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Daughter of War

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During World War I, the Turkish government abandoned Armenians in the Syrian Desert. More than one million died from malnutrition and other causes. *Daughter of War* describes the circumstances of three characters struggling to reunite after surviving this massacre.

When the book begins it is 1916, and Kevork is living in Syria posing as an Arab and dreaming of reuniting with his fiancée Marta. Through flashbacks readers learn that Kevork, Marta, and her sister Mariam lived in an orphanage before they were deported and separated. Adila, the wife of an Arab, rescued Marta and took her to Aintab, where, tragically, she was repeatedly raped by Adila's husband. Meanwhile, Kevork sacrifices his chance for a normal life by delivering money to Armenians, working to nurse the dying, and taking a dangerous journey to Smyrna, Turkey, to deliver photos of murdered Armenians that he hopes will be published in American newspapers.

Chapters are devoted to various characters, and settings frequently shift from Syria to Turkey, though the action travels as far as Boston, Massachusetts. The author provides a diverse depiction of Armenians, sympathizers, and Turks—there are Armenians who betray other Armenians, and Turks who are kind and helpful, such as Rustem. When Mariam is sold into slavery, Rustem purchases her and eventually returns her to the orphanage.

The author, who has an undergraduate degree in English and a master's degree in library science, both from the University of Western Ontario, received a nomination for the Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award for her fifth novel, *Hope's War*.

While the title may refer to both the unique plight of female Armenians and to the birth of Marta's daughter, it is misleading and might prevent boys from choosing the book. This would be a shame because male readers would miss out on an adventurous plot and well-drawn characters (i.e., Kevork's character is sensitive, heroic, and honorable). This companion to *The Hunger* and *Nobody's Child* will help enrich any instructional unit on World War I, as it provides readers with rich characters, informative historical details, and a suspenseful plot.
KAAVONIA HINTON (June 16, 2008)

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