the coup and met and married sisters. Shah and his wife, Rehana, had a daughter named Sassi and were living in Cannes, France. Shah's marriage was unhappy and he intended divorce, but Bhutto encouraged him to make it work. One day Rehana called Bhutto to tell her that Shah had accidentally taken poison. When they arrived, he was dead. Officially it was a suicide but the family suspected murder. Bhutto took her brother to Pakistan in Larkana to bury him in their hometown. Worldwide publicity prevented the military from arresting her. While the government detained Bhutto, the US State Department protested.

Rehana had been arrested and accused of killing Shah; Bhutto was asked to testify and left to Nice, France to do so. Due to suspicions against Rehana, Mir and his wife Fauzia separated. Shah's daughter went to live with grandparents in the United States and the Bhuttos still cannot locate her.



Chapter Eight, A Heroine Returns

Chapter Eight, A Heroine Returns Summary and Analysis

Throughout 1985, Bhutto traveled Europe to speak to Pakistanis and promote the restoration of democracy. At the time, martial law was lifted, though Bhutto did not trust Zia. Crimes and corruption were still high and money and weapons from Afghan fighters flowed into the country. The drug problem, primarily caused by heroin, was out of control. Zia was using the most extreme ideas of Islam to support his politics. One involved limiting the freedom of women; Muslim religious leaders, Mullahs, demanded that women in Pakistan wear traditional Pakistani dress. If women were suspected of infidelity, they could be stoned or jailed. By 1989, most prisoners in Karachi Central Jail were women.

Yet violence increased throughout the country and not only men against women. Men and provinces fought one another. No one liked religious taxes. Bhutto, in response, met with party leaders, and in January 1986, Bhutto decided that she was going home. Most felt it was time, as dictators in other countries were being overthrown. The PPP carefully planned her trip; many Pakistanis threatened to stop her but she was not scared off. She thought United States' support would help, as would the international media. She would arrive in Lahore.

A million people greeted Bhutto when she returned. She was quickly pushed in front of the people and visited the Minar-i-Pakistan monument which her father had built to symbolize Pakistan's birth. The crowd quickly swelled to three million. Once Bhutto reached the monument, she spoke. She promised to make every sacrifice to protect democracy and bring about a revolution. She declined to act in revenge and the crowd yelled that Zia must go.

Bhutto quickly prepared to celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day on August 14th, 1986 with the MRD and the PPP. The foreign press arrived. Bhutto was to speak in a stadium of followers but the police sprayed the air with tear gas. Bhutto escaped to a cab and escaped the police, but soon after the police arrested her and placed her in solitary confinement outside of Karachi. She was there until September. Afterwards, many tried to assassinate her, so she had to make three plans for every trip to stay away from her enemies. Her struggle had just begun.



Chapter Nine, Serving the Nation

Chapter Nine, Serving the Nation Summary and Analysis

In the summer of 1987, Bhutto announced her plans to marry; Zia held elections early hoping that people would think Bhutto's marriage would force her out of politics. Bhutto, while not a traditional Pakistani, agreed to an arranged marriage. She had no way to get to know a man well enough to love him, so it was an arranged marriage or no marriage at all. Nusrat had tried to arrange a marriage for some time, but she resisted; her imprisonment caused her a great deal of psychological stress that also got in the way. Nusrat started her hunt for a son-in-law in 1985.

The man chosen was Bhutto's age and was from a wealthy family in the Sindh Province, named Asif Ali Zardari. He was an athlete and polo player. But marriage was postponed when Shah died. Bhutto had a conversation with Asif's stepmother in February 1987; she told her almost mother-in-law that her politics are a commitment to freedom and that a man would never be the center of her universe. Asif's stepmother told her that her stepson knew what he was in for. In July, Bhutto returned to London and met Asif Zardari. After seven days, she agreed to become engaged; they were married in December 1987. Several Muslim customs were bypassed. For instance, Bhutto kept her father's name. At thirty-four, Bhutto entered an understanding marriage that Muslims could approve of, though Bhutto would continue to be prominent in politics.

