



Destiny of Dreams: Time Is Dear

Cathy Burnham Martin

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The graceful historical novel Destiny of Dreams covers a genocide and a family's perseverance.

Cathy Burnham Martin's heartwrenching historical novel *Destiny of Dreams* is based on the true story of her grandfather's escape from Armenia during the Ottoman invasion in 1915.

In the 1960s, thirteen-year-old Cassie begins to suffer from nightmares, which she relays in detail to her grandparents, Hrant and Marjorie, with whom she spends a lot of time. Her grandfather, Hrant, is shaken by the scenes of horror that Cassie details, like a family being slaughtered by soldiers in their home; they mirror his own experiences as a young boy in Armenia at the outbreak of World War I.

Hrant lived in Armenia with his parents, brother, and two sisters when the Ottoman Empire invaded their country, imposing Muslim beliefs and banning the education of girls, among other oppressions. As they attempted to leave the country, his father and sisters were murdered; he and his mother and brother escaped to a Russian refugee camp before crossing Europe while war raged across the continent. They emigrated to the United States. Though they witnessed the Ottoman Empire's persecution of Armenians, Hrant's parents were sure to teach their children that the Ottoman leaders were responsible, not another religion. Indeed, their family shows respect and appreciation for diverse cultures and beliefs throughout the story.

The chapters of Hrant's story build upon one another well, their stakes intense. Their endings foreshadow next developments in a campy manner, though. Beyond these transitions, the book's style is eloquent, with vibrant language used to illustrate the physical and emotional landscapes of 1915 Armenia, from lively parties before the Ottoman invasion to the bloody horrors that followed it, through to the refugee camps.

Hrant's story is bookended by Cassie's experiences, and some of Marjorie's journal entries are scattered throughout to fill in emotional gaps. Each section serves a purpose that another section cannot: Cassie's brief 1960s scenes, for instance, draw forward the consequences of the Armenian genocide and her family's perseverance, with an emotional impact that would otherwise not be present. Still, Cassie is constructed without a distinctive personality. When Hrant gives Cassie an item they were able to save during their escape, she exalts that she will protect it and find a way to tell her family's beautiful story of perseverance, but her speech sounds forced.

A graceful story about a family who values peace, education, and equality, the historical novel *Destiny of Dreams* covers a genocide that led to heartbreak, but whose survivors expressed love and perseverance.

AIMEE JODOIN (August 28, 2021)

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