

# Toufah

*author: Toufah Jallow, Kim Pittaway*

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# Synopsis

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author	Toufah Jallow, Kim Pittaway
readBy	Toufah Jallow
inLanguage	english

"Riveting . . . harrowing and propulsive." *â€”The New York Times Book Review*

\*One of The Most Anticipated Books of Fall 2021 (*Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly*)\*

"This powerful story shouldn't be missed." *â€”Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"With subject matter like this, you'd expect the book to be worthy, important, but hard-going. You'd be two-thirds right. The same qualities that prompted Toufah to break the barriers she did have allowed her to leaven the tale with humour, and a lot more of the good she encountered along the way than the bad that set her on her path." *â€”The Toronto Star*

An incandescent and inspiring memoir of resilience from a courageous young woman whose powerful advocacy brings to mind the presence, resolve, and moral authority of Malala and Greta Thunberg

Before launching an unprecedented protest movement, Fatou "Toufah" Jallow was just a 19-year-old dreaming of a scholarship. Encouraged by her mother to pursue her own ambitions, Toufah entered a presidential competition purportedly designed to identify the country's smart young women and support their educational and career goals. Toufah won.

Yahya Jammeh, the dictator who had ruled The Gambia all of Toufah's life, styled himself as a pious yet progressive protector of women. At first he behaved in a fatherly fashion toward Toufah, but then proposed marriage, and she turned him down. On a pretext, his female cousin then lured Toufah to the palace, where he drugged and raped her.

Toufah could not tell anyone. There was literally no word for rape in her native language. If she told her parents, they would take action, and incur Jammeh's wrath. Wearing a niqab to hide her identity, she gave Jammeh's security operatives the slip and fled to Senegal. Her eventual route to safety in Canada is full of close calls and intrigue.

18 months after

Jammeh was deposed, Toufah Jallow became the first woman in The Gambia to make a public accusation of rape against him, sparking marches of support and a social media outpouring of shared stories among West African women under #IAmToufah. Each brave and bold decision she made set Toufah on the path to reclaim the personal growth and education that Jammeh had tried to steal from her, a future also of leadership and advocacy for survivors of sexual violence, especially in heavily patriarchal countries lacking resources and laws to protect women and even the language with which to speak openly about sexual threats and violence.

“This terrific book had me on the edge of my seat, and sends an inspiring message to all women about the power of their voice.” --Anna Maria Tremonti

“My (s)heroes do not wear capes... they call out injustices with enough grace and forgiveness to heal anyone that hears their story. Toufah is that graceful shero the world desperately needs.” --Celina Caesar-Chavannes

*“Toufah's story is horrifying and infuriating, but ultimately also hopeful and inspiring because of what she was able to achieve out of such darkness. To anyone who cares about addressing gender-based violence, this is essential reading.”* --Robyn Doolittle

## Reader's comments

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