At the end of May 1988, Zia dissolved Parliament and called for free elections in ninety days. The PPP was happy but Bhutto was suspicious, wondering what Zia's reasons were. Sanam suggested that it was because they were expecting their first child in September and Zia expected Bhutto not to campaign. Zia also passed strict laws declaring Shariah or Islamic law, the supreme law of the land. Zia hoped to challenge the right of women to run for high office, though the constitution of 1973 made it legal. Zia then made all nine political parties register with the government so he could decide which parties could participate. But the PPP argued before the Supreme Court that the government could not legitimately exercise such a power.

Unexpectedly, on August 17th, 1988, Zia's plane crashed and all thirty passengers died, including Zia. Bhutto was stunned. She could not be totally happy because martial law had been declared. But the former chairman of the Senate took over and announced that the elections would go on. Some saw the crash an act of God, others pointed to tampering and some blamed India and the Soviets. Most today agree it was a mechanical error.

Despite Zia's death, Bhutto continued to campaign against the other candidates, though she was interrupted on September 21st, 1988 when her son Bilawal, meaning "one without equal" was born. Asif treated her son with great love. Bhutto was back at work

five days later; violence was still aimed at Bhutto and the PPP. Many crowds greeted her.

When the polls closed on November 16th, 1988, the PPP had won many major political victories, including ninety-two seats in the National Assembly. On December 1st, Bhutto was made Prime Minister of Pakistan. She was the first woman to lead a Muslim nation and one of the youngest heads of state in the world, at thirty-five years of age. A second Bhutto sought to bring democracy to Pakistan.



Chapter Ten, Making Democracy Work and Afterward

Chapter Ten, Making Democracy Work and Afterward Summary and Analysis

Many in Pakistan celebrated Bhutto's victory but Bhutto immediately had to restore democracy and heal the wounds of dictatorship. Her family moved to Islamabad. Dealing with the military was very difficult as they had held power for most of the previous four decades, especially when Zia ruled. They had become more corrupt and were concerned that Bhutto would cut their budget. They also wondered whether a civilian government could maintain order alone. Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan was also a challenge while the Soviets occupied it. And when the Soviets left, Bhutto had to deal with two Afghan governments.

Drug trafficking increased at that time; 700,000 Pakistanis were thought to be heroin addicts as a result. Bhutto encouraged farmers of poppy seeds to grow new crops. Further, Pakistan's relationship to India was a challenge. Bhutto had also struggled to decrease the seventy-four percent illiteracy rate in Pakistan; many Muslim men and religious leaders did not want women to go to school. Bhutto helped older children as well and she also worked to improve the economy and encouraged investment. She tried to lower taxes and decrease the period require to obtain a permit.

At the time of the writing of the book, Pakistan had just re-entered the British Commonwealth, a group of nations that promise to cooperate with Great Britain, which lowered many trade barriers. In May 1990, Pakistan would try selling off public companies through privatization. Bhutto's time with her family was limited and highly valued and her work day was long. The author then describes Bhutto's day. Bhutto often had to visit other countries, like the United States.

While Bhutto promised President George Bush of the United States not to become a nuclear power in exchange for military and economic aid, she agreed with China to build a nuclear power station. In 1989, Bhutto started to face major opposition. Her critics accused her of not changing things fast enough and others thought she was using her name to get special favors. They accused Asif of embezzlement.

But Bhutto struggled to balance political priorities and deal with such accusations. She had been particularly frustrated in her struggle to achieve equal rights for women. Bhutto had learned to deal with criticism. In November 1989, the National Assembly took a vote of no confidence in Bhutto and the PPP. Had a majority of Assembly members voted against her, a new national election would have had to been held, but they survived the election. Afterwards, some of her cabinet resigned. Moving from critic to leader was not always been easy.



Bhutto's main rival was Nawaz Sharif, the chief minister of Punjab province. He argued that she was an ineffective leader and did not pass any major new laws. She was also opposed by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who was associated with General Zia. Yet most Pakistanis and many world leaders admired her. Bhutto worked to harbor no bitterness towards her opponents and no resentment for her imprisonment. She tried to spread her beliefs about respecting others and not harboring anger and hatred.

On January 25th, 1990, Bhutto gave birth to her daughter, Bakhtaway, meaning "full of hope" in Sindhi. To the world, Bhutto symbolized freedom. She wanted Pakistan to have peace, be stable, to emerge out of illiteracy and equal rights for women and to inspire other countries. It was not clear at the time of the writing of the book whether her vision could be achieved.

