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English 112 B
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Book Talk



<http://www.marinabudhos.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Author-Photo-1C-2014-245x300.jpg>

Marina Budhos is an author of award-winning fiction and nonfiction. Her most recent novel is *Watched*, which received an Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature YA Honor and a The Walter Award Honor.

Her other novels include *Tell Us We're Home*, a 2017 Essex County YA Pick and *Ask Me No Questions*, recipient of a James Cook Teen Book Award, *The Professor of Light*, *House of Waiting*, and a nonfiction book, *Remix: Conversations with Immigrant Teenagers*.

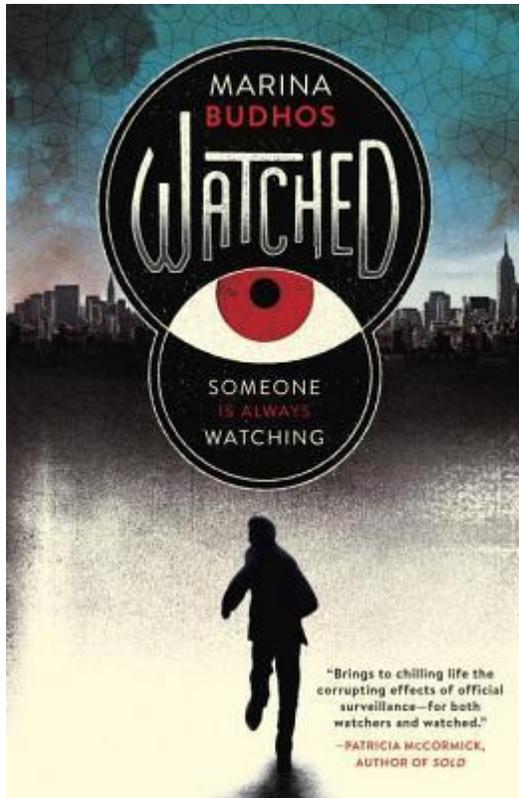
With her husband Marc Aronson, she co-authored *Eyes of the World: Robert Capa & Gerda Taro & The Invention of Modern Photojournalism* and *Sugar Changed the World: A Story of Magic, Spice, Slavery, Freedom & Science*, a 2010 Los Angeles Times Book Award Finalist.

Budhos has been a Fulbright Scholar to India, received two Fellowships from the New Jersey Council on the Arts and is a professor of English at William Paterson University.

Sources

<http://www.simonandschuster.com/authors/Marina-Budhos/29440910>

MarinaBudhos.com.



<https://images.penguinrandomhouse.com/cover/9780553534214>

Summary of the book

Naeem is a Muslim teenager, lives in a neighborhood that is not only surveyed by the cameras, but also cops, and their neighbors. Naeem emigrated from Dhaka, Bangladesh to Manhattan, New York at age 11 to join in his family, now is 18 years old, a senior at Newtown High School with imperfect grades, who has to delay his graduation. This breaks his Bangladeshi parents emotionally and financially. Naeem wants to be a superhero, who protects his people like the ones in his little brother's comic books. However, he steps into traps and becomes a watcher. At beginning he feels good and skeptical but finally realizes this dark deal makes him become a traitor, so he cuts it off.

Quote # 1

The significance of the first quote is from the beginning of the book, shows Naeem, his parents, and his people live in a strict surveillance neighborhood, and the watchers constantly patrol their community, which of that brings the pressure down to their life.

“The watching, it seeps into everything in our neighborhood...They stroll into stores, finger the edges of the newspapers in their racks, check out flyers taped to the side of the fridge” (9).

Quote # 2

The significance of the second quote is from the 1st part of the book towards the end, shows the family pressure is one of the main force causes Naeem becomes a watcher. This is the moment Naeem wants to tell his parents about his failing grades on his English and Math, and he has to pay extra tuition for summer school to graduate. However, his parents are hard to survive with their small business, and need support from him.

“‘What’s wrong?’ I ask.

He shakes his head. ‘Not enough for new supplies Maybe we go one, two months.’

...

My stomach cinches tighter, remembering, Mrs. D, getting caught at the mall. My time with Taylor. I take a breath. Start with Mrs. D. That’s easiest” (70).

Quote # 3

The significance of the third quote is from the beginning of the 4th part of the book, it is a turning point that shows Naeem realizes his watching job contradicts to his own values, and he indirectly asks opinions from his father to search possible solutions.

“‘Abba, was there ever a time when you had to do something...and you weren’t sure if it was right?’ We do have a choice. Even if I do something bad, even if I do it because it helps my family, or me, it is my choice. ” (206)

How do I use this book to teach?

This book joins in the ongoing conversation about the terrorism and the minority Muslims. It is a good resource to present to class with identity, discrimination, and struggles with decisions. Teacher can ask classes to write a response about the terrorism or the discrimination

situations, and then compare theirs to the characters in the book. This exercises make students realize that teenagers from a different culture and religion are same as everyone else.

Why teens need to read this?

- Because lost teens can relate to the main character to find their ways back.
- Because Muslim teens need to voice out about their wishes of identity, their dreams, and their difficulties carry their own culture and religion to fit in the new country.
- Because young teens might fear their Muslim peers and stereotype them in their minds, which bring extra burden to this particular group teens.
- Because reading and knowledge can reduce the fear of others to prevent the future hatred crimes happening.

Text Complexity

Lexile Level: HL550 L Ages: 12-18 +

Atos: 10.0 (picture) Age Grades: 7.5

Dave-Chall: Grade Level: 7

Reading lever: fairly easy to read. Reader's Age: 11-13 yrs. Old (Sixth and seventh graders)

The scores agree that it is a fairly easy book for 7th graders, but I don't know. The language used is simple but the structure is not easy to follow, as well the issues are difficult for middle schoolers to understand because the book focuses on the identity struggles, the pressure of stereotypes, the terrorism, and immigrant family tensions, so it would be suit for high school readers.

- **Quantitative**

- This novel resonated strongly with Exeter Quality # 4: Characters who go beyond typical experiences so that readers can use the fictional experience to learn and develop in their own lives.

- The book sketches Naeem, a Muslim teen, lives under the outer force of skeptical terrorism community, this is true for every member of this particular minority group. In his story, readers will notice the stereotypes are illogical that Muslims who fail their grades, or carry family issues, and or simply because of their culture and religion are reasons for them joining in terrorism.
- Reader and Task
 - Young readers or students can use this book to learn how to make decisions under complicated circumstance and be responsible to their decisions. They can learn how to tolerant people who are different from themselves, as well gain knowledge to help their peers who may go through similar struggles in their life.

Adolescents in the Search for Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story

- Chapter 6: Books about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with Decisions
 - Throughout the novel, young readers can see how Muslim teens are no difference, but with great pressure from the stereotype, their family tensions, and their dreams.
 - Naeem wants to be a superhero to protect his family and his people, but struggles with his poor grades and the traps he steps into. The novel shows how he shortens the distance between his dream and his reality.
 - Naeem's characters grow from making decisions, who is influenced and trapped by his friend, manipulated by the cops, and forced by his family pressure, but finally he learns making a choice from his own power and will.