



Atlas Girl: Finding Home in the Last Place I Thought to Look

Emily T. Wierenga

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Disillusioned and yearning for freedom, Emily Wierenga left home at age eighteen with no intention of ever returning. Broken down by organized religion, a childhood battle with anorexia, and her parents' rigidity, she set out to find God somewhere else--anywhere else. Her travels took her across Canada, Central America, the United States, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia. She had no idea that her faith was waiting for her the whole time--in the place she least expected it.

Poignant and passionate, *Atlas Girl* is a very personal story of a universal yearning for home and the assurance that we are known, forgiven, and beloved. Readers will find in this memoir a true description of living faith as a two-way pursuit in a world fraught with distraction. Anyone who wrestles with the brokenness we find in the world will love this emotional journey into the arms of the God who heals all wounds.

Atlas Girl: Finding Home in the Last Place I Thought to Look Details

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Author : Emily T. Wierenga

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From Reader Review Atlas Girl: Finding Home in the Last Place I Thought to Look for online ebook

Gay Idle says

Seriously, this is one of the best books that I had read in 2014!! Beautifully written! Her story is so real, raw, and vulnerable and has you asking your own questions as you trek across continents with Emily in her quest to find the thing that we all long for...

Lady Jane Grey says

Now that's how you write a memoir!

Krista D says

Over the last few years, I've discovered the beauty of a well written memoir. There is something truly powerful about someone sharing the intimate details of their life journey, inner struggles and even their faith walk that inspires and challenges me. I often set the book down at the end feeling like I've made a new friend. Without a doubt this book falls into that category.

Emily weaves together her journey with raw honesty and storytelling skill to keep the reader connected to the story with each page turned. The threads of her story build on so many different themes that readers from many walks of life can relate, from caring for an ailing/aging parent, falling in love, walking through seasons of loss, battling anorexia, worldwide travel and missions, to finding authentic faith.

This book is about being a daughter, a wife, a Christ-follower, a sister, a mother and a traveler. Its about forgiveness, living in grace, and loving unconditionally. Its about seeing God's hand in the everyday moments, especially as she cares for her mother suffering from the effects of brain cancer. And its about seeing God's extravagant love and hearing Him whisper "Watch me take care of you".

There were so many parts that I loved in this book. I enjoyed how the author continues to make sense of her past, redeeming the hard places of her story and inviting God into them. It can seem so much easier to attempt to just move on from the tough stuff, pretend it didn't happen, and try not to think about it again. But it seems there is always something we can learn or someone we can reach out to because of our journey and our story. God uses all the parts of our journey, especially the hardest parts. This book reminds me to again look at my whole journey, not just the part I'm living now, but to remember how God has taken care of me in the past as a reminder that He will continue to do so.

Nancy says

I was disappointed because I didn't find what was intimated I would find from this book. First of all, I will comment on style. She has a poetic way of writing, which I usually like, but she doesn't flesh things out.

Instead she hints at feelings and major transitions without telling in such a way that I could feel it in myself. She leaves way too much to the reader's imagination. An example: in visiting a Hindu temple she says "They seemed more convinced than any of the church members I had encountered...and so I took off my shoes and stopped believing." That was a crisis of faith? That she found some value in another religion? Later it would seem her crises of faith had to do with normal life events, but she never really delves into what that caused in her except on a superficial level. She never really explored other religions or ways of thinking, so the blurb on the back of the book that says: "Broken down by organized religion...she set out to find God somewhere else..." Nope, didn't see that. In addition to those disappointments, the hopping around from one point in her life to another and back again was disorienting. I have a bias here that I will admit. I feel I had a crisis of faith, but it took looking at other possibilities of belief: No God, maybe God, God in a variety of guises, different spiritual practices--to resolve it and it still is a matter of questioning and living what I've found to fine-tune. I think that I will not come to a solid stance in this life on earth because I realize there is too much I can't understand or know in my human condition.

Heather says

How disappointing that the author was so narrow minded despite her world travels. She and her husband "mourned" for the people in Japan who were worshipping Buddha. Wow. She is a gifted writer but between her holy rolling and constant crying, it was too much for me. But I admire that she was able to overcome personal obstacles including being brave enough to put her memoir out there.

Rachel Marie says

I don't usually read memoirs. Nonfiction is not my thing, although lately I have been trying to read more of it. But something about this book inspired me to pick it up, and I'm so glad I did. It was so touching, real, and inspiring, and I am so glad I read it.

It did take a while for me to get into it, as I usually find nonfiction books to drag a little. But once I got into it, I could not put it down. The writing was so honest, and deep. Emily chose to share such a huge part of herself with this book, and it shows. It could not have been easy to share some of the things she did with complete strangers, but they made the story come to life.