The Afterword is a short statement by Benazir Bhutto. She wrote it fifteen months after she was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The months had brought great change and challenge. Eleven years of dictatorship devastated the economy and social fabric of Pakistan and many young Pakistanis did not understand their rights and duties in a democracy society. Bhutto claimed that her government was determined to build a new, democratic Pakistan committed to equality under the law. She wanted a Pakistan that fulfills the basic needs of a people and wanted to bring Pakistan into the twenty-first century. She believed that the people of Pakistan owed it to their children. Bhutto's government is dedicated to the children of Pakistan. For Bhutto, Pakistan was a land of great promise and reached out its hands in hope.



Characters

Benazir Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007) was the first female leader of a Muslim state in history and, at thirty-five, one of the youngest world leaders of her day. Bhutto is the subject of the brief biography, *Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister*, and so is easily the most important person in the book. Bhutto grew up in a privileged Pakistani family. Her father was a major force in Pakistan politics, serving both as the foreign minister and commerce minister before becoming Prime Minister. Bhutto's family was well-off enough to ensure that she went to the prestigious Radcliffe College at age sixteen and then to Oxford to earn two degrees. Bhutto was also trained by her father to be a professional politician.

Bhutto is in many ways an inspiring character. She was initially a shy, bright girl facing severe culture shock in the United States, but she quickly blossomed into a passionate political activist, particularly on behalf of democracy, human rights and equal rights for women. These three passions are tied to causes considered important by peoples all over the world and so her attempts to bring democracy to Pakistan and her actions on behalf of political prisoners earned her worldwide acclaim.

Bhutto had a strong personality that was able to survive brutal persecution of her family and several politically motivated murders. She believed strongly enough in her cause to endure years of imprisonment and to organize politically for years outside of her own country, from which she had been effectively exiled.

Ali Bhutto

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979) was a premier political in Pakistan who was the fourth President of that nation from 1971 to 1973 and the ninth Prime Minister, serving from 1973 to 1977. He founded the PPP, Pakistan's Peoples Party, the most important political party within Pakistan. Bhutto had an international education, starting at the University of California, Berkeley, for his undergraduate degree and Oxford for his graduate degree. Bhutto was involved in Pakistani politics nearly from its inception and was foreign minister in 1962, which indicated a swift right to power. Bhutto was a major reason that Pakistan began to move away from a United States led foreign policy and worked hard to resolve the conflict over Kashmir with India. He was so critical of the way that the President, Ayub Khan handled the negotiations that he resigned.

Bhutto began to deliver speeches across Pakistan in 1967; the PPP promoted Islam as their faith, democracy as their policy and socialism as their economy. The PPP was the pro-democracy movement in Pakistan. Bhutto's party gained a large number of seats in 1970. In 1972, he nationalized all major industries in Pakistan and in March of that year, Brigadier Muhammad Zia led a military coup against him in 1977. Two years later, Zia



had Bhutto executed despite his popularity, but he named his wife, Nusrat, leader of the PPP in his absence.

Hughes presents Ali Bhutto as a shrewd politician often away from home but who had a deep and enduring love for his daughter. He promoted her constantly, making sure she had the best treatment and education. He also strove to train her to be a world class politician and taught her to endure horrible treatment by her political enemies.

Nusrat Bhutto

The wife of Ali Bhutto and the chairwoman of the PPP from 1979 to 1983. She was the mother of Benazir Bhutto who weathered imprisonment with her daughter as well.

General Zia

Brigadier General Zia led the military coup that ousted Ali Bhutto, which led him to rule the country for eleven years. In this time, he had Ali Bhutto executed and brutally persecuted Bhutto's family, having Nusrat and Benazir imprisoned on many occasions. When Benazir ran against him, he did everything he could to stop her until he died in a plane crash in 1988.

Shah Bhutto

Bhutto's brother, who was murdered.

Mir Bhutto

Benazir's brother who was killed in a polite encounter in 1996.

Asif Zardari

Bhutto's husband and an athlete.

The Pakistan People's Party

The social democratic party founded by Ali Bhutto and later headed by both Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto.



The Pakistani Military

General Zia led the Pakistani military in a coup against Ali Bhutto and the persecution of the Bhutto family for many years afterward. They grew increasingly corrupt during Zia's rule.

Traditional Muslims in Pakistan and Mullahs

General Zia pushed a hard line of Islamization in 1984 which was supported by many traditional Muslims and Muslim religious leaders known as Mullahs. They were suspicious of Bhutto in part because she was a female politician.

The International Media

Bhutto waged a political campaign against General Zia through appealing to the international media who adored her.

The United States State Department and the Senate Foreign Re

The Bhutto family had many interactions with the US government, primarily the State Department and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Their experiences with the State Department were mixed, though their Bhutto's experiences with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were largely positive, according to the book.

Foreign Leaders

The Bhuttos appealed to many foreign leaders for help and aid throughout their tenure as political leaders in Pakistan.

Peter Galbraith

An important author, academic, policy advisor and former US diplomat who was a close friend of Benazir Bhutto's when she lived in the United States. He helped to get Bhutto released from prisoner under Zia.



Objects/Places

Karachi, Pakistan

The birthplace of Benazir Bhutto.

Lahore, Pakistan

One of the major cities in Pakistan to which the Bhuttos had close ties.

Islamabad, Pakistan

The capital city of Pakistan.

Radcliffe College

The Harvard College for women where Bhutto received her undergraduate degree.

Oxford College

The English University where Bhutto went to graduate school.

Jail Cells

Bhutto spent much of her adult life imprisoned under General Zia.

Military Dictatorship

General Zia was the military dictator of Pakistan for eleven years.

Human Rights

Bhutto was an ardent advocate of human rights, particularly for women and political prisoners.

Democracy

Rule of the people, a system of government that includes strong voting rights that Bhutto advocated her entire life.



Political Prisoners

Those persons imprisoned for political activism. Bhutto was not only a political prisoner at many points in her life but a worldwide advocate for their release when she was free.

Diplomacy

Ali Bhutto was foreign minister of Pakistan and an expert diplomat; he taught Bhutto the tricks of the trade when she was a young adult. Benazir's skills as a diplomat would come in handy when she struggled to place international political pressure on General Zia to allow elections and protect human rights.



Themes

Privilege

The Bhutto family had a long legacy of wealth in Pakistan. They were significantly wealthy land owners and Benazir Bhutto grew up to enjoy its benefits. The Bhutto family did not live a traditional Muslim life, as Ali Bhutto had been educated in the United States. While her family were practicing Muslims, Nusrat Bhutto did not wear traditional Muslim garb. Bhutto went to Radcliffe and Oxford for her education, which was an extraordinary display of wealth for a Pakistani at the time. She was also able to shadow her father's diplomatic work when he served both as Foreign Minister of Pakistan and as President and Prime Minister. These privileges led her to acquire diplomatic skills that would be quite useful to her later in life.

Despite Bhutto's elite education and upbringing, she claimed to identify with the plight of poor Pakistanis. The PPP was a social democratic party that claimed to advance an ideology friendly to the needs of the weak and marginalized within Pakistani society. But despite Benazir's attempts to identify with the poor, she was wholly and completely a member of the Pakistani elite from the beginning of her life until the very end. Her privilege is significant but only a background theme in the book. It is significant because it was a necessary condition for all the work she did and sets her ideology and activism in a more complete context.

Persecution

Despite Bhutto's elite upbringing, she was no mere child of privilege. No one doubted that her political beliefs were strong, honest and serious from her political awakening at Harvard. And despite the training given to her by her father and his pressure to place her in excellent Western Universities, she developed a genuine passion to aid her country. If anyone doubts her commitment, her willingness to endure imprisonment should count as significant counterevidence.

Even though the book somewhat white-washes Bhutto's life, it is completely true that she dedicated her life to the well-being of Pakistan and fought against persecution to do so. She was imprisoned on numerous occasions and never stopped organizing as a result. In fact, due to illness, she was incredibly weak and sick at certain points in her young adulthood, but as soon as she was well she began to organize an underground political movement to fight against the abuses of power of the Zia administration.

General Zia used nearly every means at his disposal to persecute the Bhutto family. He staged a coup against Ali Bhutto and imprisoned both Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto on many occasions. He arguably had Shah Bhutto murdered as well. At times he banned the PPP and tried to force them to register with the government so he could control them. He would move parliamentary elections in order to disadvantage the Bhuttos and



their party. Nonetheless, Bhutto weathered persecution and became Prime Minister, restoring democracy to Pakistan for a time.