Although this story is about her travels, it is about so, so much more: it is about life, and family, and finding God, and turning away from God, and coming back to God. It's about discovering herself, finding her husband, loving her mother. She shared about the experiences that shaped her, such as her anorexia and her mother's cancer. All of these things came together to create such a powerful, poignant story.

I will say, the timeline had me a bit confused, as it flips back and forth. While the date is always at the beginning of each chapter, I would forget what had happened when, although nothing that really deterred my reading experience.

This book was so powerful, and one of the most inspiring books I think I have ever read. And I don't say that lightly. For anyone who struggles--with identity, with God, with family--this is the book for you. (And even if you think you don't struggle with anything...this is the book for you.)

I received a copy from the publisher, this did not affect my honest opinion.

This review first appears on The NerdHerd Reads

Nelia says

A poignant, heart-warming memoir by a young Canadian woman, who has struggled with anorexia but has found God's grace and help to live a normal life. I would highly recommend it!

Katie says

Her story was interesting enough to me. It takes a lot for someone to be willing to share such a stiry/testiminy. I probably would have gave 5 stars if the book didn't jump around so much in chronological order.

Jane says

What a beautifully written book about caring for a parent whilst learning to care for yourself in the light of the love of God

Regina Gadad says

With the title of "Atlas Girl" I was hoping to vicariously travel the world without having to fly United. I was disappointed to find this a memoir of the author's travels through her own feelings than the countries she says she visits. The destination she craves is peace within herself and her relationship with family members.

Wierenga's writing reminds me of Ann Voskamp's style. If you were a fan of Voskamp's "1000 Gifts", you might enjoy Wierenga's "Atlas Girl", minus the warmth. Her writing envelopes you with poetic sentences, but unlike Voskamp, leaves blanks in the descriptions that suggests feelings but lacks confirmation. Most of her emotions are negative and sad. It's as if someone gave her grey colored glasses when she was young and she has yet to take them off.

The author takes us through her battle of anorexia -- and for that the book has earned it's stars.

But warning, if you are depressed, don't read this book. You will feel more depressed!

Ibjoy1953 Hannabass says

MY THOUGHTS ON THIS BOOK

Emily Wierenga left her home looking for a like that she wanted, or thought she wanted. Her travels took her to may different places in the world. In searching for the life Emily thought she wanted, she gives vivid

details of her new life. She spent time in Brazzaville, Congo, and this was interesting to read about because I have heard a lot about the Congo. She also spent time in Japan, China, the Middle East, but she still couldn't find what she was really looking for. It wasn't until she

Emily Wierenga tells her story, a very difficult story with a lot of raw emotions as she so vividly tells her story. She goes through a lot of heartaches and difficulties as she searches for what she is looking for in life. This is not an easy book to read because Emily pours her heart out and tell everything in this book. I love the way Emily is reaching out to everyone, telling her story in a way that it can help others. This is a great book for everyone to read, but especially the younger generation. Reading *Atlas Girl* could help you in making the right choices in your life. I highly recommend this book to everyone!!

I received this book from Blogging for Books to read and review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 55.

Natasha says

I'm not really sure what I was expecting, but this was a quick enjoyable read. I found it very eye-opening reading about Emily's struggles with anorexia even as a young girl, her bitterness toward her parents, and then her journey toward healing and forgiveness. I will certainly be reading the second book as soon as I can get my hands on it! I only wish that more of Emily Wierenga's writings were available online (a blog), but as a fellow mother of young children, I can understand why that must be so difficult. If you enjoy inspirational personal stories, then I highly recommend this book for you.

Tammy K says

This author was new to me, but I was drawn into her style of writing and straightforward storytelling. I am a sucker for a good memoir that deals with family, faith and redemption, and this book did not disappoint. I so enjoyed the way she seamlessly weaved together her experiences and thoughts on God, family relationships, writing, travel and so much more. It did not all wrap together neatly at the end (as some books do and does not seem true to my experiences in life), which made me appreciate it all the more. Would highly recommend!

Beth Neu says

First of all, I got this book because of the title: "Atlas Girl..." It took over 100 pages into it until she got out of Canada, so... while she has traveled to and lived in other places it was not what I expected. It is hard to describe what this book is about mostly because Emily wades back and forth between her struggle with anorexia, memories of childhood and helping her mother battle cancer. But it seemed to be more about those things than the places around the world she visited. Second, while Emily is a good writer, I don't know that she has lived the "world experience" yet at her age. She seems very self-absorbed at times (perhaps we all

are?) and I did appreciate her honesty and some insights into her struggle with faith, but all in all, it has not been one of my favorite books.

Darlene says

ATLAS GIRL, by Emily Wierenga, a biography about the various challenges that she faced in her life and that of her family. I laughed some, teared up some, and was amazed at her openness and sharing. I know that hurting people will benefit from this book, giving them hope, and helping them on their journey to healing.