Justice, Human Rights and Democracy

The combination of Bhutto's upbringing and the persecution she endured made her an ardent fighter for her vision of justice for Pakistan. Her fight in particular manifested itself in the fight for the widely recognized values of human rights and democratic institutions.

One reason for her deep awareness of the importance of human rights and democracy came from the fact that her father was a freely democratically elected leader of Pakistan and was overthrown by a military dictator who treated her family brutally up from the coup until his death in 1988. This made Bhutto aware that freedom was a fragile gift and that a people had to be committed to protecting its human rights if it was to flourish. She also fought hard for political rights, that is, the right to protest and organize for political causes and to criticize the government, rights whose legitimacy General Zia did not acknowledge.

Bhutto believed that democracy was not only fundamentally just but had a strong tendency to achieve substantially better outcomes for the peoples of the world. She often appealed to Western democracies for aid and spent a great deal of her time organizing her democratic party, the Pakistan People's Party. Bhutto's fight for democracy was significant, earning her international renown. She was quite successful for a time. While Pakistan had only been an unstable democracy, Bhutto's legacy is as one who frequently pushed it in a democratic direction.

Style

Perspective

Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister was written by Libby Hughes. Hughes is a professional writer of biographies for young adults between ages eleven and sixteen. She has written books on Henry Longfellow, Ronald Reagan, Yitzhak Rabin, George W. Bush, Christopher Reeve, John Grisham, and even Tiger Woods, in addition to her biography of Benazir Bhutto. Thus, her perspective is foremost of someone who is trying to boil down the essence of a major historical figure or celebrity for young teens and pre-teens ages eleven and twelve.

Hughes' biography of Bhutto has a number of biases. First, Benazir Bhutto's family was not universally beloved by the Pakistani people. Hughes often makes it sound as if Bhutto's only opposition was sexist Muslim Mullahs and the military led by dictator General Zia. Consequently, Bhutto comes off like a perfect saint. Her faults are almost never mentioned, save that she was not an incredibly bright student but more focused on having a good time when she was young and that many accusations were made against her when she was Prime Minister. While Bhutto is undoubtedly an inspiring figure, it is not clear how Hughes does a service for her reader by wholly white-washing her past. For instance, Hughes basically dismisses the corruption charges against Bhutto which would later lead her being removed from office. Thus, the reader should be wary of the author's biases when reading the book.

Tone

The tone of *Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister* is appropriate for a pre-teen biography. Its tone is largely positive and tries to be inspiring. It becomes "sad" when things go poorly for Bhutto, but it hardly expresses the true tragedy of the execution of Bhutto's father, her brutal imprisonment and the harsh imposition of discrimination against women and military dictatorship by General Zia. The book, as a result, has a relatively simple, positive tone that is used to build up an inspiring and nearly saint-like portrait of Bhutto for her reader.

To give a few examples, towards the end of the book, in chapter ten, Hughes starts to explain the many challenges that Bhutto faces "making democracy work" in governing Pakistan. The challenges are enormous, particularly when it comes to subduing the potential for the resurgence of military dictatorship and the enormous illiteracy rate in Pakistan. Also, the tone does not express the incredible oppression experienced by women in Pakistan in the early 1990s. Instead, the tone turns mildly concerned and comes off as if Bhutto just has to "roll up her sleeves" and get to work.

Arguably, such a tone makes the book an effective work for her audience. Extreme tones would run the risk of alienating Hughes' audience. Readers picking up

biographies for the first time, perhaps assigned in class, may not want to be upset or depressed by what they are reading.

Structure

Since *Benazir Bhutto: From Prison to Prime Minister* is a work of young adult non-fiction, its structure is extremely simple. It is written in chronological order but is built around simple themes appropriate to the period of Bhutto's life that Hughes is describing to the reader. It has ten simple chapters, all in chronological order. Chapter One, *A Child Without Equal*, describes Bhutto's upbringing in a non-traditional Muslim home and as a child of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and later the President of Prime Minister. Chapter Two, *Heading for Harvard*, discusses the lead-up to Bhutto's college career at Radcliffe and her experiences at Radcliffe.

Chapter Three, *On to Oxford*, explains Bhutto's graduate studies at Oxford. Chapter Four, *Caught in a Coup*, explains how when Bhutto returned to Pakistan, her father was soon thereafter overthrown in a military coup led by General Zia. Chapter Five, *A Desert Cell*, discusses Bhutto's extended political persecution and imprisonment and Chapter Six, *Jailed and Alone*, continues on the same theme.

Chapter Seven, *Politics in Exile*, follows Bhutto's political career after she escaped Pakistan for London and how she built support for her return, which is described in Chapter Eight, *A Heroine Returns*. Chapter Nine, *Serving the Nation*, explains how Bhutto came to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Chapter Ten, *Making Democracy Work*, is written in the present tense and describes the challenges Bhutto faces as Prime Minister and how she is handling them in her first eighteen months in office. The Afterword is a single page, which is a letter from Bhutto.



Quotes

"At the age of 35, Benazir Bhutto became the prime minister of Pakistan, and the first woman to lead a Muslim country."

Chapter One, A Child Without Equal, p. 6

"I am really proud to have a daughter who is so bright that she is doing O-levels [entrance exams] at the young age of fifteen, three years before I did them. At this rate, you might become president."

Chapter One, A Child Without Equal, p. 18

"John Kenneth Galbraith hovered over Benazir like a father."

Chapter Two, Heading for Harvard, p. 22

"One of the fundamental lessons of diplomacy is to create doubt: Never lay all your cards on the table."

Chapter Two, Heading for Harvard, p. 29

"Mr. Prime Minister, your daughter is even more intimidating than you are."

Chapter Three, On to Oxford, p. 34

"[Bhutto] was also looking forward to her last year at Oxford because she could now campaign for president of the Oxford Union Debating Society. No woman or non-British person had ever been given this honor before."

Chapter Three, On to Oxford, p. 40

"Thank God you've completed your education and are home. Now you can help me."

Chapter Four, Caught in a Coup, p. 47

"You are careless. You are not in a democracy of the West now."

Chapter Four, Caught in a Coup, p. 52

"My daughter is used to wearing jewelry. Now she will be proud to wear the chains of imprisonment."

Chapter Four, Caught in a Coup, p. 53

"You don't know how much I love you, how much I've always loved you. You are my jewel. You always have been."

Chapter Four, Caught in a Coup, p. 57

"If I am the only person left resisting the tyranny of the regime, then so be it. I don't believe your lies."

Chapter Five, A Desert Cell, p. 68

"Did they teach us that life could be full of such terrible dangers and tragedies....freedom and liberty, the essays we wrote on them, papers for our tutors, for grades, but did we know the value of those words which we bandied about, or how



precious they are, as precious as the air we breathe, the water we drink."
Chapter Six, Jailed and Alone, p. 76

"Yesterday, I was a prisoner. Today, I am free with my mother and sister. We are together. We are all alive."
Chapter Seven, Politics in Exile, p. 80

"I'm going home."
Chapter Eight, A Heroine Returns, p. 94

"Do you want freedom? Do you want democracy? Do you want a revolution?"
Chapter Eight, A Heroine Returns, p. 97

"My politics are a commitment to freedom and the meaning of life. How would a man feel, knowing that his wife's life does not revolve around him?"
Chapter Nine, Serving the Nation, p. 102

"On December 1st, Benazir Bhutto was declared prime minister of Pakistan."
Chapter Nine, Serving the Nation, p. 108

"My friends, freedom is not an end. Freedom is a beginning."
Chapter Ten, Making Democracy Work, p. 116

"I would like Pakistan to be at peace with its neighbors. I would like it to be stable and independent. I would like Pakistan to emerge out of the darkness of illiteracy and have the world judge our country on its talents and merits. I would like to see equal opportunities for men and women, and have other Asian countries point to Pakistan and say, 'If Pakistan can break through illiteracy, so can we.'"
Chapter Ten, Making Democracy Work, p. 123



Topics for Discussion

How did Ali Bhutto become Prime Minister?

Bhutto's upbringing was not a traditionally Muslim one. In what ways was it different?

What kind of student was Bhutto at Radcliffe? At Oxford? What were her major interests?

How did Bhutto become active in politics?

How did Bhutto survive the persecution of General Zia?

How did Bhutto become Prime Minister?

To what extent do you think that author Libby Hughes's presentation of Benazir Bhutto's life is even-handed? Be sure to recognize that the book was written only eighteen months into Bhutto's administration. Why would the author want to write such a pro-Bhutto book?

Is Benazir Bhutto a hero? In what way? Would you have voted for her in 1988? Why or why not?